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As a Tree Beside the Water

“**T**he palm tree, beaten by the scorching sun and the fierce sandstorm, stands green and flourishing and fruitful in the midst of the desert. Its roots are fed by living springs. Its crown of verdure is seen afar over the parched, desolate plain; and the traveler, ready to die, urges his failing steps to the cool shade and the life-giving water.

The tree of the desert is a symbol of what God means the life of His children in this world to be. They are to guide weary souls, full of unrest, and ready to perish in the desert of sin, to the living water. They are to point their fellow men to Him who gives the invitation, ‘If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.’ John 7:37” – *Education*, p. 116

“It is Christian’s privilege to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. ‘The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree.’ See the weary traveler toiling over the hot sands of the desert, with no shelter to protect him from the rays of a tropical sun. His water supply fails, and he has nothing to slake his burning thirst. His tongue be-

comes swollen; he staggers like a drunken man. Visions of home and friends pass before his mind, as he believes himself ready to perish in the terrible desert. Suddenly those in advance send forth a shout of joy. In the distance, looming up out of the dreary, sandy waste, is a palm tree, green and flourishing. Hope quickens his pulses. That which gives vigor and freshness to the palm tree, will cool the fevered pulses, and give life to those who are perishing with thirst.

As the palm tree, drawing nourishment from fountains of living water, is green and flourishing in the midst of the desert, so the Christian may draw rich supplies of grace from the fountain of God’s love, and may guide weary souls, that are full of unrest and ready to perish in the desert of sin, to those waters of which they may drink, and live. The Christian is ever pointing his fellow-men to Jesus, who invites, ‘If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink.’ This fountain never fails us; we may draw, and draw again.” – *The Signs of the Times*, June 26, 1884

Ellen G. White



One Thing is Needful

Adapted from a sermon by Timo Martin

“**A**nd Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary has chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.” Luke 10:41–42

One thing is needful, and Mary had chosen that good part. To Martha, Jesus said, “thou art

troubled about many things, but one thing is needful.”

How is it with us? Are we careful and troubled about many things in life, and yet neglect the one needful thing?

The Gentiles, unbelievers, are concerned about and are seeking what to eat, what to drink, what to put on, how to pay rent, or how to make ends meet finan-

cially. However, for us, for the children of God one thing is important and necessary—to seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all the other things will be added unto us.

When I talk to people, they often have a long list of items they need. These items are considered necessary for life. Yet Jesus said that one thing is needful. Who is right?

We need to examine ourselves, is the one thing important to us, or are we like Martha? If you had the choice to either attend a prayer meeting, or go to work to make more money, or attend school, which is more important to you? If you choose to work to make more money, are you then seeking the kingdom of God first? No. You are seeking worldly goods first.

If you make the choice to seek for worldly gain, will God bless you with food, drink and clothing? No. God will put a curse on you. You will go into debt, you will have a lack of food, drink, and clothing. All because

pointed out their mistakes many times over.

Let us read about one occasion. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." Matthew 23:23. "But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." Luke 11:42

They cannot be separated. If I do not love my enemies, I have broken the 6th commandment.

"And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." Matthew 24:12. Another translation states, "because of lawlessness, the love of many shall grow cold." If one commandment is broken, our love to God and our love to our neighbours will grow cold.

When the Lord came to the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve went into hiding. They did not want to see Him. Adam started accusing both God and his wife, Eve. His love had died.

“*But seek ye first the kingdom of God,
and His righteousness;
and all these things shall be added unto you.*”

Matthew 6:33

you did not seek the kingdom of God first.

If you had the choice to read the Bible and you watch television instead, are you then seeking the kingdom of God first? Now, will God bless you? He cannot.

If you hunger and thirst for something else, more than righteousness, will you be filled? Will you be satisfied? No. You will go hungry; you will be miserable and wretched.

We are to put a value on everything that we do, deciding which is more important, and which is less important.

The Jewish people had a system of religion. However, their values were all mixed up. Jesus

Was it wrong that the scribes and Pharisees paid tithes? No, Jesus said, "This do!" It was not wrong to pay tithes. What was wrong was that they had omitted the weightier matters of the law. Paying tithes is part of the law. If we do not pay tithes, we rob God, and a curse will be upon us. However, there are even more weightier matters of the law which will bring an even greater curse upon us and a greater punishment if we neglect them.

Is the law connected with mercy, faith, and love? Are they part of the law? If I don't kill, I don't steal, and I don't lie, have I kept the law? Not yet. The law includes mercy, faith, and love.

A professed Christian who breaks even one commandment will lose his missionary spirit. Bible reading is no longer interesting to him. He even starts disliking some people. The law and love go hand in hand. Either we have both or we have neither.

Justice is a weightier matter of the law. If you favour your friends and condemn your enemies, if you see the mote in your brother's eye, yet cannot see the beam in your own eye, then your judgment is "not fair" anymore, it is not correct.

Also, mercy is a weightier matter. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. The world is full of woe and suffering. Every-

where people are crying in pain and in misery, they are unhappy. If we are merciful, we will not rest until the last person on the earth is saved from sin and wretchedness.

