

RECORD

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The Incomparable Christ

...
The heart of
the 1888 message

Readings for the
Week of Prayer,
September 3-10, 1988

**Next Week Is the Annual
Sacrifice Offering**



AN URGENT CALL FOR VICTORY

A MESSAGE FROM THE
GENERAL CONFERENCE
OFFICERS.

By Calvin B. Rock

The year 1988 has been a year of heightened spiritual reflection for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. For more than 10 months we have been commemorating the 1888 Minneapolis experience that focused upon the solemn theme of righteousness by faith. Through books, sermons, articles, songs, and testimonies shared in churches, homes, and institutions around the world we have come to better understand and to follow God's will for His people. This has been a refreshing, reviving experience.

Now we come to the climax of these highly spiritual activities—the 1988 Week of Prayer. This year's articles bring us stimulating ideas on Christ and His righteousness and add earnest appeals for churchwide rededication.

The thrust of church leaders from the beginning of this year's commemoration activities has been the exaltation of our incomparable Lord and His love, not an exoneration of persons or an in-depth study of the debates connected with that era.

It is late in the day of earth's his-

tory. One hundred years is far too long for the church to reflect upon what might have been our predecessors' catalyst to victory. It is now time, "high time," as the apostle Paul reminds us, to awake, or arouse, and move from marching militancy to joyous jubilee. The choice is ours. We can leave this year's commemoration reflections to do business as usual, or we can respond to God's gracious invitation with wholehearted surrender and enjoy the surge of spiritual strength that it will surely bring. Shall we not follow the pleadings of the Holy Spirit and fully accept God's free gift of salvation?

Sabbath, November 12, the final day of this special week, will be a day for worldwide prayer and fasting. Please join your brothers and sisters around the globe in making this Week of Prayer of 1988 what 1888 was meant to be—our linchpin of theology, our call to repentance, our source of effectiveness and power.

Calvin B. Rock is general vice president of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

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BY NEAL C. WILSON

THE INCOMPARABLE CHRIST

The heart of the 1888 message

We have heard and read much during the past few months about the 1888 Minneapolis General Conference session and about the message of righteousness by faith that was so signally brought to the attention of the church at that time. This year we have been marking, in a way, the centennial anniversary of that message.

But just what are we trying to

commemorate and emphasize? Having participated in more than 20 centenaries in various parts of the world, I have discovered that there is something bittersweet about anniversaries. Are we commemorating the fact that 100 years have gone by? Let us remember that had we fully accepted the 1888 message and been faithful to the claims of Christ on our lives, we all should

have been in our heavenly home long before this. Are we trying to emphasize the dramatic growth in the church, spiritually and numerically, during that period? There are some who would take serious issue with such an assertion. Or are we trying to affirm the fact that the Lord has been patient with us for so long and determine that if there are yet lessons to be learned from the 1888 experience, by God's grace we will learn them without further delay?

Praise God!

At the beginning of this week, and specifically in this reading today, I would like to place before you the keynote of my message, and what I believe is probably the theme for this entire week of readings—praise God! Jesus is our Righteousness, our Sufficiency, and He is the Incomparable Christ! My hope, with the help of the Holy Spirit, is to set forth the truth of justification by faith and the necessity of accepting Christ's righteousness. I hope to reveal Christ as our Substitute, Example, and Enabler, and to show how justification by faith is the third angel's message "in verity."

This message should make plain that justification by faith is more than a legal declaration. It does not merely declare the sinner righteous, it makes a person righteous, enabling him or her to obey the law of God. This embraces the idea that Christ's sacrifice on the cross is more than provisional. It actually cancels the condemnation that came on all members of the human family through Adam's fall, and it provides legal justification for the entire world. Thus, every sinner is eternally and infinitely in debt to Christ, whether or not he or she recognizes and acknowledges it.

To give a biblical basis for my message, let us consider two passages of Scripture—one now as the introduction and one later as the conclusion. "Giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and trans-

Neal C. Wilson

Darryl Tank

ferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. . . . He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent. For in him all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross" (Col. 1:12-20, RSV).

Most Important Question

These verses tell me that Jesus Christ is supreme, that He is the Lord of all creation, that He rescued me from death, and that His blood on the cross set me free from the power of sin and Satan. These verses tell me Jesus is incomparable, His name is above every name and is higher than the historical personalities and highlights of an occasion 100 years gone by, higher than the question of whether or not the church has accepted or rejected the message of 1888. The most important question for me as an individual today or any day is What will I do with Christ?

Seventh-day Adventists place great emphasis on the Bible as the Word of God. We had our beginning in the fact that the established churches seemed to be ignoring key portions of Scripture. Among these great truths were the prophecies of the literal return of Jesus, prophecies with immediate significance. We undertook to proclaim those prophecies. There was the recognition that the Ten Commandments are still binding, and that the seventh-day Sabbath is not only still God's will, but also a distinguishing indicator of our overall relation with Him.

Seventh-day Adventists feel "called to the kingdom" to proclaim these "present truths," to "restore the breach," to enhance, and to establish the authority of the Bible as the Word of God.

Take the three angels' messages of Revelation 14, for example. Adventists feel commissioned to proclaim

these messages. The first angel gives the appeal, "Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters" (Rev. 14:7). So we worship Him as Creator and Saviour by proclaiming the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and we call attention to the investigative judgment taking place in the heavenly sanctuary.

The third angel warns of the wrath of God on the beast and his image, and all who receive his mark. So we stress the importance of choosing God's will, as opposed to human traditions.

Important as these things are, the question that must be asked is "Where is Christ in all this? Isn't the heart of the judgment-hour message the fact that Christ is our high priest?" He is our advocate in the heavenly sanctuary. But He could not be an effective priest were there not a sacrifice. Thank God, Jesus is our sacrifice, as well as our high priest. He has substituted His death in our stead, that we might go free.

The Atonement Is Good News

At the heart of the first angel's message is the atonement of Jesus Christ. We do not believe in the moral influence theory of the atonement, which professes there could be salvation without the shedding

of blood on Calvary. We affirm that there is no everlasting gospel without the atonement. The good news that is to be proclaimed with a loud voice to every nation, kindred, tongue, and people is that Jesus Christ has paid the price for sin. Jesus' death on the cross has redeemed the entire human race from the sentence of death. Stupendous news! Wonderful message! Isn't it worthy of our highest efforts to proclaim that message to the world?

And the third angel's message is more than just a warning of doom. The warning is to those who look to human effort as a means of salvation instead of accepting the atonement of Christ. Notice the twelfth verse of Revelation 14 (that is part of the third angel's message too, you know): "Here is the *patience* of the saints." In other words, here are those who are willing to wait on the Lord, rather than trying to do things on their own.

"Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." This can be interpreted as faith in Jesus, or the faith that Jesus had. Either way or both ways are correct. The saints are those who look to Jesus for their salvation, who depend on Him to have His way in their lives.

The three angels' messages, then, are an affirmation of righteousness by faith.

Righteousness by faith is the phrase that above others is used to describe the 1888 message. It is a phrase that you have heard before, and that you will hear again during this series of Week of Prayer readings. It is important that we know what the words "righteousness by faith" mean, and what they do not mean. This is especially true in light of the following statement: "But this I do know, that our churches are dying for the want of teaching on the subject of righteousness by faith in Christ, and on kindred truths" (*Gospel Workers*, p. 301).

Right Living

To grasp the meaning of the term, let us take it apart and examine the

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That comes
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pieces. Then we can use simple conversational language and put it together again and more easily understand the whole. *Righteousness* has been defined, perhaps simplistically, as "right living." It is that, but it is more; it means being right with God, having all our sins forgiven, being fit for life forever with God in His kingdom.

But that kind of standing before God is not something we can achieve on our own. We cannot make ourselves right with God. No matter how good we are from this day forward, we cannot make up for the sins that we have already committed. True, God wants us to be perfect. But even if we could be perfect from now on, we could not erase our imperfections of the past or the fact that we were conceived in sin.

That right standing before God must come from a source outside ourselves. Someone besides us must make the atonement for our past sins. That Someone is Jesus Christ. He made the atonement. He died for our sins. Jesus does not just forgive our sins; He does not simply wipe the record clean. Jesus accepted the guilt of our sins and took the punishment for them! Now, with our sins out of the way, we have a right standing with God. And who deserves the credit? Not us, surely; it is Jesus!

Our Part Is Choosing

But as individuals we do have a part in all this. When Jesus died on the cross, He died for the sins of the whole world. He paid the price for everyone's sins, all at once. But God will not save us against our will. It was through our will that we chose to sin in the first place; our will must be involved in our salvation. With our will we choose to avail ourselves of the righteousness that is available in Christ Jesus.

We make that choice because we believe that Jesus died, that He died for our sins, and that He will give us eternal life. We take God at His word!

That is faith; that is what Paul meant when he said we are saved by

faith. It is not our faith that saves us; God is the one who saves us. God provides the salvation, and even supplies us with the faith by which that salvation becomes ours, but we make the choice to accept it.

This righteousness of which we speak is not just a status, or a condition. It is a right standing *and* a right living. Jesus does not just clothe us with His pure garment; in addition, through the Holy Spirit, He comes into our hearts and takes up residence there. The new creature that we become is a Christian. We take on the divine nature; our thoughts are His thoughts, our actions are His actions. We now share His goals and use His methods.

When the sinner sees and believes this truth, he experiences justification by faith. This includes a heart experience; it is not merely an objective entry in the books of heaven. Faith must be defined as a heart appreciation for the love of God revealed on the cross. This is distinct from the popular evangelical idea that faith is an egocentric trusting in God. Genuine New Testament faith, which was revived in the 1888 message, works by agape love. It demonstrates its genuineness by producing obedience to all the commandments of God.

Thus, human hearts and lives are changed by the atonement, not by the fear of destruction or hope of reward. It is when we are in this heart condition that Christ can perform His will in us. Emptied of self, with no thought of "I," we are ready to be molded and fashioned into the similitude of Christ. An individual or church cannot understand, believe, and accept the pure gospel and remain lukewarm. This is why Ellen White said when she first heard the 1888 message, "Every fiber of my heart said amen."

In the halls of theological discussion, some people would describe the role of Jesus in our salvation by emphasizing one aspect or another. Some say He is our lawgiver and judge. Some say He is our friend and advocate. Similarly, some say Jesus is our example and some say He is

our substitute. The truth is, He is all! He is also our enabler, the one who helps us to live the right life. As Paul says, He is our all and in all. Without Jesus and the Holy Spirit at work in our hearts, we would not even want to be right with God. But as we understand the reality that the wages of our sins is eternal death, we cry out for deliverance.

At the Cross

Then we see Christ hanging on the cross, and we realize He did it because He loves us with an everlasting love. The love that sent Jesus to Calvary draws us to Him. We see His holy life and we compare it with our life of rebellion. Shamed by the sin that cost Jesus His life, we repent and cast ourselves at His feet. All this is accomplished by the marvelous act of atonement: it shows us the enormity of sin; it fills us with love for Him as our personal Saviour; it pays the price for our transgression; it provides us the example of a selfless life; it channels to us the power of a life like His.

My whole being responds in the words of Philippians 2:9-11, "Therefore God raised him to the heights and bestowed on him the name above all names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow—in heaven, on earth, and in the depths—and every tongue confess, 'Jesus Christ is Lord,' to the glory of God the Father" (NEB).

My brothers and sisters and friends—who can compare with Him? I present to you the Incomparable Christ! □

Questions for Discussion

1. How is Christ the answer to mankind's hopelessness?
2. How is righteousness by faith more than a rational, theological concept?
3. Why can there be no place for human merit in salvation?
4. What part do we play in righteousness by faith?

Neal C. Wilson is president of the General Conference.

BY BERT HALOVIK

A TIME OF OPPORTUNITY

To reaffirm justification by faith.

On the very day, October 22, 1888, marking the forty-fourth anniversary of the Great Disappointment, Seventh-day Adventists were given an opportunity to acclaim the life and death of Christ as the sole basis for justification.

The 1888 General Conference sat in session in Minneapolis, Minnesota, with 91 delegates present. At 9:00 a.m. E. J. Waggoner, according to the local newspaper, continued his discussion "Law and Galatians, or Justification by Faith."

Knowing that attempts to interpret law in Galatians as the moral or ceremonial law would ruffle feathers, both A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner sought to move away from the controversial area of the law, and to highlight the "gospel" in Galatians. Their decision brought the doctrine of justification by faith to the forefront for renewed discussion in the Adventist Church.

Pioneers' View of Justification

In a study presented six years earlier at the 1882 General Conference session, J. H. Waggoner (father of E. J. Waggoner) quoted the theologian Hooker, who defined justification, written about by Paul in Romans, as "the treating of sinful man as though he were righteous." Hooker said justification was something that occurs "without us, which we have by imputation." Waggoner emphasized righteousness by faith as "what someone does *for us*," and not the result of personal obedience.¹

Although Hooker's view was sound, Waggoner and other church pioneers imposed limitations upon its extent. They felt justification applied only to initial forgiveness. To

them justification was not sufficient for salvation. It was merely, according to Waggoner, the means of making the believer "passively just" before God, "as Adam was just before God at his creation." Thus, a believer's final salvation, after justification, rested upon his performance. The pioneers did feel, though, that the power to obey acceptably still came from Christ.

Waggoner saw his view as harmonizing two apparently conflicting statements concerning justification, one by James (James 2:21, 22) and one by Paul (Rom. 4:1-3). Waggoner interpreted Paul as speaking about justification for *past* sins, and James as not speaking of the past—"that over which our actions have no control"—but as speaking of "the formation of character by our own actions. This is all accomplished *after* we are justified by faith."² Waggoner's 1882 presentation championed the pioneer view.