We have a remedy for the sinner, for his misery. We have the keys of heaven. Can you pass the masses of people without feeling concerned about their salvation? Can you stay an evening at home, enjoying the comforts, and at the same time, knowing that there are people outside of your home, on your street, perishing, lost in sin and ignorance? Only the merciful fulfill the law of heaven. Only they will obtain mercy.

Faith is also a weightier matter of the law. By faith you can be saved, by faith you will receive the power to overcome sin. By faith you have a clear eye, the sight to see the truth, and to

“amen” when heresies are presented to them. Moreover, these heresies will come from our own ranks. Among the Jews were many heresies, especially concerning the Messiah, that the Messiah would come as a world conqueror. Even the disciples believed like the rest of the Jews.

Only a blind person will teach heresies or believe them. Our faith is a weightier matter and we must jealously guard it, guard what we believe. We are the light of the world; the world is not a light to us. What they teach, we cannot accept.

Some people can go so far in blindness, when their faith is shaken or completely lost, then they will go away from the flock of Jesus, and walk no more with Him.

“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put

“ ... the weightier matters of the law,
judgment, mercy, and faith:...” ”

Matthew 23:23

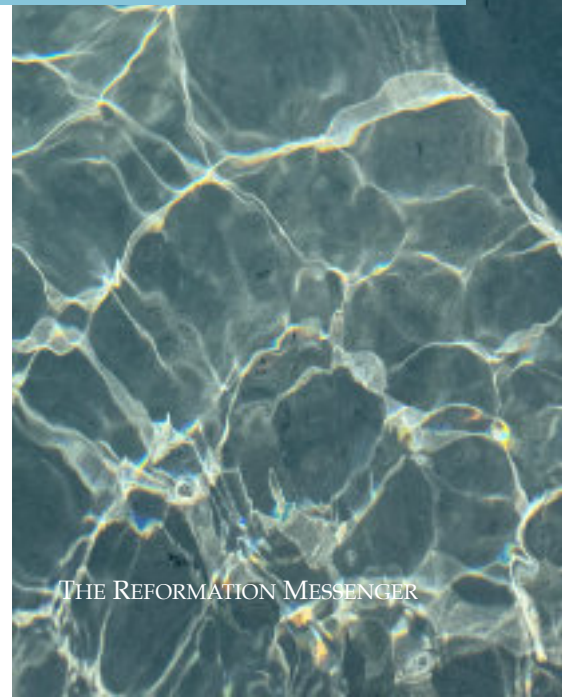
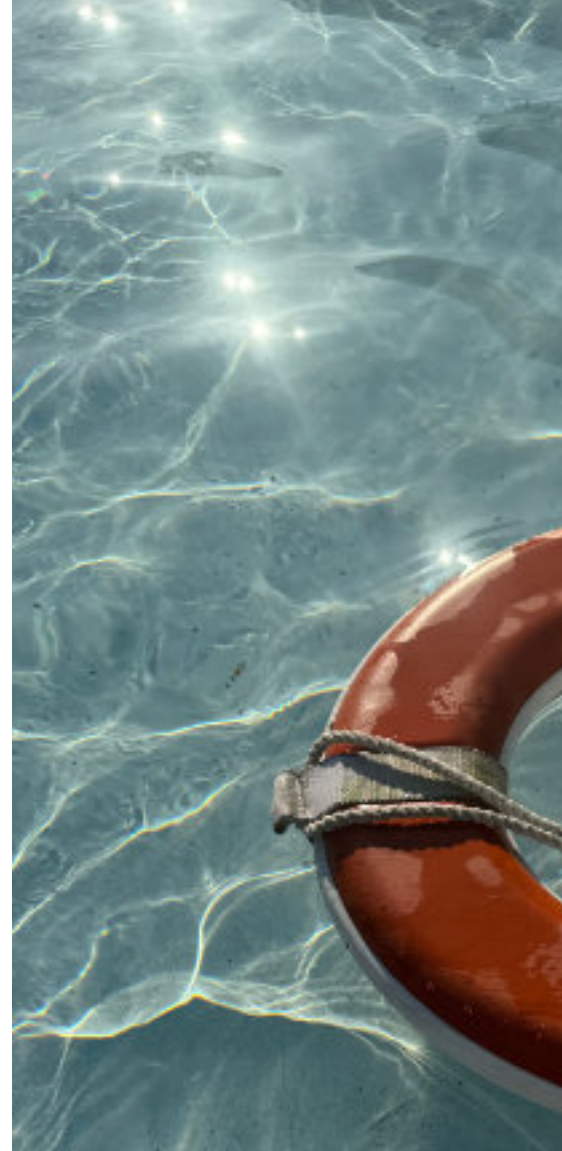
understand the Bible doctrines.