Since the pioneers limited all the substitutionary and legal concepts of justification to sins of the past, they *relied primarily upon sanctification as the basis of their hope for final salvation*. Consider Uriah Smith's definition of salvation: "The plan of salvation [is] designed to place every individual of the human family on his own responsibility in reference to his future destiny." Such a statement shows Smith maintaining that Christ died to provide the means of forgiveness and to release all from the "Adamic sin," but that "each one then stands upon his own merits."³

This defective view of the doctrine of justification led to the development of a legalistic system of religious belief that affected both

the church's public presentations and the spiritual experience of its members.

Battle Creek Series, 1885

A little more than two years after Waggoner's presentation, church leaders presented a 32-lecture public series that outlined the basic teachings and beliefs of Seventh-day Adventists to the Battle Creek community. But the series, with its heavy emphasis on obedience, lacked the reviving moisture of a basic Christocentric perspective. The February 24 to April 1, 1885, series received major newspaper coverage by the Battle Creek *Daily Journal*. For more than a month most community members filled to capacity (7,000 seats) the Battle Creek Tabernacle or read about Seventh-day Adventists in the paper.

Yet not a word was spoken about justification. The bottom line of the prophetic interpretation called for obedience to the law in order to escape the perils of the last days. Obedience to the law, graphically displayed in chart form, provided the entrance into the soon-coming kingdom. Published in pamphlet form, the "Tabernacle Lecture Course" illustrated the dryness of the old system, without the basic Christocentric perspective.

Another concept also added to the early Adventist emphasis on obedience. Leaders were convinced that Adventism's last reform before Christ's coming had already occurred. The third angel's message, in their thinking, centered almost completely upon the Sabbath. They felt the already instituted Sabbath reform would prepare the world for the return of Jesus. As the president of the General Conference sought to evangelize the citizens of Battle Creek, the gospel became the law written upon the heart. The last message, affirmed George Butler, "presents the law of God and the gospel in its purity" and was "a gospel work" that focused upon obedience to the Sabbath command. "I ask of you to consider that [your]

obedience is the one great thing," he exhorted the citizens.

Lack of Assurance in Christ

Beyond the public presentations, cracks began to show in the spiritual experience of the membership as Sunday persecutions in Arkansas and Tennessee brought arrests and imprisonment. The threat of a national Sunday law began to raise the specter of a soon-approaching time of trouble.

Glimpses into the letters of leading ministers at the time reveal feelings of spiritual inadequacy as they thought about the earth's last events and their own preparedness. A remarkable number wrote to Ellen White and expressed a preference to be laid in their graves prior to the final test.

An introspective question rose among Adventists: "Do you believe your personal righteousness is sufficient to pass the scrutiny of God?" The pioneers' theological beliefs required a yes. But the inward sensitivities of many Adventists—ministers and laity alike—answered no. The time was ripe for a closer look at the doctrine of justification by faith. The General Conference session in 1888 provided the opportunity.

Minneapolis: A Step in the Right Direction

At that Minneapolis session, E. J. Waggoner and A. T. Jones gave presentations that transcended the theology of the pioneers. They looked for the "gospel" rather than the law in Galatians and Romans. They found the righteousness of Christ, not "our righteousness," as the basis for passing the final judgment.

While these brethren provided a correction to the older view and pointed the church in a new direction, their own perspective likewise had limitations. They apparently lacked a clear-cut understanding of the objective and forensic nature of justification. The concept that God imputes the righteousness of Christ to the believer and to the sinner's account in heaven when the sinner

accepts Him as Saviour and Lord was not sharply defined.

The concept of forgiveness illustrates their limitations. A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner believed that sins were forgiven in a literal transaction within the individual, rather than an action in heaven in which God declares a penitent sinner to be just, imputing Christ's righteousness to him. They thought of Christ's righteousness as being literally infused into the believer in place of his sin: "When God remits—sends away—sin, He does it by putting righteousness in its place. Where once was sin, now appears perfect righteousness."⁴

A defective view of justification led to a system of legalistic beliefs by church pioneers.

Although this transaction was often stated confusingly in objective-sounding terminology, examination of the full theological system of Jones and Waggoner, both before and after 1888, indeed throughout their entire careers, shows they thought the transaction occurred subjectively—not outside the believer. Proclaimed Waggoner: "The righteousness of God is *declared* for the remission of the sins of all who believe in Jesus. He cures the disease by putting health in its place. The righteousness which is *brought to* the believing sinner through the gospel is the same thing exactly as the righteousness of the law, for

it is witnessed by the law."⁵

Understanding Justification

Records clearly indicate that church leaders did not want 1888 to be a year of theological innovation.⁶ A spirit of confrontation, rather than an earnest searching for truth, prevailed at the GC meetings. Ellen White observed: "God forbid [that] anything should ever take place again like that which transpired at Minneapolis." She would also write that a spirit of pharisaism and intolerance had provided Satan a good opportunity at Minneapolis.⁷

Although the older view of the pioneers and the view offered by Waggoner and Jones had defects, each perspective had something to offer the other. If the spirit of Christ had prevailed, a harmonious combining of the best of both systems might have been achieved at Minneapolis. The integration of the pioneers' objective focus upon justification (though limited) and Jones and Waggoner's Christocentric analysis (that salvation was based upon Christ's righteousness and not the achievements of the individual) could have given Adventists the full salvation message that was needed. Such a union would have prevented the multiplicity of theological aberrations the church suffered over the next decade.

Alone among Adventists of the time, Ellen White, without the exegetical analysis of either the pioneers or Jones and Waggoner, combined the best of both systems. In a letter to Smith, Ellen White pointed to the message of "justification by faith and the righteousness of Christ [as] themes to be presented to a perishing world."⁸ Indeed, she affirmed, "one interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up every other—Christ our righteousness."⁹

In "Christ the Way of Life," an article written for the *Review*, Mrs. White clearly stated her understanding of justification by faith. She combined the objective, heavenly focus of the pioneers with the new insight, of righteousness as the gift of faith, as presented by Jones and Waggoner:

"The only way in which [the sinner] can attain to righteousness is through faith. By faith he can bring to God the merits of Christ, and the Lord places the obedience of His Son to the sinner's account. Christ's righteousness is accepted in place of man's failure, and God receives, pardons, justifies, the repentant, believing soul, treats him as though he were righteous, and loves him as He loves His Son. This is how faith is accounted righteousness."¹⁰

Ellen White saw the need for Christ's continual mediation, a concept that transcended the pioneer view that had relegated justification solely to the past. "His mediation secures you everything that your faith claims," she observed.¹¹ Her focus made justification an ever-present necessity, a truth that provides the believer with true assurance and security in Christ:

"The religious services, the prayers, the praise, [and] the penitent confession of sin ascend from true believers as incense to the heavenly sanctuary, but passing through the corrupt channels of humanity, they are so defiled that unless purified by blood, they can never be of value with God. . . . [Christ] holds before the Father the censer of His own merits. . . . He gathers into this censer the prayers, the praise, and the confessions of His people, and with these He puts His own spotless righteousness. Then, perfumed with the merits of Christ's propitiation, the incense comes up before God wholly and entirely acceptable. Then gracious answers are returned."¹²

In one of her most widely distributed volumes, *Steps to Christ*, Ellen White also combined the two emphases of justification and sanctification in a balanced picture of the saving process. She saw obedience to God's law (His will) as a fruit of genuine justification: "Because of his [Adam's] sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey the holy law. We have no righteousness of our own with which to

meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned.

"More than this, Christ changes the heart. He abides in your heart by faith. You are to maintain this connection with Christ by faith and the continual surrender of your will to Him; and so long as you do this, He will work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. So you may say, 'The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me' (Gal. 2:20). . . . Then with Christ working in you, you will manifest the same spirit and do the same good works—works of righteousness, obedience.

"So we have nothing in ourselves of which to boast. We have no ground for self-exaltation. Our only ground of hope is in the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and in that wrought by His Spirit working in and through us."¹³

Our Time of Opportunity

How could a church err in its study of justification? Simply, the church of 100 years ago was sidetracked. Theological animosity among leaders prevented the subject of justification from being perceived as the essential issue. But Ellen White's numerous identifications of the "righteousness of Christ" and "justification by faith" as the new message are too numerous to be questioned.

We now have the opportunity to reaffirm our belief in justification by faith. Indeed, Ellen White's calling justification by faith the third angel's message "in verity" is a call for

a revival and reformation within the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

As we commemorate the times and issues that arose in the 1888 General Conference session at Minneapolis, we must realize anew that proclaiming the truth of justification by faith, the tidings that "Christ is our righteousness," brings genuine assurance and security to believers who live at the approaching end of the world. □

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Questions for Discussion

1. Why should the time of trouble raise questions of spiritual security in Christians who are striving to do God's will?
2. How did the pioneer, the Jones-Waggoner, and the Ellen White views of justification differ?
3. What could have happened in 1888 if a spirit of true unity had prevailed?
4. In what sense does the ministry of Ellen White maintain relevance to us today?



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BY W. DUNCAN EVA

LEGALISM, LICENSE, OR LIBERTY?

The law and gospel in Galatians.

Three years before the 1888 General Conference session, Adventist pioneer E. J. Waggoner wrote several *Signs of the Times* articles in which he argued the moral law—the Ten Commandments—was the law spoken of by Paul in Galatians 3:24 as “our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.”

His articles aroused strong opposition by some leaders in Battle Creek who felt Galatians 3:24 referred to the *ceremonial* law. In 1886 General Conference president G. I. Butler published an 85-page booklet refuting Waggoner’s teaching, claiming the law was the ceremonial law. Butler felt Waggoner’s exegesis undermined the basis of the Sabbath truth and exposed Adventist teachings to ridicule and effective attacks by enemies. Butler distributed his booklet, *The Law in the Book of Galatians*, to delegates assembled for the 1886 General Conference session.

Not to be outdone, Waggoner published a booklet, *The Gospel in Galatians*, and distributed it to delegates at the 1888 General Conference session in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The booklet was a printed form of his long letter written to Butler in February 1887.

During the pre-session ministerial institute and the 1888 session, Waggoner gave a series of studies on Galatians that emphasized justification, by faith. But already-existing prejudice against Waggoner’s interpretation of Galatians and a spirit of debate and contention engendered by other topics studied during the ministerial institute began what

Ellen White described as “the hardest and most incomprehensible tug-of-war” (*Selected Messages*, book 3, p. 178). Who can assess the loss the Advent people suffered as a result of their pride and stubbornness, their spirit of contention and levity?

Which Law Is Our Schoolmaster?

To which law does Galatians 3:24 refer: to the *ceremonial* law, as George Butler and others believed, or to the *moral* law, as Ellet Waggoner and Alonzo Jones taught? No specific light came through Mrs. White until 1896, when she affirmed, “In this scripture [Gal. 3:24], the Holy Spirit through the apostle is speaking especially of the moral law” (*ibid.*, book 1, p. 234; see also p. 233).

We might wonder why God waited eight years before leading Seventh-day Adventists to the true intent of this scripture. Was it because certain leaders continued to cling tenaciously to their own ideas despite the manifest workings of the Holy Spirit at Minneapolis?

In 1890 Mrs. White had written, “Now brethren, I have nothing to say, no burden in regard to the law in Galatians. This matter looks to me of minor consequence in comparison with the spirit you have brought into your faith” (letter 83, 1890). Note that she did not say that an understanding of which law Galatians 3:24 referred to was unimportant. A clear understanding of Scripture is always important. But so sinful was “the spirit you have brought into your faith” that “*in comparison with*” it the matter of

the law of Galatians was “of minor consequence.” That which was of first importance was the putting away of the pride, stubbornness, and anger that had fostered disunity.

The bonds of love, mutual trust, and true Christian unity must first be restored; then the truth of the Word would shine forth in all its beauty and convincing clarity. That principle is as true for us today as it was then, and especially so as we think back to 1888.

The law that is “our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ” cannot give life (see Gal. 3:21). This law’s purpose is to declare “all under sin” (verse 22) “that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God” (Rom. 3:19).

Paul explains in Romans 7:7 how this came home to him personally: “I had not known sin, but by the law . . . Thou shalt not covet.” “Sin by the commandment,” he adds, became “exceeding sinful” (verse 13), for “by the law is the knowledge [a deeper and fuller knowledge] of sin” (Rom. 3:20). It is thus that the law points and leads sinners to Christ. The reflected light from the cross illuminates its precepts and extends the offer of free forgiveness—justification by faith—to all who believe.

As one studies the letter to Galatians thoughtfully (notice also the parallel teachings of Romans and Philippians), it becomes clear that Paul is saying that lawkeeping, whether ceremonial or moral, cannot justify a person. Literally, Galatians 2:16 reads that no human being is justified “by works of law.”

The only means of justification for the sinner before God’s holy law is nothing less than “the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference” (Rom. 3:22). At the heart of the Galatian heresy was the tendency to push Christ somewhat to the side and to add human works as also necessary to salvation. Do not

many of us tend to do the same today?

Legalism

We might define legalism in many ways. In the setting of the Galatian controversy, the intrusion of human works into the sinner's justification before God, be it ever so slight, is legalism. Justification is not of works, nor of faith plus works, but by faith alone in Christ alone. This is the truth of the gospel.