Sister White writes, “God will arouse His people; if other means fail, heresies will come in among them, which will sift them, separating the chaff from the wheat. The Lord calls upon all who believe His word to awaken out of sleep.”
—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 707

People who are not established in the faith will say

darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!”
Isaiah 5:20–21

Can a person who once rejoiced in the truth, suddenly lose it and become confused, calling light darkness, and darkness light? Yes. This has happened millions of times. These people are in the outer





darkness. Their standard of religion has been lowered to consist of ceremonies, meetings, rules, tithe paying, and going to church on Sabbath. The wheels are turning, ceremonies are conducted outwardly. All is in order, but the weightier matters can be neglected. The field is being plowed, but the treasure remains hidden.

“Religion does not consist merely in a system of dry doctrines, but in practical faith, which sanctifies the life and corrects the conduct in the family circle and in the church. Many may tithe mint and rue, but neglect the weightier matters, mercy and the love of God. To walk humbly with God is essential to the perfection of Christian character.” —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 337

When there is love, compassion, and mercy, there is also joy and happiness. When you come to the church, you come among your friends who love you, who would die for you, who have prayed for you, all throughout the week. In the church of God, you feel comfortable, all around you are smiling faces, saying, we love you. There is a feeling of a sincere friendship.

In the church, you meet the Good Samaritans, who are willing to be involved, who would spend their last penny to help you. Even the visitors will feel and enjoy this atmosphere of love and peace. There is no criticizing, no condemnation, and no hypocrisy. The church of God is to be just like heaven, where a sinner finds sweet re-

lease and a balm to his wounded soul. A place of healing for broken hearts.

To accomplish this, one thing is needful. One thing is important. To sit at the feet of Jesus and learn of Him. Mary learned something that Martha did not. Who broke the alabaster box and anointed the feet of Jesus? Was it Martha? No, it was Mary. Who was first at the grave of Jesus on Sunday morning? Was it Martha? No, it was Mary.

Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things, but one thing is needful. Mary had learned the weightier matters. Martha had kept the ceremonies, however she was unhappy. Martha complained about her sister to Jesus. However, Mary was filled with the love of Jesus. This made her religion enjoyable, and she was happy.

It is vital for us to examine our own lives. At the end of each day, take note of how much time you spent with the cares of this life, as did Martha, and how much time you spent at the feet of Jesus, as did Mary. What is your priority? May we all be like Mary, who chose the better part.

It would behoove us to examine our own lives. At the end of each day take note of how much time you spent with the cares of this life as did Martha, and how much time you spent at the feet of Jesus like Mary did. What is your priority? May we be like Mary who chose the better part.

Amen.



“**A**nd when any will offer a meat offering unto the LORD...” Leviticus 2:1

In the Old Testament, there were five principal offerings: the Burnt Offering, the Meat Offering, the Peace Offering, the Sin Offering, and the Trespass Offering. Many of the sanctuary services consisted of different combinations of these five offerings. Today, we will focus our attention on the Meat Offering.

The Name

In the King James Version, the word "meat" does not refer to animal flesh as we commonly understand it today. Rather, it means food or a meal. Unlike most of the other offerings, the Meat Offering consisted en-

tirely of the produce of the field rather than an animal sacrifice. In fact, some other translations, such as the Japanese and Korean Bibles, render it as the Grain Offering.

Grain is the harvest of one's labour. It is the fruit of the work performed in the field. Thus, this offering represents good work and the fruits of the Christian life—the evidence of a life transformed by God's grace.

Looking more closely at the original Hebrew, the word translated "meat offering" is *minchah*. It refers to a gift or tribute presented to a superior, expressing honour, gratitude, and submission.

When we put these ideas together, we see that the Meat

Offering represents sanctification—the daily offering of a consecrated life, the fruits of Christ-like character and gifts we present to God in gratitude for the salvation we receive.

Indeed, we can understand what sanctification truly looks like as we delve further into this offering.

Ingredients

Now, let us look at the ingredients. "...his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon: And he shall bring it to Aaron's sons the priests: and he shall take thereout his handful of the flour thereof, and of the oil thereof, with all the frankincense thereof; and the priest shall burn the memorial of it upon the altar, to be an offering



The *Meat* Offering

By Makoto Matsumoto (AB, Canada)

made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the LORD. . . it is a thing most holy of the offerings of the LORD made by fire.” Leviticus 2:1–3

There are three ingredients: fine flour, oil, and incense. Fine flour, the bread’s main ingredient, represents the Bible. The oil represents the Holy Spirit. And the incense represents prayer.

This shows what our sanctified life looks like. The sanctified life is the life of walking with God and becoming more and more like Him. While justification is like a wedding, sanctification is like married life. We spend time with God, communing with Him.

But, how does “communion with God” actually look in practicality? Communication

means two-way: listening and talking. How can we listen to God and talk to Him? God speaks to us in different ways, such as through providences and messages we hear in the church. But of all those, the most certain and irreplaceable sure way is through the Bible.

And just reading the Bible is not enough. We need to read it with the Holy Spirit. Very few will study the Bible harder than Satan, whose purpose is to attack the Word. Yet, as he studies without the right motive and spirit, he cannot be blessed at all by the Bible. If we do not invite the Holy Spirit to humble and guide our hearts, we will not be ready to learn. We might be reading to prove our own points. Some Christians repeat-

edly recite Bible verses as though they were magical incantations. Yet, like the ark of the covenant that Eli’s two sons carried into battle, the words themselves have no power when the mind is not guided by the Holy Spirit. Scripture is living and powerful only when received with faith and illuminated by the Spirit of God. Therefore, it is written that: “Never should the Bible be studied without prayer. Before opening its pages we should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and it will be given.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 91

And thus, God has given us prayers. So that we can ask for the Holy Spirit, and so that we can talk about all our thoughts to Him.

Forbidden Ingredients

On the other hand, there were ingredients that were not allowed to be included in the meat offerings: "No meat offering, which ye shall bring unto the LORD, shall be made with leaven: for ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the LORD made by fire. As for the oblation of the firstfruits, ye shall offer them unto the LORD: but they shall not be burnt on the altar for a sweet savour." Leviticus 2:11-12

In the Bible, leaven represents sins. And honey, in this context, represents the pleasures of the flesh. In other words, things that feel sweet to our sinful nature. Thus, the meat offering shows us that our obedience and works, the sanctified life, should be without sin and its pleasures.

How to Cook

Having learned the ingredients, we should now know how to cook. There were very specific instructions on how the meat offerings should be prepared. "And if thou bring an oblation of a meat offering baken in the oven, it shall be unleavened cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, or unleavened wafers anointed with oil. And if thy oblation be a meat offering baken in a pan, it shall be of fine flour unleavened, mingled with oil. Thou shalt part it in pieces, and pour oil thereon: it is a meat offering. And if thy oblation be a meat offering baken in the fryingpan, it shall be made of fine flour with oil. And thou shalt bring the meat offering that is made of these things unto the LORD: and when it is presented unto the priest, he shall bring it unto the altar." Leviticus 2:4-8

The meat offerings could be baked in an oven, in a pan, or in a frying pan. These represent different trials and hardships we experience in our Christian life. Imagine yourself in an oven. It is like torture. While you are not being directly put on the fire, the heat comes from everywhere, slowly drying you out. And indeed, that is how our life feels sometimes. It feels like the problem is lasting, and it slowly dries us out.

How about a pan? You can think about a pot. It is like steam surrounding us, making our lives and troubles feel suffocating. How about a frying pan? It is painful and hurtful. Taking each step feels like piercing pain.

But would God want us to suffer? No, not at all. God never



“

*He is like a refiner's fire
and like fullers' soap*

Malachi 3:2

wants us to suffer, be hurt, or feel pain. It is what Satan wants, actually. Then why does God allow these hardships to happen? Why is the Christian life sometimes hard and difficult?

Fire

Let us think about fire. What does it do? Yes, it burns. "But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:" Malachi 3:2

For the good and the faithful, fire burns sin and sets them free from their bondage: "And I will bring the third part through the

fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on My name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is My people: and they shall say, The LORD is my God." Zechariah 13:9

However, for those who love sin, they burn along with their sins: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Revelation 21:8

So, either good or bad, every human has to face the fire one day. The baptism of fire or the

fire of judgment. Just as Christians have to experience the baptism of water and fire, the earth experienced purification through water at the time of Noah and will experience purification through fire after the Millennium. Being born to this human race of sin, fire is inevitable. It is our choice which fire we will partake of.

There is a great difference. Those who take part in the baptism of fire are happy and rejoicing even when they are in the refining fire. On the other hand, when evil men face the fire of the final judgement, "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matthew 8:12

Happiness in the Baptism of Fire

Then, how can we be happy even when we go through challenges? God does not deceive us. He does not say that we would not have any difficulties. But He shows us how we can be

happy even in those troubles. God prepared divine power and grace for us, so that we can rejoice even in suffering that feels like an oven, a pot, or a frying pan.

"Many, walking along the path of life, dwell upon their mistakes and failures and disappointments, and their hearts are filled with grief and discouragement. While I was in Europe, a sister who had been doing this, and who was in deep distress, wrote to me, asking for some word of encouragement. The night after I had read her letter I dreamed that I was in a garden, and one who seemed to be the owner of the garden was conducting me through its paths. I was gathering the flowers and enjoying their fragrance, when this sister, who had been walking by my side, called my attention to some unsightly briars that were impeding her way. There she was mourning and grieving. She was not walking in the pathway, following the guide, but was walking among the briars and thorns. 'Oh,' she mourned, 'is it not a pity that this beautiful garden is spoiled with thorns?' Then the guide said, 'Let the thorns alone, for they will only wound you. Gather the roses, the lilies, and the pinks.'

"Have there not been some bright spots in your experience? Have you not had some precious seasons when your heart throbbed with joy in response to the Spirit of God? When you look back into the chapters of your life experience do you not find some pleasant pages? Are not God's promises, like the fragrant flowers, growing beside your path on every

*refiner's fire,
miller's soap*

”

chi 3:2



hand? Will you not let their beauty and sweetness fill your heart with joy?" *—Steps to Christ*, p. 116–117

Christians are those who, by the grace of God, are able to see the bright and positive side of life even in difficult times. Then how can we do that? What methods did God prepare for us to be able to be positive? Well, the answer is not far. We have already talked about this. Yes, it is the Bible, the Spirit,

Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. . . ." Genesis 4:3–5

Then why did God reject Cain's offerings if He ordered the Israelites to bring meat offerings? The meat offering is written in Leviticus chapter 2. And in the previous chapter, chapter 1, there is another offering that was re-

This belief that God has given us His only begotten Son becomes the basis of our happiness in the fire. If God has provided us the best He can offer, what can exist in this universe that God would spare us from? If He is willing to give us Jesus, what would He hesitate to give us?