Was this the kind of justification by faith Waggoner was teaching? Unfortunately we have no verbatim record of his sermons. However, according to the *Review and Herald* reports of the 1889 and 1890 camp meeting preaching, it was what Ellen White, A. T. Jones, and E. J. Waggoner were teaching immediately following the 1888 Minneapolis meeting. And as time lent perspective in the years that followed to the full implications of the Minneapolis meeting, their message was clear and distinct. Note the words from an article entitled

Some look upon this teaching of justification by faith, this pronouncing of the sinner as just and looking upon him as if he had never sinned, as a "legal fiction." Ellen White does not seem to be bothered by objections like that. "Sinners," she wrote, "can be justified by God only when He pardons their sins, remits the punishment they deserve, and treats them as though they were really just and had not sinned, receiving them into divine favor and treating them as if they were righteous. They are justified alone through the imputed righteousness of Christ" (*ibid.*, book 3, p. 194).

License to Sin?

Does such justification mean one has license to sin with impunity? Many feared that this could be so. But such a suggestion is illogical and ludicrous. Although we may not find standards of righteous living explicitly stated in a single Scripture passage, the whole tenor of the Word of God testifies that these standards as upheld by the claims of the gospel are infinitely

but enables us to do so. The truth is that "nothing reaches so fully down to the deepest motives of conduct as a sense of the pardoning love of Christ" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 493).

How plainly Paul put it to the young pastor Titus. "He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life. This is a trustworthy saying. And I want you to stress these things, so that those who have trusted in God may be careful to devote themselves to doing what is good" (Titus 3:5-8, NIV).

This is another way of stating what Ephesians 2:1-10 makes so clear. We are saved by grace and not by works. But "we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (verse 10).

Liberty in Christ

A true understanding of justification by faith never leads to license and lowered standards. Its effect is the very opposite. True justification leads to true freedom in Christ. The sinner is released not only from bondage to self and salvation by his own works, but also from the debasing servitude of Satan. "You, who once were slaves of sin," Paul wrote, but now are "emancipated from sin, have become slaves of righteousness" (Rom. 6:17, 18, NEB). Only in Christ's absolute bonds do we find complete freedom. It is a strange paradox but a glorious one.

Saving Faith

Faith itself is not a virtue or a work that God rewards by justifying and sanctifying us. It is a gift from God (Rom. 12:3; Eph. 3:8) and is the means by which we lay hold of the "exceeding great and precious

The intrusion of human works into the sinner's justification is pure legalism.

"Justified by Faith," written by Ellen White and published in April 1893:

"The great work that is wrought for the sinner who is spotted and stained by evil is the work of justification. By Him who speaketh truth he is declared righteous. The Lord imputes unto the believer the righteousness of Christ and pronounces him righteous before the universe" (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 392; italics supplied).

higher than the demands of the letter of the law could ever be. The law of God that is "holy, and just, and good" (Rom. 7:12) speaks to that which is deep within the heart and motives. In his heart, every Christian knows this; the Sermon on the Mount makes it crystal-clear.

It is the Holy Spirit who, in the light that shines from the cross, leads us into deep repentance. He not only awakens the desire to live according to the Father's law

promises" by which we become "partakers of the divine nature" and escape "the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:4).

Writing one and a half years before the 1888 Minneapolis General Conference session, Ellen White beautifully summed up salvation. And would that today we would grasp this understanding fully and anew.

"Money cannot buy it, intellect cannot grasp it, power cannot command it; but to all who will accept it, God's glorious grace is freely given. But men may feel their need, and, renouncing all self-dependence, accept salvation as a gift. Those who enter heaven will not scale its walls by their own righteousness, nor will its gates be opened to them for costly offerings of gold or silver; but they will gain an entrance to the many mansions of the Father's house through the merits of the cross of Christ" (*Review and Herald*, Mar. 15, 1887; see also *Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 233).

By our loyalty and loving obedience to Him, *our* lives will tell with increasing clarity of the saving relationship we have with Him who is our Redeemer and Sanctifier. □

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the purpose of the schoolmaster law of Galatians 3:24?
2. What is the essence of legalism? What forms does it take?
3. How is the gospel an antidote to license to sin?
4. Is obedience relevant to salvation? If so, how? If not, why not?

BY HEINZ HOPF

REDEMPTION IS ONLY FOR LOST SINNERS

Jesus seeks the lost.

Young people like adventure. An all-night hike in the Black Forest of West Germany offered an exciting experience to 40 Pathfinders of our church. We planned our enterprise carefully. We had maps, matches, food, and warm bedding and clothing. Keen expectation of the unknown thrilled our hearts. Two hours before midnight we arrived at our beginning point, and we set out to cross the woods.

The Black Forest (an extended forest area in southern Germany) was indeed black. The tall pines with their limbs arching over our trail barred any view of an overcast sky. No star or moon shone, but we were happy, chatting and singing. Soon we fell silent as we stepped carefully to avoid the roots and branches in the almost impenetrable darkness.

Three hours later I was pretty



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sure: We had lost our way, and I had no idea of the proper direction. To avoid causing any fear and confusion, I decided to say nothing and continued to walk on in apparent certainty. Before long others began to express their doubts about our going the right way. Finally the whole group knew: we were lost, without any prospect to escape the forest and the darkness for the next few hours. We patiently waited for the sun to rise so we could determine the direction of our destination.

Lost Generation

Five billion human beings search for the meaning of life, struggle for lasting happiness, fight sickness and the problems of old age. In a sense, our population, on what is like a whirling grain of dust in the vastness of the universe, is battling to get back on the right path lost some 6,000 years ago when our first ancestors strayed and lost their orientation with God.

That very day the intimate relationship of unquestioned trust was broken. They tried to reach the of-

When God asked Adam, "Where are you?" (Gen. 3:9), the reason was not for God's information, but for Adam's orientation. The first couple suddenly became aware they had lost not only their trustworthiness before their Creator, but also their righteousness and holiness, peace and purity, and all that brought complete harmony to their days in Eden. Soon they realized they also had lost their home and the comforts of Eden.

They were lost and inescapably doomed to eternal death. Feeling their sin, "the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord" (verse 8). Their miserable destiny came from their separation from their Life-giver. God's call to Adam penetrated the deadly silence of human despair. It was God's first attempt in an age-long endeavor "to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10).

Deception of Human Progress

Sin always cuts the ropes, breaks down communication, drives into isolation and loneliness, fills the heart with fear and despair, and

refined, but when he heard the name of Jesus mentioned in conversation, he gently smiled and remarked, "You may need this Jesus, all right, but as far as I am concerned, I can get along pretty well without Him."

What ignorance, if not arrogance! No one can "get along" without Him! He is not only the Creator of all things but the Sustainer of the universe (Heb. 1:3). And He is the world's Redeemer (John 4:42). If it were not for His grace, this whole world would not survive for another second. Truly this educated man was one of God's lost sons.

The Deception of Outward Piety

Even among the members of God's family, many may go astray if they depend on their own selves. "Many will be lost while hoping and desiring to be Christians. They do not come to the point of yielding the will to God," says Ellen White (*Steps to Christ*, p. 48).

Many do not believe or admit that by birth and nature they are lost creatures. They try hard to perform the outward acts of a converted life, but they never have experienced an intimate, lasting, and meaningful relationship with their Saviour. Their tragedy is not simply that of being lost in the midst of God's children. Their tragedy is ignorance. "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death" (Prov. 14:12).

Many were born, perhaps, into Adventist families. These lost ones have never fallen into the depths of worldly living, and they regard themselves faithful followers of Christ. Yet they may be hiding themselves behind fig leaves of self-produced righteousness, such as Sabbathkeeping, health reform, vegetarianism. They do not take time for daily surrender or sufficient prayer and communication with the Lord. Knowingly or ignorantly, they move in the wrong direction. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way" (Isa. 53:6). And in the judgment the Lord has to declare: "I

Jesus numbers every tear of repentance and feels every longing for pardon.

fered tempting knowledge more quickly than by obedience and spiritual growth. The serpent proposed a shortcut, and Adam and Eve sinned. In the midst of paradise they became lost creatures. The consequence of their action is tragic for all of us: we now belong to a lost generation. "All have turned aside, together they have gone wrong" (Rom. 3:12). * Today we may close our eyes and hide behind self-made bushes of philosophy, profession, and materialistic satisfaction, but we have to face the sad consequence; there is no *life* apart from God.

robs us of life eternal. Even today this is the bitter taste of the sweet fruit of sin.

Many a self-sufficient individual is convinced of progress—from animal-like forefathers to the climax of supermankind, from primitive Stone Age savages to high-tech civilization. Yet God still calls. And through the voice of His Spirit, some realize they are deteriorating, not progressing.

A man in a train compartment appeared well educated. He was informed on politics, science, and economics. He was mannerly and

never knew you" (Matt. 7:23).

Only when I know and confess that I am a lost sinner can the Lord help; redemption is only for lost sinners.

Drawn by Love

We must thank God that He is still searching and calling, "Where are you?" This great theme runs throughout Scripture. It is the foundation of human hope, the clearest revelation of our Master's love, the very essence of the gospel. Jesus "came to seek and to save the lost."

In His heart-touching parable of the prodigal son, Jesus portrays the story of any individual. It was not because of the son's merit that he belonged to the household of his father. It was not the son who had accumulated all the wealth. Yet he demanded his part of his father's belongings—"give me the share of property that falls to me" (Luke 15:12). The tragedy began in the father's house: the son lost his affection for his father. He lost his gratefulness and his respect. And he lost his home.

Later he lost his principles, his purity, his money, his belongings, his friends. Peace, joy, and happiness deserted him. He came to the realization that "I am no longer worthy to be called your son" (verse 21).

A person without hope, meaning, and self-respect finds life meaningless. When the son reached this point, he was able to acknowledge, perhaps for the first time, the results of his earlier selfish decision. "How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, but I perish" (verse 17). Paul says, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).

But in the depths of his despair, he was able to recall his father's image. He knew for sure that his father would not drive him away. The love of his father's heart pulled and drew him from afar. When the son returned, his father ran to meet him and to take him home.

All-sufficient Love

Many lost sons and lost daughters exist today. To all of them the heav-

enly Father extends His love: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (John 3:16). Will they respond? It is a comforting thought to grasp that no one could have invested more love than He did. No one could have given a greater sacrifice than Jesus gave. "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13).

Mere talking about redemption, without sharing the warmth of Christ's affection to those who need help, will never move any heart. We should seek to imitate Jesus, who leaves nothing undone to seek and save every soul.

No one loves more intensely than He; no one seeks more perseveringly than He. Jesus does not overlook the least person, nor does He miss the weakest sigh. He numbers every tear of repentance and feels every longing for pardon.

"And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself" (John 12:32). The prompting of His heart reaches all men, but never forces one against his or her own will. Calvary's cross is sufficient to save all human beings from the disadvantage of being born in a sinful world. No one will be lost for eternity because of Adam's sin. If one perishes, it is only because he or she rejects Christ's saving love. The Great Shepherd still leaves the 99 and goes after the one that is lost (Luke 15:4).

Christ is not satisfied simply to grasp a few excellent persons on top of the social pyramid. When Jesus came to earth, He reached out to the high priest, Nicodemus, Pilate, and others of the upper levels of society. But He reached further, to the demoniac among the tombs (Mark 5:1-19), a tax collector in the branches of a tree (Luke 19:1-9), and a woman of ill reputation at a village well (John 4:7-29).

No place was too remote for Jesus to seek His lost children. Even while nailed to the cross, Jesus promised salvation to a convicted criminal. When Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

(Matt. 27:46), He acquired the ability to address all who feel forsaken by God, and to become their representative.

Jesus went into the heart of the prison of sin. Right there on the cross, the place of final punishment and seeming defeat, Christ gained His final victory. "He took in His grasp the world over which Satan claimed to preside, and restored the human race to favor with God" (Ellen White, in *Youth's Instructor*, Apr. 16, 1903), thus transforming the symbol of shame and scandal into the meeting point of God and humanity.

We cannot merit His rescue. We cannot work our way closer to home. But He will certainly find us. We can only accept, stretch out our hand, and hold fast to Him. Through the ages of eternity the anthem of the lost race will resound to His praise: "I once was lost, but now I'm found." □

* All Scripture quotations in this article are from the Revised Standard Version.

Questions for Discussion

1. Why is it difficult for an unconverted person to acknowledge a sense of lostness?
2. What means does Jesus use to work upon human hearts to initiate the longing for restoring a relationship with our heavenly Father?
3. How can Christians protect their identity in this world of pluralism and sin? What differences should we detect?
4. Do I have to perform in order to qualify for being found? Is it difficult to believe that salvation is a gift from the Father, who is searching for us?



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BY CLIFFORD GOLDSTEIN

JUSTIFIED AND SANCTIFIED: GOD'S GOAL FOR US

The balance between what God has done *for* us and what He is doing *in* us.

What is the proper balance between what God has done *for* us, justification, and what He is doing *in* us, sanctification—and why must we understand both?

The question of justification and sanctification raises the old issue of faith and works. Abel offered to God the "firstlings of his flock" (Gen. 4:4), an offer, made in faith, that God accepted; Cain offered "the fruit of the ground" (verse 3), an offering, of works, that God rejected. Later, though, God declared, "I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings" (Hosea 6:6).

Paul said, "For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God" (Rom. 4:2); yet James asked, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?" (James 2:21).

Faith and Works

Disputes over faith and works split Christendom in the 1500s, and the issue challenges Adventism today. Even Ellen White wrote at one time that "the merits of fallen man in his good works can never procure eternal life for him" (*Faith and Works*, p. 20); yet at another time she stated: "There are many in the Christian world who claim that all that is necessary to salvation is to have faith; works are nothing, faith is the only essential. But God's Word tells us that faith without works is

dead, being alone" (*ibid.*, p. 47).

These positions don't contradict each other. Instead, the question is how we balance them.

Indeed, some lean so heavily on justification that it alone becomes redemption; others lean so heavily on sanctification that it alone becomes redemption. Rather, both justification and sanctification constitute redemption. Redemption is no more justification alone than baptism is immersion alone; redemption is no more *just* sanctification than baptism is *just* coming up out of the water. As immersing and rising compose the two parts of baptism, so justification and sanctification compose the two parts of redemption. One without the other is incomplete; together, though, they make a perfect whole.

Christ gives both justification and sanctification. "For without me," Jesus said, "ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). Of ourselves we can no more have faith, "the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8), than we can have works, which come also from God (see Phil. 2:12, 13).

The Lord created Adam in "the image of God." After Adam sinned, his children, instead of also being created in the image of God, were created in the image of Adam, now a fallen sinner. "And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in *his own likeness*, after *his image*" (Gen. 5:3). All humanity, created in the image of Adam, is under the curse of sin. "But the scrip-

ture hath concluded all under sin" (Gal. 3:22). All our righteousness and good works, even those done by Christians under the prompting of the Holy Spirit, can no more make us acceptable to God than all the scrubbings, perfumes, and manures can make a pig kosher.

The only good works and righteousness that save us are the perfect works and righteousness of Jesus, which He wrought out for us, independent of us, yet which He offers to us in place of our own filthy garments. "I will clothe thee," Jesus says, "with change of raiment" (Zech. 3:4).

Jesus, by His perfect life and death, is qualified to supply us with an experience in righteousness. After He finished His work on the earth as a sacrificial lamb, He entered heaven as a high priest, ministering the merits of His death in our behalf. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). And because Jesus didn't assume the "nature of angels" (Heb. 2:16) in His incarnation, but instead came in the "likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3), the flesh that we are encumbered with, He proved that we too, through the power of God, can resist sin. "Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation," wrote Ellen White (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 123). "So it may be with us."

Righteousness Is a Gift

Justification and sanctification, though inseparable, are not identical. Justification entails the legal declaration of forgiveness. It is a gift of a perfectly righteous, sinless, and holy character—a character that we sinners by our nature could never possess. We might reflect that character "perfectly," but we can never equal it.

God, though, accepts only perfect righteousness, not even a perfect reflection of it, and because none of us have that perfect righteousness, Jesus came to the earth, worked it out for us, and offers it freely.

Imagine a school where you received only one of two grades, pass or fail. The only way to pass is to have a score of 100 percent. Ninety-nine percent will get you the same failing grade as only 9 percent. Some might have 80 percent or even 90 percent, but legally they are still in the same class as those with only 5 percent.

Except for Jesus, who has a perfect score, all humanity has a failing grade. The thief on the cross who might have had only a 30 percent, or a saint upon the earth after probation closes who might have a 94 percent—both will get to heaven by the same exact thing: the perfect righteousness, the 100 percent, of Jesus Christ given to them. Anything else is insufficient, as useless as trying to master French by studying physics.

Beginning a New Life

But the good news of salvation, of redemption, does not end with this legal declaration of forgiveness, any more than baptism ends with immersion. We must come up out of the water “in newness of life” (Rom. 6:4), after first going under. Redemption begins, not ends, with forgiveness, just as baptism begins, not ends, with immersion.

Without sanctification, without Christ working in our lives to root out inherited and cultivated evil, we cannot presume justification. Salvation is not like the law of the Medes and the Persians: salvation *can* be revoked, just as faith can be lost.

In Matthew 7 Jesus contrasts two individuals. One hears His words and “doeth them” (verse 24); the other hears His words but “doeth them not” (verse 26). The obedient one, who does what Jesus commands, who has works—he stays faithful unto the end. His faith is perfected by works. The disobedient one, who doesn’t do what Jesus commands, who doesn’t have works—he falls away. His faith, without works, is dead.

And the good news about good works is that, like justification, they also come from God. We procure sanctification as we procure justifi-

cation—by unconditional surrender to God. Sanctification, too, can come only as we surrender ourselves to God, choose to die to self, and serve God daily. “Genuine sanctification . . . is nothing less than a daily dying to self and daily conformity to the will of God” (*Life Sketches*, p. 237). Then God can work in us “both to will and to do of his good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13).

Character development, obedience, and good works come only as we choose to allow God to work in us, to purge the dross and to mold us after the divine similitude. And the only way He can make these changes is if we submit, just as we did when we were born again. “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him” (Col. 2:6).

In Ephesians 2 Paul gives a powerful example of the relationship between faith and works. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (verses 8, 9). Paul clearly states that salvation comes by faith, not works.

In verse 10 he writes that “we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus *unto good works*, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Paul stresses salvation by faith, not works, yet in the next breath he says that we were created for good works, works that God had “before ordained” that we should do.

No Contradiction

No contradiction exists. Though created for good works, we don’t receive salvation by them. The only works that save us are the works of Jesus in our behalf. Nevertheless, we were created in Jesus to do good works, because works are an intricate part of the redemption process.

Our salvation didn’t end at Calvary, because redemption does not end with forgiveness. The gospel is not just pardon, which is its foundation, but is also restoration, which is its pinnacle. Justification is the first step toward God’s ulti-

mate goal for us: the reflection of Christ in us! “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you” (Gal. 4:19).

The issues in the great controversy between Christ and Satan go beyond this earth, beyond the salvation of man. Though sin is confined to earth, it is a universal, cosmic issue. At Calvary, more than a mob witnessed the cross. The universe was watching.

And though the complete penalty for sin was paid at the cross, though God poured out His love in a way that made all the universe marvel, not all the questions about sin, rebellion, and the law of God were answered, even there. God was going to give the onlooking universe more—and He has been using humanity to give it!

“That through the *church* the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places” (Eph. 3:10, RSV). And how is this wisdom made known to the principalities and powers in heavenly places? Jesus said, “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit” (John 15:8). God is glorified by the character He develops in us.

The first angel’s message is “Fear God, and give glory to him” (Rev. 14:7). And we give glory to God by allowing Him to sanctify us so that we can bear much fruit. “The very image of God is to be reproduced in humanity,” wrote Ellen G. White. “The honor of God, the honor of Christ, is involved in the perfection of the character of His people” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 671), which is why God’s faithful remnant are those who “keep the commandments of God” (Rev. 12:17; 19:10). This obedience of God’s law is not what saves the remnant—but is what the remnant render because they are already saved!

A false balance between faith and works, either one way or the other, will leave us wanting.

Finding the Balance

An emphasis on justification at the expense of sanctification can

BY RALPH LARSON

deceive a person into the false gospel that obedience, character development, and personal victory over sin are mere appendages to the gospel. John makes it plain: "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that *doeth* righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil" (1 John 3:7, 8).

An overemphasis on sanctification at the expense of justification can deceive a person into believing that his acceptance with God depends on his performance, and that his good works guarantee him a place in heaven. Ellen White has stressed: "There is not a point that needs to be dwelt upon more earnestly, repeated more frequently, or established more firmly in the minds of all than the impossibility of fallen man meriting anything by his own best good works" (*Faith and Works*, p. 19).

As Adventists, we bask in a blaze of gospel light unknown to previous generations. Yet we must present that light in a balanced manner, with proper emphasis on both aspects of redemption. Indeed, though a false balance is abominable to God, "a just weight is his delight" (Prov. 11:1). □

Questions for Discussion

1. Why cannot good works, even by a committed Christian, earn salvation?
2. If good works cannot save us, what, then, is their place in the life of the Christian?
3. Explain how the issues in the great controversy between Christ and Satan go beyond this earth.
4. What role does Christ play in our sanctification?



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THE EARLY AND THE LATTER RAIN

Now is the day of decision.

Three great Bible truths link together the experience of the New Testament church and the experience of the last-day church—the atonement, the sealing, and the early and the latter rain.

The Atonement

Christ made atonement when He died at Calvary as a sacrifice for our sins and thereby reconciled us to God (2 Cor. 5:18; Rom. 5:18). This sacrificial phase of the atonement

was perfect, full, and complete (Heb. 9:26). Yet there remained a further *priestly* ministry of that same atonement in the heavenly sanctuary.

When Christ intercedes before God with the merits of His death in behalf of the penitent sinner, He brings about atonement by mediation, because His intercession reconciles the individual believer to God. In 1844 Christ entered the Most Holy Place of the heavenly sanctuary to carry out



Darryl Fank

His final ministry—atonement by judgment (the antitype of the Day of Atonement, Lev. 16).

This ministry will result in the disposal of the sin problem, and in reconciliation of all things in heaven and earth to God (Eph. 1:10). Christ's final aspect of atonement will continue until His priestly ministry is completed and the decree goes forth that we read in Revelation 22:11, 12.

This concept of priestly atonement is scriptural. In the first 15 chapters of Leviticus we find more than 15 descriptions of sacrifices (sin offerings), all of which are types or symbols of the atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross. In each of these descriptions we find that the priest shall "make an atonement" for him, or for her, or for them, as the case may be. This atonement was made on any day and on every day throughout the year.

When we go on to chapter 16, we read of a Day of Atonement that came only on one day each year. This description states that five times an atonement is made for the sanctuary and the people—in spite of the fact that an atonement had already been made for the people earlier in the year when they brought their sacrifices to the sanctuary.

Was this atonement described in Leviticus 16 a denial of the value of the previous atoning sacrifices and mediation? By no means; God Himself established the process, and God Himself applied the word *atonement* to its several aspects.

Similarly, our designation of the second phase of our Lord's priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary as the *final atonement* in no way depreciates the value of the atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15: "And if Christ be not *risen*, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (verse 14). "And if Christ be not *raised*, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (verse 17).

Thus, all phases of the atonement are necessary. Though some in our time deny the atoning value of the sacrifice of Christ, and others deny

the atoning value of His priestly ministry, we Seventh-day Adventists, strictly following the Scriptures, accept both. And in so doing we see a linkage between the experience of the New Testament church and the last-day church, of which we are a part.

The Sealing

As our Adventist pioneers studied the Sabbath, they discovered that the Sabbath commandment is God's seal in His holy law, since it is the only part of the law that identifies Him as the Creator of heaven and earth.

They reasoned, then, that the sincere, truehearted follower of Jesus who keeps the Sabbath *has the seal of God*. Thus, they took the Sabbath to their hearts with great affection and kept it with delight, seeing themselves as repeating the New Testament experience. They loved the Sabbath, and spoke often of its precious value as a *sign* between them and the Lord who sanctified them (Eze. 20:12, 20).

Our pioneers saw the time of the final atonement (from 1844 until the close of probation) as the *sealing time*. And they saw the message that they preached, calling people to give allegiance to all of God's commandments, as the *sealing message*.

The Early and Latter Rains

The third truth linking the New Testament church with the last-day church is that of the early and the latter rain.

"The outpouring of the Spirit in the days of the apostles was the beginning of the early, or former, rain, and glorious was the result" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 54, 55).

This glorious result was seen in a marvelous harvest of people. From the record in Acts, we can easily visualize as many as 20,000, or even more, accepting the message of the risen Saviour and committing their lives to Him within a short space of time under the influence of the early rain of the Holy Spirit.

What, then, of the latter rain? The result will be no less glorious!

Says Ellen White: "The great work of the gospel is not to close with less manifestation of the power of God than marked its opening. The prophecies which were fulfilled in the outpouring of the former rain at the opening of the gospel are again to be fulfilled in the latter rain at its close. . . ."

"Now the rays of light penetrate everywhere, the truth is seen in its clearness, and the honest children of God sever the bands which have held them. Family connections, church relations, are powerless to stay them now. Truth is more precious than all besides. Notwithstanding the agencies combined against the truth, a large number take their stand upon the Lord's side" (*The Great Controversy*, pp. 611, 612).

Thus we see close parallel in the *time* of the final atonement, the sealing, and the latter rain. The experience of the church and its members during this crisis period of earth's history is set before us with an abundance of emphasis and clarity.

First, it is a time of responsibility. We must remember that increased spiritual light and opportunities bring a corresponding increase in responsibility. This principle has always been a part of the plan of salvation.

"Our responsibilities are exactly proportioned to our light, opportunities, and privileges" (*Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 416).

Ellen White writes: "We are not living in the age in which our fathers lived. God gave them treasures of wisdom, which, through the manifestation of His Spirit, and through the testimony and example of His children from generation to generation, have come down along the lines to our time. We have all the light which they had, and additional light is continually shining, and will shine more and more unto the perfect day. This generation is responsible, not only for all the light that God has imparted to past generations through His Spirit and Word, but for the more abundant light now shining. We cannot be

accepted and honored of God in rendering the same service and doing the same works that our fathers did. In order to be blessed of God as they were blessed, we must be faithful in improving the increased light, as they were faithful in improving the light that God gave them" (*Review and Herald*, Jan. 5, 1886).

Second, it is a time of urgency. There can be no mistaking the urgency with which the servant of the Lord appeals to us not to delay that spiritual work that may be done now, and that cannot be done after this special time has passed away.

"Now, while our great High Priest is making the atonement for us, we should seek to become perfect in Christ" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 623).

"The sealing time is very short, and will soon be over. Now is the time, while the four angels are holding the four winds, to make our calling and election sure" (*Early Writings*, p. 58; italics supplied).

"If we do not progress, if we do not place ourselves in an attitude to receive both the former and the latter rain, we shall lose our souls" (*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 508).