When you feel the fire of your life is too painful, remember what God has done for you. He has not only provided you with food on the table in the past. He has given you His son. This undeniable fact is already proof to us that He would spare nothing for you. If you feel like there is something lacking in your life, it is only temporary, and it is allowed to happen so that you can be given even more and better blessings at the right time. Current challenges are only a process and a training. It is a refinement. It does not mean that God does not love you. Rather, it is proof that God loves you and has not given up on leading you to higher ground. So we should rather rejoice and appreciate the fire given to us!

"There is an evidence that is open to all,—the most highly educated, and the most illiterate,—the evidence of experience. God invites us to prove for ourselves the reality of His word, the truth of His promises. He bids us 'taste and see that the Lord is good.' Psalm 34:8. Instead of depending upon the word of another, we are to taste for ourselves. He declares, 'Ask, and ye shall receive.' John 16:24. His promises will be fulfilled. They have never failed; they never can fail. And as we draw near to Jesus, and rejoice in the fullness of His love, our

“Taste, and see that the Lord is good.”

Psalm 34:8

and Prayer. As we commune with God, He gives us strength. He shows us brightness. He gives us reasons to be happy. He will keep us joyful. We will not have any reason to complain, but to be thankful. We will count our many blessings, naming them one by one, and see what God has done for us. And we will learn that all these trials are setting us free from sin, leading us to greater joy.

Well, do you think the help will not be enough? Does this sound unrealistic? Then let us talk about this.

Prerequisite

The meat offering could not be made on its own. There was a condition. Let us think about Cain's offering. It was actually a meat offering! "And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And

quired before the meat offering. It is called the burnt offering.

The burnt offering is probably the one that many people would imagine first when they hear the word "offerings." For the burnt offering, the Israelites had to bring a lamb, confess their sins with their hands on the animal's head, and so on. This was Abel's offering, and it represents justification, in other words, faith in Jesus' sacrifice for us.

Without giving the burnt offerings, the meat offerings could not be offered. This shows that without faith in Jesus, our works cannot be accepted. If we bring our actions to God without faith in His promises, it is unacceptable to God. Our obedience has no merit. Only those who accept the truth that only by Jesus are we saved, can bear the real fruits of works and obedience.



doubt and darkness will disappear in the light of His presence.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 111

The Last Ingredient

There is one more ingredient that we did not mention yet: “And every oblation of thy meat offering shalt thou season with salt; neither shalt thou suffer the salt of the covenant of thy God to be lacking from thy meat offering: with all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt.” Leviticus 2:13

What does salt mean in the Bible? As Jesus said, “Ye are the salt of the earth.” Matthew 5:13

Most of the time, the fire we go through does not affect just us but also our family, church, friends, and community. And during that time, you are called to be a salt to them. You are responsible for standing firm and helping the people you love

around you. There are times when everything and everyone around you is falling apart. At that time, commune with God through the Bible, the Spirit and Prayer, and stand firm. Do not let yourself slip and fall, as you could lose your loved ones if you do so. Hold even tighter unto Jesus. And thus, be a salt to others.

“Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He who numbers the hairs of your head is not indifferent to the wants of His children. ‘The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.’ James 5:11. His heart of love is touched by our sorrows and even by our utterances of them. Take to Him everything



that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest. ‘He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.’ Psalm 147:3. The relations between God and each

soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watch-care, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son.”—*Steps to Christ*, p. 100

My dear brothers and sisters, you are not alone. God knows everything. God knows how hard it is for you. And He is begging you, “Come and receive My help. I have prepared strength for you. You have to go through this to grow. I’m here for you. Let’s hold on tight a bit more.”

And let us be there for each other. Even when you feel alone, God left seven thousand faithful ones. “That they should seek the LORD, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us.” Acts 17:27. If there are any of us that are going through struggles, let us not judge one other, but go and offer a hug, prayers, and help. Let us be a salt to each other.

My beloved readers, let us bring our meat offerings to God. A sanctified life is not always easy. Fine flour represents not only the Bible but also our lives. We have to fall upon Jesus, being humbled, ground, and broken. There are challenges and sufferings. However, if we seek help from God with faith in His love, which has not spared His Son for us, it will become so easy. Fine flour also represents Jesus. He has gone through all our trials. He knows how it feels and how to win. The power that would flow from His throne into our hearts would be way beyond the troubles we would face. And if you have experienced this victory through Jesus, let us go and help those around us.

May your life be a meat offering, that is, “a sweet savour unto the Lord.”

Amen.