Third, it must be a time of victory. The theme of New Testament writers, especially the apostle Paul, was *victory by the power of Christ*—victory over circumstances, victory over opposition, victory over self, over temptations, and even over death itself (1 Cor. 15:51-58). Since Paul sealed his testimony with his blood, there probably was no Christian writer who had such an overwhelming sense of victory, such a "victory complex," as he had until the arrival of Ellen White. This humble and chosen messenger to the remnant church wrote unceasingly of *victory by the power of Christ!*

A recent examination of the approximately 10,000 pages of material that make up her major books revealed more than 1,000 victory statements, an average of one for every 10 pages of written material. A similar pattern may be found in her magazine articles. She sounded the

note of victory with tremendous power. Now, in the time of the final atonement, now, in the sealing time, now, in the time of the latter rain, victory is fully available to everyone who sincerely desires it and earnestly seeks it from the Lord.

"By the power of the Holy Spirit the moral image of God is to be perfected in the character. We are to be wholly transformed into the likeness of Christ" (*ibid.*, p. 506).

Two phrases that occur frequently in Ellen White's victory statements are the expressions "ample provision" and "more than conquerors."

"Ample provisions have been made for every son and daughter of Adam to obtain individually a knowledge of the divine will, to perfect Christian character, and to be purified through the truth" (*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 644).

"God has given His Holy Spirit as a power sufficient to subdue all your hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrongdoing. By yielding the mind to the control of the Spirit, you will grow into the likeness of God's perfect character, and will become an instrumentality through which He can reveal His mercy, His goodness, and His love. Whatever may be your defects, the Holy Spirit will reveal them, and grace will be given you to overcome. Through the merits of the blood of Christ you may be a conqueror, yes, *more than a conqueror*" (*Youth's Instructor*, Oct. 2, 1902).

Nowhere did Ellen White set forth strong assurances of victory more than in her messages to the youth of the church. In the articles that she wrote for the *Youth's Instructor* throughout her long life, we find more than 500 victory statements. In her last message to youth we find these words:

"I feel an earnest desire that every one of you shall be victorious in the struggle against evil. . . . If you will ask God to help you to overcome what is un-Christlike in your dispositions, He will prepare you for entrance into heaven, where no sin can enter. . . . If you give yourselves

wholly to Him, you will be conquerors in the warfare against sin. . . . As you strive to overcome everything that is displeasing to God, angels of heaven will help you. . . . Power from above will be given you. . . . You will find that He will give you daily strength to overcome. . . . You can overcome evil—evil thoughts, evil desires—by the blood of the Lamb and the word of your testimony" (*ibid.*, June 9, 1914).

We are living in the *time* of the final atonement, the sealing of God's people, and the latter rain. It is a time of great spiritual light and of great spiritual responsibility. It is a time that has, in the mercy of God, been extended. But extensions must be limited. They cannot go on endlessly. The terminal point soon must be reached. Will we be ready? The decision is ours. Ample provision has been made. Will we take advantage of it? □

Questions for Discussion

1. Why do you think Christ designed a second phase in heaven for His work of atonement?
2. Does the heavenly ministry of Christ bring fear or happiness to you today? Why?
3. How will the latter rain prepare the church for Jesus' return?
4. Is there any connection between the sanctuary and the Holy Spirit?
5. Is the Holy Spirit involved only in justification, or in sanctification, too?
6. Why did Ellen White say that the 1888 message of righteousness by faith was the beginning of the latter rain and the loud cry? (See *Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 363, and *Early Writings*, p. 271.)



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BY CARL COFFMAN

FROM LAODICEA TO TRIUMPH

Christ is knocking upon our heart's door.

Laodicea undoubtedly is not a favorite word in Adventist vocabulary. Nor is the word *lukewarm*. When we apply Laodicea to the final period of earth's history, the term fits perfectly, for Laodicea means "a people adjudged." It is an appropriate word indeed!

In Revelation 3:14-21, John outlines a serious problem—lukewarmness (verse 16) of the church during the Laodicean period. But he also gives hope to believers by listing three things: a remedy (verse 18), a wonderful invitation (verse 20), and a glorious promise (verse 21). God does not expose the prob-

lem just to condemn; He wants us to see our need.

In the first beatitude in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5:3), Jesus showed the Jewish people that it was a blessed and happy thing to sense their need. Only then would they, or we, search for a remedy and experience the fulfillment of God's wonderful promises.

God exposed a similar problem of the Ephesians, too. In Revelation 2:4, He said clearly, yet sadly, "Thou hast left thy first love." Then He pleaded, "Remember" (verse 5). He desperately wanted them to see their problem and feel their need.

Notice how closely the problems of Ephesus and Laodicea parallel each other. Each group of believers has left its first-love experience with Jesus and become lukewarm.

In 1902 Ellen White equated the Ephesians' loss of their first-love experience to Adventists "in their present condition" (*Review and Herald*, Feb. 25, 1902). And it would be just as fair to apply God's condemnation of the lukewarmness of those first-century Ephesians to us today. Lukewarmness has its earmarks: "Thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot. . . . Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; . . . thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:16, 17). Ellen White adds further insights: "The [Ephesian] church lost her first love. She became selfish and ease-loving. The spirit of worldliness was cherished. The enemy cast his spell upon those to whom God had given light for a world in darkness" (*Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 26).

The frightening part of what happened to the Ephesians is that the change came upon them "little by little" (*ibid.*), almost imperceptibly. Has lukewarmness crept over God's last-day people in the same way since 1844? Have we also not been aware of it? John says that those who are wretched, poor, blind, and naked know not their true condition (Rev. 3:17).

We have said enough about the problem, haven't we? We don't like it. It contains everything opposite to a description of real faith and righteousness. Some of us may have been confronted with the "Laodicean message" so often that we have even come to think of God as a "hard man" as did the man with one talent when he made his excuse to his Lord (Matt. 25:24).

How have we reacted to Christ's statement in Revelation 3:16, "I will spue thee out of my mouth"? We have emphasized those distasteful, lukewarm waters of the historic city so often that we almost have practiced spitting them out ourselves!

What is Christ saying here? Ellen



Dorey Tank

White comments: "The figure of spewing out of His mouth means that He cannot offer up your prayers [if indifferent or lukewarm] or your expressions of love to God. . . . He cannot present your religious exercises with the request that grace be given you" (*ibid.*, vol. 6, p. 408).

Christ loves to intercede for us (1 John 2:1); but if we are living in lukewarmness and do not see our need for faith in Him and His righteousness, He *cannot* intercede because we *do not ask* for His interceding. He wept over Jerusalem—the people whom He dearly loved but who had rejected Him (Luke 19:41). If we do not seek His intercession, His love will lead Him to weep over us, too! He lovingly is knocking upon the doors of our hearts. If we do not open the doors and let Him in to help us, we cannot lay any blame on Him.

The Remedy Explained

It is important for us to understand just what Christ is saying in Revelation 3:18. Let's review this oft-quoted verse, but in the reverse order of its three parts: the eyesalve, white raiment, and gold tried in the fire.

First, Jesus presents an eyesalve that enables spiritual eyesight to be developed by the spiritually blind. Jeremiah and Jesus both spoke of those who had eyes but could not see (see Jer. 5:21; Mark 8:18). Our Lord promises us perfect eyesight if we will allow Him to put on this badly needed salve. He wants us to see *His will, His way, His grace, His forgiveness, His acceptance, His righteousness, His example, His victory, and exactly how to attain His goals through faith in Him*. He even wants us to see how to gain that needed faith so vital at every step of salvation and spiritual faith.

The Holy Spirit is the great source of the heavenly eyesalve, or remedy, for every case of Laodicean blindness. Such blindness could be of many types. It could be what religious people have who feel saved because they go to church. We might call this type of blindness salvation by church membership.

Another type of spiritual blindness affects those who believe in a man-made system of salvation, apart from Acts 4:12 or Ephesians 2:8, 9. Such people have unconfessed sins that they are unwilling to confess. Yet they apparently want to be in heaven.

Another variety of spiritual blindness is found in those who expect salvation by superior mental ability. And still another type is seen in those who seem to rely upon eating only nonmeat foods. Vegetarianism is of great importance to the maximum development of the whole man, but it is *not* a method of salvation.

We cannot afford to be fooled in these things; but the devil loves it if we are. He knows that when Christ comes again, those fooled will be like the five virgins without oil—without the Holy Spirit and a personal experience with Christ. To those, the Lord must sadly say, "I know you not" (Matt. 25:12).

Blindness Removed

The Holy Spirit's ministry includes removing all such forms of blindness from the eyes of willing Christians. He does this by convicting us of sin (John 16:8, 9); showing us God's righteousness in all its purity, beauty, and availability (verses 8, 10); warning us of a sure judgment to come (verses 8, 11); telling of vindication of all who have put on Christ's proffered robe of righteousness; and telling of exclusion from the eternal kingdom of all without it (see Matt. 22:11-13).

How badly we need the oil of the Holy Spirit for our eyes so that we can clearly see our great need. We then can discover, receive, and utilize the *gift* of faith needed to accept Christ, and find the remedy for our sinful self-satisfaction in dedicated, total relationship to Him.

In 1897 Ellen White wrote: "The Laodiceans boasted of a deep knowledge of Bible truth, a deep insight into the Scriptures. They were not entirely blind, else the eyesalve would have done nothing to restore their sight, and enable them to discern the true attributes of

Christ." "The eye is the sensitive conscience, the inner light, of the mind. . . . The 'eyesalve,' the Word of God, makes the conscience smart under its application, for it convicts of sin. But the smarting is necessary that the healing may follow" (*Review and Herald*, Nov. 23, 1897).

"Healing" here begins with the putting on of God's beautiful white raiment, the second part of Revelation 3:18. We call this justification by faith. It would be more accurate to say justification by Christ's gift of faith, which we utilize, with the Holy Spirit's help, to reach up to Him. With the raiment on and our former nakedness gone, we can rest in the promise of full acceptance and have the joy of knowing that we are now a part of the family of God.

I presented this wonderful truth to a Spanish church a number of years ago. On a table I had put two books—a white, wedding guest book to represent the book of life, and a large, black book to represent the books of sin. To illustrate the moment when we receive justification by faith, I covered the black book with one of my wife's beautiful linen napkins, leaving to one's view only the book of life and the pure white covering all confessed sin. My interpreter then added a point that I had not included. He went down to the table, picked up one corner of the napkin, and peeked under. Then he said: "And God does not peek under the white raiment to see how bad our past lives have been, either." Blessed be that fine interpreter!

Since then, I have always included this statement in my presentation of the subject: "If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 62). Instead of peeking at our awful past (and we all have one), our blessed God casts it all "into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19). He plans to

leave it there, and we must leave it there too. Shame on us for digging up someone else's past.

What about the third part of Laodicea's remedy, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich"? Jesus says to "buy" the gold. Remember that the Holy Spirit has opened our eyes, and heaven has put on us a white raiment—the beautiful and perfect righteousness of Christ. These are "gifts," and God's gifts cannot be bought. Salvation is free. All can have it, "without money and without price" (Isa. 55:1). The eyesalve is ours for the asking, and the white raiment is ours for the asking.

But what about buying this gold that is to be tried in the fire? Have we slipped a bit into the error of trying to buy some part of salvation by our works? What does Ellen White mean when she identifies this gold as "faith that works by love" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 158)? This comment appears in conjunction with the story of the Pharisee and the publican. It would be easier to understand her statement if we would emphasize it this way: "Faith that works—*by love*." This emphasizes *where* working faith comes from. It is in harmony with the Bible illustration, for the Pharisee's works did *not* come from love to Christ. Skipping one sentence, the paragraph then says: "We may be active [as were the Pharisees], we may do much work [as they did], but *without love*, such love as dwelt in the heart of Christ, we can never be numbered with the family of heaven" (*ibid.*; italics supplied).

So the third part of the remedy tells us that the on-fire Christian who has his eyes open and who rejoices in the covering righteousness of Jesus will be so motivated by godly love that he will have an active, working faith. He will be so dedicated to God, pleading each day for restoration to His image, that he will even ask for trials to purify his faith if God sees that such is necessary.

In academy, my first job in the school's press was to remelt lead for the typesetting machines. We al-

ways put a chemical into the molten lead to cleanse the lead of dross. The lead's future usability depended upon this process. Naturally, the lead could not ask for the dross-removing material. One who knew the need for the process put it in. God uses trials in the same way. Rightly understood and related to, trials become like fire to try and purify the gold, or faith, in us. Our characters thus will become more and more like Christ's.

God purifies our faith in a fire of daily life experiences. The justified person finds his love for Christ enabling him to live in a way we call Christlikeness. Let us never be caught thinking that Christ does not expect that. The counsel of Galatians 2:20 and Revelation 14:12 is too clear.

We cannot become smug or satisfied either in our relationship to Jesus or with our "works" for the Lord. The "relationship" is to be full and satisfying every day. But it will also mature, as does a good marriage relationship. And our character, which forms within that relationship with Christ, also will continue to mature. There is no stopping place for either the maturing of our relationship or the development of our character. But daily we can have the full satisfaction of total acceptance by our blessed Lord. Shouldn't we sing the doxology more often than we do?

"I Stand at the Door, and Knock"

We have heard Christ's knocking for a long time, haven't we? He is knocking at this very moment. We have let Him in, haven't we? And when we permit Him to enter, Revelation 3:20 says that we will sup with Him, and He with us.

The daily knock includes our daily need for reassurance that we are a part of the heavenly family. We have this when we let Him in. As I sup with Him, my relationship with Him is secure. We are together *every* day. We talk, we worship together.

The message of this week is that God wants to give us daily triumph here in this life, and finally eternal victory. Ellen White says, "The

worthless material will be consumed; but the gold of true, simple, humble faith will never lose its value. . . . It is imperishable" (*The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, vol. 6, p. 1088).

In our imagination, let's place ourselves inside a simple room with only one door. We are sitting there, looking at the door handle. We know the door cannot be forced open from the outside. Then we hear a knock, a soft knock, a love knock. And we hear a soft voice: "May I come in, and sup with you?" Even though it is 20 centuries later, we recognize that it is Jesus' voice. In light of our studies this week, and today, what will we do? □

Questions for Discussion

1. Is it possible that we have become victims of an air of self-satisfaction that could affect our readiness for Christ's second coming?

2. How can we have both assurance of God's acceptance and a sense of growing spiritual development?

3. Would we feel comfortable sitting in a room all alone with our Lord? If such a thought is unnerving, what can we do about it?

4. Has the idea of "perfection," possibly wrongly understood, been a barrier in our spiritual development? If so, why, and what can we do to change it?

5. Could it be that the "peace" of Isaiah 26:3, and the "rest" of Matthew 11:28 have seemed elusive to us because we have not entered into *total* dedication to Christ?



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BY ELLEN G. WHITE

TELL OF GOD'S LOVE AND POWER

The benefits of positive Christianity

Condensation of a sermon presented at Minneapolis, Minnesota, Sabbath afternoon, October 13, 1888.

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not" (1 John 3:1).

How can we understand God? How are we to know our Father? We are to call Him by the endearing name of Father. And how are we to know Him and the power of His love? It is through diligent search of the Scriptures. We cannot appreciate God unless we take into our souls the great plan of redemption. . . . It is a wonderful thing that after man had violated the law of God and separated himself from God, was divorced, as it were, from God—that after all this there was a plan made whereby man should not perish, but that he should have everlasting life.

After the transgression of Adam in Eden it was Christ whom God gave to us, not that we might be saved in our sins, but that we might be saved from our sins, that we should return to our loyalty to God and become obedient children. As we yield our minds, our souls, our bodies, and our all to the controlling Spirit of God, it is then that the Spirit of truth is with us and we can become intelligent in regard to this great plan of redemption.

It is true that God gave His only-begotten Son to die for us, to suffer the penalty of the [broken] law of God. We are to consider this and dwell upon it. And when our minds are constantly dwelling upon the matchless love of God to the fallen race, we begin to know God, to be-

come acquainted with Him, to have a knowledge of God, and of how Jesus Christ, when He came to our world, laid aside His royal robes and His kingly crown and clothed His divinity with humanity. For our sakes He became poor that we through His poverty might be made rich. The Father sent His Son here, and right here on this little atom of a world were enacted the grandest scenes that were ever known to humanity.

Universe Looks On

All the universe of heaven was looking on with intense interest. Why? The great battle was to be fought between the power of darkness and the Prince of light. . . . Satan wanted that the children of men should get such an idea of his wonderful work that they would talk of his masterly power. In doing this he was all the time placing God in a false light. He was presenting Him as a God of injustice, and not a God of mercy. . . .

How was God to be rightly represented to the world? How was it to be known that He was a God of love, full of mercy, kindness, and pity? How was the world to know this? God sent His Son, and He was to represent to the world the character of God. . . .

Christ has been in heaven and He will bring the light of heaven, drive back the darkness, and let the sunlight of His glory in. Then we shall see, amid the corruption and pollution and defilement, the light of heaven. . . .

We want to keep the perfect Pattern before us. God was so good as to send a representation of Himself in His Son Jesus Christ, and we want to get the mind and heart to unfold and reach upward. . . .

Brethren, you have all seen on the bosom of the lake the beautiful white lily. How anxious we have been, how we have wished and worked, that we might get that blossom. No matter how much scum and debris and filth there is around it, yet that does not destroy our desire for the lily. We wonder how the lily can be so beautiful and white where there is so much filth. Well, there is a stem that strikes down to the golden sands beneath and gathers nothing but the purest substance that feeds the lily until it develops into the pure and spotless flower as we see it.

Should not this teach us a lesson? It ought to. It shows that although there is iniquity all around us we should not approach it. Do not talk of the iniquity and wickedness that are in the world, but elevate your minds and talk of your Saviour. . . . Talk of those things that will leave a good impression on the mind, and will lift every soul up out of this iniquity into the light beyond.

Now, we may go into a cellar and stay there and look around into its dark corners, and we can talk of the darkness and say, "Oh, it is so dark here," and keep talking about it. But will it make it any lighter? Oh no! What are you going to do? Come out of it; come out of the dark into the upper chamber where the light of God's countenance shines brightly.

You know our bodies are made up of the food assimilated. Now, it is the same with our minds. If we have a mind to dwell on the disagreeable things of life, it will not give us any hope, but we want to dwell on the cheery scenes of heaven. Says Paul, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

While we were in Switzerland I had many letters from a sister whom I dearly love and highly esteem. In every one of these letters were the most gloomy pictures. She seemed to be dwelling on everything objectionable. Soon after I received these letters I prayed the Lord that He would give her help to turn her

mind from the channel that it was running in.

That night I had a dream presented to me three times. I was walking in a beautiful garden, and Martha was by my side. As soon as she came into the garden I said, "Martha, do you not see this beautiful garden? See, here are the lilies, the roses, and the pinks." "Yes," she said, as she looked up and smiled. Soon I looked to see where she was. I was looking at the lilies, the roses, and the pinks, and did not see her. She was in another part of the garden, and was grasping a thistle. Then she was pricking her hands on the bramble bushes. She said they hurt her hands, and she asked, "Why do they keep all these thistles and these briars in the garden? Why do they let them stay here?"

Then there appeared before us a tall, dignified man who said, "Gather the roses, the lilies, and the pinks; discard the brambles and touch them not." Then I awoke, and when I went to sleep I dreamed the very same thing again. Three times I had the same dream, and I arose—because I could not sleep—and wrote to Martha the dream I had had.

"Now," said I, "God does not want you to gather up everything objectionable; He wants you to look at His wonderful works and at His purity. He wants you to take a view of His matchless love and His power, to look up through the beauties of nature to nature's God." Said I, "This [dream] represents your case exactly. You are dwelling on the dark side. You are talking of those things that give no light and bring no joy into your life. But you must turn your mind from these things to God. There are enough roses, pinks, and lilies in the garden of God's love so that you need not look at the briars, the thistles, and the brambles. . . . I did not see these things, because I was delighting myself with the flowers and all the beauties of the garden."

Now, that is what we want to do, brethren. We want to have our minds on the encouraging things. We want to have our minds on the new country to which we are to be

introduced. Our citizenship is not of this world, but it is above, and we want to consider what characters we should possess in order to become inhabitants of that better world and associates of the saints of God in heaven. . . .

I do not want Satan to succeed in throwing his dark shadow across your pathway. I want you to get away from that shadow. The Man of Calvary will throw the light of His love across your pathway and dispel the darkness. He is able to do it and will do it, for He is Lord of all. . . .

Talk About Jesus

I remember when my sister Sarah, now sleeping in the grave, who attended me in my first travels, was in discouragement. She said, "I had a strange dream last night. I dreamed somebody opened the door and I was afraid of him; and as I continued to look at him he increased in size and filled the whole space from the floor to the ceiling, and I continued to grow more and more afraid. Then I thought that I had Jesus, and I said, 'I have Jesus; I am not afraid of you.' Then he began to shrink and shrink until you could scarcely see him, and he went out of the door."

It taught her a lesson. She said, "Ellen, we talk a great deal more of the power of the devil than we have any right to. It pleases him, and his satanic majesty is honored; he exults over it, and we give him honor in doing this; but," she said, "I am going to talk of Jesus, of His love, and tell of His power." And so she

**I love Him,
for He is my
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charms."**

brought her soul right out of darkness and discouragement into light, and she bore a living testimony for God and heaven.

Now, I think our testimony would be a great deal better if we talked more of Jesus and His love and did not pay so much honor to the devil. Why should we not do it? Why not let the light of Jesus shine in our hearts? . . .

Is not this the case with many of us? Do we not dwell on trifles and talk of them till our thoughts are changed to the same similitude? We can drive even our children to do wrong things by accusing them of wrongs of which they are not guilty. While we are to rebuke and exhort in all love, should we not also exalt Jesus and talk of His love?

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." It is one of Satan's devices that we should be picking up all these disagreeable things and that our minds should not be dwelling on God and His love. That is what Satan wants, that we should keep our minds occupied with these things of a revolting character that cannot bring peace, joy, and harmony into the life—nothing but discouragement—and that we should not represent Jesus Christ.

Now, Christ left us His work when He went away, and He said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." We are not left alone in the hands of the devil. Do you think our heavenly Father would leave us alone to carry on the work of redemption and bringing up the fallen race, that He would leave us in a world flooded with evil with no help, no support, after He had endured the agonies of the cross? Do you think He will leave us now? No! Says the Saviour, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." And again, . . . "If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it." This is on the condition that we keep His commandments. Is not this a blessed promise? Why do we not talk of it more and praise God for it? . . .

If we have a sense of the goodness

of God in sending His Son to die for sinful man, and if we keep that interwoven into our experience and riveted in the mind, we shall have such love for those for whom Christ died that there will be no [desire for] supremacy. It is Satan that brings in these differences. While we are worshipping God, there will be no hatred, no envy, no evil surmising. Brethren, we have no time for these. We cannot think of them. There is something else before us. It is the eternal weight of glory, the plan of salvation. We ought to understand it from beginning to the close, that we may present it justly to the world.

What is our work here? We are to take hold of the work just where Christ left it. What was His work? To reveal the Father to us. What is our work? To reveal Christ to the world. How can we do this? By talking of the devil? Oh no, we have a better work to do. We want to talk of the crucified and risen Saviour. Oh, what a terrible thing it would be for any of us to profess to be followers of Jesus Christ and then make a botch of it, and He find us with characters all stained with defilement. What a fearful responsibility rests upon us! How is Christ to be revealed to the world, unless it is through those who take hold on His merits, who believe in Jesus Christ, to the saving of their souls? . . .

When I awake in the night I begin to pray. Some three weeks ago I awoke and said, "O God, have mercy on me." I had no more than spoken when a voice by me seemed to say, "I am right by you, I have not left you." This was everything to me, and it may be just the same to you. Jesus says, I am right by you, dwelling with you; you are not alone at all. That was just the joy I experienced, and it was worth more than mountains of gold to me. I have learned to trust my Saviour, and I want to tell you that I have a Saviour, and He lives; and because He lives I shall live also.

Hid With Christ

Our lives are hid with Christ in God, and when He who is our life

shall appear, we shall appear with Him in glory. You do not need to be discouraged. Christ came to save His people from their sins. The devil will come to you and tell you that you are a sinner and cannot be saved. But Christ says He came to save sinners. . . . Christ can pardon your sins. He says, "Come now, and let us reason together . . . : though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Oh, I want you to take the rich promises of God and hang memory's halls with them. What more could you want than that promise? We have the assurance that a mother can forget her nursing child but He will not forget us. Oh, I want the promises of God to be the living pictures on memory's walls, that you can look at them. Then your heart can be filled with His grace and you may exalt Jesus and crown Him Lord of all. That is your privilege.

Now I want to read Colossians 1:12: "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." There is something to be patient and long-suffering over — "who hath delivered us from the power of darkness." Yes, we should talk of deliverance, not of bondage; we should be joyful and not cast down. "And hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." Why can we not act as subjects of His kingdom? May the love of Christ burn on the altar of our hearts, and may you love Christ as your Saviour, and your brethren as yourself.

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Now we want to act like individuals who are redeemed by the blood of Christ; we are to rejoice in the blood of Christ and in the forgiveness of sins. That is what we are to do, and may God help us to get our minds off the dark pictures and think on those things that will give us light. . . .

Now, whenever we can see anything encouraging, put it in the paper [the *Review*], and talk about it. . . . Talk of the love of God and dwell

upon it; thank Him for it. Open the doors of your hearts and show forth your gratitude and love. Clear away this rubbish which Satan has piled before the door of your heart and let Jesus come in. . . . Talk of His goodness and power. . . .

Now, brethren and sisters, let us hope in God. Let gratitude enter into our hearts. And while we may have to bear plain testimony to separate from sin and iniquity, we do not want to be hammering upon that string forever. We want to lift up these souls that are cast down; we want them to catch that love of God and know that He will put His everlasting arms beneath them. . . . We want to look up; not down, but upward, upward, lifting the soul higher and still higher. I want these blessings and I will not rest satisfied until I am filled with all the fullness of God. Nothing can be greater than that, can it?

We want to be in that position where we shall perfect a Christian character and represent Jesus Christ to the world. Christ was sent as our pattern, and shall we not show that we have all His love and kindness and all His charms? And the love of Jesus Christ will take possession of our characters and our lives, and our conversation will be holy, and we will dwell on heavenly things. . . .

God Is Not An Enemy

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." He is not your enemy, He is your best friend, and He wishes us to show to the world that we have a God. He wants us to show that we have Jesus with us, and He is stronger than the strong man armed. Therefore, let us elevate our minds and our conversation, and seek for heaven and heavenly things. God help us when we are in this position, that we shall not be seeking after earthly things, but that we shall be charmed with the things of heaven. We want to "behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because

Notes

it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

I look over this congregation, and you look like discouraged men, like men who have been fighting with the powers of darkness; but courage, brethren! There is hope! . . .

Oh, I love Him. I love Him, for He is my love. I see in Him matchless charms, and oh, how I want that we shall enter in through the gates into the city. Then shall every crown be taken off from every head and cast at the feet of Jesus our blessed Redeemer. He has purchased it for me; He has purchased it for you, and we shall acknowledge Him Lord of all. And we shall cast all our honor at His feet and crown Him Lord of all. We shall shout, "Glory to God in the highest."