“

*The ear that heareth
the reproof of life
abideth among the wise.*

Proverbs 15:31

”

Stephen Smith, although he attended church, was unfriendly, and his volcanic temper erupted much too often. He was known around Washington, New Hampshire, as a “hard-bitten New Englander who liked nothing better than a good squabble.” He was known to say that he came to church to “rap on the hive to hear the bees hum.”

Brother Smith accepted the Third Angel’s message in 1850, and he and his wife and children became active members of the Washington, New Hampshire church.

However, he soon began to undermine confidence in the leaders of the Advent message, he felt he had received “new light” through one of the offshoot movements that had begun to spring up. James and Ellen



The Unwanted Testimony

Submitted by Wendy Eaton (ON, Canada)

White were his favourite targets. Even though he had seen Sister White while she was in vision, it was not enough to convince him that her messages were from God. He wanted nothing to do with her—except, of course, to use her as a whetstone for his critical spirit.

In late October of 1851 a conference was held by the Advent believers in Washington, New Hampshire. About 75 people, including Elder and Sister White, came from surrounding areas as well as from other states. Stephen Smith was not shy about proclaiming his new views.

On Sabbath afternoon, as the sun began to set, Sister White was given a vision concerning the members of the Washington church. Afterward she spoke frankly about what God had shown her, and all who heard accepted the counsel as coming directly from God—all, that is, except Stephen Smith and E.P. Butler. During the entire meeting Smith was so vitriolic in renouncing the visions and the work of James and Ellen White that the entire gathering felt it was necessary to disfellowship him until such a time as he could come into harmony with the believers.

The next year he seemed to have a change of heart, and he was accepted back into the group. But that did not last long either. He believed in the Sabbath but had no use for the visions given by God. As a result, he was ready for any offshoot party claiming to have something new.

He first joined the Messenger Party, but it soon fell apart. Then he went with the 1854 time-setting group until it collapsed. After that he was off with the Marion Party and their no-organization, no-sanctuary, no-Spirit of Prophecy teachings. The fledgling church clearly

recognized the true nature of these dissident teachings, for the Lord showed them to Sister White in vision. But Stephen Smith felt he was above such warnings and counsels.

In spite of his hatefulness, the Lord still loved Stephen. In fact, He loved him so much that He gave Sister White a vision so that he might understand his danger.

She carefully wrote out everything that had been shown her, and closed the letter with an appeal to Stephen to return to the Lord. Then she mailed it to him.

A few days later the post office manager handed him the letter. He recognized the handwriting and knew it held a testimony for him.

How dare she! Sister White had written him a testimony when he did not want any testimony! His violent temper sent the blood rushing to his head as he fought to hold back his anger. Determined that he would not read that letter, he shoved it into his pocket and angrily strode home. As he went into the house, he saw the trunk over in the corner. He was so furious that he could hardly control himself, but at once he knew what he'd do. Lifting the lid, he pushed the unopened letter into the bottom of the trunk, covering it with quilts and odds and ends. He slammed the lid with a bang and turned the key in the lock. There! That would take care of the unwanted testimony!

For 28 years that testimony lay in the bottom of the trunk, unopened and unread.

If possible, Stephen Smith became even more bad-tempered. Someone who knew him well said "Stephen Smith had the most withering, blighting tongue of any man I ever heard. He could say the meanest things in the meanest, most cutting way of any man I ever met."

We can be sure that Sister White and the Spirit of Prophecy came in for a good share of that withering tongue.

Stephen spent what should have been the best years of his life making life



“As nearly as I love, I
be zealous

Rev

miserable for everyone else. In spite of her husband's attitude, Sister Smith remained loyal to the church, but she and the children led a most unhappy life.

The years rolled by, Stephen's hair turned white, and his shoulders stooped. Then one day in 1884 he passed through the parlor and saw a copy of the *Review and Herald* on the table. Looking around carefully to see if any of the family happened to be in the house, he picked up the paper and paged through it. He noticed the name of Ellen G. White in one of the articles. He

took time to read it, and when he was finished, he thought, That's the truth!

The next week there was another copy of the paper on the table. He read it, and when he finished the article by Sister White, he again said to himself that the article spoke the truth.

As the weeks passed, Stephen Smith continued to read the *Review*, and possibly other church papers. Slowly he began to soften in his words and attitudes. His wife and neighbours noticed the change. Did his wife purposely leave the *Review* on the table week after week? Did she realize he was reading it?

In the summer of 1885 the announcement was made that Eugene Farnsworth was coming back to hold revival meetings in his old home

church at Washington, New Hampshire.

William Farnsworth, his father, had accepted the Sabbath in that same little frame church in 1844. In that church Sister White had delivered a public rebuke to William that led him to give up tobacco and become the Christian he professed to be. That act had its effect on Eugene, and he became a minister—a local boy who made good. There was a great deal of excitement as word got around that he was coming to hold meetings.

Smith had liked Eugene when he was a boy. He thought it might be a good thing to see him again and hear him preach, and on the appointed day, he was in the congregation.

When Elder Farnsworth finished his sermon, Stephen Smith stood to his feet. Farnsworth was well aware of Smith's up-and-down experience, and he hardly knew what to expect—probably more criticism. But what he heard was quite different.

Stephen spoke of the past, confessing his involvement



rebuke and chasten:
long therefore, and repent.

”

relation 3:19



with the offshoot parties and his opposition to church organization and almost everything else. He had seen those offshoots disintegrate and fall apart. He admitted that he and others who had opposed the work of the church had come to nothing, and that those who held fast to the faith had grown spiritually and were closer to God.

Now, almost at the end of his life, he had discovered that more than anything else he wanted to be in harmony with the Advent people.

The congregation was amazed to hear such words from this man. They knew all about his past. In time he remembered the letter he had stuffed in the bottom of the trunk. It had been years since he had even thought of it, and for the first time in all those years he wanted to know what it said.

With hands that trembled with age and anxiety he turned the trunk key in the lock and swung the lid up. He reached way, way down to the bottom, searching for the feel of the paper he had so angrily placed there many years before. When at last he held it in his hands, he just looked at it. Abruptly he sank into a nearby rocker and began to read the yellowed paper, now brittle with age.

Tears flowed down his face as he read a detailed description of what his life would be like if he continued in the path he had chosen. There was a precise picture of bitterness and disappointments—exactly what his life had been, for he hadn't changed his harsh attitude.

The letter closed with an earnest appeal to return to God.

The next Sabbath morning Smith was back at the church. Though Elder Farnsworth knew nothing of Smith's experience during the past week, he had chosen to speak on the Spirit of Prophecy. He had hardly finished his sermon before old Mr. Smith rose from his seat. What a testimony he had:

"I received a testimony myself 28 years ago, took it home, locked it up in my trunk, and never read it until last Thursday. I didn't believe the testimony was true, although I confess that I didn't know a word that was in it. I guess I was afraid to read it for fear it would make me mad. But I was mad nearly all the time anyway."

Finally, he admitted: "Brothers and sisters, every word of that testimony is true, and I accept it. I have come to the place where I finally believe the testimonies are all of God. And if I had heeded the one God sent to me. . . it would have changed the whole course of my life, and I would have been a very different man. . . . The testimonies were right and I was wrong.

"Brethren," he concluded, "I'm too old to undo what I've done. I'm too feeble to get out to our large meetings, but I want you to tell our people everywhere that another rebel has surrendered."

That letter lay in his trunk all those years with a message God sent to save him from a life of anger and hate. A message unread and unheeded. According to his own testimony,

“To day



*if ye will hear His voice,
harder Not your hearts.* ”

Hebrews 3:15

if he had read and taken the message to heart, it would have changed his very being, and he would have lived a godly, useful life.

Through His marvelous grace God

accepted Stephen Smith when he finally surrendered to Him. Smith lived his later years in a far better way than he lived in those 29 miserable years when the testimony lay in the trunk, but sadly the best years of his life were wasted in bitterness and hate.

Then there was a man named Willard Saxby who also received a testimony from Sister White. But the outcome was very different from Stephen Smith's experience.

It was at camp meeting that Brother Saxby received the testimony Sister White sent to him, detailing some of his most grievous character flaws. It was hand-delivered and personally read to him by Elder A. During the reading of the testimony Brother Saxby objected four times, saying, "No, no; that's not so!"

Elder A suggested that if he were to say it was so, then the Lord would help him to see that it was so.

Saxby then took the letter to his camp meeting tent, where his wife had already gone to bed. He was so agitated that he insisted on reading one paragraph that concerned the two of them. After he read the paragraph, he kept repeating

that it wasn't so. His wife sat straight up in bed, pointed her finger at him, and earnestly assured him, "Willard, that is so! It most certainly is so!"

He began to think seriously that if his wife said it was so, and Elder A said it was so, and most of all, the Lord Himself had sent the message through His messenger, it must be so.

So, Willard Saxby accepted the counsel of the Lord, saying, "Three against one. It must be so!"

How wonderful it would have been for the work of God had Stephen Smith had the same attitude.

Although Sister White is not alive today to give testimony to the members of God's church as needed, there are, however, church leaders, ministers, and Bible Workers to whom the Lord will give messages and insight to members of His church. Sometimes the needed encouragement or gentle reproof may come from a lay member, perhaps someone even newer in the faith than we are.

We need to carefully consider the messages of reproof and counsel that are given to us. They are messages from the Lord. How will we respond? Like Stephen Smith? Or like Willard Saxby? "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." Proverbs 27:6. The wounds are not for the purpose of destroying us, but to encourage us to a higher course. Let us all work together and help one another on our journey to heaven. Let us be like Willard Saxby and humbly accept any reproof or encouragement that the Lord sends us through one of His servants.

Amen.

Canadian Field NEWSLETTER



Family Outing in Calgary

On June 14, members and visitors of the Calgary Church gathered at Forget Me Not Pond in Kananaskis for a special Family Outing organized by the local Family Department.

Everyone enjoyed a blessed time of fellowship, sharing lunch together while surrounded by God's beautiful creation. A special program was held in which each family presented songs and shared testimonies about their family experiences and growth. Some people stopped by to listen to music dedicated to God. These heartfelt presentations were an encouragement to all who attended.

The program was followed by various outdoor activities, including boat-floating. The event provided an opportunity for all generations to spend meaningful time together in a warm and uplifting atmosphere.

The day concluded with a message emphasizing that unity within the family leads to unity within the church. It was a memorable occasion that strengthened friendships, encouraged families, and reminded everyone of God's blessings.

May the Lord continue to bless the churches in Calgary and throughout Canada.



Woodbridge Church Reopens

After many years of waiting, the renovation is finally complete! Following the dedication service on July 7, the Woodbridge Church is now open once again.

Sabbath Worship Service:

- Every Saturday at 9:30 AM
- 9-7611 Pine Valley Drive, Vaughan, ON L4L 0A2

May God richly bless this church. May it be a house of worship where His name is glorified, and a spiritual home where the remnant people of God find joy, peace, and hope in Christ.

Everyone is warmly welcome!



Missionary Outreach in GTA



A group of Toronto and Hamilton church members worked together to distribute literature in a Toronto shopping area.

Toronto Church Deep Cleaning



On July 12, a dedicated group of people, young and old, worked together to prepare the Canadian Field headquarters property for the 2026 Canadian Field Conference.



Youth Activity Day in Ontario



Now that warm weather is out so are our youth! Youth from Hamilton, Toronto and Woodbridge were able to spend time together playing various sports and shar-

ing fresh fruit and food with each other. Who knew that sun and watermelon could bring people together so well? Please join us at our next youth event!!

Walkathon 2026: Calgary



The Calgary Church members gathered to support Walkathon 2026, a campaign organized by the Canadian Field Good Samaritan Department.

Although the day was met with heavy rain, preventing participants from completing the walk as planned, the members still came

together in support of the cause. They renewed their commitment to faithful Christian stewardship, recognizing that offerings can be used to bless those in need and advance God's work.

The Calgary Good Samaritan Department has remained active in community outreach. Apart from

the Walkathon, members collected food donations to be distributed to individuals and families in need, demonstrating Christ's love through practical service.

Walkathon 2026 is being held in various locations across Canada.

Calgary Retirement Home Visit

On May 30, 2026, the Calgary youth group had the privilege of visiting a local retirement home to share music and fellowship with the residents. The young people presented a variety of uplifting songs that brought smiles, joy, and encouragement to those in attendance. Beyond the musical program, the youth spent time visiting with residents, creating meaningful connections and brightening their day through friendly conversation. The outreach was warmly received and served as a wonderful reminder of the blessing that comes from serving others and sharing Christ's love in practical ways.



Vacation Bible School in Calgary



During July 5–11, the Calgary Church held a Vacation Bible School outreach at Pearce Estate Park in downtown Calgary. Children were invited to learn the story of Noah's Flood through engaging Bible lessons, music, and creative animal-themed snacks that drew many families to the program.

While the children enjoyed Bible stories and activities led by the children's teachers, parents participated in open discussions with church

members on various biblical truths. These conversations provided meaningful opportunities to answer questions, build friendships, and exchange contact information for future follow-up.

We pray that God will continue to bless every heart in which the seeds of truth have been planted. May He also prosper the children's ministry, enabling it to grow and reach many more families with the love and truth of Christ.



HEALTHY RECIPE

By Linda Kolyn (ON, Canada)



Savoury Pistachio Delight

Ingredients:

- 2 c. shelled pistachios [3 cups raw pistachios = 2 cups shelled], soaked for at least one hour
- 2 c. almond milk, or coconut milk
- 2 large white onions
- 2 c. cooked brown rice
- 1.5 tsp. sea salt or 2 Tbsp. Bragg liquid aminos, or soy sauce
- 4 Tbsp. fresh parsley
- 1/2 c. water

Instructions:

Blend all ingredients together in a food processor or blender.

Add 1/2 c. water if not greasing the baking dish.

Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour 18 minutes in a convection oven.

This is best baked in a shallow glass or ceramic dish.

Test with a toothpick. When the toothpick comes out clean the delight is done. Cut and enjoy.



Romania

European Division Evangelism Symposium



Costa Rica

Music Event



USA

International Youth Conference



Brazil

Evangelical Outreach



Colombia

Baptism



New Zealand

Oceania Union Reorganization

WE BELIEVE:

The all-wise loving God created all things in the universe by His Son, Jesus Christ. He is the Owner and Sustainer.

He met the challenge to His loving leadership and authority by reconciling the world to Himself through the life, death, and resurrection of His Son, the Word made flesh.

The Holy Spirit, Jesus' representative on earth convicts of sin, guides into truth, and gives strength to overcome all unrighteousness.

The Bible is the record of God's dealings with mankind and the standard of all doctrine, the Ten Commandments are the transcript of His character and the foundation of all enduring reform.

His people, in harmony with God's word and under the direction of the Holy Spirit call all men everywhere to be reconciled to God through faith in Jesus.

Bible prophecy reveals that earth's history will soon close with the visible return of Jesus Christ as King to claim all who have accepted Him as the world's only Redeemer and their Lord.



**International
Missionary Society**

Seventh-day Adventist Church
Reform Movement