I wish we would learn to praise Him more. "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth" God. I wish you would talk of it. I wish you would educate your hearts and lips to praise Him, to talk of His power and glory. I wish you would tell of His power. When you do it you are elevating your Saviour, and when you lift that standard up against your enemy he will flee from you. God help us to praise Him more and to be found faultless. □

Manuscript 7, 1888.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is the best way to deal with discouragement?
2. What lesson can we learn from the lily that grows in the lake?
3. What role does the onlooking universe play in the great controversy? How can God's character be rightly represented?
4. What is the overall *impact* of this sermon on you? What chief *impressions* do you take from it?

Jesus Wants Me to Live With Him Forever

Note to Leaders/Parents: Through the following messages we intend to help children understand salvation through Jesus Christ. The principles come from Steps to Christ and are evidenced in the life of the apostle Peter. Re-reading Steps to Christ would be profitable to you in preparation for reading these messages.

Sabbath, September 3

Never Too Busy

Let's imagine what might have happened one day in Palestine when Jesus lived here on earth.

Mrs. Levi hurries to finish sweeping the floor. She puts the broom into the corner, washes her hands, and pats her hair into place. Going to the front door, she calls her two children, Sarah and Matthew. "Hurry, children. We have to go to the village square. Your uncle Simon told me that the great Rabbi is traveling through town today. I want Him to bless you."

As Mrs. Levi and her children walk down the street, neighbor women ask where they are going. "To see the Rabbi," they answer.

"Wait a minute. We'll come too." Mothers and children join in, and soon it looks like a parade going through town.

At the town square they see a large group of people in front of the synagogue. As the mothers push forward, they see a young, kind-looking Man seated in the middle of the crowd, talking with the people around Him. Mrs. Levi holds Sarah's and Matthew's hands and slips as close as she can get. "Is that the Rabbi?" she asks a man who seems to know what is going on.

"Yes," the man answers, "His name is Jesus."

"I'd like Him to bless my children," Mrs. Levi says. "There are a lot of other mothers with me. We've all brought our children to be blessed." The man doesn't look very happy. He says something to another man standing beside him. Mrs. Levi watches and hopes. She is too shy to go straight to Jesus. She hopes the men will help her meet the Rabbi. While Mrs. Levi watches, she notices that Jesus seems to know what is going on. But He seems to be waiting to see what the other men will do.

Finally, after talking for several minutes, the first man Mrs. Levi spoke with turns back to her and says, "I'm sorry." But Mrs.

Levi notices that he doesn't look very sorry—He looks annoyed.

"Jesus is very busy today. He is an important Man with many important things to do. He doesn't have time to spend with children. You should see your own rabbi if you want the

children blessed." With those words the man turns away.

Mrs. Levi feels terrible. The man had said the Rabbi was too busy. With a heavy heart she turns to go. Just then she hears a sweet, gentle voice calling her. "Mrs. Levi, don't go. I want to bless your children. Bring them to Me." Then, turning to the man who had told Mrs. Levi to leave, Jesus says, "Tell the other mothers to bring their children also."

"Come here, children," Jesus says. He puts Sarah on one knee and Matthew on the other. He talks to them for quite a while, then puts His hands on their heads and whispers a blessing. Then He smiles at Mrs. Levi.

We don't know what Jesus said to Sarah and Matthew that day. Maybe He asked Sarah about her pet lamb and Matthew about his studies. He might have found out that they felt sad because their grandfather was sick or that their father was out of work. Whatever was on Sarah's and Matthew's minds was important to Jesus.

We can be sure those children never forgot the day Jesus blessed them. They felt His love for them and His interest in them. It changed their whole lives.

Sometimes it is hard for us to believe the Bible or our teachers or our parents when they tell us that God loves us. We wonder how the God who owns and runs the whole universe has time for us. But God sent Jesus to live here on earth so we could see just what

God is like. So one way to know how God feels about us is to look at how Jesus treated the children and their mothers on that day so long ago. They were more important to Him than anything else. He took time for them. He



listened to them. He blessed them.

That is exactly how Jesus and His Father feel about us today. We are more important to Them than anything else. They will take time for us. They will listen to us. They will bless us.

Sunday, September 4

The Man Who Couldn't Walk on Water

Let's imagine what two boys might have talked about one morning after a terrible storm on the Sea of Galilee.

Benjamin and David have been friends ever since they were born. Their fathers are fishermen who spend almost every day either on the lake in their boats or repairing the nets they use to catch fish.

Last night a terrible storm raged on the lake, but now the sun is shining. The boys have finished their chores and are walking along the shore of the lake to see if anything interesting washed ashore.

"Do you remember the last storm we had?" David asks as he picks up a piece of driftwood and studies its shape.

"You mean the storm right after Jesus was here?"

"Yes," replies David, remembering the day Jesus fed the large crowd outside their small village.

"Well, my dad talked with Peter's family," says David, "and Peter now travels around with Jesus. Peter is one of His disciples."

"Oh, really?" Benjamin replies intently.

"Yes," continues David. "Jesus told the disciples to take the boat and meet Him at Capernaum."

Benjamin nods and then motions for David to continue. "It was getting dark, and a terrible storm blew down the mountainside onto the lake. Most of the disciples are terrific sailors and fishermen, but this storm was too much for them. They tried to row to shore, but the boat was tossed around on the lake like a piece of driftwood."

"I'm sure they wished Jesus were with them," Benjamin adds.

"You're probably right," David continues. "Just as they thought they would possibly die, they saw an unusual light moving across the water. When it got closer, they couldn't believe their eyes! It looked like Jesus walking across the water!" Benjamin sits amazed.

"And Peter, you know what he is like!" says David. "He called out and said, 'If You're really Jesus, ask me to come out there with You.' Then Jesus said, 'Come.' So Peter scrambled over the edge of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus!"

"What happened next?" Benjamin asks in suspense.

"Well, he started acting really proud walking across the waves. He looked back at the boat to see if everyone was watching. But when he took his eyes off Jesus, he started sinking. He looked back toward Jesus, but a wave blocked his view. He became frightened and cried out, 'Master, save me,' and Jesus grabbed his hand, and they walked over to the boat together and got in."

"Wow," Benjamin replies.

"I bet Peter quickly learned how important it is to keep his eyes on Jesus!"

Yes, David thinks. *That's a lesson we all need to learn.*

We can get into trouble when we start thinking about ourselves instead of relying on Jesus. Some-

times we get to thinking that we're doing pretty well as Christians. We obey our parents and are kind to our brothers and sisters. We don't lose our tempers on the playground at school. We do our homework every night and then study our Sabbath school lesson before going to bed.

But you know what happens? The more we think we are doing great, the more trouble we are in. That is because we can't resist temptation except when we are relying on Jesus. He is our only source of strength.

Monday, September 5

The Silly Flower Seed

Yesterday we learned what happened when Peter took his eyes off Jesus—he almost drowned. Peter learned too that Jesus gave him the power to walk on the water and to resist temptation.

Today let's imagine that a flower seed decides it wants to grow in Mr. Brown's flower bed. It says to itself, "I'm going to go over to Mr.

Brown's yard and plant myself in the flower bed by the fence. I'll plant myself one inch deep because that's the best depth for a flower like me. After I'm planted,



I'll water myself and fertilize myself and sprout. After I grow a little, I'll peek my head through the soil and sprout two leaves. I'll grow about a foot a week, and soon I'll be a beautiful carnation. I'd rather be a carnation than a daffodil because carnations smell better."

Boys and girls, when we try to live good Christian lives without relying on Jesus for strength, we are just as silly as the flower seed trying to grow all by itself. In fact, we are in much more danger than Peter was in when he tried to walk on water in the middle of a storm.

God gives us Jesus' strength because we don't have enough of our own. We never will have enough. But when we give our lives to God and pray for the power we need to live a Christian life, He performs the miracle He promised to perform. That miracle happens when the Holy Spirit comes to live right inside us to help us. Let's ask God to perform that miracle in us today, shall we?

Tuesday, September 6

Caught by a Rooster

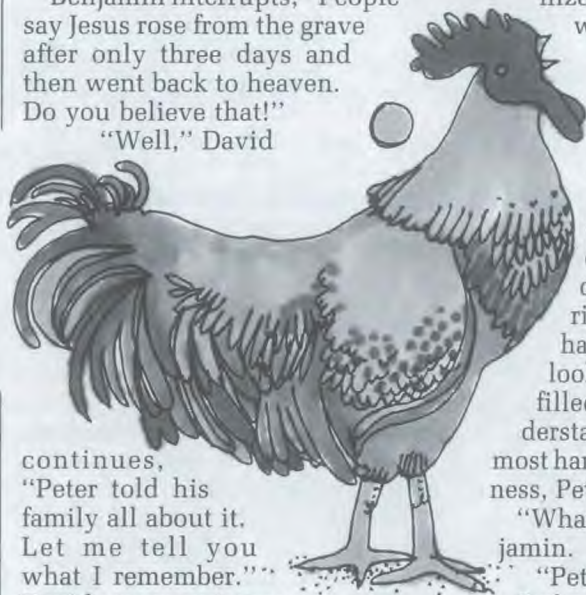
Let's imagine that a couple of years have gone by since David and Benjamin's conversation about the storm on Galilee. The boys don't have as much time together as they once did because they're spending more time fishing with their fathers to earn money for the family.

On this particular day they have finished their work sooner than they had planned. Since they have extra time to visit with each other, they choose to walk along the shores of Galilee once more.

"My dad was talking with Peter's family the other day," David says. "Dad wanted to know what caused the change in Peter since Jesus died."

Benjamin interrupts, "People say Jesus rose from the grave after only three days and then went back to heaven. Do you believe that!"

"Well," David



continues, "Peter told his family all about it. Let me tell you what I remember."

David gazes out across the blue water and seems to gather his thoughts.

"You remember hearing that Jesus was captured in the Garden of Gethsemane and taken to trial during Passover?" Benjamin nods. "Well, just before that, all the disciples were celebrating the Passover with Jesus. He told them a lot of things that didn't seem to make much sense to them. One thing He said was that Peter would deny Jesus three times that very night before the rooster crowed.

"Well, you know how Peter is—he's always talking before he thinks. I guess it made Peter pretty upset to think that Jesus didn't trust him. Peter told Jesus that he would rather die than deny Him." Benjamin chuckles as he listens to David. He knows exactly what Peter was like when he lived in their village.

"Anyhow," David continues,

"Peter and John followed Jesus and ended up in the courtyard outside the place where the Sanhedrin meets. John was quiet and everyone seemed to leave him alone, although I guess most of them knew he was one of Jesus' disciples.

"But Peter was afraid he'd be recognized and captured, so he sneaked over to the fire to warm himself. Someone, though, recognized him and asked him if he was Jesus' disciple. He said no. He even answered no a second and a third time to some others who thought he was a disciple of Jesus.

"Then he heard a rooster crow at that moment. The crowd parted, and Peter could see Jesus looking right at him. He said that he had never seen such a sad look, but that Jesus' eyes were filled with kindness and understanding, too. That was almost harder to look at than His sadness, Peter said."

"What did Peter do?" asks Benjamin.

"Peter went to the Garden of Gethsemane to be alone. In spite of his terrible sin, he knew God could and would forgive him. So he spent the rest of the night in Gethsemane, right where Jesus had spent hours praying before His arrest. Peter said he gave himself to God completely and admitted he could not live a Christlike life in his own power. He asked God to give him the power he needed."

"You know, that same night another disciple, Judas, confessed that he betrayed Jesus," Benjamin says.

"Yes," David replies, "but he confessed only because he was afraid of the punishment coming, not because he felt sorry for what he had done."

Jesus forgives our sins only when we are truly sorry for them. And He is willing to give us the power we need to live a Christlike life, just as He gave Peter the strength to live for Him.

Wednesday, September 7

The Car With No Engine

Yesterday we heard about Peter denying Christ, about his terrible sadness for that sin.

Imagine for a moment that your parents have asked you not to go to the neighbor's house to play. But you really want to go. Your friend has a new game that you want to try. So when you think no one is watching, you go next door. You have a good time, but when it comes time to go home, you get nervous. What is Mother or Dad going to do to you?

You decide to try to get out of trouble by confessing right away. You tell your mother you're sorry you disobeyed her and promise to do better in the future. But are you confessing because you are genuinely sorry for doing something wrong and you really intend, with God's help, to change? Or are you not really sorry, and are confessing because you hope to escape the punishment of doing wrong?

Peter confessed because he was genuinely sorry; Judas confessed because he hoped to escape punishment.

True repentance is being sorry for our sins and willing to turn away from them. After we feel sorrowful, we confess the sin to God and to the people involved. We shouldn't just say "I'm sorry"; we also should say what we're sorry for: "I'm sorry I broke your vase, Mother." "I'm sorry I called you a

name, Susan." "I'm sorry I cheated on my test, Teacher."

Sometimes people make another mistake when they realize they have sinned. They try to make themselves better before they return to Jesus. We forget that even before we realize we have sinned, Jesus is working on our heart through His Holy Spirit, leading us to see our wrong and to feel sorry. Every step along the way, Jesus is working with us and through us to make us the kind of people He wants us to be.

We simply cannot make *ourselves* better. That is as silly as a flower seed trying to pick where and how it is going to grow. It's as silly as a person fixing up the outside of a car—washing it, painting it, and polishing it—when there isn't any engine. Sure, you can go somewhere in a car without an engine, but you'll have to push it or pull it everywhere you go. God is like the engine of a car. He is the power for our lives.

During this Week of Prayer let's take a few minutes to review what we've learned about how Jesus works with us.

1. We need a Saviour. There is only one Saviour—Jesus. God sent Him into this world so we could know what God is like. God is exactly like Jesus because Jesus is God. He loves us and will take time for us no matter how other people treat us.

2. We are lost without a Saviour. We need His power every day to live the way He wants us to live. Every time we get proud and think we can do things on our own, we are in danger of losing sight of Jesus, just as Peter lost sight of Jesus when he was trying to walk on water.

3. Our Saviour will forgive us even if we hurt Him. We must be truly sorry for our sins and turn away from them.

4. Jesus will work with us and help us be the kind of people He wants us to be.

Thursday, September 8

Empty Nets

Let's imagine what David and Benjamin might have talked about on a day soon after their last conversation. Today they are not on their fathers' fishing boats, but they are mending nets. Usually their fathers don't let them work together because they talk too much. But the boys have promised to get everything done if they can work together. Their fathers said they could try it.

"I went with Father to visit Peter's family last night," David begins after the boys settled down to their task. "I found out more about what has happened since Jesus died."

"Tell me." Benjamin is eager to hear.

"Well, Mary Magdalene and some of the other women who were going to anoint Jesus' body with spices on Sunday morning found Jesus' tomb empty. They were afraid someone had stolen His body, so they ran and told Peter and John what had happened."

"It is kind of hard to believe," says Benjamin, who doesn't know whether he would have believed the women or not.

"Anyhow," David goes on, "an angel told the women to be sure to tell the disciples and Peter that Jesus would be in Galilee before they were."

"You mean the angel said Peter's

name, but not the others'?" Benjamin asks.

"Yes. That made Peter feel a lot better, I can tell you. He had been feeling pretty low since the trial when he denied Christ.

"It seems that Jesus appeared to several groups of disciples during the next several weeks. Of course, some people don't believe that Jesus was raised from the dead. But I can tell you, Peter certainly does."

"Any special reason?" asks Benjamin, who has finished mending one part of the net. He carefully checks other places until he finds another spot that needs his attention.

"Well, as soon as the Passover ended, seven of the disciples walked to Galilee as quickly as they could. According to Peter's family, they found a quiet spot not far from here where they knew they would not be disturbed. Since they hadn't been fishing for a long time, they decided to fish. They fished all night without catching anything."

"What?" Benjamin can hardly believe that. "That certainly doesn't happen very often this time of year."

"Well, I don't know how hard they fished. According to the story I heard, they spent a lot of time talking about Jesus and remembering their travels with Him during the past three years."

"Peter always did like to talk."

Benjamin smiles as he remembers the tough, friendly man.

"That morning a Man standing on the beach called to them as they came toward shore. 'Do you have anything to eat?' He called. 'No,' they shouted back, 'we fished all night, but we didn't catch anything.'

"Now comes the amazing part of the story," David says. "Put your nets into the water on the other side of the boat," the Stranger called. As soon as they did, the nets were so full of fish that they almost broke."

"I'm glad we aren't mending those nets today," Benjamin sighs with relief.

"When that happened," David continues, "Peter realized that the Man on the shore was Jesus. Good old Peter. He jumped over the side of the boat and waded in toward shore. Soon everyone realized who was on shore. The disciples were so happy to see Jesus that they didn't know what to do next. Jesus had to remind them to bring the nets in toward shore."

"Wow," Benjamin responds. "I wish I could have been one of the disciples who got to talk with Jesus personally."

"Yes," David adds, "but you still can! Even though He is now in heaven, He is still as close to us when we need Him as He was to the disciples when they needed Him. All we have to do is pray."

"That's nice to know," Benjamin responds.

At this moment the boys hear their names being called. "It must be lunchtime," Benjamin says. "I'll meet you back here soon. I want to hear the rest of the story."

Friday, September 9

Hungry Sheep and Lambs

Yesterday David and Benjamin talked about what happened to Peter and the other disciples after Jesus had been raised from the dead. Jesus had told the disciples to meet Him by Galilee, so they had gone there just as quickly as they could.

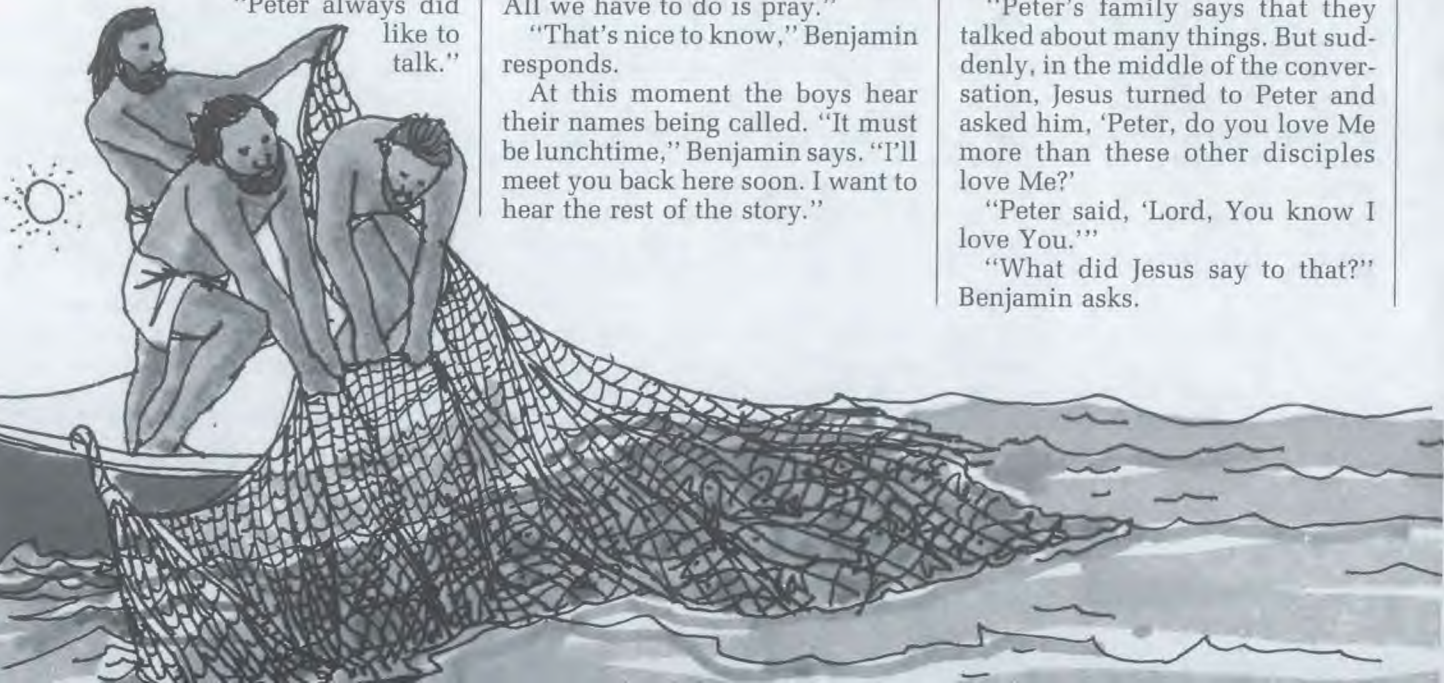
Today Benjamin eats his lunch so quickly that his mother has to tell him to slow down. Then she wants him to bring her some wood. Finally he races back to the shore. David is already mending nets once more.

"Well," says Benjamin as he settles down and picks up the net, "what happened after they pulled the nets in to shore?"

"Peter's family says that they talked about many things. But suddenly, in the middle of the conversation, Jesus turned to Peter and asked him, 'Peter, do you love Me more than these other disciples love Me?'

"Peter said, 'Lord, You know I love You.'"

"What did Jesus say to that?" Benjamin asks.



"He told Peter to feed His lambs."

"Lambs? What lambs?" Benjamin is confused.

"Well, Jesus meant that Peter was to tell people about Jesus and God. Jesus called Himself the Good Shepherd, you know. He was taking care of people like a good shepherd takes care of his sheep."

"Oh, I think I understand," Benjamin answers.

"Anyhow, Jesus wasn't finished with Peter yet. Twice more He asked Peter if he loved Him. And Peter said he did. And Jesus told Peter twice more to feed His sheep."

"He asked Peter three times if he loved Jesus?"

"Yes, it must have had something to do with Peter's denying Jesus three times during the trial."

"I don't think he'll forget that," Benjamin says.

"What else happened?"

"I don't know much more," David replies. "We'll have to wait until Peter visits again before we hear anything else."

"There," he continues, "I'm all done with this net. Let me help you finish."

Sabbath, September 10

The Man God Made Again

During most of this past week we've looked at the life of Peter. In his life we see how Jesus works as our Saviour. He calls us to follow Him just as He called Peter to be His disciple. He is patient with us

while we learn about Him. All of that takes time, but during that time we are changing.

We will make mistakes sometimes. We might trust in our own power instead of trusting in Jesus, as Peter did when he was trying to walk on the water. We might even cause people to think that we don't know Jesus at all, as Peter did the night of the trial. But even though we make mistakes, Jesus keeps right on loving us and working with us. He loves us just as we are.

If we make mistakes like Peter's, you can be sure that Jesus will ask us to make those mistakes right. Ellen White tells us in *The Desire of Ages* that Jesus asked Peter those questions by the Sea of Galilee so that Peter could repent and confess before his brothers in Christ and regain their confidence.

Then, when He had Peter's confession, Jesus entrusted him with the important work of telling others about Christ. Peter went on to play an important role in the formation of the early Christian church. He was a changed man because he had met the Saviour.

For a few minutes let's talk about another man who met Jesus. Back in the early 1900s in Idaho, Harry Orchard was a hired killer. He worked for labor unions that were trying to get the control of the mining industry of Idaho away from the mine owners. Harry would set bombs to interrupt the work in the mines. As many as 10 people died in those bombings.

But when Harry set a bomb that killed the former governor of Idaho, Frank Steunenberg, he got caught, went to trial, and was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Harry lived at the Idaho State Penitentiary more than 50 years until he died in his 80s. But he wasn't unhappy. You know why? Because something wonderful happened—he met Jesus.

It happened this way. The widow of the last man Harry killed was a Seventh-day Adventist. God worked a miracle in her life, and

she didn't feel hatred toward the man who killed her husband. Instead, she prayed for Harry. She did more than pray; she sent her son to the prison to take Harry some Christian literature and ask him to read it and turn to the Lord.

Harry said, "I was prepared for harsh words from him [young Steunenberg], but the kind words he spoke broke me all up."

The Christian interest shown him by the family he had hurt was the means God used to change Harry Orchard's life. He became known as "the man God made again."

Harry had a great influence in prison. Often when criminals were sad or in difficulty they would call for Harry. They wanted Harry to pray with and for them. In his later years Harry lived outside the prison walls and raised 10,000 chickens as a prison industry.

My dad worked for the Idaho Conference of Seventh-day Adventists during that time, and he visited Harry. "In those days," my dad says, "we used to give ribbons to people who read the Bible through in a year. No one had ever taken Harry his ribbons, so one day I took him more than 30 because he had faithfully read the Bible through each year after his conversion."

Boys and girls, God sent His Son to this world to show us how we could live and to give us a Saviour. Each time we ask for Jesus' love and power to become part of our lives, that prayer will be answered. God wants us to learn how to love and serve Him here on earth so that we can become the kind of people who will be happy to live with Him forever.



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A Message From the President

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Faith:

A century has passed since the Seventh-day Adventist Church went through a crisis that came to a head at the 1888 General Conference session in Minneapolis. And here we are in 1988 still facing the challenges and disappointments of an unfinished task. Among our believers, many are probably asking, "What happened in 1888 and what does it mean for the church today?"

For the pioneers of our movement, who lived before 1888, the living grace of Christ was a precious experience and a comforting reality. However, it seems that in focusing on the doctrines peculiar to Adventism, our early believers unconsciously neglected this glorious truth, and their religious experience became increasingly lukewarm.

As the church grew, the attacks against it multiplied. Countless publications denouncing our "heresies" appeared everywhere. And in the attempt to defend the doctrines we hold, our ministers, members, and leaders became more and more involved in apologetics and less and less Christ-centered. As a result, the church began to face the prospect of alarming apathy and spiritual decline.

Concerned by the pernicious effects of a religious experience without the power and attraction of the cross, two young ministers rose before the delegates to the historic session in 1888 and proclaimed with boldness and fervor "the matchless charms of Christ."

Their messages were viewed by some as a dangerous deviation from traditional Adventism but were received by others as "apples of gold in pictures of silver." Those who were blessed by their ministry testified that they had never before received such comforting assurance.

In spite of some misunderstandings and confrontations, the 1888 experience was a victory in many respects. The eyes of our believers were opened and directed toward Jesus and His changeless love for us, and a wave of joy swept over them. They saw the majesty, righteousness, and glory of Jesus in all His fullness.

During this Week of Prayer, the meaning of, and the lessons to be learned from, the 1888 message will be presented by different writers. May the Lord help us to put aside theological differences that could eventually separate us, and focus our eyes on Jesus and thus transform this week into a season of refreshing blessings.

Once again the messages for the Week of Prayer come to us through the *Adventist Review*. How thankful I am for this vehicle of communication for the world family! Many of you receive this paper on a weekly or monthly basis. If you are not subscribing to it, I encourage you to take steps now to ensure its regular arrival in your home.

And as you prayerfully study the readings on righteousness by faith in this issue, may you see Jesus, "the Man of matchless charms."

Neal C. Wilson
President, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists