

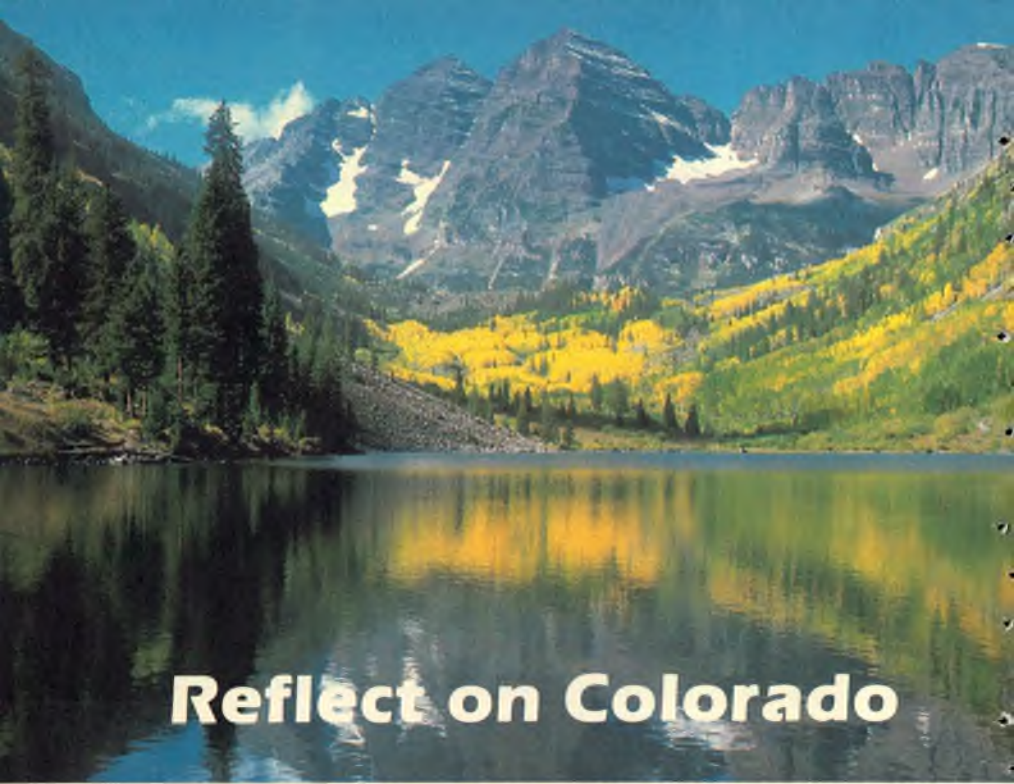


FAITH ALIVE

Collegiate Quarterly

July-September 1983

A North American Youth Ministries Publication



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Photo by Steve Nobis

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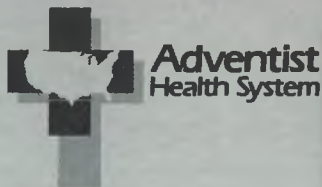
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THE FAR EAST SAYS THANK YOU



Two years ago you, the members of the worldwide Seventh-day Adventist family invested \$330,000 in the spreading of the gospel in the Far East. As a result of that Special Projects Offering nearly 100 village chapels stand today in the Philippines, and the girls of Mt. Clabat College in Indonesia enjoy a new dormitory.

Pictured above are the Simanggang jungle chapel and the Tual village chapel, both built as a result of your 1978 Special Projects Offering. For your love and generosity through the years, we in the Far East thank you.

Third quarter, 1983, brings the Far East to your attention once again. The projects we present for your prayerful support are: Expansion of our meager publishing facilities in Taiwan; upgrading of Timor Academy; construction of an administration building for Okinawa Junior Academy; and a new classroom block for Marshall Islands Seventh-day Adventist Academy.

The work of God in the Far Eastern Division has been blessed richly over the years through the Sabbath School Special Projects Offerings. Thank you again for your sacrifice.

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Collegiate Quarterly is written by faculty, students, and friends of the Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities in North America. Organized under the Union College Board of Trustees, it is coordinated by the Campus Ministry and published with the approval of the North American Division Church Ministries Committee.

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FAITH ALIVE

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INVESTING IN SABBATH SCHOOL

How would you rank the following as spiritual priorities in your life: Sabbath School, church, Friday vespers, Bible classes, and personal devotions?

My guess is that a survey of North American college-age Adventists would show that Sabbath School ranks fairly low on the list of priorities. A number of reasons might account for this. The harried college student, with mental and physical resources utterly depleted after a rigorous week of lectures, labs, and exams and extracurriculars (not to mention three successive days of "soya-cheese surprise" in the cafeteria) may find the extra hour of sleep irresistible; especially since showing up at church seems adequately sufficient to placate the conscience.

Perhaps also Sabbath School suffers on campus because of its name. Who wants to go to "school" on the weekends?

How can Sabbath School take on a distinctive meaning that makes it a high priority experience? Like most anything else, Sabbath School won't pay off unless you make an investment in it. And I suggest that it *will* pay off if you:

1) Make a personal investment in studying the Scripture. There is no substitute for encountering the Word of God, one-on-one, through Scripture. The *Collegiate Quarterly* isn't intended to be a substitute for studying the Bible. Its purpose is to help you think through the Scriptural themes.

So, read for yourself the passages on the Logos page and the key texts for each day. Without doing this, reading the comments in the *Collegiate Quarterly* would be something like sipping the fizz off the top of a glass of soda pop and then not touching the drink itself. The real "punch," and reward, is in God's Word itself.

2) Make a personal investment in studying the Scripture with people. The idea of being slavishly bound to the quarterly topic every week may seem antiquated. But if Sabbath School discussions are to be more than spiritual rap sessions, they need to involve a group of people who have covenanted to study a particular topic together.

If a group of people who have made a personal investment in studying the same topic during the week get together on Sabbath morning, imagine how the dividends will be multiplied. Not only will we learn from one another, but strong, eternal bonds of friendship will be established and maintained through the weekly interaction.

Each edition of the *Collegiate Quarterly*, of course, represents a major joint investment of time and creativity from scores of students, teachers and others throughout North America. We can never thank these contributors enough, for it is they who *make* the *Collegiate Quarterly*.

With this edition we are pleased to introduce Evert McDowell, who, as acting editor, joins in coordinating the corporate effort which produces the quarterly, in addition to making a major creative contribution himself. He is a junior theology and English major at Union College. Like most PKs, he can claim any number of places as home, including South Africa, Ontario, Canada and currently, Kansas.

Selene Peck, a sophomore English major from Iowa nicely rounds out the editorial team. Unfortunately (for us) by the time this is in print, her stint as associate editor will have been interrupted for another form of service: she and her husband will be student missionaries in Indonesia during 1983-1984.

Douglas Morgan

Douglas Morgan
Editorial Director

COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY PROFILE



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June 26-July 2

Salvation's Source

"In the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed . . ."
(Romans 1:17, NIV).



by Calvin Miller

The Broken Key

The Singer is Calvin Miller's interpretation of Christ's ministry. What do the symbols in the following excerpt say to you about this week's theme?

INTRODUCTION

In the morning, the wreckage of the great machine lay in splintered beams beneath the wall. It had fallen in the night. The great iron pinions that held it to the ancient stones had given way.

The whole affair had been so wrapped in mist that none had seen its fall. But all had heard the roar and crash of its collapse.

The city had not slept. A common guilt had kept them thinking of the man who died above them and the holiday that they had passed in emptiness. And when they had tried to sleep, the image of the Singer etched itself upon the darkness of the night. They felt unspoken shame in merely being sons and grandsons of the masons and carpenters who had made the great machine in centuries long gone.

When Terra shuddered in the night, the old machine had torn itself away and splintered in a single heap of rotted wood and rusted iron. And many in the peaceless night remarked that it was odd the Singer and the old machine should die in the self-same moment.

Shortly after daybreak the wreckage lay behind a civil barricade and a crew of laborers was sent to clear the chaos from the streets. A group of men lifted the heavy beams. Ox-drawn sledges took them well beyond the city gates.

Each workman feared that he might be the one to come upon the mangled body of the Singer who now lay buried in the last remains of the machine. The heavy drayage of debris lasted into early afternoon.

A workman finally spied the giant tension cable that drew the heavy chains. He feared to see the mutilation he would find beneath the tangled cables and the ropes.

But when he had pulled the final chains away, the manacles were empty. And where the Singer should have been there lay only a key—a great key forged from a metal never mined on earth. When the workman stooped to pick it up he found that it was broken. It was clear that whatever door it might have fit would never see its use again. That nameless door would remain forever locked or open. For a moment the workman wondered which. "Open," he thought. "Yes, definitely open."

He pondered the great key. Was it of any consequence? Should he report it to the Grand Musician? He finally threw the broken key into a passing ox-cart filled with wreckage. He shrugged his shoulders and set out to find the overseer.

At length he found the foreman sent to direct the clean-up operation at the wall. "Tell the Grand Musician," he said, "there is no body in the wreckage and the manacles are empty."

Excerpted from *The Singer* by Calvin Miller, pp. 135-137. Copyright © 1975 by Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship and used by permission of InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois 60615.

Calvin Miller is an author and pastor in Omaha, Nebraska.

June 26
Sunday

From One Alone

LOGOS

It would seem that the concept of salvation coming from God alone would be simple enough to grasp and accept. However, as we examine the human experience, we find that this isn't always true. Today we will be looking at the lives of three pious Jews. Their examples show a variety of responses to the truth that God is the only source of salvation.

Nicodemus could have refused the life from above which Jesus offered by pleading that his high position as a religious leader and upright life merited God's favor. Jesus startled Nicodemus by saying, "I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5, NIV). This applies to all individuals no matter what their station in life or their style of living. Everyone must be born from above and accept the gift of salvation which Jesus has offered in their behalf.

Another man came to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?"

"If you want to enter life, obey the commandments."

"Which ones?" the man inquired.

"Jesus replied, 'Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, honor your father and mother,' and 'love your neighbor as yourself.'"

"All these I have kept," the young man said. "What do I still lack?"

"Jesus answered, 'If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me'" (Matt. 19:16-21, NIV). Unfortunately the young man was not interested, he had great wealth and did not want to give it up. He thought that he could be righteous by following the commandments and he was not prepared for any sacrificing of self. He left Jesus that day rich in goods but destitute of eternal life. He turned away from the sole source of salvation.

Our final example is Daniel, who remained a devoted servant of God while a captive in Babylon. Daniel was a constant student of the scriptures. Knowing that the seventy-year period of captivity for the Jews predicted by Jeremiah (see Jer. 29:10) was near its fulfillment, he prayed for the promised deliverance.

He prayed with a heart full of earnestness, identifying himself with a sinful people. "We do not make requests of you because we are righteous, but because of your mercy. O Lord, listen! O Lord forgive! O Lord, hear and act! For your sake, O my God, do not delay, because your city and your people bear your Name" (Dan. 9:17, 18, NIV). Daniel thus fully recognized that no matter how great the piety of himself or his people, there is no saving power to be found in humanity.

Where, then, is the power that yields salvation? Paul shows us by declaring, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes. . . . For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: 'The righteous will live by faith'" (Rom. 1:16, 17, NIV, emphasis supplied).

S.D.P.

Heads or Tails?

Too often we consider only one side of a two-sided coin. In our eagerness to show our love for God, by keeping His commandments, we emphasize the importance of obedience and we readily quote statements from Ellen White like the following:

"Righteousness is right doing, and it is by their deeds that all will be judged. Our characters are revealed by what we do. The works show whether the faith is genuine.

"It is not enough for us to believe that Jesus is not an imposter, and that the religion of the Bible is no cunningly devised fable. We may believe that the name of Jesus is the only name under heaven whereby man may be saved, and yet we may not through faith make Him our personal Saviour. It is not enough to believe the theory of truth. It is not enough to make a profession of faith in Christ and have our names registered on the church roll. 'He that keepeth His commandments dwelleth in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us.' 'Hereby we do know that we know Him if we keep His commandments'. 1 John 3:24; 2:3. This is the genuine evidence of conversion. Whatever our profession, it amounts to nothing unless Christ is revealed in works of righteousness."¹

Perhaps it is time to flip the coin to the other side and seriously consider what else Ellen White has written.

"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. Salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ alone."²

"Let the subject be made distinct and plain that it is not possible to effect anything in our standing before God or in the gift of God to us through creature merit. Should faith and works purchase the gift of salvation for anyone, then the Creator is under obligation to the creature. Here is an opportunity for falsehood to be accepted as truth. If any man can merit salvation by anything he may do, then he is in the same position as the Catholic to do penance for his sins. Salvation, then, is partly of debt, that may be earned as wages. If man cannot, by any of his good works, merit salvation, then it must be wholly of grace, received by man as a sinner because he receives and believes in Jesus. It is wholly a free gift."³

"Justification is wholly of grace and not procured by any works that fallen man may do."⁴

TESTIMONY

Key text:
Acts 4:12

"It is not possible to effect anything in our standing before God . . . through creature merit."

1. *Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 312-313.

2. *Faith and Works*, p. 19.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

An Opening Into Paradise

by Martin Luther

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Romans 1:16, 17

Editor's note: One of the most significant events in the history of Christianity was Martin Luther's "tower experience"—his breakthrough in understanding the "justice" or "righteousness" of God in Romans 1:17. Below is his description of the experience and its significance for understanding the source of salvation.

I had been seized upon by a certain wonderful desire to understand Paul in Romans. No lack of seriousness had hitherto stood in my way, but only a single statement in the first chapter: "The justice of God is revealed in the Gospel." I had, of course, conceived a hatred of the phrase, "justice of God," because, in conformity with the custom of all theologians, I had been taught to understand it philosophically as formal or active justice, whereby God is just and punishes sinners and the unjust.

Though as a friar I had led a blameless life, I felt myself to be a sinner before God, with a totally restless conscience, and I could not be confident that I had reconciled God by my satisfactions. Hence I did not love, but rather I hated the just God who punishes sinners. Thus I was angry with God, if not in secret blasphemy, at least in strong grumbling, and I said: It is not enough that wretched sinners and those lost forever because of original sin should be oppressed according to the law of the Old Covenant with every sort of calamity. No, God also intends to heap affliction upon affliction by the Gospel, while menacingly holding out to us his justice and his anger through the good tidings. And so I was frantic, upset and raving in conscience, and struggled relentlessly with that passage of Paul, filled with an ardent desire to know what Paul meant.

After days and nights of meditation God finally took pity on me and I noted the inner connection of the two passages: "The justice of God is revealed in the Gospel, as it is written, 'The just man lives by faith.'" Then I began to understand the justice of God as that by which the just man lives, thanks to the gift of God, that is, by faith; that the justice of God, which is revealed by the Gospel, is to be understood in the passive sense; that God in his mercy justifies us by faith, as it is written: "The just man lives by faith."¹ At once I felt myself to be reborn and as though I had entered paradise through the opened gates. Holy Scripture immediately showed me another face. I then went through Scripture, as my memory presented it, and found a corresponding meaning in the other passages. For example, the "work of God" is what God works in us; the "strength of God" is that whereby he makes us strong; the "wisdom of God" is that by which he makes us wise. In a similar manner are to be understood the "power of God," "salvation of God," "glory of God."

Just as great as was my hate with which I had previously encountered the phrase, "justice of God," so great was now my love with which I glorified it as the sweetest word of all. Thus did this Pauline passage really become for me a gate to paradise.²

1. Luther's meaning here is clarified by a comment on the same passage in the *Table Talks*: "If we, as just, must live by faith and if the justice of God must bring about salvation in everyone who believes, then it must be not our merit but the mercy of God." Quoted in Erwin Iserloh, Joseph Glazik and Hubert Jedin, *Reformation and Counter Reformation* (New York: Seabury Press, 1980), p. 34.

2. This passage from the introduction to Volume 1 of Luther's Latin works is quoted in Iserloh, Glazik, and Jedin, *Reformation and Counter Reformation*, pp. 35-36.

All We Like Sheep

by Lawrence S. Kidder

HOW TO

Key text:
Luke 15:1-7

Sheep are born stupid. They have a severely limited ability to think for themselves in a rational manner. They must constantly be watched in order to keep them from doing totally "brainless" acts. They need a leader—one who finds safe pastureland for them, who knows of unpolluted pools of water where they can drink, and who leads them back to a secure fold each night.

Human beings, too, are born stupid. As infants, they need a concerned parent hovering over their crib to fill every need and quiet their lusty cries. As toddlers, they need someone to protect them from themselves—someone to say, "That's a no-no," when they reach out to touch the "pretty orange stove," or put razorblades in their mouth, or start a little fire on the living room rug.

In essence, the basics of the Gospel are included in the parable of the lost sheep. God, like the Good Shepherd, is looking for us (implying that we are all lost). Not only has He worked out a simple, yet intricate, plan to save us and offered it to us as a gift, He also comes looking for us.

1. **We're all in the same condition.** Any one of the 99 sheep still in the fold would be just as pitiful and confused as the lost sheep if they were in the same position. It is God that gives us what security we have. Our efforts have nothing to do with our actual salvation.

2. **The Shepherd was able to find the lost sheep because of its helpless bleating.** The sheep had realized that its short "freedom" had actually turned into a nightmare. It was now far more confined and "shackled" than the 99 sheep safe in the fold. We, too, must realize our helplessness and call for God to help us.

3. **The Shepherd carried the exhausted sheep back to the fold.** When the sheep had realized it was lost, all attempts to find its own way back proved futile. When the Shepherd found it, it had no energy left and death was near. Our struggles, too, will prove futile.

4. **The sheep was not scolded for getting lost and exhibiting stupidity.** The Shepherd showed tenderness and love. Likewise, God realizes our exceedingly sinful natures and does not scold us but carries us back to the safety of His supervision.

It is important for every human being to realize that they are in dire need of God's supervision in their lives. The work of the Christian is in yielding to that supervision and not attempting it alone. Then we, like the rest of God's perfect Universe, will learn to rely totally on Him for our existence because He is the sole Source.

Solo Deo

by Tito Correa

OPINION

Key text:
Psalm 62:1-2

There is an old Spanish story about a farmer whose crops were almost ruined by the lack of rain. Needing about \$100 to save his farm, he wrote a letter to God, and asked for the money he needed. When the postmaster received the letter, his curiosity and compassion overcame him. Realizing the farmer's need, he decided to help. He took up a collection among his fellow workers, which raised \$75. Proud of his good heart he placed the money in an envelope, and patiently waited for the farmer to come. When the farmer came, the postmaster secretly observed what he hoped would be an exciting reaction. After taking the money out of the envelope, the farmer wrote another letter to God. When the postmaster noticed the letter he immediately opened and read:

Dear God:

Thank you for the money. I must tell you, however, that I only received \$75. Next time you send me something, do not send it by mail. These guys in the post office are a bunch of crooks.

No doubt the unique relationship of trust between the farmer and God leaves us thinking about our own relationship with God. If faith could be measured or rated, what grade would you give the farmer's faith? What about your faith? Is your relationship with God one of a total dependence on Him?

The activity of God as the exclusive source of salvation for humanity has been the theme of this week. History shows that Adventists have come a long way in understanding salvation. Emphasis on the Law and especially the Sabbath gave the church an appearance of legalism. Though our church did not actually teach legalism, we did go through a period when some of us were believing in salvation by works. The messages of Minneapolis in 1888, and more recently at Palmdale in 1976, have clearly stated that our church supports the Reformation view of salvation by grace through faith. Does this mean that the debate has ended? By no means! We will be discussing the subject of salvation for a long time, in fact, throughout eternity.

What is salvation? Adventist theologian Hans LaRondelle has responded in this way: "Salvation is not the achievement of man's own doing or willing or thinking. Salvation is a gift from God! This gift is God Himself, manifested in His Son, Christ Jesus. The source of salvation is a Person."¹ There! It is not our works nor our faith that saves us, but God alone.

All the credit should go to Him that saved us all. It may be concluded that man's only part in salvation is believing in God and accepting His will. But are not even these qualities the product of God's gift of freedom? God is the source of salvation, God is salvation. David testified triumphantly, "My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from Him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; He is my fortress, I will never be shaken!" (Psalm 62:1, 2).

In short, salvation and the source of salvation is *Solo Deo*. God alone.

1. Hans LaRondelle, *Christ Our Salvation* (Mountain View, Calif: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1980), p. 6.

1. What do you think the broken key in the Introduction symbolizes?
 2. Discuss the significance of the following phrases in the Introduction with regard to the theme of this week's lesson:
 - a) "They felt unspoken shame in merely being sons and grandsons of the masons and carpenters who had made the great machine in centuries long ago."
 - b) ". . . it was odd the Singer and the old machine should die in the self-same moment."
 3. Compare and contrast the attitudes of Nicodemus, the rich young ruler and Daniel (see Logos). What do they have in common? How did each relate to the concept of salvation being found in God alone?
 4. Develop a mental profile of what a modern Nicodemus, rich young ruler or Daniel might be like. Can you identify with any of them? Compare your concepts with those of other class members.
 5. Summarize in your own words what Luther discovered in his "tower experience" (Evidence). Why do you think he felt the discovery to be so momentous?
 6. Can faith be measured or graded (see Opinion)? How much faith is necessary to be saved?
 7. Do we sometimes place the following alongside God as sources of salvation? If so, are we correct in so doing?
 - a) Sabbath observance
 - b) involvement in the church
 - c) faith
 - d) the devotional life
 - e) anything else. . .
-

July 3-9

Facets of Faith

"The righteous will live by his faith" (Habakkuk 2:4, NIV).



by Beth Anderson

Acting on Faith

INTRO- DUCTION

When I was a little girl, my parents didn't always have an easy time making ends meet. I remember one month that was particularly bad. We just didn't have the money to cover the bills. Mother was in charge of the finances and although she was worried, she trusted in God and prayed about our problem.

But Mother wasn't one to pray and then just wait for God to place a twenty dollar bill under her pillow. She had a faith that acted. The next day she called an antique dealer to come out and look at a few items she had, hoping this would bring enough money in to pay the bills.

The antique dealer didn't seem overly interested in anything until Mother showed him an old bureau she had bought for five dollars at a summer camp that had closed down.

I was in the next room trying to practice my piano lesson and eavesdrop on their conversation at the same time. I

knew my mother was good at making bargains and was anxious to hear the outcome of this one. I wasn't prepared for what I heard, though, and there was a very noticeable rest between measures in the song I was playing. The antique dealer offered Mother three hundred dollars for the bureau! This far surpassed what we had dared hope or pray for. Mother was surprised, but graciously accepted his offer. Because of her faith, our prayers were answered and our bills were paid.

As this modern example reveals, faith is more than intellectual belief, it involves action based on trust. This week we will see that even more is involved in faith—such as commitment, submission and perseverance. Sometimes the rewards don't come immediately, but the stories of the Bible reveal that God is always looking out for the well-being of His people.

Beth Anderson was a senior English major at Atlantic Union College at the time of this writing.

□ July 3
Sunday

Faith That Saves

LOGOS

When studying the word faith, one quickly comes to the conclusion that it has many shades of meaning. To different biblical characters it meant different things, but in all cases, it was and is an essential ingredient to salvation. **“Without faith it is impossible to please him. For whosoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him”** (Heb. 11:6, RSV).

How does one, through faith, draw near to God? St. Augustine, while grappling with this problem, said: **“God is nearer to us than we are to ourselves.”** God is already as near as He possibly can be, and all that is required is to have faith that this is so.

The experiences of biblical characters help us grasp the aspects of saving faith. It was through faith that Abraham, **“when called to go to a place he would after receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going”** (Heb. 11:8, NIV). This story is very simply told in Genesis. The Lord said to Abraham: **“Leave your country, your people, and your father’s household and go . . . so Abraham left”** (Gen. 12:1, 4, NIV). No conflict is mentioned, but one is implied. The Lord clearly outlined to Abraham the sacrifices he would have to make. He was to leave his friends, family, and home. Responding to a request such as this is never easy, especially when the destination is unknown. But Abraham was able to act on God’s direction because he had faith in His promises and this was **“credited to him as righteousness”** (Gen. 15:6, NIV).

“Now faith is [also] being certain of what is not seen” (Heb. 11:1, NIV). Such was the saving faith of Job. Through faith he looked beyond the circumstances of his prosperity and his poverty to gaze upon the unseen because what is seen is temporary, and what is unseen is eternal (see 2 Cor. 4:16-18). As a result he did not lose heart in spite of his pain, and in spite of the **“comfort”** given by his friends. Through a faith that was steadfast regardless of circumstances he was able to say: **“I know my redeemer lives and I . . . will see him with my own eyes”** (Job 19:25, 27, NIV).

The saving faith of Moses is exemplified by his commitment **“to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin”** (Heb. 11:25, NIV). Moses, with his intellectual greatness, his unparalleled leadership and legislative abilities could well have been one of the greatest Pharaohs of Egyptian antiquity, but instead **“he regarded disgrace for Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt”** (Heb. 11:26, NIV).

Two thousand years ago in the region of Tyre and Sidon a Canaanite woman’s persistent faith resulted in the healing of her daughter. Even though Christ appeared to be deaf to her request, her faith remained adamant and her daughter was saved (see Matt. 15:21-28).

Abraham, Job, Moses, and the Canaanite woman, all typify a faith that saves. Different personalities, different circumstances bring out various aspects of what faith is. To all God has given a measure of faith (see Rom. 12:3) and whatever differences there may be it is, nevertheless, a faith that saves. It is a faith that will result in a crown of life.

E. R. M.

A Banner in the Enemy's Camp

selected by Jackie Baker

Faith is simply to take God at His word.¹

All things are possible to him that believeth; and whatsoever things we desire when we pray, if we believe that we receive them we shall have them. This faith will penetrate the darkest cloud and bring rays of light and hope to the drooping, desponding soul. It is the absence of this faith and trust which brings perplexity, distressing fears, and surmisings of evil. God will do great things for His people when they put their entire trust in Him.²

Those who think it impossible for them to yield to the will of God and have faith in His promises until all is made clear and plain before them will never yield at all. Faith is not certainty or knowledge; it is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.³

Faith is the living power that presses through every barrier, overrides all obstacles, and plants its banner in the heart of the enemy's camp.⁴

The clouds that gather about our way will never disappear before a halting, doubting spirit. Unbelief says: "We can never surmount these obstructions; let us wait until they are removed, and we can see our way clearly." But faith courageously urges an advance, hoping all things, believing all things. Obedience to God is sure to bring the victory. It is only through faith that we can reach heaven.⁵

We have no power in ourselves to cleanse the soul-temple from its defilement; but as we repent of our sins against God, and seek pardon through the merits of Christ, He will impart that faith which works by love and purifies the heart. By faith in Christ, and obedience to the law of God, we may be sanctified. . . .⁶

Many who are sincerely seeking for holiness of heart and purity of life seem perplexed and discouraged. They are constantly looking to themselves, and lamenting their lack of faith; and because they have no faith, they feel that they cannot claim the blessing of God. These persons mistake feeling for faith. They look above the simplicity of true faith and thus bring great darkness upon their souls. They should turn the mind from self to dwell upon the mercy and goodness of God and to recount His promises, and then simply believe that He will fulfill His word.⁷

There is in genuine faith a buoyancy, a steadfastness of principle, and a fixedness of purpose, that neither time nor toil can weaken.⁸

TESTIMONY

Key text:
James 1:6-7

"Faith is the living power that presses through every barrier, overrides all obstacles. . . ."

1. *Testimonies*, Vol. 1, p. 620.

2. *Testimonies*, Vol. 2, p. 140.

3. *Testimonies*, Vol. 4, p. 28.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 163.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

6. *The Sanctified Life*, p. 60.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 64.

8. *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 147.

Jackie Baker was a senior English major at Atlantic Union College at the time of this writing.

☐ July 5
Tuesday

Ultimate Concern

by Paul Tillich

EVIDENCE

Key text:

Deuteronomy

6:5

“Faith . . . is the state of being ultimately and unconditionally concerned about Jahweh and about what he represents in demand, threat and promise.”

Faith As Ultimate Concern

Faith is the state of being ultimately concerned: the dynamics of faith are the dynamics of man's ultimate concern. Man, like every living being, is concerned about many things, above all about those which condition his very existence, such as food and shelter. But man, in contrast to other living beings, has spiritual concerns—cognitive, aesthetic, social, political. Some of them are urgent, often extremely urgent, and each of them as well as the vital concerns can claim ultimacy for a human life or the life of a social group. If it claims ultimacy it demands the total surrender of him who accepts this claim, and it promises total fulfillment even if all other claims have to be subjected to it or rejected in its name. If a national group makes the life and growth of the nation its ultimate concern, it demands that all other concerns, economic well-being, health and life, family, aesthetic and cognitive truth, justice and humanity, be sacrificed. The extreme nationalisms of our century are laboratories for the study of what ultimate concern means in all aspects of human existence, including the smallest concern of one's daily life. Everything is centered in the only god, the nation—a god who certainly proves to be a demon, but who shows clearly the unconditional character of an ultimate concern.

But it is not only the unconditional demand made by that which is one's ultimate concern, it is also the promise of ultimate fulfillment which is accepted in the act of faith. The content of this promise is not necessarily defined. It can be expressed in indefinite symbols or in concrete symbols which cannot be taken literally, like the “greatness” of one's nation in which one participates even if one has died for it, or the conquest of mankind by the “saving race,” etc. In each of these cases it is “ultimate fulfillment” that is promised, and it is exclusion from such fulfillment which is threatened if the unconditional demand is not obeyed.

An example—and more than an example—is the faith manifest in the religion of the Old Testament. It also has the character of ultimate concern in demand, threat and promise. The content of this concern is not the nation—although Jewish nationalism has sometimes tried to distort it into that—but the content is the God of justice, who, because he represents justice for everybody and every nation, is called the universal God, the God of the universe. He is the ultimate concern of every pious Jew, and therefore in his name the great commandment is given: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might” (Deut. 6:5). This is what ultimate concern means and from these words the term “ultimate concern” is derived. They state unambiguously the character of genuine faith, the demand of total surrender to the subject of ultimate concern. The Old Testament is full of commands which make the nature of this surrender concrete, and it is full of promises and threats in relation to it. Here also are the promises of symbolic indefiniteness, although they center around fulfillment of the national and individual life, and the threat is the exclusion from such fulfillment through national extinction and individual catastrophe. Faith, for the man of the Old Testament, is the state of

being ultimately and unconditionally concerned about Jahweh and about what he represents in demand, threat and promise.

Another example—almost a counter-example, yet nevertheless equally revealing—is the ultimate concern with “success” and with social standing and economic power. It is the god of many people in the highly competitive Western culture and it does what every ultimate concern must do: it demands unconditional surrender to its laws even if the price is the sacrifice of genuine human relations, personal convictions, and creative *eros*. Its threat is social and economic defeat, and its promise—indefinite as all such promises—the fulfillment of one’s being. . . . When fulfilled, the promise of this faith proves to be empty. . . .

The Emotionalistic Distortion of the Meaning of Faith

. . . The father of all modern Protestant theology, Schleiermacher, has described religion as the feeling of unconditional dependence. Of course, feeling so defined does not mean in religion what it means in popular psychology. It is not vague and changing, but has a definite content: unconditional dependence, a phrase related to what we have called ultimate concern. Nevertheless, the word “feeling” had induced many people to believe that faith is a matter of merely subjective emotions, without a content to be known and a demand to be obeyed.

This interpretation of faith was readily accepted by representatives of science and ethics, because they took it as the best way to get rid of interference from the side of religion in the processes of scientific research and technical organization. If religion is mere feeling it is innocuous. The old conflicts between religion and culture are finished. Culture goes its way, directed by scientific knowledge, and religion is the private affair of every individual and a mere mirror of his emotional life. No claims for truth can be made by it. No competition with science, history, psychology, politics is possible. Religion, put safely into the corner of subjective feelings, has lost its danger for man’s cultural activities.

Neither of the two sides, the religious and the cultural, could keep this well-defined covenant of peace. Faith as the state of ultimate concern claims the whole man and cannot be restricted to the subjectivity of mere feeling. It claims truth for its concern and commitment to it. It does not accept the situation “in the corner” of mere feeling. If the whole man is grasped, all his functions are grasped. If this claim of religion is denied, religion itself is denied. It was not only religion which could not accept the restriction of faith to feeling. It was also not accepted by those who were especially interested in pushing religion into the emotional corner. Scientists, artists, moralists showed clearly that they also were ultimately concerned. Their concern expressed itself even in those creations in which they wanted most radically to deny religion. A keen analysis of most philosophical, scientific and ethical systems shows how much ultimate concern is present in them, even if they are leading in the fight against what they call religion.

“Faith as the state of ultimate concern claims the whole man and cannot be restricted to the subjectivity of mere feeling.”

Excerpted from Paul Tillich, *The Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), pp. 1-4, 38-40.

A Little Word With a Big Meaning

by Robin Lundgren

HOW TO
Key text:
Hebrews 11:1

Faith is a little word with a big meaning that gets tossed around very freely in a religious setting. How often have you been suffering from some kind of mental or physical anguish only to be given the pat answer, "You just have to have faith"? This is easy to say and may be all very well and good, but just exactly what is faith? The theme of this week's lesson is that faith has many shades of meaning including belief, commitment, trust, obedience, submission and perseverance. I would like to take this one step further and say that while faith may include any or all of these things, in and of themselves they do not constitute faith. I believe that faith is measured not so much by the reaction, but by the circumstances under which that reaction took place. **Faith is obedience, submission, commitment, trust, belief, and perseverance:**

1) **Against what appear to be impossible odds.** It's when you are Moses and God tells you to stand up against the most powerful man in the world, when even your own people are murmuring against you and still you listen to the command of God to lead them to freedom.

2) **When to believe seems to go against common sense.** It's when you are Abraham and God has asked you to leave everything that was ever familiar to you and to live and raise your descendants in a land of strangers in order to fulfill a future promise, and you go without question.

3) **When even the person or thing in which you believed seems to have turned against you.** It's when you are Job and in the course of a few days your entire world has come crashing down around your ears and yet you can stand up and declare that God is still there looking out for you.

4) **When to have faith goes against every fibre of your being.** It's when you are Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane and for just a few moments you are a man sweating blood over the agony of impending death. But when those few moments are over, you walk out of that garden with "Thy will be done" written peacefully on your lips.

The Shield of Faith

by John Henry Jowett

"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Eph. 6:16).

But did the apostle who gives the counsel find his faith an all-sufficient shield? He recommends the shield of faith, but is the recommendation based on personal experience? . . . Here is one glimpse of his experience: "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one; once was I stoned; thrice have I suffered shipwreck; a day and a night have I been in the deep; in stripes above measure; in prisons more frequent; in deaths oft; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." And yet this is the man who speaks about the shield of faith, and in spite of the protecting shield all these things happened unto him! . . .

We want a shield against sorrow, to keep it away, a shield against adversity, to keep it away, a shield against the darkening eclipse of the sunny day. We want a shield against loss, to keep it away, a shield against the rupture of pleasant relations, a shield to protect us against the bereavements which destroy the completeness of our fellowships. We want a shield against pain, to keep it away, a shield against the pricks and goads of piercing circumstances, against the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune.

In a word, we want a shield to make us comfortable, and because the shield of faith does not do it we are often stunned and confused, and our thin reasonings are often twisted and broken, and the world appears a labyrinth without a providence and without a plan. . . .

Paul wanted a shield, not against failure; that might come or stay away. But he wanted a shield against pessimism that may be born of failure, and which holds the soul in the fierce bondage of an Arctic winter. Paul wanted a shield, not against injury; that might come or stay away; but against the deadly thing that is born of injury, even the foul offspring of revenge. Paul wanted a shield, not against pain; that might come or might not come; he sought a shield against the spirit of murmuring which is so frequently born of pain, the deadly, deadening mood of complaint. Paul wanted a shield, not against disappointment, that might come or might not come; but against the bitterness that is born of disappointment, the mood of cynicism which sours the milk of human kindness and perverts all the gentle currents of the soul. Paul wanted a shield, not against difficulty that might come or might not come; but against the fear that is born of difficulty, the cowardice and the disloyalty which are so often bred of stupendous tasks. Paul did not want a shield against success; that might come or might not come; but against the pride that is born of success, the deadly vanity and self-conceit which scorch the fair and gracious things of the soul as a prairie fire snaps up a homestead or a farm. Paul did not want a shield against wealth; that might come or might not come; but against the materialism that is born of wealth, the deadly petrifying influence which turns flesh into stone, spirituality into benumbment, and which makes a soul unconscious of God and of eternity. The apostle did not want a shield against any particular circumstance, but against every kind of circumstance, that in everything he might be defended against the fiery darts of the devil.

He found the shield he needed in a vital faith in Christ. First of all

OPINION

Key text:
Ephesians 6:16

"We want a shield to make us comfortable, and because the shield of faith does not do it we are often stunned and confused."

“The apostle did not want a shield against any particular circumstance, but against every kind of circumstance.”

the faith-life cultivates the personal fellowship of the Lord Jesus Christ. The ultimate concern of faith is not with a polity, not with a creed, not with a church, and not with a sacrament, but with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must seek His holy presence. We must let His purpose enter into and possess our minds. We must let His promises distil into our hearts. And we must let our own hearts and minds dwell upon the Lord Jesus in holy thought and aspiration, just as our hearts and minds dwell upon the loved ones who have gone from our side. We must talk to Him in secret and we must let Him talk to us. We must consult Him about our affairs, and then take His counsels as our statutes, and pay such heed to them that the statutes will become our songs. Faith-life cultivates the friendship of Christ, and leans upon it, and surrenders itself with glorious abandon to the sovereign decrees of His grace and love.

And then, secondly, the faith-life puts first things first, and in its list of primary values it gives first place to the treasures of the soul. Faith-life is more concerned with habits than with things, with character than with office, with self-respect than with popular esteem. The faith-life puts first things first, the clean mind and the pure heart, and from these it never turns its eyes away.

And, lastly, the faith-life contemplates the campaign rather than the single battle. One battle may seem to go against it. But faith knows that one battle is not the end of the world. “I will see you again, and your sorrow shall be turned into joy.” Faith takes the long view, and view of the entire campaign. “I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God.” “The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our God.” Such a relationship to the Lord protects our life as with an invincible shield. It may please God to conduct our life through long reaches of cloudless noon; the shield of faith will be our defence. It may please God to lead us through the gloom of a long and terrible night; the shield of faith will be our defence. “Thou shalt not be afraid of the pestilence that walketh in darkness nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday.”

1. The Introduction relates to an incident in which faith was rewarded. Is it possible to know when an event is the reward of faith and when it is merely coincidence or natural circumstance?
 2. If you had to describe the faith of the biblical characters discussed in the Logos article in one word, what would it be?
Abraham's _____ faith
Job's _____ faith
Moses' _____ faith
The Canaanite woman's _____ faith
What modern situations might call for the facets of faith demonstrated by each of these individuals?
 3. This week's Testimony suggests that faith involves courageous advance in the face of obstacles. Is it possible to take this counsel too far, and then to be devastated when your faith does not overcome impossible circumstances? Or does faith always prevail? Suggest some principles for knowing when to advance in faith and when to acknowledge failure or impossibility.
 4. Discuss Paul Tillich's definition of faith as "ultimate concern." What are the strengths and weaknesses of his analysis?
 5. What "ultimate concerns" other than God are most tempting to modern Christian young people?
 6. Do you agree with the How To author's assertion that faith is measured more by the circumstances to which we react than by our reaction to circumstances? Explain why or why not.
 7. John Henry Jowett (Opinion) argues that the shield of faith does not protect us from any particular circumstance, but from destructive mental attitudes that could result from those circumstances. Do you agree, or has he gone too far in reducing what faith does for us? Does faith make any difference in the way things actually are in our lives, or is it simply a positive mental attitude in the face of all circumstances?
 8. Having studied this week's lesson, define faith in your own words in one sentence.
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July 10-16

From Paul and James

"From Paul, an apostle, not by . . . human commission, but by commission from Jesus Christ . . ." (Gal. 1:1, NEB).

"From James, a servant of God and the Lord Jesus Christ" (James 1:1, NEB).



Faith and Motion

INTRODUCTION

Galatians and James are two very different letters with a common purpose: vibrant faith in the lives of Christians. These letters will be the basis of our study for the remainder of the quarter and this week we explore the backgrounds of both.

From Paul

Something is eating away like acid inside Paul. If we could see him, lines of tension would probably be working in his jaw and his face would flush red. Normally in his letters, after a brief introduction and greeting he launches into praise of his readers. But in *Galatians*, flattery is replaced by shock and dismay. A grave crisis is threatening the Galatians, and Paul opens with a withering blast against whoever is causing it. . . .

If the Galatians continued their policies, the bedrock of the Gospel would crumble. Faith in Christ would become just one of the steps in salvation, not the *only* one, as Paul insists. The Gospel itself would be perverted (1:7-9).

. . . If every new Christian must undergo a process of "Judaizing," Christianity could well dissipate into one more minor Jewish sect. . . .

Paul could not silently allow Christianity to fade into just another sect. The new faith had already taken root in Asia, Greece, Rome, and Africa. For the Gospel to continue to extend across the entire world, into every major culture, he would have to destroy those false trends. *Galatians*, then, is a protest book against treason.¹

From James

Where there is life, there is motion. Some antelopes, as

well as the cheetah, sprint faster than the legal speed limit for cars. Bighorn sheep, charging one another head-first, collide with such force that the sound echoes like a gunshot through mountain passes. Common Canada geese, fanned out across the sky in an orderly "V," battle winds for 1,000 miles, non-stop, before dropping back to earth.

Sometimes we keep relics of life: an elegant elk head hanging above a fireplace, a fragile, perfect sea shell, an exotic butterfly mounted on a pin. But these are mere memories: life has gone from them, and with it motion.

The book of *James*, subject of controversy for centuries because of its emphasis on "good works," is perhaps best understood through the analogy of motion. When a person becomes a Christian, new life begins and inevitably that life must express itself through spiritual motion. In James's words, "What good is it if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds?" (2:14). Movement does not cause life. Similarly, genuine faith in Christ always results in action.

Modern readers of *James* face the same dilemma as the first recipients of his unsettling letter. His words are easy enough to understand, but are we doing what he says? What kind of motion characterizes our spiritual lives?²

1. Taken from *Insight: The New International Version of the New Testament* with notes by Philip Yancey, pp. 324, 325. Copyright © 1982 by the Zondervan Corporation and used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 416, 417.

Signed, "Concerned"

LOGOS

Have you ever received a letter from a close friend or relative expressing concern about your Christian experience? How did you feel? Resentful, maybe: "It's my life, what business is it of theirs how I think or act?" Or, you might have felt gratitude: "Somebody cares a whole lot about me."

Paul's letter to the Galatians and the general epistle of James differ widely in purpose, structure, and content. Their similarity is this: they are both expressions of intensely felt concern for those the authors greatly love.

Paul gets right to the point: "I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and turning to another gospel—not that there is another gospel, but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we preached to you, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:6-8, RSV).

Why is Paul so passionately concerned? Because the gospel, the very heart of the Christian faith was at stake in Galatia. Certain individuals were having considerable success in convincing the Galatians that one has to move beyond the mere grace of God and comply with certain Jewish customs in order to qualify for salvation.

Herman Ridderbos explains the activity of these "trouble-makers": "To trouble means, in this connection, to bring about spiritual schism and an obscuration of the insight of faith (cf. 5:10). . . . Their intent was nothing less than to overturn the gospel that had Christ as its content and to live out an opposing principle. This happens when the cross of Christ is no longer recognized in its all-sufficiency."¹

Paul had not only planted the gospel seed in Galatia, he had carefully nurtured its growth. Luke described Paul's "follow-up" after the initial evangelization of the Galatian region: "Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord in whom they had put their trust" (Acts 14:23, NIV).² No wonder, then, Paul's vehement pronouncement of a curse on those who would tear down what he had poured his very soul into building up.

Paul clarifies his title, "apostle," by explaining that he was "sent not from man nor by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father" (Gal. 1:1, NIV).³ Thus, Paul's gospel comes, not by human authority, but from God. And while Paul could urge latitude on a great many matters (1 Cor. 9:19-23; Rom. 14) he could accept no compromise regarding the foundation of his life and thought—the gospel.

Though James was not a letter addressed to a specific situation like Galatians, the author's concerns are felt just as strongly. James sees dry intellectual belief and hypocrisy draining the Christian community of vital faith. He takes a no-nonsense approach, challenging readers to make their walk consistent with their talk. In the epistle's 108 verses, there are 54 verbs in the imperative!⁴

We could be resentful about the pointed directions on how to think and act in the letters. Or we could be thankful that there is One who cares enough to show us the right way.

D.F.M.

1. Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia*, New International Commentary of the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company), p. 49.

2. The churches which Paul is depicted here as nurturing can be equated with churches in the Galatian letter only if the letter was directed to the South Galatian area (see Evidence). But even if the letter was directed to North Galatia, the principle of Paul's deep personal investment in the churches he established remains true.

3. See F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, pp. 180-181 for background on Paul's defense of his apostolic authority.

4. Norman Perrin and Dennis C. Duling, *The New Testament: An Introduction* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & Jovanovich, Inc.) p. 373.

Severity Not Spared

Ellen White has very little to say about the authorship and background of the Epistle of James. She consistently refers to the author as the "Apostle James."¹ In Acts of the Apostles she indicates that James wrote his epistle sometime after the believers were called Christians in Antioch.² This would eliminate James the son of Zebedee as a possible author for he had been executed prior to this time (see Acts 12:2).

She has much more to say about the Epistle to the Galatians.

"While tarrying at Corinth, Paul had cause for serious apprehension concerning some of the churches already established. Through the influence of false teachers who had arisen among the believers in Jerusalem, division, heresy, and sensualism were rapidly gaining ground among the believers in Galatia. These false teachers were mingling Jewish traditions with the truths of the gospel. Ignoring the decision of the general council at Jerusalem, they urged upon the Gentile converts the observance of the ceremonial law.

"The situation was critical. The evils that had been introduced threatened speedily to destroy the Galatian churches.

"Paul was cut to the heart, and his soul was stirred by this open apostasy on the part of those to whom he had faithfully taught the principles of the gospel. He immediately wrote to the deluded believers, exposing the false theories that they had accepted and with great severity rebuking those who were departing from the faith. . . .

"Paul arraigned the believers in Galatia before the tribunal of their own conscience and sought to arrest them in their course. Relying on the power of God to save, and refusing to recognize the doctrines of the apostate teachers, the apostle endeavored to lead the converts to see that they had been grossly deceived, but that by returning to their former faith in the gospel they might yet defeat the purpose of Satan. He took his position firmly on the side of truth and righteousness; and his supreme faith and confidence in the message he bore, helped many whose faith had failed, to return to their allegiance to the Saviour.

"In the Galatian churches, open, unmasked error was supplanting the gospel message. Christ, the true foundation of the faith, was virtually renounced for the obsolete ceremonies of Judaism. The apostle saw that if the believers in Galatia were saved from the dangerous influences which threatened them, the most decisive measures must be taken, the sharpest warnings given."³

TESTIMONY

Key text:
Jeremiah 14:7-9

"He took his position firmly on the side of truth and . . . helped many whose faith had failed."

1. See for example *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 248, 384.
2. *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 157.
3. *Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 383-385.

Backgrounds of Two Letters

by Timothy D. Berry

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Acts 15:1-35

Galatians

Though addressed to the churches of Galatia (Gal. 1:2) we are not sure about the exact destination of this letter. The churches may have been located in northern or southern Galatia. The problem of knowing the origin of the Galatian churches had become exaggerated for our modern scholars because the ancient province expanded geographically under Roman rule, but was not given an official name. The important point is that the letter was written to first-century Christians.

The occasion which prompted Paul to write this letter was the deceitful and rather successful influence of certain Jewish Christian legalists among the Galatian churches. It appears that sometime after Paul's second visit to the Galatian communities, certain agitators arrived in Galatia and attacked Paul's gospel by insisting that all Gentiles be circumcised as a means of salvation. They did not deny that faith in Christ is necessary, but demanded that circumcision and obedience to certain additional legal requirements are also necessary.¹ The same agitators were also intent on undermining Paul's authority as an apostle.

The purpose of the epistle was to meet the controversy. In this letter, Paul intended to counteract this dangerous cancer by emphasizing the gospel of free grace in Christ Jesus: justification by faith alone, apart from the works of the law.

James

The first verse in the letter of James gives an obscure clue as to authorship: "James a servant of God. . ." (RSV). The problem is that we are uncertain as to who James was—or rather which James it was who wrote this letter. If one attempts to identify the author with a James which is mentioned in the New Testament, the most likely candidate is James the brother of Jesus.²

The form of this epistle is quite simple. It consists of a series of admonitions on different themes. It cannot really be considered a personal letter like those of Paul's. Rather, it is a type of "circular" with the contents in the form of a sermon.³

The epistle of James is addressed to "the twelve tribes in the Dispersion" (1:1, RSV). As Wikenhauser suggests, this could have several meanings, but there is no doubt that the epistle is intended for Jewish Christians, though its message is worthy of consideration by all Christians.⁴

Though this important book has been well-received by many, it had a difficult time obtaining universal acceptance as part of the New Testament canon. Even Martin Luther, centuries later, called this book an "epistle of straw," suggesting low esteem for it. Since accepted, however, it has become a vital part of the New Testament mosaic.

1. William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary: Exposition of Galatians*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1968), p. 19.
2. Bo Reiche, *The Anchor Bible: The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude*, (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1973), pp. 3, 4.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 7.
4. Alfred Wikenhauser, *New Testament Introduction*, (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), p. 477.

□ July 13
Wednesday

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To Conciliate or Controvert?

"You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?" (Gal. 3:1, NIV). "If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!" (Gal. 1:9, NIV). As for those agitators [who urge circumcision], I wish they would go the whole way and emasculate themselves!" (Gal. 5:12, NIV). Can this really be Paul speaking, the same Paul who composed the matchless description of love in 1 Corinthians 13? Can it be the same Paul who told us to "stop passing judgment on one another" (Rom. 14:13, NIV) and to "accept one another" (Rom. 15:7, NIV)?

How do we know when to follow the intractable Paul and when to follow the tolerant Paul? How do we know when to blast away with spiritual ammunition and when to apply healing salve?

1. **Be sure your theological priorities are in order.** The gospel was at stake in Galatia. In the Romans passage alluded to above, it was dietary regulations and the details of the religious observances. Because Paul had his theological priorities in order, he knew that the gospel was worth disputing over and that dietary regulations, important as they are, were not.

2. **Stand firmly for principle.** Controversy should never be sought, but neither should it be avoided at the high cost of integrity. In the sixteenth century, Sir Thomas More, the chancellor of England, when confronted with an act of Parliament which we could not support, took a course worthy of consideration. He sought diligently to find a way to conscientiously swear to the act. But after concluding he could not, he went to the executioner's block rather than taking a false oath. He explained to his daughter, "When a man takes an oath, Meg, he's holding his own self in his own hands. Like water. And if he opens his fingers *then*—he needn't hope to find himself again."¹

Paul put it this way: "For me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21, NIV). To do nothing when the gospel of this Christ was being seriously threatened in Galatia would have been an unimaginable compromise of Paul's personhood. So we, having identified those few things truly central to our being, must take a firm stand for them.

3. **Recognize your fallibility.** An important distinction between us and apostles must be made here. The biblical apostles and prophets spoke for God in a way that we do not. We should avoid assuming that our *interpretation* or understanding of the gospel is as infallible as the gospel itself.

Recognition of your fallibility involves recognition that the collective wisdom of the community of believers is probably greater than your own. This does not mean that your personal convictions are to be dictated by prevailing opinion. But it does imply an inclination to put greater trust in the collective judgment of the group than in your own judgment.

4. **Practice *agape*.** As Van Harvey defines it, Christian *agape* is "the selfless commitment of the lover to the one loved to the enrichment and enhancement of the beloved's being."² So the key question in religious controversy then would be, will the interests of others be best served if I take a stand on this issue, or would they be better served if I seek peace and reconciliation?

D. F. M.

HOW TO

Key text:
Galatians 1:8-9
1 Corinthians
1:10-13

1. *A Man For All Seasons*, a play by Robert Bolt (Scholastic Book Services edition, 1969), p. 81.

2. Van A. Harvey, *A Handbook of Theological Terms* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1964), p. 13.

July 14
Thursday

Needed: Trumpets of Christ

by Martin Luther

OPINION
Key text:
Titus 1:10-11

Editor's Note: In the following comment on Galatians 1:9, Martin Luther reflects on how Paul might have reacted to the situation in the sixteenth century. After reading, ask yourself: Are there detractors from the gospel in today's world on which Paul would have pronounced "anathema" if he were alive? How should we relate to viewpoints or trends which we consider inimical to the gospel?

For us it is enough that the apostle, aflame with zeal for the Gospel, should wish that he himself and the angels from heaven, to say nothing of the other apostles, would be ostracized, accursed, execrated, cut off, and disgraced rather than that the truth of the Gospel be endangered; and this he repeats twice. This is not because he believed that the angels from heaven, he himself, or the apostles would preach something else; it is because it was imperative that those who, under the pretext of the apostle's name and example, were teaching the Law should be crushed as with a violent attack and, as he writes to Titus (1:11), that their mouths be stopped and they be utterly and totally cut off.

Would that in our age, too, there were such trumpets of Christ to oppose the relentless and violent promoters of papal decrees and decretals! Under the name of the apostles Peter and Paul and of the Church of Rome these men are besetting us to such an extent that if we do not believe that everything stated, written, and even dreamed up in the papal decrees and decretals is necessary for salvation, they, with the most shameless effrontery, have the audacity to pronounce us heretics, even though no one is a heretic unless he sins against the Word of faith. Moreover, those words of men are so concerned with outward behavior and so devoid of faith that no greater benefit could be rendered to faith than if once for all they were thoroughly and totally done away with. What do you think Paul would have done if in our day he had seen that so many useless, yes, ruinous laws of men are raging throughout the whole world and utterly abolishing Christ—Paul, who flies into such a passion against the laws of God that were delivered through Moses and were doing away with Christ in only one place, namely, among the Galatians? Therefore let us say confidently with Paul: "Damned and accursed be every doctrine from heaven, from earth, or from whatever source it is brought—every doctrine that teaches us to trust in works, righteousness, and merits other than those that belong to Jesus Christ." And by saying this we are not being insolent toward the popes and the successors of the apostles; we are being dutiful and truthful toward Christ. For one must prefer Him to them; and if they should refuse to allow this, we must shun them altogether as being anathema.

Excerpted from *Luther's Works*, Vol. 27 Jaroslav Pelikan, ed. (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), pp. 178-179.

REACT
Lesson 3

1. What were the reasons for Paul's anger in writing Galatians? Assuming his indignation in Galatians was justifiable, under what conditions is it appropriate for Christians to express anger? What are appropriate means for expressing anger?
 2. Can Paul's vehement verbal attack on the Judaizers be reconciled with his exalted statement of love in 1 Corinthians 13? Explain why or why not.
 3. In the Opinion, Martin Luther expressed how he thought Paul would have reacted to the situation in the sixteenth century. Are there modern detractions from the gospel which Paul would address the same way he addressed the Galatian problem? Explain.
 4. What principles would you suggest for determining when to make an issue over a theological disagreement and when to try to smooth over differences?
 5. How do we get the "motion" into our spiritual lives which James saw was lacking in the lives of his readers?
-

July 17-23

Freedom in the Gospel

"Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom"
(2 Corinthians 3:17, NIV).



What Is

Our Freedom Today?

by William J. Cork

Freedom! Five men lying in blood-stained snow in a Boston street—slain for the sake of freedom in 1770. A few years later, in a village not far away, for the same cause, a group of men fired “the shot heard round the world.” On Lexington Green stands a monument over the bones of some who died that April morning, marking a spot “sacred to liberty and rights of mankind.”

This was not the first occasion men died to be free, nor was it the last. Each generation that appears has the same desire for freedom, though that which enslaves them differs. Oppression—whether it be social, political, religious, or economic—is present in every age and every nation, but so is the desire for freedom. It is a desire God placed in man at creation, a feature of having been made in God’s image.

Adventism is going through a

struggle for freedom, in the eyes of some. Men and women have left the church because of newly found “freedom in the gospel.” They proclaim freedom from the judgment, freedom from the Sabbath, freedom from tradition, freedom from Ellen White, freedom to eat what one wishes and teach what one believes. In the name of freedom magazines have been published, and ministers, teachers, and administrators have resigned.

Is this the freedom Paul means? If not, what is “freedom in the gospel”? How does my life reflect this freedom I claim? How does it affect my dealings with others? As you study this lesson, keep these questions in mind and apply the scriptural principles to your own situation to see if you are living in the freedom you possess as a Christian.

INTRODUCTION

William J. Cork is a history and religion major at Atlantic Union College.

July 17
Sunday

Free at Last

LOGOS

From the marble steps of the Lincoln Memorial in 1963 Martin Luther King rang out to the thousands before him: "I have a dream." His dream was freedom, freedom for all those still chained to slavery by the shackles of prejudice and the hate of others. He lived for that dream and he died for that dream. He lived for freedom and he died for freedom. For many, freedom is still a dream. To them it is a reality available to only a privileged few. I am not referring to those suppressed by governments, but rather to those who are slaves to the law of sin and who stand condemned by the law of death.

Everyone has been a slave, all have stood condemned because "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23, NIV). So how can freedom be obtained? **"Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!"** because **"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us,"** and so all **"are justified freely by his grace"** and **"therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"** (Rom. 7:25, Gal. 3:13, Rom. 8:1, NIV). Through Jesus Christ we are set free from the law of sin and death.

Lest the phrase, "through Jesus Christ" becomes a meaningless cliché it is essential that two questions be answered: How is freedom obtained through Jesus Christ? And, What are the results of this freedom? In Galatians 3 Paul says: **"If you belong to Christ, then you are . . . heirs according to the promise"** (verse 29, NIV). He then goes on to explain how we become heirs. **"But when the time had fully come, God sent His son, born of a woman, born under the law to redeem those under the law that we might receive the full rights of sons"** (Gal. 4:4, 5, NIV). God sent His Son, Jesus Christ to the world and He fulfilled the requirements of the law for us. What the law demands of us He did. Through His perfect life, upon our request, He is able to transfer His merit to us. As a result we become His heirs and by becoming heirs we are set free.

What are we freed from? We are freed from a futile method of salvation. **"Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods"** (Gal. 4:8, NIV). In the context of this passage the false system is salvation by works. A system of rituals and forms, in which there is no merit. But Christ has set us free and now we may **"approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need"** (Heb. 4:16, NIV).

However, freedom does not mean lawlessness. With freedom there comes a responsibility. This responsibility is service to others. **"You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love"** (Gal. 5:13, NIV). If we are led by the Spirit we are not under the condemnation of the law. Nevertheless the fruits of the Spirit will still be seen in our lives and against these there is no law (see Gal. 5:18, 22-23). So **"let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up"** (Gal. 6:9). For **"Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery"** (Gal. 5:1, NIV). Our bonds are gone. Our ransom is paid. No man can enslave us again because in Jesus Christ we are free at last.

E. R. M.

Liberty of the Soul

by William J. Cork

God loves freedom. This concept is central to the great controversy theme in Ellen White's writings. Humankind were created free, and Christ died to restore freedom to us. This freedom that Christ has won for us has implications for the way we deal with others.

"In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. . . . The only condition upon which the freedom of man is possible is that of becoming one with Christ. 'The truth shall make you free;' and Christ is the truth. Sin can triumph only by enfeebling the mind, and destroying the liberty of the soul. Subjection to God is restoration to one's self,—to the true glory and dignity of man. The divine law, to which we are brought in subjection, is 'the law of liberty.' James 2:12."¹

"In matters of conscience the soul must be left untrammelled. No one is to control another's mind, to judge for another, or to prescribe his duty. God gives to every soul freedom to think, and to follow his own convictions. 'Every one of us shall give account of himself to God.' No one has a right to merge his individuality in that of another. In all matters where principle is involved, 'let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.' Rom. 14:12, 5. In Christ's kingdom there is no lordly oppression, no compulsion of manner."²

And yet, in any organization, there must be order. The church would be useless as a means of spreading the gospel if every member did his own thing regardless of what the other members saw as important. As a dismembered body is dead, so anarchy in the church defeats its purpose.

"By some, all efforts to establish order are regarded as dangerous—as a restriction of personal liberty, and hence to be feared as popery. These deceived souls regard it a virtue to boast of their freedom to think and act independently. They declare that they will not take any man's say-so, that they are amenable to no man. I have been instructed that it is Satan's special effort to lead men to feel that God is pleased to have them choose their own course independent of the counsel of their brethren. Herein lies a grave danger to the prosperity of our work. We must move discreetly, sensibly, in harmony with the judgment of God-fearing counselors; for in this course alone lies our safety and strength. Otherwise God cannot work with us and by us and for us. . . .

"Some have advanced the thought that, as we near the close of time, every child of God will act independently of any religious organization. But I have been instructed by the Lord that in this work there is no such thing as every man's being independent. The stars of heaven are all under law, each influencing the other to do the will of God, yielding their common obedience to the law that controls their action. And, in order that the Lord's work may advance, . . . His people must draw together."³

TESTIMONY

Key text:
2 Corinthians
3:17

"God gives to every soul freedom to think, and to follow his own convictions."

1. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 466.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 550-551.
3. *Testimonies*, Vol. 9, pp. 257-258.

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July 19
Tuesday

Freedom By Adoption

by Alwyn R. Fraser

EVIDENCE
Key text:
Romans 8:14-17

Bondage and freedom, Hagar and Sarah, Old Covenant and New Covenant, works and faith, law and gospel. With these sets of contrasts Paul endeavors to show the Galatians the superiority of the gospel as a way of returning to fellowship with God.

The central message of the gospel which Paul never tired of preaching was that Jesus had taken care of man's sin problem. By His death He paid the penalty for God's broken law, and by His sinless life He provided man with a perfect righteousness which is acceptable to God.

The wonderful news which Paul and later Luther stressed was that this righteousness is given freely to the one who believes in Jesus; it is never earned by any personal effort. Both reformers had to uphold the gospel against a tradition which stressed that a person could merit God's favor by performing certain ritual acts or religious good works laid down by the church.

One of the great themes in Paul's letter to the Galatians is that anyone who tried this method of establishing fellowship with God is living by a covenant of bondage, while the person who seeks fellowship by faith in Christ is living by the new covenant experience of freedom. Getting into a right relationship with God through personal effort could never succeed because it meant that one had to keep the law perfectly, including both inward thought as well as outward act. This may well be "theoretically right but impossible in practice" (Rom. 10:4, Phillips) because all men are sinners. All who fail automatically come under a curse (Deut. 27:26).

But no one need remain under the curse for there is a way of escape. Jesus Christ, as man's substitute, has taken upon Himself the curse "so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:21, NIV). The believing sinner, now freed from the curse, is accepted by God. A relationship with God based on the life and death of our Substitute means "the end of the struggle for righteousness-by-the-Law" (Rom. 10:4, Phillips). It also brings an unbelievable change of status from slave to adopted son (Gal. 4:7).

Paul's metaphor comes from a Roman practice, common at the time, of legally adopting into the family circle someone (even a slave) who was not a member by birth. As a son, a former slave was entitled to all the benefits which came with his new status, including the right to share in the family inheritance. This is exactly what justification, God's gracious act of forgiveness and reconciliation, embraces. It is a declaration that the penitent sinner, a former slave, has been redeemed, is now robed in Christ's righteousness, and is recognized by God as His righteous son in Christ. This is the very objective of God's everlasting covenant of restored fellowship.

Theology, according to Paul, has little value unless its principles can be used in daily living. The person who has been emancipated by Jesus Christ will express his gratitude by loving attention to his neighbor's welfare. Such love is not to achieve salvation but is the result of being saved and thereby fulfills the whole purpose of the law and the plan of redemption.

Structuring Your Freedom

The Introduction to this week's lesson called attention to some current views on how Adventists should translate the Christian freedom proclaimed by Paul into modern day specifics. Discussion of how our freedom in Christ relates to behavioral dictums, be they derived from the Old Testament, Ellen White, or Adventist "tradition" should be based on a clear understanding of the nature of freedom.

Herold Weiss has observed that the word "freedom," by itself is meaningless. Freedom is not an independent essence or state of being. It exists only in relationships. "Freedom," says Weiss, "must be tied down to some specifics. Grammatically speaking, freedom must be followed by a preposition. You may be free *from* . . . in order to be free *for* . . . or free *to* . . ." An understanding of some of the things inextricably related to Christian freedom should help us define in specifics what that freedom means for our lives.

1. Freedom in Christ is structured by law. Freedom in Christ doesn't mean that we have entered a realm of existence in which we are unaffected by law, natural or moral.

Paul's point in Galatians is that Christ frees us from the concept of the law as a list of rules and regulations whereby we can achieve acceptance with God. But he does not suggest that the moral and ethical principles taught in the law have suddenly ceased to be true.

When God liberated the Israelites from slavery, he then gave them the law to structure and safeguard their freedom (see Exodus 20: 1-17). Likewise for the Christian, freedom *from* sin means freedom to live the way the Liberator has ordered life. This way is revealed in His law.

2. Freedom in Christ is consistent with truth. Jesus said, "you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (John 8:32, NIV). Falsehood can enslave us in a vicious cycle: we act wrongly because we believe wrongly. And we suffer the consequences—frequently without realizing it because our wrong belief has blinded us to reality.

So, freedom in Christ is informed and enhanced by truth. Rejecting a tradition is never an expression of freedom, unless Christ's truth compels one to do so.

3. Freedom in Christ is expressed by love. While freedom is not independent of the law, it also takes us beyond the law. Our preoccupation is not with fulfilling a written code, but with loving as Christ loved. "Do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature," writes Paul, "Rather, serve one another in love" (Gal. 5:13, NIV).

Jacques Ellul explains why this kind of self-giving love is necessary for our freedom: "In Christ there is no freedom without love, for without love freedom would be incoherent and a turning back upon itself. How can we believe that self-admiration or self-centeredness is freedom when all we have is enslavement to what is most alienating, our body, our opinions, our needs, and our passions?"²

Christian freedom, then, is not found in being blown about by the prevailing winds of inclination or fad. Rather, Christ frees us *from* sin, error and the law as a means of approach to God in order that we may be free *for* beliefs that are truthful and relationships that are loving.

D. F. M.

HOW TO

Key text:
John 8:32

1. Herold Weiss, "So You Want to Be Free," *Insight*, February 14, 1974, p. 19.

2. Jacques Ellul, *The Ethics of Freedom* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976), p. 207.

Freedom to Love

by Tamarah A. Khoe

OPINION

Key text:
1 John 4:16-21

Through the death of Jesus Christ and the pardoning grace of our heavenly Father, each one of us has become a son or daughter of God. Our individual relationship with Him frees us from the condemnation of the law and consequently, having full assurance and confidence in the positive outcome of the future, we are also free to love others unconditionally.

In Galatians 4:1-7, Paul points out that through Jesus we have all been made children (and thus heirs) of God. God is the only being who is completely free and self-sufficient.¹ Humans on the other hand, are totally dependent on someone—or perversely—on something. As a child relies on a parent for the needs of daily life, so the Christian relies upon God for the needs of eternal life (Rom. 6:23). Happily, the latter relationship was made possible by Christ's perfect fulfillment of the law and His death on the cross. Through these actions God's adoption plans for His earthly family were finalized.

Our previous status as children of Adam bound us for sure death, but our new relationship with Christ gives life (1 Cor. 15:21). Being allowed to claim Christ's victory as our own, we are free from the "yoke of slavery" (Gal. 5:1, RSV). Any legalism that attempts to shackle a Christian was nailed to the cross (Col. 2:13, 14). This means freedom from struggle to achieve salvation. Nothing can be done to gain redemption for God has foreseen and done it all.² On this point Paul is adamant: Under no circumstance should any ritualistic belief lead a Christian astray (Gal. 5:12).

Knowing that our redeemer is alive today in 1983, and that we are saved, gives us confidence and freedom from fear. We are unconditionally loved by God (there are no conditions attached to His acceptance of sinners), therefore we are liberated from fear (1 John 4:18-21, RSV). "You can be whoever you are, express all your thoughts and feelings with absolute confidence. You do not have to be fearful that love will be taken away."³ Job, realizing this, was able to express assurance about the future even when everything in his life was going wrong (Job 19:25-27, RSV). Everyone can have this confidence of being loved, and all may thus feel free to respond in love to one's neighbor: "Through love be servants of one another" (Gal. 5:13, RSV).

1. Robert Horn, *Go Free!* (London: Intersarsity Press, 1976) p. 39.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 75.

3. John Powell, *Unconditional Love* (Texas: Argus Communications, 1978) p. 68.

1. Complete the following sentences in your own words:
 - a) The gospel frees me *from* . . .
 - b) The gospel frees me *for* . . .
 - c) The gospel frees me *to* . . .
 2. The Logos and Evidence articles note that our freedom comes through being heirs of God. Explain how this status brings freedom.
 3. Are God's free sons and daughters in any sense bound to the law? Explain.
 4. Ellen White comments (see Testimony) that "In matters of conscience the soul must be left untrammelled. No one is to control another's mind, to judge for another, or to prescribe his duty." Does this mean there is to be complete freedom of thought and action in the church community?
 5. If there are limits to the freedom asserted by the Testimony, how do we define what they are and how to impose them?
 6. In light of Paul's message of freedom to the Galatians, what do you think the church today most greatly needs to be freed from? What about your own life?
-

July 24-30

Confrontation Over the Gospel

"As for me, the only thing I can boast about is the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Galatians 6:14, Jerusalem Bible).



Is What You See the Real You?

by Winona Wendth

INTRODUCTION

In a short essay, "What You See is the Real You," Willard Gaylin,¹ a clinical psychologist at Columbia University, suggests that we should judge others not by what or who they might be, but by what they appear to be. As a Christian, I find this idea distressing. I make mistakes. I don't really *mean* to do some of the awful things I do: I forget birthdays, I lose my temper with my children, I hand papers in late—but I'm not a bad person. I operate on the assumption that my grandparents, my children, and my professors know that, and for them, as well as for myself, I keep trying to do better. And the rest of you—please don't judge me until you know me—until you know me well.

On the other hand, as a member of a subculture—as an Adventist Christian—I am quick to make certain, and often accurate, judgments about whether or not I and my near, and far, associates are good Adventists. Clearly, so far as being an Adventist is concerned, what I see is the real you. Do you occasionally have a pepperoni pizza? Have you ever bought anything on the Sabbath? Do you wear earrings? Tell me, and I'll tell you how good an Adventist you are.

What we are learning when we make this sort of evaluation, however, is really societal (social) information. In traditional Judaism, and in other homogeneous societies, there is no distinction readily made between personal acceptability and social acceptability. Saying that someone who eats

pork is not a good Jew is the same thing as saying that someone who sneezes in your face or who doesn't use a napkin is not a well-mannered person. In both these cases, people are defined by their actions as much as, if not more than by their beliefs.

When the young Christian community grew to include peoples not part of a single social group, questions were understandably raised about the extent to which the evangelizers could expect others to assume what had become, through the crucifixion, essentially societal indicators. It was clear to many that the quality of their Christian experience was positively affected by the habits that they had religiously maintained all their lives. Surely these practices would also help insure others against gradual re-assimilation into the heathen societies from which they emerged; it would help them, too, to stand apart.

Many were reluctant to make the new and necessary distinctions between what people *were* (believers) and what they *did* (practicers) that had been unnecessary before. Paul, bringing news of great conversions among the Gentiles, argued against "irksome restrictions," specifically circumcision, as requirements for new believers. By word and actions he made a clear and forceful statement about the essentials of being part of the *universal* Christian community: having the Grace of and learning the Truth through Jesus Christ.

1. Willard Gaylin: "What You See is the Real You," *The New York Times*, October 7, 1977.

Rite vs. Reality

by Clay Peck

LOGOS

When God established His covenant with Abraham he said, "You are to undergo circumcision and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you" (Gen. 17:11, NIV). Israel was to continue circumcision as a sign of God's covenant, a token of their obedience to the Law of God, and a pledge that they would not mix with idolators (see Gen. 17:9-14).

Israel held on to the sign of circumcision but they lost sight of its significance, repeatedly breaking God's covenant. It came to the point that the Lord declared, "I will punish all who are circumcised only in the flesh . . . the whole house of Israel is uncircumcised in heart" (Jer. 11:25, 26, NIV).

God wanted Israel to see that spiritual cleansing is more crucial than physical, and heart service more important than outward obedience. The Lord said, "Circumcise your hearts, you men of Judah and people of Jerusalem" (Jer. 4:4, NIV; see also Deut. 10:16). There were those who still needed their hearts circumcised as the early Christian church began. "Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: 'unless you are circumcised according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved'" (Acts 15:1, NIV).

A number of Pharisees had been converted to Christianity but were having a hard time accepting the uncircumcised Gentiles. They felt that if the Gentile converts continued to increase in number the Jews would soon lose their uniqueness and exclusiveness, which they treasured so much. They demanded that the new converts be circumcised and observe the laws of Moses. "This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. The church sent them . . ." (Acts 15:2, 3, NIV). The committee finally came to the conclusion that the Gentiles should not be required to be circumcised. A letter was sent informing the believers in Antioch of this decision (see Acts 15:19-31).

During the discussion Peter had stood up and told how God had given His Spirit to the circumcised and uncircumcised alike, showing that He accepted them. He concluded by saying, "We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are" (Acts 15:11, NIV).

Even after this powerful statement by Peter, at a later time "began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group" (Gal. 2:12, NIV). Paul boldly confronted Peter concerning this and "opposed him to his face, because he was in the wrong" (Gal. 2:11, NIV, see also vs. 11-14). Paul strenuously objected to anything that would give the Gentile believers the idea that they were second-class citizens in the Christian community unless they fulfilled the requirements of Judaism.

Paul sought diligently to make it clear "that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ" (Gal. 2:16, NIV).

With Paul Against Judaizers

selected by Ted Wick

TESTIMONY

Key text:

1 Corinthians
7:19

A Crisis

In every church there were some members who were Jews by birth. To these converts the Jewish teachers found ready access, and through them gained a foothold in the churches. It was impossible by scriptural arguments, to overthrow the doctrines taught by Paul; hence they resorted to the most unscrupulous measures to counteract his influence and weaken his authority. They declared that he had not been a disciple of Jesus, and had received no commission from Him: yet he had presumed to teach doctrines directly opposed to those held by Peter, James, and the other apostles. Thus the emissaries of Judaism succeeded in alienating many of the Christian converts from their teacher in the gospel. Having gained this point, they induced them to return to the observance of the ceremonial law as essential to their salvation. Faith in Christ, and obedience to the law of ten commandments, were regarded as of minor importance.¹

The situation was critical. The evils that had been introduced threatened speedily to destroy the Galatian churches.

Paul was cut to the heart and his soul was stirred by this open apostasy on the part of those to whom he had faithfully taught the principles of the gospel. He immediately wrote to the deluded believers, exposing the false theories that they had accepted, and with great severity rebuking those who were departing from the faith.

An Example of Adaptability

How different from Paul's manner of writing to the Corinthian church was the course he pursued toward the Galatians! The former he rebuked with caution and tenderness; the latter with words of unsparing reproof.²

An important lesson for every minister of Christ to learn, is that of adapting his labors to the conditions of those he seeks to benefit. . . . To deal wisely with different classes of minds, under varied circumstances and conditions, is a work requiring wisdom and judgment enlightened and sanctified by the Spirit of God.³

A Failure of Integrity

At Antioch Peter failed in the principles of integrity [see Gal. 2:11-14]. Paul had to withstand his subverting influence face to face . . . [I]s it not strange that he [Peter] should dissemble and evade the principles of the gospel, for fear of man, or in order to gain his esteem? Is it not strange that he should waver, and be two-sided in his position?⁴

The Archenemy's Changing Tactics

In every age the archenemy adapts his temptation to the prejudices or inclinations of those he is seeking to deceive. In apostolic times he led the Jews to exalt the ceremonial law and reject Christ; at the present time he induces many Christians . . . to cast contempt on the moral law, and to teach that its precepts may be transgressed with impunity.⁵

1. *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 1108.
2. *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 385.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 386.
4. *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 1108.
5. *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 387.

A Response to Traditionalists

by W. Larry Richards

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Galatians
3:26-29

"The confrontation between Paul and the traditionalists continues in every age."

The first Christians were quite obviously Jews who had accepted the proclamation that Jesus of Nazareth was the long-awaited Messiah. When the good news of salvation was taken to the non-Jewish world, primarily by Paul, many Jewish Christians charged that Paul had forsaken Jewish traditions, that he was making salvation too easy for the non-Jewish world. His opponents wanted all non-Jews to become Jews *before* they could become Christians. This meant, among other matters, that the non-Jew had to be circumcised (Gal. 5:2 and 6:12-16), and observe certain "days, and months, and seasons, and years" (Gal. 4:10). Circumcision, for example, was so deeply entrenched in the spiritual life of the Jew that even the Jews outside Palestine, those of the Diaspora who were considered to be less traditional, believed that circumcision was indispensable for all Jewish males.¹

But Paul said *no* to all of this; becoming a Jew *first* was unnecessary. His position was that although Jews had some advantages (Rom. 3:1-3), they were actually no better off in the sight of God. "Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all . . ." (Rom. 3:9).² Why? "Both Jews and Greeks are under the power of sin, . . . None is righteous" (Rom. 3:9-10). For Paul, becoming a Jew enroute to becoming a Christian was not only unnecessary, it had no merit whatsoever; he concludes that "There is no distinction, since all have sinned" (Rom. 3:22-23).

The Jewish Christians who followed Paul practically everywhere he traveled in order to oppose his view of the gospel were known as Judaizers, and the clearest record of their activity is found in Galatians. The Judaizers were traditionalists in the truest sense; they had great influence over the people, for they argued from Scripture and history, but even more significantly, from their positions of authority. It does not take long to recognize that the attacks made against Paul's gospel were to a large degree made against Paul the man. He did not have, so his opponents argued, the credentials of the other church leaders.

Paul, however, does not attack the church's authority in making his defense. Rather, he points out that, contrary to the so-called defenders of the church, he is the one who is in harmony with the church's decision made at the Jerusalem Council (see Acts 15) and is even more consistent than Peter, a reputed authority! (Gal. 2:6-14).

Paul's understanding of the gospel prevailed: salvation is for everyone;³ it is a gift of God who shows no partiality (Rom. 2:11). The recipients of the gift need no credentials of any kind.

The confrontation between Paul and the traditionalists continues in every age,⁴ and clearly teaches us two things: (1) claiming to be a defender of the church or of the truth does not make the claim (and frequent attacks on others) necessarily true, and (2) since it is human nature to seek credit for our salvation, the beautiful and true basis of our salvation needs to be continually proclaimed.

1. Philo, *Migration of Abraham*, pp. 89-94.

2. All scriptural references are from the RSV.

3. Some of the references which make this point: Rom. 3:22, 29; 5:18, 8:1; 10:4, 12-13; Gal. 3:26-29.

4. *Desire of Ages*, p. 280.

Today's Judaizers

by Gilbert Muth

HOW TO

Key text:
Romans 15:7

In the Seventh-day Adventist subculture there is a tendency toward Judaizing. Admitting this may actually serve to draw us together rather than polarize us.

Since Adventists are "students of the Word" each sees his salvation and relationship to God a little differently than all others. Because of our commission to spread the gospel to all people and because we "know what salvation entails," we find it our duty to labor with those who seem to be living "in sin" and/or believing "another gospel."

Judaizers, whether in the early church or our day, are individuals who *demand* beliefs and practices which are not essential to salvation. When we labor with fellow believers we tend to be coercive, trying to convince them that our way is right and that they will be lost if they don't believe and act in the manner we prescribe. We are therefore demanding that they conform to beliefs and practices that they are not convinced are essential to salvation.

What then is the absolute bottom line for salvation? Of the many passages in the Scriptures giving the essentials of salvation the one I like comes from John 3. Here, the greatest authority ever to live on earth told Nicodemus that the one thing truly necessary was to have a quality of belief in Christ and His mission to earth which resulted in a rebirth experience. In Romans, Paul shows that the rebirth experience includes not only repentance and confession, but also leads to a loving response to God and to others (see especially chapters 12-15).

If we are commanded to love one another as Christ loved us, and if Judaizers were not distinguished for their overwhelming love for those who didn't agree with them, how can we love one another if we are to some extent Judaizers?

1. **Dialogue with all persons**, opening up new options and viewpoints for each other to ponder and prayerfully study.

2. **Put pressure on others to change only through love and prayer, not by force or argument.** Don't do what is not your responsibility to do, the work of the Holy Spirit.

3. **When a brother or sister seems to be putting pressure on you to conform to what you think are non-essentials, reject the pressure kindly but don't reject the person.** We all need to be loved and accepted no matter what we believe or practice. Our churches are "hospitals for sinners and not showcases for saints."

Probably most modern Adventist Judaizers are saved even if they do require of themselves or others certain non-essentials. Shouldn't our attitude toward all men be one of live and let live, as well as personal acceptance? Can't we discuss our differences and disagree without being disagreeable? Is it possible that many of us who disagree will be sharing heaven? Perhaps we need to identify with the Judaizers instead of identifying with Paul in order that we might understand our true condition. Might knowing our true condition make us more tolerant and less likely to polarize?

Idols of Exclusion

by Greg Schneider

OPINION

Key text:
Luke 4:8

"The circles of our group become spheres of exclusion, teaching us almost unwittingly whom to look down on. . . ."

Human groups. We cannot live without them. We are social beings, born to live in community and to know the world and ourselves only through the language, symbols, tools, and nurture that the group provides. The unsocialized human would be a monstrosity.

But groups are also hard to live with. They so often set up what Francis Bacon called the Idols of the Tribe, symbols which represent to their members their common interests and which elicit a shared sense of "we-ness." These idols mark out the circles that encompass us with caring and protection, the small ponds in which we can gain recognition as significant frogs. They also set boundaries which restrict us through fear. Worse, they identify the territory of the outcast. The circles of our group become spheres of exclusion, teaching us almost unwittingly whom to look down on, whom to despise.

The Torah had become the idol of the Jewish tribe in the days of Jesus and Paul. The Jews had tried to confine God within the familiar bounds of their traditional views of the Law. But God came in the form of a man who was found constantly among the outcast, not among the keepers of the tribal idols. He lived out the truth which is suffering servanthood and embodied the grace which brings despised ones who were once far off near to one another in His new community, the Body of Christ (Eph. 2:13-15).

Although the Judaizers saw this grace and the truth in Christ and were drawn to it, they were not quite able to let go of their idols. Somehow they thought they knew that Christ would naturally confine Himself within their familiar circles of meaning.

We may be tempted to some Judaizing. Where we see the hungry fed, the despised lifted up to a sense of dignity, the prisoners of poverty freed, we may query: "What makes you different from any nominal Christian or well-wishing atheist? What about the Sanctuary? What about the Three Angels, Babylon, the Beast, and the Health Message?"

It is no disavowal of these, our distinctive truths, to remind ourselves Who truth is and among whom He may constantly be found.

Suggested Reading:
Harold Issacs, *Idols of the Tribe* (Harper & Row)
Donald Kraybill, *The Upside-Down Kingdom* (Herald Press)

July 29
Friday

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REACT
Lesson 5

1. How does one determine whether a new position, such as Paul's was, is heresy or gospel? Test your answer(s) by what has occurred in the Early Church and in the history of Adventism.
2. Does the controversy over the Judaizers suggest anything about what the requirements for modern church membership should be? Do we make membership too easy or too complex? Relate your answers to those given in the first century confrontation.
3. What is your reaction to the dispute between Paul and Peter (Gal. 2:11-14)? Does the fact that there was a conflict between the apostolic church's two most prominent (and inspired) leaders weaken your faith? Strengthen your faith? Neither? Explain.
4. Do you agree with Gilbert Muth's assertion that Adventists tend to be "Judaizers"? Explain why or why not?
5. Is it possible that if two modern "Judaizers" were in the midst of an argument when Christ comes, He would translate them both? Explain.
6. People rarely devote themselves as enthusiastically as the Judaizers did to the Law (Torah) unless it serves some essential needs. What needs do you think the Torah served for the Judaizers? Can you think of aspects of Adventist faith and practice that might serve similar needs? Can we retain these things without being "Judaizers"?
7. Do you think some distinctive Adventist beliefs and practices have become "Idols of the Tribe" (see Opinion)? If so, explain how they are such. Is this necessarily bad? Can a group hold beliefs strongly without them marking out "spheres of exclusion"?

July 31-August 6

A Different Gospel

“So we . . . have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified” (Galatians 2:16, NIV).



The Race

by Laurie Lee Wilson

INTRODUCTION

What the citizens had been hearing was true. The Race was going to be run in Tile Town! The Race, sponsored by the automobile manufacturer, Terrestrial Transports, was a driver endurance test run on a long, difficult course. No one had heard of anyone finishing in less than a week and often the participants were driving for a month or more. It had been a popular event for some time in other parts of the country and TT Mfg. had decided to offer the opportunity to the residents of Tile Town.

Representatives from TT Mfg. arrived with a load of its newest model car, the Faith Deluxe II, for distribution to interested drivers. After a trial period, in which the participants practiced with their cars, the representatives started the Race.

"Ladies and gentlemen," the voice of the TT Mfg. representative boomed over the loudspeakers, "let me remind you of a few ground rules." He cleared his throat.

"1. Your Faith Deluxe II was given to you so you would be able to participate in the Race. Remember, it will be impossible to finish the Race without it.

"2. Keep your fuel tanks full.

"3. Care for your car properly.

"4. Study the map provided and follow the signs so that you will not lose the course.

"Drivers, start your engines!"

At first confident, the drivers soon began to be distracted. They found there were gas sta-

tion attendants, food store owners, and hitch hikers along the way who tried to convince them that they needed more than the representatives had told them—unleaded fuel, better mufflers, and smog devices. Although the TT Mfg. representatives had told the drivers their cars were fully equipped, some of the drivers from Tile Town were beginning to doubt. They made some changes, but the changes didn't seem to help at all. The drivers were becoming confused.

Word got back to TT Mfg. The representatives were worried. The manufacturer had designed FDII especially for the Tile Town participants and tampering was only damaging.

One concerned representative sat down and wrote a message that was to be posted in places where the Tile Town drivers would be sure to see it when they stopped to rest.

You foolish Tile Towners. Who has changed your thinking? You were given a clear description of what the Race entailed. Tell me, didn't you accept the gift of the FDII so you could enter the Race? You started with a car that met all the specifications. Why do you want to add worrisome details to the Race? Others have successfully finished the Race using only the FDII. The vehicle is what carries you to the end, not a smog device, a different muffler, or unleaded fuel. Don't get bogged down in incidentals. Remember the Race!

The Race has come to our town. Have you checked out your Faith Deluxe II?

To Live By Faith

LOGOS

As Habbakuk stood on his tower of watch he gazed with a prophetic eye on the terrible scenes set before him. On all sides he was surrounded by a panorama of destruction and injustice. He saw smoke rising from smoldering rubble and heard the cries of the dying wafting heavenward. He could see the wicked swallowing up the righteous and everywhere justice was being perverted. As he looked at the carnage, fear clutched his heart. What hope was there now? In his utter despair he cried out: "How long, O Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry to you 'violence!' but you do not save? Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife and conflict abounds" (Hab. 1:2, 3, NIV).

In the solitude of the tower Habbukuk waited for the answer. It came, ringing loud and clear: "The righteous will live by his faith" (Hab. 2:4, NIV). This is the answer to the cries of Christians who are in daily combat against a world of sin, surrounded by the violence and the injustice of those in rebellion against God. When beset with the trials and perplexities of life and when temptation comes with burning intensity, there is no cause for despair because "the righteous will live by his faith."

This is the only way to live but many forget it, as did the Galatians. Paul had clearly presented to them the good news that salvation is freely obtained by the sacrifice of Christ, but now they had reverted to salvation by works, trying to receive life by their own deeds. Paul asked them: "Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to obtain your goal by human efforts?" (Gal. 3:3, NIV). From his preconversion experience Paul knew that human works could never result in salvation. No one can fully keep the law and so "all who rely on observing the law are under a curse for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law'" (Gal. 3:10, NIV). F. F. Bruce comments that one "could not pick and choose among the ordinances of the law; it was all or nothing. The law pronounced an explicit curse on all who failed to keep it in its entirety. The gospel showed how men and women could be redeemed from that curse by faith in Christ, who by the manner of his death absorbed the curse in his own person"¹ (see Gal. 3:13).

Human efforts to gain salvation are futile. Instead of drawing one closer to Christ they bring separation. Paul said: "You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen away from grace" (Gal. 5:4, NIV).

So "clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, 'The righteous will live by faith'" (Gal. 3:11, NIV). It is by faith that salvation is obtained. "A man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ" (Gal. 2:16, NIV). It is by faith we experience Christ within. "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20, NIV). And it is by faith that a triumphant life may be lived from here to eternity. "The righteous will live by faith" (Gal. 3:11, NIV).

1. F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977) pp. 181-182.

The Veil Removed

TESTIMONY

Key text:
2 Corinthians
3:7-18

The greatest difficulty Paul had to meet arose from the influence of Judaizing teachers. These made him much trouble by causing dissension in the church at Corinth. They were continually presenting the virtues of the ceremonies of the law, exalting these ceremonies above the gospel of Christ, and condemning Paul because he did not urge them upon the new converts.

Paul met them on their own ground. "If the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious," he said, "so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: how shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory" (2 Cor. 3:7-9).

The law of God, spoken in awful grandeur from Sinai, is the utterance of condemnation to the sinner. It is the province of the law to condemn, but there is in it no power to pardon or to redeem. It is ordained to life; those who walk in harmony with its precepts will receive the reward of obedience. But it brings bondage and death to those who remain under its condemnation.

So sacred and so glorious is the law, that when Moses returned from the holy mount, where he had been with God, receiving from His hand the tables of stone, his face reflected a glory upon which the people could not look without pain, and Moses was obliged to cover his face with a veil.

The glory that shone on the face of Moses was a reflection of the righteousness of Christ in the law. The law itself would have no glory, only that in it Christ is embodied. It has no power to save. It is lusterless only as in it Christ is represented as full of righteousness and truth. . . .

Paul desires his brethren to see that the great glory of a sin-pardoning Saviour gave significance to the entire Jewish economy. He desires them to see also that when Christ came to the world, and died as man's sacrifice, type met antitype.

After Christ died on the cross as a sin offering, the ceremonial law could have no force. Yet it was connected with the moral law, and was glorious. The whole bore the stamp of divinity, and expressed the holiness, justice, and righteousness of God. And if the ministration of the dispensation to be done away was glorious, how much more must the reality be glorious, when Christ was revealed, giving His life-giving sanctifying Spirit to all who believe? . . .

The law and the gospel are in perfect harmony. Each upholds the other. In all its majesty the law confronts the conscience, causing the sinner to feel his need of Christ as the propitiation for sin. The gospel recognizes the power and immutability of the law. "I had not known sin, but by the law," Paul declares (Rom. 7:7). The sense of sin, urged home by the law, drives the sinner to the Saviour. In his need man may present the mighty arguments furnished by the cross of Calvary. He may claim the righteousness of Christ; for it is imparted to every repentant sinner. God declares, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

"The law of God . . . is the utterance of condemnation to the sinner."

Review and Herald,
April 22, 1902 (*Selected Messages, Book One,*
pp. 236-241).

August 2
Tuesday

Passive Righteousness

by Martin Luther

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Philippians 3:9

"It is impossible for the human mind to conceive any comfort of itself. . . ."

First of all, we must speak of the argument, that is, of the issue with which Paul deals in this epistle [Galatians]. The argument is this: Paul wants to establish the doctrine of faith, grace, the forgiveness of sins or Christian righteousness, so that we may have a perfect knowledge and know the difference between Christian righteousness and all other kinds of righteousness, which the emperor, the princes of the world, philosophers, and lawyers consider. There is also a ceremonial righteousness, which human traditions teach, as, for example, the traditions of the pope and other traditions. Parents and teachers may teach this righteousness without danger, because they do not attribute to it any power to make satisfaction for sin, to placate God, and to earn grace; but they teach that these ceremonies are necessary only for moral discipline and for certain observances. There is, in addition to these, yet another righteousness, the righteousness of the Law or of the Decalog, which Moses teaches. We, too, teach this, but after the doctrine of faith.

Over and above all these there is the righteousness of faith or Christian righteousness, which is to be distinguished most carefully from all the others. For they are all contrary to this righteousness, both because they proceed from the laws of emperors, the traditions of the pope, and the commandments of God, and because they consist in our works and can be achieved by us with "purely natural endowments," as the scholastics teach, or from a gift of God. For these kinds of the righteousness of works, too, are gifts of God, as are all the things we have. But this most excellent righteousness, the righteousness of faith, which God imputes to us through Christ without works, is neither political nor ceremonial nor legal nor work-righteousness but is quite the opposite; it is a merely passive righteousness, while all the others, listed above, are active. For here we work nothing, render nothing to God; we only receive and permit someone else to work in us, namely, God. Therefore it is appropriate to call the righteousness of faith or Christian righteousness "passive." This is a righteousness hidden in a mystery, which the world does not understand. In fact, Christians themselves do not adequately understand it or grasp it in the midst of their temptations. Therefore it must always be taught and continually exercised. And anyone who does not grasp or take hold of it in afflictions and terrors of conscience cannot stand. For there is no comfort of conscience so solid and certain as is this passive righteousness.

But such is human weakness and misery that in the terrors of conscience and in the danger of death we look at nothing except our own works, our worthiness, and the Law. When the Law shows us our sin, our past life immediately comes to our mind. Then the sinner, in his great anguish of mind, groans and says to himself: "Oh, how damnably I have lived! If only I could live longer! Then I would amend my life." Thus human reason cannot refrain from looking at active righteousness, that is, its own righteousness; nor can it shift its gaze to passive, that is, Christian righteousness, but it simply rests in the active righteousness. So deeply is this evil rooted in us, and so completely have we acquired this unhappy habit! Taking advantage of the weakness of our nature, Satan increases and aggravates these

Excerpted from *Luther's Works*, Vol. 26, Jaroslav Pelikan, ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1964), pp. 4-6.

□ August 3
Wednesday

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Martin Luther (1483-1546) was the pivotal figure in the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century.

thoughts in us. Then it is impossible for the conscience to avoid being more seriously troubled, confounded, and frightened. For it is impossible for the human mind to conceive any comfort of itself, or to look only at grace amid its consciousness and terror of sin, or consistently to reject all discussion of works. To do this is beyond human power and thought. Indeed, it is even beyond the Law of God. For although the Law is the best of all things in the world, it still cannot bring peace to a terrified conscience but makes it even sadder and drives it to despair. For by the Law sin becomes exceedingly sinful (Rom. 7:13).

Therefore the afflicted conscience has no remedy against despair and eternal death except to take hold of the promise of grace offered in Christ, that is, this righteousness of faith, this passive or Christian righteousness, which says with confidence: "I do not seek active righteousness. I ought to have and perform it; but I declare that even if I did have it and perform it, I cannot trust in it or stand up before the judgment of God on the basis of it. Thus I put myself beyond all active righteousness, all righteousness of my own or of the divine Law, and I embrace only that passive righteousness which is the righteousness of grace, mercy, and the forgiveness of sins." In other words, this is the righteousness of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, which we do not perform but receive, which we do not have but accept, when God the Father grants it to us through Jesus Christ.

As the earth itself does not produce rain and is unable to acquire it by its own strength, worship, and power but receives it only by a heavenly gift from above, so this heavenly righteousness is given to us by God without our work or merit. As much as the dry earth of itself is able to accomplish in obtaining the right and blessed rain, that much can we men accomplish by our own strength and works to obtain that divine, heavenly, and eternal righteousness. Thus we can obtain it only through the free imputation and indescribable gift of God. Therefore the highest art and wisdom of Christians is not to know the Law, to ignore works and all active righteousness, just as outside the people of God the highest wisdom is to know and study the Law, works, and active righteousness.

"I do not seek active righteousness. I ought to have and perform it; but . . . I cannot trust in it."

Justification as Gift and as Power

by Terrence Trivett

HOW TO
Key text:
Galatians
2:16, 20, NIV

The issue in Galatians is how God saves people. Does it matter how we understand this? The Apostle Paul argues that it matters very much, and that legalism is a false gospel because it is inferior to the righteousness of Jesus Christ. But can this justification by faith do more than eliminate our personal guilt? Can it enable us, after Christ to serve others? The answer is "Yes," if we:

1) **Learn how to resist legalism—the different gospel which was no gospel at all** (Gal. 1:6, 7). The Apostle Paul roundly denounces legalism as a "perversion" of the gospel of Christ, for it was powerless to save. After learning the truth in Christ, the Galatians had followed bad leadership back into a salvation dependent upon human effort, and Paul warned them to have nothing of this "foolishness" (Gal. 3:1-3). The Galatians had no corner on legalism, however, for its lure is so timeless as to ensnare unwary believers in every age—in actual practice if not as formal doctrine.

And yet, living within legalism is often freighted with one of two serious problems. More commonly, we find ourselves making no progress in keeping the law and becoming discouraged. Less often, those of strong will may sense moral progress and become proud. Either discouragement or pride is spiritually deadly, however, and must finally be remedied by beholding the Savior. At its core, legalism is too self-centered to be redemptive personally or socially.

"Justification for Paul, then, implies social action in the broadest sense."

2) **Accept justification by faith in Christ Jesus.** The thrust of Galatians is that we are saved by God's grace rather than our own accomplishments. As a result of Christ's sacrifice, we may enjoy a justified stance before God that should provide an important consequence: *Personal assurance* (Gal. 2:16). God has put Christ's merits to our account because He bore our sins on the cross. Though our righteousness is as filthy rags, we are forgiven and accepted in the sight of heaven as though perfect in Jesus.

These lessons will enable us to engage in social action (Gal. 2:20). If, like Paul, we have been crucified with Christ so that He lives in us, then we should in gratitude to God shoulder the burdens of our fellow men and act as agents of His grace for their spiritual and social needs. This privilege, though often ignored as a part of justification, should naturally follow from the experience of personal forgiveness and freedom in Christ. Indeed, only if we accept the merits of Christ on a daily basis are we likely to rise above a preoccupation with our own salvation and go forth in free and joyous service to others. This point is developed admirably by Charles B. Cousar:

"But what does it mean to live as one who has been crucified with Christ, as one in whom the crucified Christ lives? What does it mean to receive justification not only as a gift but as a power? Here the two neglected aspects of Paul's understanding of justification converge. The righteousness of God—given, received, and lived out—is not just a personal but a corporate reality. It involves participation in a community of people who risk their own security by being *for* others whose histories may be radically different, who culturally, ethnically, economically, politically, and/or socially live on the other side of the tracks. Movement from the old dominion of death to the new dominion of life draws people into a strange fellowship where previously

significant divisions no longer matter. To cling to these anachronistic barriers is to reject the demand which the gift of God's righteousness has made. Justification for Paul, then, implies social action in the broadest sense. It implicates the recipient in the cause of sisters and brothers of various circumstances who labor under the weight of oppression, affliction, and personal grief. The divine acquittal is received not by faith which may someday lead to a social concern (or may not) but by faith which *is* social concern, or to use Paul's words, 'faith working through love (Gal. 5:6).'¹

God forbid that we should appropriate His grace selfishly. As forgiven Christians, let us direct our gaze upward in thankfulness to God and then outward with care to society.

1. Charles B. Cousar, *Galatians. Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982), p. 62.

A New World Now

by Adrian Zytoskee

OPINION

Key text:
2 Corinthians
5:17, NEB

Paul was concerned that the Galatians were turning to "another gospel"—one of salvation through works of the law. Many in the church today have taken up Paul's cause and zealously seek to correct their misguided fellow believers who are laboring under the burden of a "false gospel." Hurling labels such as "legalistic perfectionist" and "tolerator of sin" at one another they have made the gospel a synonym for controversy rather than a reminder of the cross. They have caricatured Paul's arguments and misunderstood the context in which Paul was speaking.¹ The "legalism" Paul was condemning was not so much an emphasis on good works as it was an attempt to maintain barriers such that acceptance of Christ was not considered sufficient to allow the believer to enter the Christian community. Paul always understood the good news of what Christ had done as opening the way for all who believe to become a part of God's covenant people. He did not see the gospel as primarily offering individual fulfillment and victory. Even salvation was understood in the context of community rather than an individual arrangement with God. ▼

Current emphasis on the primacy of justification or the essential cleansing of the life through sanctification may be theologically unsailable but the practical result is to turn the mind of the believer inward, examining the accuracy of his beliefs or the validity of his experience. Such a process often leads the introspective seeker of the "gospel" to judge the beliefs or experiences of others in ways that destroy community and subvert the true gospel. Albert Rasmussen has suggested that such people "strain" the gospel "through a sieve of self-serving anxiety, and the milk of Christian obligation to God and community [is] thrown away while the cream of selfish reward is retained. . . . [A]nxiety for one's own good and one's own salvation becomes the root source of sin. . . ."²

"Paul did not see the gospel as primarily offering individual fulfillment and victory."

Perhaps the point is best made by Paul in writing to the Corinthians. 2 Corinthians 5:17 is a familiar text typically used to assure the believer of the possibility of victorious living through the power of Christ. However, *The New English Bible* suggests a reading which gives a new and exciting emphasis to the words of Paul. "When anyone is united to Christ, *there is a new world*; the old order has gone, and a new order has already begun" (emphasis supplied). Because of what Christ has done the *world has changed*. Jew and Gentile can come together. Rich and poor can make common cause. Young and old can understand one another. Black and white can be reconciled. Paul's message is one of reconciliation based on an objective happening and best understood in the context of community. This is the gospel.

I can remember well when my first child, my daughter Terri, was born. After a frantic rush to the hospital (twelve hours early), the great event happened. I hurried from the nursery window to my wife's bed and back again. I could not believe that the wizened little creature placing her ink-stained footprints on the paper was actually my daughter. I can remember bringing her back to our little garage apartment in an alley where, as penurious students, we lived, and rocking her while I actually sang to her. When we took her to church for the first time our friends gathered round as we proudly let them

1. For further study on this point I recommend Krister Stendahl's *Paul Among the Jews and Gentiles* (Fortress Press, 1976).

2. Albert Rasmussen, *Christian Social Ethics* (Prentice-Hall, 1956), pp. 89-90.

□ August 5
Friday

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peek beneath the blankets. It was a new world and I acted accordingly. I didn't say, "Look at me. I'm a father." I said, "Look at my daughter." The world had changed and I had changed and I acted accordingly.

The gospel is the good news that the world has changed and that the community which accepts Christ can act accordingly. It is a world in which the hungry can be fed, the thirsty can be given drink, the naked can be clothed, and the stranger invited into our midst.

REACT **Lesson 6**

1. In what sense is it possible for law-keeping actually to alienate us from Christ (see Gal. 5:4)? Why does this type of law-keeping alienate us from Christ (see How To)? Why does Paul call it "another gospel"?
 2. Discuss the significance of Paul's statement that "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13, see also Logos). How does this statement affect your understanding of what Christ did for us on the cross?
 3. What does Luther mean by "passive righteousness" (see Evidence). Is he right in saying that this kind of righteousness alone is "the righteousness of faith"? Is he going too far when he says "the highest art and wisdom of Christians is not to know the Law"? Explain.
 4. Is Luther's concept of "passive righteousness" in harmony with the concept of justification as a gift and power presented in the How To section? Explain why or why not.
 5. Are there ways in which justification by faith itself directly involves us in service and social concern (see both How To and Opinion for suggestions)? Or, is this a blurring of the useful distinction between justification and sanctification?
 6. Does the New English Bible rendering of 2 Corinthians 5:17 (see Opinion) give you a new perspective on what it means to be "in Christ" by faith? Explain.
 7. The Opinion author implies that because Christ has redeemed the world the Christian community can and should minister to the needs of society. Might not such a stress on the corporate nature of salvation lead to a social gospel with insufficient concern for the importance of changing individual lives? If such an emphasis were accepted, how might it alter our approaches to evangelism?
-

7

August 7-13

In Spiritual Need

“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights” (James 1:17, NIV).



A Reason For Being There

by Arthur A. Milward

INTRODUCTION

Some time ago I had occasion to pay several visits to a house in my community where I became acquainted with a young lady. She was a very young lady, around six years old, and a tentative friendship was formed between the two of us, despite—or perhaps because of—the fifty year's difference in our ages.

It was the sort of home which I was not accustomed to entering—but I had business there. My first impression was the general air of dishevelment and the strong odor of marijuana that permeated the atmosphere. Three children, including six-year-old Jennifer,¹ all rather sketchily clad, tumbled over each other on the unswept floor. The young parents, totally ignoring the children, were engaged in a spirited verbal battle, liberally laced with colorful epithets.

Not long after this, the young couple who, although both married, were not married to each other, decided to “split,” and promptly left the area, taking the two smaller children with them, but—her parentage apparently being a matter of some discussion—abandoning the six-year-old to her own devices.

Subsequently, a compassionate Christian couple in the locality took the child into their home and she appeared one Sabbath morning in my second-grade Sabbath School room.

Jennifer was clean, attractively dressed, and, I quickly perceived, very frightened by the totally unfamiliar surroundings in which she found

herself. The preliminary song service was already under way, so I smiled at her, found her a seat, and sat down beside her. A few minutes into the program proper, a small hand timidly crept into mine, and a voice whispered in my ear: “Oh God! I'm glad you're here.”

Not infrequently I have been moved to ask myself: “What are you doing here? Are you serving any genuinely useful purpose?”

Now, as the tiny fingers tightened around mine, and I looked into Jennifer's anxious little face, I realized that I was there, at that moment, in that place, specifically to be a bridge over troubled water for one very bewildered little girl.

As church members—followers of the compassionate Jesus—we too often forget that we are here, in this place, at this time, for that very purpose—to reach out to those who are hurting and desperately need an expression of His love.

The needs to which James addresses himself—for impartiality, a gentleness in communication, humility, a concern for economic justice, and a desire for heavenly wisdom—are all rooted in a concern for our fellows.

Such a mutual concern for others, both within and without the church, establishes a path to unity, a sure and simple antidote to the current climate of divisiveness that sets brother against brother, and renders ineffectual the presentation of a loving Savior to those who look for Him in us.

1. The incident is factual, the child's name only having been changed.

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August 7
Sunday

A Different Kind of Needy

LOGOS

There are millions of needy people in the world and there are many kinds of needy. In his letter, James addresses a particular type of "needy."

His readers prided themselves in the possession of faith, but it was a faith which produced no matching fruitage of works. He pointed out several specific deficiencies in their lives which caused them to be spiritually needy.

James saw a strong need for impartiality among the Jewish Christians. They were judging people by looking through a worldly telescope. "If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, 'Love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers" (James 2:8, 9, NIV). How many times have poor, ragged, broken and lonely people sought acceptance, warmth, and Christian love within the church door but instead been met with a criticizing stare? James pointedly asks "Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?" (James 2:5, NIV).

Have you ever watched a rancher working to tame a wild horse? The horse wants to run and jump and kick by natural instinct quite like the tongue of a human being. James warned the Christians about a fast and loose tongue by writing, "If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not keep a tight rein on his tongue, he deceives himself and his religion is worthless" (James 1:26, NIV). It is unthinkable that a Christian should use the tongue to communicate hypocritically. "With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be" (James 3:9, 10, NIV).

Charles Dickens' "Scrooge" is a famous example of a rich oppressor. He was a rich, miserly man who hoarded his wealth and made his employees work like slaves for a pauper's wage. James did not hesitate to speak the harsh truth to the rich Christians oppressing their workers. "The cries of the harvester have reached the ears of Lord Almighty. You have lived on earth in luxury and self-indulgence. You have fattened yourselves in the day of slaughter" (James 5:4, 5 NIV). Christianity simply is not compatible with self-indulgence. The heart transformed by looking to Jesus will invest its wealth in seeking to comfort the sick and aid the poor.

Finally, James points out the need for a godly wisdom which encompasses nearly all the attitudes he wishes his readers to possess. "But if you harbor bitter envy or selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such 'wisdom' does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. . . . But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere" (James 3:14-17, NIV).

James' answer to the problem of spiritual need is for Christians to go beyond mere profession of belief and seek the divine qualities found in the noble pattern and example of Jesus Christ. "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says" (James 1:22, NIV).

S. D. P.

Zeal That Brings Pain

by Paul Stauffer

TESTIMONY

Key text:
James 3:2-12

The temptation to "offend in word" is especially strong when, having very strong convictions about what is right or true, we must deal with others who have equally strong convictions that we consider not only wrong, but dangerous. In 1882, Ellen White wrote a testimony to some in the church at Battle Creek who, no doubt righteously indignant, were attempting to discredit a teacher at Battle Creek College. Some of them had written to Mrs. White, apparently thinking to enlist her support. Her response was forthright and unequivocal.

"Whatever may be Brother _____'s faults, your course is unjustifiable and unchristian. You have gone back over his history for years and have searched out everything that was unfavorable, every shadow of evil, and have made him an offender for a word. You have brought all the powers you could command to sustain yourselves as accusers. . . .

"The tongue . . . that says Report, and I will report it, is declared by the apostle James to be set on fire of hell. . . . You have yourselves thrown open the doors for Satan to come in. You have given him an honored place at your investigation, or inquisition meetings. But you have shown no respect for all the excellencies of character established by years of faithfulness. . . . Revengeful tongues have colored acts and motives to suit their own ideas. They have made black white and white black. When remonstrated with for their statements, some have said: 'It is true.' Admitting that the fact stated is true, does that justify your course? No, no. . . . Even facts may be so stated as to convey a false impression."¹

Some observations about an incident occurring on Jesus' last journey from Galilee to Jerusalem are even more pointed. When the Samaritans refused hospitality to Jesus and his followers, James and John wanted to defend the Lord by calling down fire from heaven, citing from Scripture the example of Elijah. Ellen White comments:

"James and John . . . loved their Lord, and were filled with indignation because he had been so rudely treated by the Samaritans, whom he was honoring by his presence. . . . They were surprised to see that Christ was pained by their words, and still more surprised as his rebuke fell on their ears: 'Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.'

". . . What a lesson this is to those who are filled with religious zeal, and who would cause to suffer those whose belief is not in accord with their own! . . . Many reveal the attributes of Satan by trying to compel their fellow men to believe as they believe. They desire to punish those who, they think, dishonor Christ. They may say that they are working for the truth and liberty, they may claim to be doing honor to God; but if they exercise a zeal that brings pain to the bodies and spirits of those who dare to differ with them, they are controlled by the enemy of God."²

Writing of the same incident in *Desire of Ages*, Mrs. White declares, "There can be no more conclusive evidence that we possess the spirit of Satan than the disposition to hurt and destroy those who do not appreciate our work, or who act contrary to our ideas."³

"Many reveal the attributes of Satan by trying to compel their fellow men to believe as they believe."

1. *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, pp. 53, 57, 58.
2. *Review and Herald*, February 7, 1899.
3. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 487.

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August 9
Tuesday

Toward a Higher Stage

by Larry Richardson

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Philippians 2:1-4

James' admonitions to correct certain attitudinal and behavioral patterns amount to a plea for moral development. According to his assessment of the spiritual needs of his audience, important segments of the early church had not progressed very far through what Lawrence Kohlberg calls "the six stages of moral development."¹ Kohlberg identifies these stages as follows:

Motivational Aspects of Morality

- STAGE 1: Acts out of fear of punishment by others. The physical consequences of an action determine its goodness or badness.
- STAGE 2: Acts to satisfy one's own needs or receive rewards from others. Right action consists of what instrumentally satisfies one's own needs.
- STAGE 3: Acts to gain approval of others. Good behavior is that which pleases or helps others.
- STAGE 4: Acts to conform to authority and to maintain law and order. Right behavior consists of maintaining social order for its own sake.
- STAGE 5: Acts out of mutual obligation and a sense of public good. Right action tends to be defined in terms of general individual rights and in terms of standards that have been critically examined and agreed upon by the whole society. This is the official "morality" of the American government and Constitution.
- STAGE 6: Acts out of a universal principle. Right is defined by the decision of conscience in accord with self-chosen ethical principles appealing to logical comprehensiveness, universality, and consistency. This is the "golden rule" model rather than concrete moral rules such as the Ten Commandments.

"The human condition continues to cry out for impartiality, a bridled tongue, wisdom, and economic justice."

Looking at James' description of current practices, we can see good reason for his concern. For example, the habit of giving preferential seating to the rich (James 2:1-8) very likely indicates a moral plateau at about Stage 2 or 3. The tendency to exploit the laborers of the day (James 5:1-6) likewise implies a sense of morality at no higher than perhaps Stage 2. Little wonder James spoke so bluntly to his "brethren" in calling for moral development and a social conscience befitting a follower of Christ. Down through the ages, the human condition continues to cry out for impartiality, a bridled tongue, wisdom, and economic justice. In fact, the unanswered cry for economic justice essentially led to the Russian Revolution of 1917.

Finally, James' call for humility (James 4:13-16) involves one of the cornerstones of the Christian edifice. In his classic, *The Screwtape Letters*, C. S. Lewis comments on the nature of Christian humility.

My dear Wormwood,

... Your patient has become humble. You must therefore conceal from the patient the true end of humility. Fix in his mind the idea that humility consists in trying to believe [his] talents to be less valuable than he believes them to be

The Enemy wants to bring the man to a state of mind in which he could design the best cathedral in the world, and know it to be the best, and rejoice in the fact, without being more or less glad at having done it than he would be if it had been by another. The Enemy wants him, in the end, to be so free from any bias in his own favor that he can rejoice in his own talents as frankly and gratefully as in his neighbor's talents—or in a sunrise, an elephant, or a waterfall. He wants each man, in the long run, to be able to recognize all creatures [even himself] as glorious and excellent things. . . .

Your affectionate uncle,
Screwtape²

1. Lawrence Kohlberg, "The Development of Moral Character and Ideology," in M. Hoffman (ed.), *Review of Child Psychology* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1984).

2. C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1981), pp. 62-66.

☐ August 10
Wednesday

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Avoiding What Pushes Apart

by Kenneth Millard

HOW TO
Key text:
Romans 12:3,
9, 10

James talks about social behavior which pushes people apart. In his outspoken way, he strongly condemns any attitude or activity which is destructive to human relationships. The behaviors he condemns are as common now as they seem to have been in James' time, so there is no trouble at all seeing the relevance of his advice.

1. Don't discriminate among people because of the wealth they flaunt. Perhaps nothing is a less accurate indicator of value in people than their material wealth. And, in any case, it is not our role to pass judgment on human worth. Try looking through the veneer, whatever it may be. Fine clothes, fast automobiles, and elegant homes are things that impress us and are likely to elicit value judgments toward those who have, usually at the expense of those who don't. Conversely, it is always tempting to look with disparagement on anyone who appears either richer or poorer than we.

Learn to look for real values in people: wit, warmth, clear thought, love; and learn to value all people. Remember how God values them.

2. Don't use your own material blessings as a tool to impress others and win their favor. This too is divisive and counterproductive in terms of your own happiness. It's great to bask in the reflected glory of your new Italian sports car, but that kind of activity has several potential consequences which aren't so nice. If you elicit even a little resentment from a friend by your vain behavior, you more than counteract any joy that behavior seems to produce. Warm relationships with people are far too valuable to jeopardize by playing peacock.

Another danger is that you might begin to believe your own press. You might come to believe that some part of your personal value actually stems from your possessions. This kind of thinking becomes the foundation of a vicious human habit: acquiring goods to demonstrate one's worth. It's an endless cycle. There is always something new: the latest clothes, new models of high-fidelity equipment with better specifications than last year's nearly perfect models, and, of course, new cars that are—well, just new cars. It all becomes a hopeless chase after your own tail if you come to view yourself as somehow second class if your possessions are not the very latest and finest.

3. Don't let your words get out of control. James nowhere uses stronger language than when he condemns careless speech. He is not talking about four-letter words, either. He is talking about gossip. It is incredible how taken up we seem to be with repeating the latest juicy and destructive news about those who should be our friends.

Never attempt to strengthen your own position by belittling someone else, or repeating tales (even factual ones) that will harm them. Strength you gain this way is illusory. You haven't made yourself better, you have made yourself worse. Real strength comes from building relationships, not destroying them. The old adage is a good one: If you cannot say something good about someone, say nothing at all.

A New Viewpoint On Wealth

by Peter H. Davids

OPINION

Key text:
James 5:1-6

James is deeply concerned to denounce the party spirit and the petty infighting which are dividing the Christian communities he knows. He urges instead care for one another, which he expresses in terms of peacemaking, gentleness, mercy, and good fruit. A lifestyle of practical care for one another comes to the surface (James 3:17, 18).

James reveals, in this context, his deep concern for the economic lifestyle of the community, which for him must be characterized by concrete sacrificial help for the less fortunate members. . . .

James' concern for the poor spills over into economic analysis of society. He argues that the Christian lifestyle must outlaw all distinctions based on economic difference. If the Christian community begins to honor the wealthy, it has failed to obey the gospel and has betrayed Christ, for it is Christ himself who declared the law of love for all; it is Christ who made the poor rich and the rich poor. To honor the rich is to ignore the whole new viewpoint which Jesus introduced, according to which the Christian sees through worldly distinctions to ultimate reality (James 1:9-11, 2:1-13).

"The Christian lifestyle must outlaw all distinctions based on economic differences."

This new viewpoint reveals two facts: the rich are not only the persecutors of the church, but also the oppressors of humanity; and those who desire material security are compromising with the basically anti-God forces of the world—thus making themselves enemies of God despite their professed Christian faith. It is the rich and powerful who persecute, James cries, for only they can persecute—money is power (James 2:6, 7). He continues that it is the same group which, by one legal means or another, has gathered wealth by impoverishing the poor (James 5:1-6).

But, declares James, this powerful group is doomed, for the kingdom has broken into the world, and they will pass away in the end like dried grass. But woe to those professed Christians who, driven by desire, try to be like the wealthy and fail to share with one another. They know the good they ought to do, but, since they are double-minded, they fail to do it. They look to their business and make their plans to increase their (perhaps) modest wealth. Thus they have become friends of the world and therefore enemies of God. They must repent (James 4:1-17).

In this denunciation of wealth and its corrupting power, James not only echoes the words of Jesus, but also explains what the author of Revelation put in symbol: the structures and systems of the world—that which enriches the merchants and governments—are the great city of Babylon, the anti-God prostitute. In the end God will destroy her, bringing ruin on all the wealthy and powerful, for it is this force which has slaughtered saints and prophets. The call to the people of God is to come out of her, to be part of the new vision from God, of the new community where people love one another and share with one another (Revelation 18).

Excerpted from Peter H. Davids, "God and Mammon, Part Two", *Sojourners*, March 1978. Used by permission of *Sojourners*, P.O. Box 29272, Washington, D.C. 20017.

□ August 12
Friday

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At the time of this writing, Peter H. Davids was on the faculty of Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry in Coraopolis, Penn.

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, what overall rating would you give your church in the following areas addressed by James (1=poor, 10=excellent)?

_____ impartiality
_____ Christian principles in communication
_____ economic justice
_____ spiritual wisdom

What should be done to improve areas you gave a low rating?
How would you rate yourself on the same scale?

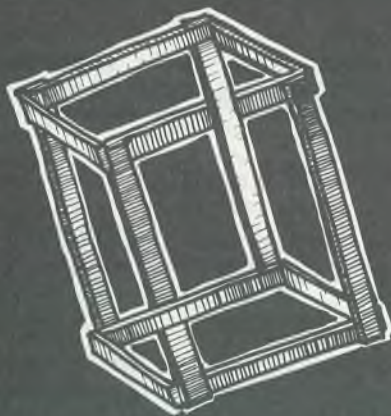
2. Does James' call for impartiality mean that we should show no deference to the rich and powerful? What conflicts might arise from attempting to practice such radical impartiality?
3. What determines an individual's worth in your eyes? Should your assessment of their "worth" at all affect the way you relate to them?
4. What does James' forthright denunciation of economic injustice suggest for the church today? Should we speak out against economic oppression in society or should we be mainly concerned that Christian employers treat their workers properly?
5. This week's Testimony suggests that a zeal for truth which brings pain to others is misguided. Is it always possible to uphold truth without causing hurt to someone in error? It is never right to confront others with your convictions? What are some principles to be followed in speaking to and about one another?
6. Look carefully at Kohlberg's stages of moral development on the Evidence page. At what stage do you most often find yourself? What is the lowest stage possible for truly Christian behavior?
-

August 14-20

Two Perspectives on Justifi- cation

"A man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ" (Galatians 2:16, NIV).

"You see that a person is justified by what he does and not by faith alone" (James 2:24, NIV).



The Grace of the Jungle

by Ken Thomson

INTRODUCTION

Boohoo the hippopotamus absent-mindedly hummed a tune as he walked along the jungle trail in the morning sun. "Sunshine always makes me feel good," he thought, "and in the waterhole it will be even better." Then a sound caught his ear. "Help! Help!"

Boohoo stopped. "Who's that?"

"It's me—Dik Dik. Help me, Boohoo!"

"Where are you, little antelope?"

"I'm down here, in this hole."

"Ooo, I see. What are you doing down there, Dik Dik?"

"I've fallen in this hole, Boohoo, and I can't get out. Please help me!"

"Why can't you get out—have you tried? How did you come to fall down such a big hole anyhow?"

"I have tried, Boohoo. My knees are skinned and my hooves are split with trying all night to get out: it's a TRAP!"

"Ooo—it must have been made by the hunter. Now I have ten rules about traps, Dik Dik. My uncle taught them to me, and he said they were very important. The first rule is that you must be careful not to fall into traps. And the second rule is . . ."

"Please, Boohoo, another time—I'm sure the rules are very good, and I will learn them, but not now. I want to get out of this trap. It's wet down here, and cold at night, and there are spiders and scorpions, and . . ."

Boohoo was just a little piqued that Dik Dik had not shown greater interest in his rules, which he thought quite

appropriate at this time. He sniffed.

"I can't help you, Dik Dik, if you are not going to listen. Anyhow, some animals like living in holes—they spend their lives in them. Perhaps you could get used to it!"

"If the hunter comes back I won't have a chance to get used to it! Please, Boohoo, if you can't help me get out, please—go and find someone who can!"

Boohoo lumbered away muttering about traps and rules. Eventually he found two of his friends and together they returned to where Dik Dik was struggling futilely in the hole. "Are you still there Dik Dik?"

"Yes, Boohoo—can you do anything?"

Toto the monkey peered into the hole. "Toto," said Boohoo, "if you reach down and catch hold of Dik Dik's hooves, we can both pull on your tail, and that should get him out."

"Not on your life, Boohoo—you're not pulling on my tail. I'd have a kink in it for a month!" Toto walked around the trap scratching his chin. "It looks as though you're stuck, Dik Dik."

Then Nhemba the elephant spoke. "I know what traps are like, I've had experience with them. Don't worry, Dik Dik, we'll help you."

Turning to the others, Nhemba gave instructions: "I will reach my long trunk down as far as it will go. Boohoo, you take hold of my tail, and when I say 'Pull,' you pull. Dik Dik, you just let me

(Continued on page 71)

Ken Thomson is an Australian who teaches physics and computer science at Pacific Union College.

Acknowledgments to Paul White, the "Jungle Doctor."

□ August 14
Sunday

Real Living Faith

LOGOS

Seventh-day Adventists have long been accused by our cousins in Christ of overemphasizing the book of James and ignoring the writings of Paul. We, in turn, have accused them of stressing Paul and ignoring James. In the past few years this argument has entered the church and the same accusations are being made. This controversy stems from an apparent paradox in the writings of the New Testament. Paul, in Galatians 2:16 says: "A man is not justified by works of the law, but through faith in Jesus Christ" (RSV). James, on the other hand, says: "A man is justified by works and not by faith alone" (James 2:24, RSV). In another instance Paul quotes Genesis 15:6 and says: "Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness" (Rom. 4:3, NIV). James quotes the same passage but he says: "Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did? . . ." (James 2:21, RSV). Which is correct, the emphasis on grace, or the emphasis on works? Is one right and the other wrong?

In order for an amiable solution to be found for this apparent conflict the context and the background of these passages need to be understood. Paul, during his ministry, continually had to deal with Judaizers. These were Jewish Christians who insisted that Gentile converts should follow the old Jewish rites and rituals which they believed essential to salvation. Evidently they met with quite some success in many of the churches to which Paul ministered. As a result, Paul had to contend with this false method of salvation—salvation by works. To meet this apostasy he emphasized justification by faith and downplayed works because works do not, of themselves, result in salvation.

James was confronted with the opposite problem. The people to whom he wrote verbally expressed their belief but their lives did not give evidence to their words. "James is not therefore defining the mode of justification as Paul is so careful to do. His aim is to destroy the pretense of those who imagined they had faith, when there was no evidence in the way they behaved to show that their faith was alive. In the context of the book of James 'justified' means in effect 'shown to be justified.' " "Works, although they cannot save, are the expression of being saved. " "So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead" (James 2:17, RSV).

So what is real faith, faith that is alive? Real faith, living faith is manifested in works and cannot be thought of simply in terms of belief. In this, there is no controversy between Paul and James. Paul says the only faith which counts is "faith expressing itself through love" (Gal. 5:6, NIV). James agrees by pointing out that the "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world" (James 1:27, NIV).

Paul is not wrong and James is not incorrect. Both deal with a living faith. Paul emphasized a faith which saves and James emphasized a faith which shows the results of being saved. They are both one and the same.

E. R. M.

1. R. V. G. Tasker, *Tyn-dale New Testament Commentaries*, "The General Epistle of James," (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1980), p. 68.

The Two Oars

Genuine faith will be manifested in good works; for good works are the fruits of faith. As God works in the heart, and man surrenders his will to God, and cooperates with God, he works out in the life what God works in by the Holy Spirit, and there is harmony between the purpose of the heart and the practice of the life. Every sin must be renounced as the hateful thing that crucified the Lord of life and glory, and the believer must have a progressive experience by continually doing the works of Christ. It is by continual surrender of the will, by continual obedience, that the blessing of justification is retained.

Those who are justified by faith must have a heart to keep the way of the Lord. It is an evidence that a man is not justified by faith when his works do not correspond to his profession. James says, "Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was his faith made perfect?" (James 2:22).

The faith that does not produce good works does not justify the soul. "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:24). "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom. 4:3).¹

Works will not buy for us an entrance into heaven. The one great Offering that has been made is ample for all who will believe. The love of Christ will animate the believer with new life. He who drinks from the water of the fountain of life, will be filled with the new wine of the kingdom. Faith in Christ will be the means whereby the right spirit and motive will actuate the believer, and all goodness and heavenly mindedness will proceed from him who looks unto Jesus, the author and finisher of his faith.²

The Two Oars—Faith and Works. If we are faithful in doing our part, in cooperating with Him, God will work through us [to do] the good pleasure of His will. But He cannot work through us if we make no effort. If we gain eternal life, we must work, and work earnestly. . . . Let us not be deceived by the often repeated assertion, "All you have to do is to believe." Faith and works are two oars which we must use equally if we [would] press our way up the stream against the current of unbelief. "Faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." The Christian is a man of thought and practice. His faith fixes its roots firmly in Christ. By faith and good works he keeps his spirituality strong and healthy, and his spiritual strength increases as he strives to work the works of God.³

The soul that lives by faith in Christ desires no other nor greater good than to know and to do the will of God. It is God's will that faith in Christ shall be made perfect by works; He connects the salvation and eternal life of those who believe, with these works, and through them provides for the light of truth to go to all countries and peoples. This is the fruit of the working of God's Spirit.⁴

TESTIMONY

Key text:
Philippians
2:12-13

"A man is not justified by faith when his works do not correspond to his profession."

1. *Selected Messages*, Vol. 1, p. 397.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 388.
3. *Welfare Ministry*, p. 315.
4. *Testimonies*, Vol. 5, p. 644.

Avoiding the Faith-Works Trap

by Wayne Judd

EVIDENCE
Key text:
Ephesians
2:8-10

In the worksheet I received for writing this lesson, the editors of the *Collegiate Quarterly* wrote: "Paul and James present contrasting views of justification: Paul stresses that it is a gift from God and has nothing to do with human works; James stresses that no one is justified who does not demonstrate his faith by works." Our editors are good people, but they are incorrect about Paul and James. Their statement reflects Lutheran theology, perhaps, but not the biblical nor the Adventist view. In fairness to them, however, it should be said that the interpretation of "contrasting views of justification" may antedate Luther. Origen (A.D. 185-250) includes James in his list of those New Testament books that were not universally accepted as canonical. Moreover, it must also be recognized that the Jerusalem Christians did have a somewhat different understanding of first century Christian theology than the Apostle to the Gentiles. (Remember Paul's encounter with the circumcision party in Gal. 2:11-16?)

But history has set a trap into which many Christians, including Adventists, have fallen. The trap springs twice: First, it springs on unwary souls who view the passages under consideration primarily as statements of theology. The second entrapment is the consequent penchant for such persons to engage in the very old balancing act between faith and works. Let's analyze:

"Paul and James are not disagreeing about justification, they are agreeing about life!"

Trap #1: The Bible is *not* essentially a book of theology. Someday we are going to resolve many of the questions that plague our church by accepting Ellen White's simple statement in *Selected Messages*, Book 1, p. 20: "The Bible was given for practical purposes." This does not mean that theology and doctrine are unimportant, but it does suggest that doctrinal truth grew out of real-life circumstances that demanded immediate attention. Paul and James are not disagreeing about justification, they are agreeing about life! Paul writes for people who want to earn their salvation; James approaches individuals whose misunderstanding of salvation makes them irresponsible.

For Paul, "belief" means a relationship that works. For James the word "belief" means mental assent. (Even demons "believe"—and *tremble!*) Paul addresses Christians who are living irresponsibly toward God by claiming too much for themselves. James writes to people who live irresponsibly toward their fellow men. James seems to step aside from the task of theology for the purpose of helping people live better in relationship with one another. We do not find a formal soteriology in James.

Luther's sometimes celebrated reference to the book of James as an "epistle of straw" requires us to respond that James did not write to meet Luther's need! James *presupposes* the inestimable gift of God's love in Christ. In view of our own pitiful striving for salvation, our own persistent query, "Am I saved, am I saved?", James refreshes us with the happy assumption that we are indeed saved. Certainly Paul does not advocate abandonment of obedience, nor does James negate the gift of salvation.

Trap #2: Neither Paul's audience nor James' audience, contrary to our traditional understanding, could resolve their problems by injecting a bit more "faith" or "works" into their corporate bodies.

August 17
Wednesday

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Our own historic swinging of the pendulum back and forth from faith to works—ever attempting to achieve just the right formula—defies the point of both passages under consideration, for neither writer is interested in a theological balancing act, but rather in the appropriation of relational realities that change lives. And as long as we opt for the balancing act, the demons will have little about which to tremble. The reality, then, of the Christian life is not plural but singular: Not faith *and* works, but faith *that* works. Paul settles the question once and for all for Christians in every age: “Faith working through love” (Gal. 5:6).

(Continued from page 67)

lift you with my trunk. Don't struggle, don't look down. Toto, you can pull on Boohoo's tail. Are you all ready?"

After several attempts, a badly scraped antelope came out like a cork from a bottle, and everybody sat down with a thump—on top of each other. You can guess who was on the bottom!

"How can I thank you," said Dik Dik, "you saved my life. Boohoo, I want to learn those Rules, and Nhemba, I am in your debt forever. How

good it is to be free. Thank you, Toto, and everyone!"

"I know what it's like, Dik Dik," said Nhemba. "But there is always a way out. Now let's get going before the hunter returns—he's going to be disappointed!"

The four moved away, Dik Dik dancing, Nhemba smiling benignly, Boohoo puffing to keep up, and Toto examining his kinked tail, grumbling to everyone who would listen, which was hardly anyone.

In Search of a "Therefore"

by James Kempster

HOW TO
Key text:
Matthew 20:28

Consider the following two perspectives on salvation held by prominent Seventh-day Adventists:

One: It is through faith in the blood of Christ that all the sins of the believer are canceled and the righteousness of God is put in their place to the believer's account. Here is a man born in sin. . . . He yields, repents, confesses, and by faith claims Christ as his Saviour. The instant that is done, he is accepted as a child of God.¹

Two: Since man cannot save himself, his only hope of salvation at the outset is in responding to the love of God in Christ Jesus. This he does by accepting the righteousness of Christ as the sole basis of his salvation. Then having accepted the saving act of God in Christ Jesus, he must go on in the way of salvation and particularly in the way of sanctification to become more and more completely and perfectly obedient to the will of God (as outlined in the Ten Commandments and lived by Jesus Christ when here on earth). If he lives to see Christ's second coming, he must have reached by or before then a state of condition in which he no longer disobeys in any respect the will of God. If he fails to measure up over this long-term pull to what many would rather generally call "perfection" . . . he will ultimately be lost.²

So what . . . ? That always seems to be the ultimate question, doesn't it? God is able to pardon my sins through Jesus . . . so what? It's a wary question. It implies that there may be a "catch" somewhere. "So what?" boils down to a search for a "therefore." Jesus died for me . . . therefore. . . .

"Therefore's" are often the focus of controversy. While my friend, Wayne Judd (Evidence), maintains there is but one authentic biblical viewpoint concerning "Justification by Faith," I would assert that the SDA denomination has proffered several "therefores" at various times in its history, some of which have produced controversy. Jesus gave his life (for me) . . . *therefore*, I must choose from the following options:

- A. I must obey God's law (the Ten Commandments) . . . Perfect obedience has always been and remains the requirement. Christ's sacrifice enables us to obey.
- B. I *will* obey God's law . . . I will be *willing* but I may not always be able. It's the willingness that counts.
- C. As the person of Jesus grows in me I will automatically obey God's will . . . Obedience is a natural, effortless outgrowth of total surrender.
- D. I will obey the commandments of Jesus . . . to love God and one another.
- E. I would like to obey but realize it is humanly impossible . . . God knows where I'm at.
- F. Christ's perfect obedience serves as mine . . . I need nothing more.
- G. All of the above.
- H. None of the Above.

Which would you choose? Perhaps you have other "therefores" that you would like to add to the list. One of the persistent questions in the church today is which one of these is the "historical SDA position." What are the "therefores" (if any) you find in the letters of Paul

and James? (Look at Rom. 5:1, 12, 18, 19; Rom. 6:14; James 1:19-22; James 4:7.) What is the perspective of Jesus?

Did Jesus give us any "therefores"? I think so. Let me be presumptuous and try to paraphrase what I imagine some of His "therefores" to be. I think He says to us, "I have ransomed you (Matt. 20:28), adopted you with a blood-bond that can never be broken unless you sever it by choice or neglect. That bond says we are part of each other. Treat that bond with love and respect. Through this relationship I will show you the important 'therefores.' Don't presuppose the 'therefores' but accept mine—yours will usually require too much or too little! In your life, trust me!"

To our "so what?" Christ answers, "Trust me!"

A final thought: Trust is an attitude which leads to peace of mind. The secular author Robert Pirsig suggests the following relationships: "Peace of mind produces right values, right values produce right thoughts. Right thoughts produce right actions and right actions produce . . . a material reflection of a spiritual reality."³ What is your spiritual reality?

1. Arthur G. Daniells, *Christ Our Righteousness*, (Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald, 1941), p. 15.

2. This view cited by Gordon M. Hyde as one of three alternatives in *Rags to Righteousness*, (Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press, 1978), pp. 19, 20.

3. Robert M. Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, (New York: Bantam Book, 1975), p. 267.

The Fruit of Love

by Earl Aagaard

OPINION

Key text:
John 15:1-5,
9, 10

As I walked across campus recently I noticed two young people who were obviously in love. I knew because of the tender embrace that they were sharing. However, other couples whom I have never seen embracing are also deeply in love. In their cases, I know because I have watched them perform acts of caring, speak words of encouragement, or let their friend be apart when that is needed. The common factor that demonstrates love is *action*. Something these people *do* tells me that they are in love. This is a good analogy for the relationship between faith and works.

However, actions are not an infallible guide. Some people embrace (and more) with those whom they do not love. There are also situations where one does kindly deeds for another without there being a love relationship at all. This sort of thing can be difficult to detect—"Does this person really care about *me*, or is it my Porsche that is so interesting?" In the spiritual realm, these people are legalists—those who perform the outward works without having experienced the inner change.

I find it inconceivable that one might form a real love relationship with another and then never show it in any outward way. Perhaps you know someone who seems to fit this description. I think what may be happening is that something else—work, sport, friends, or whatever—is actually the beloved. If someone is always, or even often, given second place, can we legitimately claim a love relationship with them?

There is danger in making judgments on these matters about anyone but ourselves. My wife and I have a number of little things that we do for each other that say, "I love you." If we look around and see that some of our friends aren't holding hands when they say grace at meals, or don't kiss each other when one leaves the house, we would be foolish to assume that they really don't love each other very much. Why, then, are we so quick to judge a Christian brother's relationship to God by the church he attends, or the amount of his donations, or his presence at Sunshine Bands, or any of the actions by which we demonstrate *our* love to the Lord.

Paul and James are not talking to us about separate (or separable) issues, but about the root and the fruit of our acceptance by God. Without both, we do not stand in a right relationship with Him. But the questions of whether you possess the root of faith, and what your fruits shall be, are to be settled between you and God. For me to say that you can't possibly love the Lord since you aren't serving Him in the same way that I am is equivalent to my denying that an apple tree has roots because I don't happen to like the kind of apples it bears.

Every tree with roots bears fruit, but fruits come in unending varieties. Every person in love shows it by actions toward the beloved, but none of us shows our love in exactly the same way. Every Christian who accepts Jesus by faith will perform works, but it is not to be expected that all of us will do the same ones.

"... [T]he questions of whether you possess the root of faith, and what your fruits shall be, are to be settled between you and God."

August 21-27

From Sinai to Jerusalem

"The Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother" (Galatians 4:26, NIV).



A New Perspective On the Law

by Gene Gascay

INTRO- DUCTION

Recently there have been an increasing number of books on the market which deal with the problem of anger in the life of the Christian (i.e., *Love Me With Tough Love*, *Caring Enough to Confront*, and *Anger, Yours and Mine and What to Do With It*). There is a general agreement among these authors that humans need to be honest with one another regarding the strong emotions associated with disagreement, frustration, disappointment, and misunderstanding. All agree that when we do have a "bone to pick" with someone, we must do it in a way that will preserve the self-dignity of all concerned.

In recent years I have been introduced to a definition of sin as being the destruction of human relationships. This was new to me, because for most of my life, I have heard that sin was a transgression of the law or that sin was separation from God and fellowship with Him. Obviously sin is all of these, but the concept of sin as separation and alienation among people has significant implications.

With the two common definitions of sin, our attention is primarily concerned with individual salvation and individual spiritual growth. With this newer perspective God's law truly becomes a law of love.

The Pharisees were indicted by Christ for being zealous in their honor of the law. He said their ceremonial obedience to the law was for self-glory and that they missed the principle of love which was the essence of the law.

When we are concerned about sin primarily as it affects us as individuals, our attitudes toward others are measured by an impersonal, legal yardstick. However, as we adopt a concern for strengthening human relationships as expressive of Christian principle, then all areas of personal Christian conduct will reveal the effects of the gospel. Our activities on Sabbath, our choice of entertainment, and our use of money will all take on added meaning that is less selfish.

This new perspective on the law is part of what it means to be children of the "Jerusalem that is above" (Gal. 4:26).

The Covenant of the Free

LOGOS

A large man wearing a dark suit sat behind an imposing desk, smoking a cigar. A poor woman with three small children came up to the desk to plead her case. "Sir," the timid woman began, "my husband is out of work and I cannot find a job. We need to borrow money to buy food for our hungry children and ourselves."

"Well," the red-faced, stern man answered, "we'll loan you the money, but only for a short time and there will be interest charged. Sign here and go to the cashier's window. Remember, this is a legal transaction and you are under the law to keep it."

Does the man described above remind you of God? He probably wouldn't be far from a modernization of the perception of God held by many Jews of Paul's day. Their concept of a covenant relationship with God centered on Sinai: God was beneficent enough to give them the law, but He demanded to be paid back with their obedience. After all, had not the Israelites made a proper response to God when they said, "'We will do everything the Lord has said'" (Ex. 19:8, NIV).

Paul counters such thinking by arguing that God never intended lawkeeping to be the basis of the covenant relationship with His people. In Galatians 3 he had pointed out that the purpose of the law was to reveal sin, not to supercede the promise made to Abraham as the terms of an individual's acceptance with God (see vs. 19, 21-25). In chapter four he again draws on Abraham's experience, using the story of Abraham's two wives to allegorize the two concepts of the covenant. "For it is written that Abraham had two sons, one by the slave woman and the other by the free woman. His son by the slave was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise.

"These things may be taken figuratively, for the women represent two covenants. One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar. Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia and corresponds to the present city of Jerusalem, because she is in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem that is above is free, and she is our mother. . . . Therefore brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman" (Gal. 4:22-26, 31, NIV).

In attempting to impose conformity with the Mosaic law on Gentiles as a prerequisite for right standing with God, the Judaizers in Galatia were bringing the Gentile believers into the covenant symbolized by Hagar and Sinai (and the intimidating executive with the cigar and the large desk).

William Barclay observes that "Hagar stands for the old covenant of the law, made on Mount Sinai . . . Hagar herself was a slave and all her children were born into slavery; and that covenant whose basis is the law turns men into slaves of the law. Hagar's child was born from merely human impulses, and legalism is the best that man can do. On the other hand Sarah stands for the new covenant in Jesus Christ. . . . Her child was born free—and according to God's promise—and all his descendants must be free."¹

For free citizens of the new Jerusalem, all attempts to gain acceptance with God through deeds must go. Paul summed the matter in a sermon at Pisidian Antioch by declaring that "through faith in him [Je-

1. William Barclay, *Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976) p. 42.

sus] a man is absolved from all those things from which the Law of Moses could never set him free" (Acts 13:39, Phillips).

For Paul the covenant of promise and the covenant of legalism were mutually exclusive. Thus the circumcision party's endeavor to bring believers under certain legal requirements meant not only a return to slavery, but a rejection of Christ. "Mark my words! I, Paul, tell you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no value to you at all. Again, I declare to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obligated to obey the whole law. You who are trying to be justified by law have been alienated from Christ; you have fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:2-4, NIV).

Those who, on the other hand, approach God through the covenant of promise fulfilled in Christ find full acceptance with God. And, they are able to enter the kind of relationship with God that He has wanted with His people all along. It is a relationship based on personal, loving fellowship, not compliance with legal demands.

There is one night I will always remember—the night my husband asked me to marry him. What if I had responded by saying "Yes, I'll wash your clothes, cook your meals and type your papers?" Would he have been pleased? No. This sort of response would not have matched his feelings for me. He wanted to know that I felt the same way about him as he felt about me.

God, too, desires a response of love from us that springs from within, not the outward, forced subservience of slaves. To that end He gives us this new covenant promise, "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God and they will be my people" (Jer. 31:33, NIV).

S. D. P.

The Spirituality of the Law

TESTIMONY

Key text:

Matthew 5:20-22

Commenting on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, Ellen White describes the deepened significance of the law for those living under the new covenant.

"The scribes and Pharisees had accused not only Christ but His disciples as sinners because of their disregard of the rabbinical rites and observances. Often the disciples had been perplexed and troubled by censure and accusation from those whom they had been accustomed to revere as religious teachers. Jesus unveiled the deception. He declared that the righteousness upon which the Pharisees set so great value was worthless. The Jewish nation had claimed to be the special, loyal people who were favored of God; but Christ represented their religion as devoid of saving faith. All their pretensions of piety, their human inventions and ceremonies, and even their boasted performance of the outward requirements of the law, could not avail to make them holy. They were not pure in heart, or noble and Christlike in character.

"A legal religion is insufficient to bring the soul into harmony with God. The hard, rigid orthodoxy of the Pharisees, destitute of contrition, tenderness, or love, was only a stumbling-block to sinners. They were like the salt that had lost its savor; for their influence had no power to preserve the world from corruption.

"While the law is holy, the Jews could not attain righteousness by their own efforts to keep the law. The disciples of Christ must obtain righteousness of a different character from that of the Pharisees, if they would enter the kingdom of heaven. God offered them, in His Son, the perfect righteousness of the law. If they would open their hearts fully to receive Christ, then the very life of God, His love, would dwell in them, transforming them into His own likeness; and thus through God's free gift they would possess the righteousness which the law requires. . . ."¹

For Jesus, the sixth commandment is much more than a rule. It shows God's opposition to anything that destroys human relationships. "In the gift of His Son for our redemption, God has shown how high a value He places upon every human soul, and He gives to no man liberty to speak contemptuously of another. We shall see faults and weaknesses in those about us, but God claims every soul as His property,—His by creation, and doubly His as purchased by the precious blood of Christ. All were created in His image, and even the most degraded are to be treated with respect and tenderness. God will hold us accountable for even a word spoken in contempt of one soul for whom Christ laid down His life.

"The love of God is something more than a mere negation; it is a positive and active principle, a living spring, ever flowing to bless others. If the love of Christ dwells in us, we shall not only cherish no hatred toward our fellows, but we shall seek in every way to manifest love toward them."²

1. *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 83-85.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 89-91.

The Only Source of Righteousness

by H. Roger Bothwell

Paul's statement, "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do" (Rom. 7:15),¹ reflects the experience of every Christian who is completely honest with himself. Each of us experiences a "law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin within my members" (Rom. 7:23). Our heroic attempts at righteousness produce only "filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6).

The only evidence we need of our inability to be justified by keeping the law is a true knowledge of ourselves and the personal integrity not to deny the truth about ourselves. The first part of Romans was written by Paul expressly to reveal to us the truth about our nature. "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands. No one who seeks God. All have turned away. They have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one" (Rom. 3:10-12).

Yet we know that righteousness is the standard to be obtained if we are to live forever (Matt. 25:31-46). And righteousness is exactly what we do not have to present before God (Rom. 3:23). Are we then lost? Do we cry out with Paul, "What a wretched man I am!" (Rom. 7:23)? Fortunately not, for there is a righteousness available to us (Rom. 3:21-22). It is the righteousness from God that comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. We now have imputed to us the perfect obedience of Jesus (2 Cor. 5:21). This is not merely a legal pronouncement, but a transformation of growth immediately begins in us. We become actual partakers of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4) and escape the corruption of our natures.

This does not mean that we will never again fall. It does mean that once "in union with Christ the believer always stands in a position of acceptance with God as he learns and grows, ever delighting to do the will of God as he more clearly discovers it."² Therefore the keeping of the law is a delightful fruit in the life of the believer in a covenant relationship to God. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit" (Gal. 5:22-25).

Now the Christian begins to experience true freedom. He is no longer a slave bound by rules and regulations. He begins to do good things because it gives him pleasure. He responds to circumstances in a natural way that will produce good for himself and others. "As we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses."³

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Romans 5:21

"In union with Christ the believer always stands in a position of acceptance with God as he learns and grows. . . ."

1. All scripture quotations are from the New International Version.
2. Adult Sabbath School Lesson Quarterly, Teachers Edition, December 11, 1982, p. 68.
3. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 668.

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August 24
Wednesday

The Law of Christian Freedom

by Larry Mitchel

HOW TO

Key text:
Gal. 4:21-31

The main purpose of this lesson is to discover the essential difference between the perceptions of the law on the part of an unjustified person and of the justified Christian. While the external or practical distinction might not be detectable—both individuals would appear to observe the law—the internal difference is as great as that between slavery and freedom (Gal. 4:21-5:4).

How then can a person know whether he or she views law and law-keeping under the framework of a covenant “from Mount Sinai” (Gal. 4:24) or under the rubric of “the Jerusalem above” (v. 26)? The following steps should help. Ask yourself:

1. **Do I conceive of law and law-keeping as an external restraint?** Or do I understand it to be an internal constraint? I think this distinction appropriately expresses Jeremiah’s view concerning the old covenant and the new (Jer. 31:31-34). For Jeremiah old and new covenant have little to do with ancient history and much to do with present experience. How were these two covenants different in principle? The old covenant, founded upon external constraint, depended upon enforced adherence. In keeping with the early Old Testament understanding, Israel’s promise to obey the law came less out of a sense of inner conviction than from their theological understanding of God’s word—even His commands for obedience—as self-fulfilling. This view of law was and always has been bankrupt (Jer. 31:32b).

On the other hand, for Jeremiah, the new covenant is founded on an internal constraint (2 Cor. 5:14-15). The institution of this new covenant makes void the need for the forced and artificial development of a religiously- and theologically-informed conscience, “for they shall all know me” (Jer. 31:34).¹ But, far from emasculating morality and ethics, this very act of God alone guarantees *faithfulness*, the missing ingredient in the old covenant.

We today thus make a grave mistake when we equate Old Testament “faithfulness” with “sinless obedience.” A *faithful* people may also be *sinless*, but biblically, *faithfulness* does not demand *sinlessness* as a logical necessity.

2. **Do I place my trust for salvation upon God’s act and His provisions, or upon my spiritual determination and resolve?** The real question behind this is, what does it mean to have faith? Is faith and its exercise that last work left to the Christian? Is my save-worthiness determined by the measure of faith I generate? The uniform answer of Old and New Testament is alike, No, a thousand times no!

I am saved *only* by *God’s faithfulness*. That is what Paul means by his oft-used phrase “the righteousness of God”: not a liquid called “faith” which God can measure out to each new believer; not a cosmic divine example for us to try to imitate; but a continuous series of loving acts, in history, on behalf of His lost daughters and sons. This divine faithfulness in action is what impels the Christian into reciprocal faithfulness, a faithfulness characterized by acts of submission to God and loving service to God and humankind. And commitment to Jesus Christ is our *only* avenue to and from that righteous God who alone saves us.

3. **Do I find myself meddling in others’ spiritual business?** Or do I find I

can relate to others as individuals who are free from the external restraint of law, and enslaved by the internal constraints of the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2)? This distinction is crucial. It is the foundational difference between a judgmental, petty, self-serving, egocentric person, and a person who—while maintaining high personal standards—is non-judgmental and others-oriented.

Attempting to ensure the compliance of others to the external demands of the law is the worst possible substitute for true God-ordained and God-given piety and Christian mission. Under the language of theological non-deviationism and moral rectitude often lies a substratum of self-serving, self-justifying pseudo-piety. If this latter category describes you (even a little bit!) there is an easy corrective: analyze your own life—as you actually live it, and without the benefit of the usual excuses! Then remind yourself that Jesus did not condemn *you*, He didn't prejudge you as unfit and He didn't exclude you from His self-sacrificing death. In fact, *given* all that you are and have done He pre-judged you for life in Him! What right have we, then to condemn others!

Take a minute to read Gal. 4:21-31 (and on to 6:5). Separate the historical facts (Abram had two sons, one slave-born, one free-born), from Paul's allegorical application. Hagar and Mount Sinai here represent Judaizing Christians—church members—who seek to return fellow believers to the bondage of an artificial external restraint. Paul's counsel is radical: "Cast out the slave and her son" (4:30); "stand fast . . . do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (5:1); "a little leaven [of legalism!] leavens the whole lump!" (5:9); "I wish those who unsettle you would mutilate themselves!" (5:12).

Radical manifesto indeed! "For freedom Christ has set us free" (Gal. 5:1).

Children of the Free Woman

by Walter C. Utt

OPINION

Key text:
Jeremiah
31:33-34

The Apostle Paul says we are no longer "slave" children; the law is now written in our hearts. Should not the liberty proclaimed by Paul have brought a victorious surge, "finishing the work"? The old limerick warns:

God's plan made a hopeful beginning,
But man spoiled his chances by sinning.
We trust that the story
Will end in God's glory,
But at present the other side's winning.

"We must be certain the Law is imprinted correctly in each others' hearts, with no typographical errors."

Improved model though the New Covenant was, did it ask too much? Should it not have produced agreeable, observably joyous people? But we feel we must rate each other and only externals are visible—"the fruits." We must be certain the Law is imprinted correctly in each others' hearts, with no typographical errors. What holy lives we could live were it not for the aggravation of the brethren. In their diversity, they delay and confuse the Work. The hermit's cave had much to recommend it. God indeed knows the heart, but we have to draw conclusions by which we run a church and decide the behavior identifying our group.

Part of the problem is that highs are too high to hold. Emotions cannot be sustained very long. Inevitable letdown and frustration follows. We then feel a need to identify brethren who fall short, strive desperately to overfulfill our responsibilities, or attempt to perpetuate the level attained by enacting legislation appropriate to keep others on their toes. How can we risk leaving the work for such people to the Holy Spirit? There is anger and disputation and a rise in "Remnant" thinking. Some regret that the 1983 civil code forbids burning at the stake! The Law in the heart seems forgotten. ". . . The enthusiast who thinks very few people will go to heaven ordinarily assumes he is one of them."¹

The "world" looks sourly on these children of God: "The Christian church was built on a rock and God-loving Christians have been throwing stones at each other ever since."²

And what of the child of the Free Woman, with the Law in his heart? Faith is a loving response to God's love, wisdom, and power. Faith is loving confidence in that God and consequently the living of a self-disciplined life which brings happiness to ourselves and to others.

C. S. Lewis speaks of the serene believer awaiting Christ's return at his post and responsible, whether feeding the pigs or making some long-range plans to combat some great evil. "We cannot always be excited. We can, perhaps, train ourselves to ask more and more often how the thing which we are saying or doing (or failing to do) at each moment will look when the irresistible light streams in upon it."³

Let Paul sum it up: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10).

1. Ronald A. Knox, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion* (New York: Galaxy, 1961), p. 217.
2. Philip Nobile, *San Francisco Chronicle*, January 20, 1980.
3. C. S. Lewis, *The World's Last Night and Other Essays* (New York and London: Harcourt-Brace-Jovanovich, 1973), p. 113.

1. List in one column as many characteristics of "children of the Slave woman" as you can think of, in another column the characteristics of "children of the Free woman."

Slave woman

Free woman

In summary, then, what makes the difference between experiencing the law as liberating and experiencing it as enslaving?

2. What do you think the Introduction author means in commenting that when we see sin "primarily as it affects us as individuals" our attitudes toward others are measured by an impersonal legal yardstick? What difference in tangible terms, does it make to adopt the perspective of sin being that which destroys relationships? Does the contrast between the Pharisees view of the law and that of Jesus in the Testimony help answer this question?
3. Larry Mitchel (How To) suggests that "meddling in other people's spiritual business" is out of place for children of the "free woman." But are there proper ways of expressing concern about the spiritual condition of others without "meddling"? If so, how can we decide whether we are meddling or if we are expressing genuine concern?
4. What principles should guide us in expressing anger within the Christian community if we have come to see the spirituality of the Law (See Introduction and Testimony)?
5. If we truly experience the new covenant, will we not be captured by a zeal for "finishing the work" (see Opinion)? Does the quoted depiction by C. S. Lewis of the believer serenely awaiting the Second coming reflect a lukewarm, lackadaisical attitude or reflect mature, realistic faith? Neither? Explain.
-

August 28-September 3

The Purpose of The Law

"I run in the path of your commands, for you have set my heart free" (Psalm 119:32, NIV).



Keeping the Law

The law is a functional commodity. So you need to consider the use you will make of it. A few of the ways it has been used in the past are listed below.

You may keep the law:

- 1) In a flask with roses and violets and the smell of musk.
- 2) In a safe deposit box with other valuable things.
- 3) In a gun case, so you can defend yourself with it.
- 4) Around your neck like a millstone, a necklace or a noose.
- 5) In a coffin with the rest of the dead.
- 6) In a cage tightly locked, because it's out to get you.
- 7) In a vacuum, apart from the perishable realities of life.
- 8) In a time capsule, set

for the remote future.

9) In the workroom, with the fire extinguisher and pest controls.

10) In the department of antiquities at a local museum.

11) In the library under DECA.

12) In a lunch pail, for use when hungry.

13) In a weak moment, when you're afraid.

14) In your spare time.

15) *In extremis*.

16) In case of fire.

17) In splendid isolation.

18) In the presence of thine enemies.

19) *In excelsis Deo*. (getting close)

20) In spirit and in truth.

Aaaah.

And amen.

INTRODUCTION

A Law That Liberates

LOGOS A much vented complaint of youth today (and yesterday) is that religion is filled with too many "do's" and "don'ts." Phrases such as, "It's too restrictive," "Why can't I do my own thing," or "What's wrong with . . .", are frequently heard. Perhaps there is a basis for these complaints; after all, isn't the Bible filled with "thou shalt's" and "thou shalt not's"? Thou shalt love God. Thou shalt not commit adultery (even if it feels good). Thou shalt not kill (enemies included). Yes, the rules are there, and God did give them, and because He did, it is evident that the things which the carnal nature loves to do are wrong.

The law defines sin. "Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law" (Rom. 7:7, NIV). Functioning as a mirror to reveal our desperate condition (see James 1:23-24), the law causes us to seek a solution. "So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Gal. 3:23, NIV).

But the law does much more than show what is right and what is wrong. In the law God has an underlying principle which goes far beyond the nitty gritty of the "do's" and "don'ts." The law is a revelation of God's character and of His will.

God never requires people to reach a certain level of spiritual development before He will commune with them. God meets people where they are and then elevates them to higher levels of spiritual development. This is what He did with the children of Israel at Mt. Sinai. For centuries they had been slaves in Egypt. For generations they had been told what to do and what not to do by their Egyptian taskmasters. And now, God spoke to them in the same terms—the terms which they could understand. It was not His desire for them to remain at the simplistic level of a "do-and-don't" understanding of the law.

God desired that they rise above this as He revealed Himself to them. This they were slow to do. As a result, they stagnated in their legalistic interpretation of the law and they failed to recognize God in human form. Had the Israelites grown in their understanding of the law, they would have recognized the divinity of Christ because the law is a revelation of what God is like.

Some small minds have twisted this particular revelation of God into an excuse for believing that He is a tyrant and an exacting oppressor. But this too stems from a short-sighted view of the law. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. In him was life and that life was the light of men" (John 1:1, 4, NIV). God is life and the source of life. And because the law is a revelation of Him and His will, it suddenly becomes, not a list of restrictions, but a formula for living; not a way to live but a way to life—free, abundant life! "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly" (John 10:10, NIV). So, it becomes evident that sin is the oppressor for "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). And the law turns out to be a source of liberation. "But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does" (James 1:25, NIV).

E. R. M.

Understanding the Law

selected by Al Keiser

Seventh-day Adventists, with good reason, have long stressed the importance of the law. Our friends, who understand us, applaud us for emphasizing its validity and value, particularly in a lawless generation. Not surprisingly, Ellen White has much to say about it: the *Index* has almost 20 pages of entries.

She strongly affirms its importance.

"In the precepts of His holy law, God has given a perfect rule of life; and He has declared that until the close of time this law, unchanged in a single jot or tittle, is to maintain its claim upon human beings. Christ came to magnify the law and make it honorable. He showed that it is based upon the broad foundation of love to God and love to man, and that obedience to its precepts comprises the whole duty of man. In His own life He gave an example of obedience to the law of God. In the Sermon on the Mount He showed how its requirements extend beyond the outward acts and take cognizance of the thoughts and intents of the heart."¹

She describes its function.

"Let those who feel inclined to make a high profession of holiness look into the mirror of God's law. As they see its far-reaching claims, and understand its work as a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, they will not boast of sinlessness. 'If we,' says John, not separating himself from his brethren, 'say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.' 'If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.' 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' 1 John 1:8, 10, 9."²

She notes its limitation

"The apostle Paul clearly presents the relation between faith and the law under the new covenant. He says: 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' 'Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law.' 'For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh,'—it could not justify man, because in his own sinful nature he could not keep the law,—'God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' Romans 5:1; 3:31; 8:3, 4."³

She tells us our obligation to it.

"It is the Creator of men, the Giver of the law, who declares that it is not His purpose to set aside its precepts. Everything in nature, from the mote in the sunbeam to the worlds on high, is under law. And upon obedience to these laws the order and harmony of the natural world depend. So there are great principles of righteousness to control the life of all intelligent beings, and upon conformity to these principles the well-being of the universe depends."⁴

TESTIMONY

Key text:
Romans 8:1-4

"Let those who feel inclined to make a high profession of holiness look into the mirror of God's law."

1. *Acts of the Apostles*, p. 505.
2. *Ibid.*, 562.
3. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 373.
4. *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 48.

Law for Man, Not Man for the Law

by Sakae Kubo

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Mark 2:23-28

In enunciating the principle that the Sabbath is made for man and not man for the Sabbath, Jesus verbalized that which He consistently practiced. In every experience Jesus valued the person above conventions, rules, customs, and laws. He was no anarchist who sought to destroy rules, customs, and order, but sometimes the laws and rules had been so distorted that they became detrimental to others. Whenever any of these regulations destroyed men rather than benefited them, when the fulfillment or the enforcement of the law did not achieve its intent, He declared that the person is more important than the rule. "For the Sabbath is made for man and not man for the Sabbath." So Christ's spirit of freedom, not the Pharisaic spirit of legalism, must guide the life of the Christian. . . .

"Jesus declared that the person is more important than the rule."

Sometimes people get caught by laws never intended for them. The spirit of legalism would seek to enforce such laws even under these circumstances, but not so the Christian spirit of freedom. King Darius of Persia signed a law that no one should petition any god or man for thirty days. All petitions had to be made to the king alone. He signed it in good faith, but those who drew up the law did it with the express intention of trapping Daniel, of whom they were jealous. King Darius loved Daniel supremely, and would never have made that law if he had realized that its proponents intended to trap Daniel. But the officially enacted laws of the Medes and Persians were not changeable even by the king. When these wicked contrivers brought their accusations against Daniel, the distressed king sought to deliver him, but he could do nothing to save Daniel from the den of lions. That evening the king could not sleep because of his concern for Daniel. Darius was caught in the clutches of his own law. And Daniel, for whom the king never intended the law, was caught. . . .

We need to beware of becoming so involved in making laws and applying them that we lose our concern for the people whom the laws were to benefit. The laws that the Jews had built up around the Sabbath commandment became a burden rather than a blessing. The rabbis had grown more interested in the law than in people. Jesus pointed out this fact by healing chronic ailments on the Sabbath. All could have waited another day. The man at the pool of Bethesda had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. . . . Jesus asked His accusers—and in asking implied a positive answer—"Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save a life or to kill?" (Mark 3:4). Neglecting to heal a man or to do good on the Sabbath was tantamount to killing or doing evil.

Paul Ramsey sums it up: ". . . Jewish ethics was a legalism modified by humanitarianism, which meant also a humanitarianism *limited* by legalism. Jesus' humanitarianism was not at all fettered by respect for long-established custom or the preconceptions of legal definition. Love led him to be downright unconcerned about the laws he had been trained to cherish."

Excerpted from *Calculated Goodness* (Nashville: Southern Publishing Association, 1974), pp. 79-86.

☐ August 31
Wednesday

Sakae Kubo is President of Newbold College in England.

A Part of God's Victory

by Beverly Connors

HOW TO
Key text:
Romans 13:8-10

Humanity has great talent for missing the point. How else do we explain that within 30 years of the death of St. Francis of Assisi, the most lavish and splendid monastery of the day was built to honor that monk who had chosen to serve in abject, joyous poverty? How else do we understand all the palaver about keeping the law that was meant to keep *us*? The law was meant to serve as a basic guide until the day dawned when man could see ethical and religious questions in the heart-breaking glow of God's shining love-gift, Jesus the Christ.

There *is* a universal standard of righteousness, but it's not just the Ten Commandments. When God gave the tables of stone on Sinai one can just imagine the angels chuckling fondly and saying, "Look how simple He's made it for them. He's giving them the easy parts so they can't miss." But a species which failed "Apples I" wasn't likely to get a passing grade in "Decalogue," either. The real law by which the universe lives, and without which even God Himself would eventually perish, is perfect, principled, giving love—*agape*.

This Big Law, which includes and surpasses by quantum leaps the easy one we can't master, was exemplified 2,000 years ago by a man whose name meant "The Victory is God's." The New Testament is the remarkable word that in Joshua (Jesus) of Nazareth, God's Victory is forever our own. The right question is: How do we remain, not apart from, but a part of Jesus?

1) **Believe you live in Him.** Take journeys through the Word. "Behold and become changed," it promises. "Taste, and you will see." Watch His love animate your ethics, gentle all relationships and tranquilize ego's anxious brashness.

2) **Believe you live in Him.** Not just H. M. S. Richards, or Mother Teresa, or Paul, but the most central you, the one whose rockfirm outlines you sometimes dimly sense. The twentieth century is full of hectic lives, victims of the disintegrating chaos of beings separated from God. Joe Wise has a song that says, "Come to Me, and I'll give you back to you." Unfragmented selfhood, centered in God, is the perfect gift for the man who has everything, and the indomitable resource for the person who has nothing.

3) **Believe you live in Him.** Materialism gives pleasant satisfactions, and using people gives a sense of power, but both lead to barrenness and death. Only love animates, because all real living is in relationships conducted with mutuality.

4) **Believe you live in Him.** No longer a spectator or fugitive, you're enclosed in His heart and written on His hands. Guilty in actuality, dripping with self-interest even in prayer, you're totally loved and all-forgiven.

5) Most emphatically, **believe you live in Him**, who feels all human needs, anxieties and anguish with a poignancy beyond our dulled understanding. If Jesus says you're abundantly alive in Him, you have the certainty that now and at a happier time of His choosing, you're part of God's Victory. There's no task left but to live in the electric joy and contagious gratitude of this stunning reality.

Beverly Connors, wife, mother of four, and nurse,
writes from Oshawa, Ontario.

September 1
Thursday

Camels and Gnats

by Jonathan Butler

OPINION

Key text:
Matthew 23:23

Legalism has a bad name among young Christians. According to the stereotype, legalists are conservative and red-necked and oppressive. They look with little grace upon the underworld of pimps and pushers, long-hairs and loose women. They wield the clubs of condemnation, shoot the canisters of reproof. They establish their "kingdom" through ever stricter enforcement of the law, or standards.

Unfortunately, legalists make a bad name for "law." Legalists loom up like an ugly cartoon scribbled on the face of the Old Testament, portraying Old Testament law as rigorous, vengeful legality.

Sadly enough, legalists are themselves the worst of the law-breakers. They misunderstand the law—both the spirit and the letter of it—and therefore never keep the law. In short, legalism is a far cry from true law keeping. And it is time we threw out legalism like old bath water, while, of course, saving the "baby."

To begin, what is a legalist?

"The trouble with the Pharisee was that he had no priorities."

The usual answer, I think, is a wrong one. It is that the legalist adheres to a great many rules and laws and that's what makes him legalistic. But Moses himself wrote down a great many laws and Old Testament Jews kept them. Were they gnat-straining, hair-splitting legalists?

For the Old Testament Jew, religion pervaded all of life. Religion meant more than Sabbath morning at the Temple. Religion mattered in the mundane, dust-level concerns of every day. Religion involved real estate, cattle, crops, meals, children, friends, loans, courts, work, days off, freedom, war.

The Jew took Deuteronomy 8:3 (later quoted by Christ Himself) with great seriousness: "Man does not live by bread alone, but . . . by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord."¹ The Jew did nothing without a word of instruction from God. He lived quite literally from the "mouth of the Lord" whether he was harvesting grain (Deut. 24:19-22), or loaning money (15:1-11), or disciplining children (21:18-21), or even honeymooning (24:5).

This is not dry, arid legalism. This religion—what might be called "true law"—plants the green stalks of life and joy within ordinary living. This religion makes fat people thin, sick people healthy, slaves freedmen, loan sharks charitable, warmongers peaceful. Turning from true law, however, we uncover at least two kinds of legalism.

The first is typified in the outlook of the Pharisee. Jesus never attacked the Pharisee for making too many laws. He said that "not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law." In fact, He said, "Unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:18, 20). Christ Himself, as a good Jew, wore fringes on the hem of His garment as the law required (Deut. 22:12; Matt. 14:36).

But the trouble with the Pharisee was that *he had no priorities*. Every teaching was as important as every other teaching. As one Pharisee was quoted in the Mishnah, "Be heedful of a *light precept* as of a *weighty one*, for thou knowest not the recompense of reward of each precept."²

For the Pharisee, the teaching against muzzling an ox (Deut. 25:4)

was as important as the teaching to leave grain for the widows and orphans (Deut. 24:19). The rule about fringes on the garment (22:12) was as weighty as the command to honor father and mother (Ex. 20:12). Thus for the Pharisee, oxen were as important as widows and orphans. The hemline was as important as parents.

This is the essence of the first kind of legalism, and Christ hotly condemned it. He said, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for you tithe the mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith; these you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!" (Matt. 23:23, 24). Christ could divide the law into "light matters" and "weightier matters," while for the Pharisee everything weighed the same.

According to this first kind of legalism, smoking cigarettes is as disastrous as polluting a metropolis; promiscuity as abhorrent as war; non-vegetarianism as evil as racism. They "weigh" the same. Christ adhered to the "hemline" of the law—He would certainly fight smoking, promiscuity, and unhealthy diet—but He had an eye, too, for the larger matters.

The sectarian legalist strains at gnats (Christ never actually condemned this), but his legalism ignores the "camels"—injustice and mercilessness—walking about on four legs. Such myopic oversight Christ found to be intolerable.

The second kind of legalism is typified in the outlook of the Sadducee. The Sadducee felt that the law was important, but only in the Temple. The law had to do with religious matters, but not with the secular marketplace. The Sadducee preferred a religious dualism that sharply distinguished sacred from secular. Religious teachings—or laws applied only to his one day a week at the Temple. To apply religion on the marketplace on the other six days secularized religion.

Turning from the Pharisees and the Sadducees we find another kind of law. It is not the law enmeshed in gnat-picking trivia. Nor is it the law locked in the Temple. It is the law that speaks—and cries out—on the "weightier matters." And we hear it in the marketplace. It is the law written on the heart of prophets and of Jesus Christ.

When Amos thundered at the gate, a man who had been swindled out of his land got his land back (Amos 5:11, 12). When Elijah stood before royalty, the tyrannous kings were troubled (1 Kings 18:17). When prophets laid down the law, the "little people" got a fair deal in the marketplace. Untrue scales hiking up the prices were corrected. "Welfare checks" of harvested grain were paid to the hungry. Orphans found homes. Slaves obtained freedom. Blood feuds dissolved.

Why? Because prophets spoke the *law of God*. And this law was no abstract and oppressive code, no bloodless legality. The little people thanked God for it. The little people—fearful, impoverished, forgotten—walked like kings in the shadow of a prophet. Small and timid voices magnified a hundredfold in the voice of a prophet. Because for the prophets, law meant that justice and mercy, loyalty and good faith—between man and man, between man and God—would per-

"When prophets laid down the law, the 'little people' got a fair deal in the marketplace."

vade their society. "Law and order" for them meant compassion.

Jesus Christ echoed the prophets. When the Pharisee asked Him, "Which is the great commandment?" He said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart," and "Love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets" (Matt. 22:35-40). For Christ, too, law meant love for man and love for God. For Him, the law not rooted in love was no law at all.

An example: If a man by an oath—called *corban*—gave his property to God, it was no longer under his control anymore for any purpose. The Temple owned it. This was not simply a tradition of the elders, this was Scripture. It was the word of Moses: "When a man vows a vow to the Lord, or swears an oath to bind himself by a pledge, he shall not break his word" (Num. 30:2).

The problem was, however, that children would sell the land of their aging parents right out from under them. Jesus complained that these oaths, often taken rashly, hurt the old people. In behalf of their comfort and security, he quoted Exodus 20:12, "Honor your father and your mother." The statement in Numbers and Exodus are both in Moses' books, but the aged were more important to Jesus than oaths. The law rooted in human life weighed more.

In fact, Jesus said that "the sabbath was made *for man*, not man for the sabbath" (Mark 2:27). In effect, then, Jesus taught that *law is made for man. Law cares. Law heals. Law restores the broken relationships of the covenant community and forms the new covenant community. The law remembers the forgotten people.*

In a word, then, true law is personal. It is inscribed on the heart of man and the heart of God. To break the law is to break hearts. Jesus Christ solved the riddle of "light matters" versus "weightier matters." For the law that has more to do with persons matters more. The law that has less to do with persons matters less.

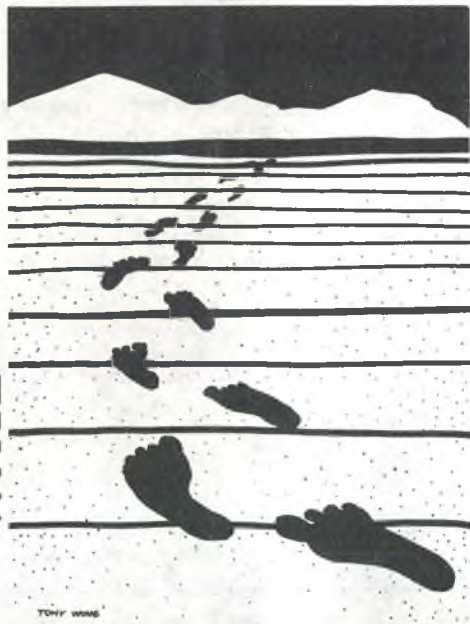
1. All Scripture quotations from the RSV.
2. *Mishnah*, *Aboth* 2:1.

1. What do you think the Introduction author means by her metaphorical statements of how the law might be kept? She implies that No. 20 is the best way. Are any of the other options valid? In what ways do you most frequently find yourself relating to the law?
2. What do you think the Logos author means by suggesting that God wants us to move beyond the simplistic "do-and-don't" understanding of the law? Do you agree with him? Are the "nitty-gritty" details of the law unimportant (see also Opinion)?
3. Sakae Kubo (Evidence) asserts that Jesus valued the person above the law and Jonathan Butler (Opinion) similarly concludes that laws having more to do with people are more important than laws having less to do with people. Is it ever necessary or right to break one of the Ten Commandments in order to *best* serve the interests of another? If so, give examples. If not, explain why.
4. If you had to rank order the importance of the following "laws," how would you do it?
 - ___telling the truth
 - ___tithe-paying
 - ___honoring one's parents
 - ___abstaining from unclean foods
 - ___caring for orphans and widows
 - ___Sabbath-keeping
 - ___upholding economic justice
 - ___providing shelter for those in needWhat conflicts might arise in seeking to observe the laws listed above? Does your rank ordering accurately reflect how you would resolve those conflicts?
5. Have Adventists, like the Pharisees of Christ's day, been guilty of placing too great a stress on the "lighter" matters of the law while tending to ignore the "weightier" matters (see Matt. 23:23)? Explain, giving examples.
6. Several lessons this quarter have touched on the law in the Christian life. How would you now summarize the role of the law for the believer?

September 4-10

The Spirit-led Life

"Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit" (Galatians 5:25, NIV).



Wanted: A Seventh Subculture

by Glenda-mae Greene

Pushing up steel-rimmed glasses, he glances at the ad which had generated the mountain of videotapes now threatening to crowd him out of his office:

WANTED: a 30-second commercial typifying a motivating force which cuts across barriers created by age, ethnicity, sex, creed, socioeconomic status—the seventh subculture. The spirit-led culture.

Mentally he lists the six subcultures which form the mosaic of his country—Anglo-celtic, French, other ethnic, regional, technological and countercultural. He reaches for a stack of videotapes. The final selection.

At the flick of a switch a thickly carpeted living room appears on the monitor behind his desk. He sees modern furniture—velvet, stainless steel, glass, art deco. A man's voice thundering vitriol. (*Focus on stiffening back of a pubescent boy*)

A powerful hand appears on the screen, fastening on the boy's shoulder. The man turns him around and shakes him with barely-controlled violence. Fear. Pain.

The picture dissolves and the adolescent voice whispers, "I'm sorry we can't agree, Dad. (*Beat*) I will always love you."

Forgiveness. Self control.

Another video. . .

Intertwined fingers of a young couple. Booklined

shelves. Several adults (college students?) sitting at tables.

(*Cut to young woman*)

Brown hair ratted by restless fingers. (*Focus on pile of crumpled papers beside her binder*)

(*Short beat*) Girl detaches her hand. "Go without me, Tyler. Pam needs help with her math."

Self-sacrifice.

And another. . .

A nursing home. Gray-haired ladies in wheelchairs. Toothless old men endlessly pleating their sheets. Harried nurses swishing efficiently through the wards.

Focus on an altercation between young nurse and old woman. Camera medium tight

A no win situation.

(*Angle to old man moving center stage in a wheelchair*)

"I'll feed her, nurse. I've got the time."

(*Full shot of nurse's face, puzzled.*) "But she bit you yesterday! She might do it again."

"Perhaps." (*Beat*) "I'll take the chance." (smiling)

(*Fade out.*)

Slowly the steel-framed glasses slide down his nose. The director strokes his jaw. These people have gone beyond the call of duty. The fifth mile.

Selection is difficult. Impossible.

A montage for his mosaic?

INTRODUCTION

Eternity Guaranteed

LOGOS

Statistics tell us that every second a baby is born. Birth brings a child into the world. God brings a Christian into existence by the salvation made known in the Word. "He chose to give us birth through the Word of truth, that we might be a kind of first fruits of all he created" (James 1:18, NIV).

The Holy Spirit is the means by which this spiritual life is imparted to the believer. Jesus told Nicodemus, "Unless a man is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God . . . (John 3:5, NIV). Barclay comments: "There are two thoughts there. Water is the symbol of cleansing. When Jesus takes possession of our lives, when we love him with all our heart, the sins of the past are forgiven and forgotten. The Spirit is the symbol of power. When Jesus takes possession of our lives it is not only that the past is forgotten and forgiven; if that were all, we might well proceed to make the same mess of life all over again; but into life there enters a new power which enables us to be what by ourselves we could never be and to do what by ourselves we could never do."¹

In Ephesians, Paul says to the Gentiles, "And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory" (Eph. 1:13, 14, NIV). Paul tells them that they "were marked in Him with a seal." By this he meant that they were sealed with the Holy Spirit. "In the ancient world—it is a custom still followed—when a sack, or a crate, or a package was dispatched, it was sealed with a seal, in order to indicate from where it had come and to whom it belonged. The possession of the Holy Spirit is the seal which shows that a man belongs to God. The Holy Spirit both shows us God's will and enables us to do it."² The Holy Spirit in our lives marks us as God's possession and is a guarantee of our final redemption.

Paul was very conscious of battles that take place within us. To walk in the life of the Spirit is Christian freedom while indulging the sinful human nature is slavery. "So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want" (Gal. 5:16, 17, NIV).

"But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law" (Gal. 5:18, NIV). "Paul warns the Galatians that the Holy Spirit never leads men to seek salvation by compliance with the requirements of the Jewish ritual system, or for that matter through any system of legal righteousness. Conversely, those who submit to a legalistic religion are at war with the Holy Spirit."³

Being led by the Spirit results in salvation and eternal life. No one is saved by the works of the law, but through faith in Christ eternity is guaranteed.

S. D. P.

1. William Barclay, *The Gospel of John*, Vol. 1. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975), p. 129.
2. William Barclay, *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), p. 87.
3. *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 981.

A Friend Who's Always There

selected by Floyd Petersen

The Comforter is called the "Spirit of Truth." His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth and thus he becomes the Comforter. Through the Scriptures, the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of Truth working through the Word of God that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself.

... It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer. It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil and to impress His own character upon His church.¹

God takes men as they are, and educates them for His service, if they will yield themselves to Him. The Spirit of God, received into the soul, will quicken all its faculties. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the mind that is devoted unreservedly to God develops harmoniously, and is strengthened to comprehend and fulfill the requirements of God. The weak, vacillating character becomes changed to one of strength and steadfastness. Continual devotion establishes so close a relation between Jesus and His disciple that the Christian becomes like Him in mind and character. Through a connection with Christ he will have clearer and broader views. His discernment will be more penetrating, his judgment better balanced. He who longs to be of service to Christ is so quickened by the life-giving power of the Sun of Righteousness that he is enabled to bear much fruit to the glory of God.²

The Holy Spirit is the breath of spiritual life in the soul. The impartation of the Spirit is the impartation of the life of Christ. It imbues the receiver with the attributes of Christ. Only those who are thus taught of God, those who possess the inward working of the Spirit, and in whose life the Christ-life is manifested, are to stand as representative men, to minister in behalf of the church.³

With the consecrated worker for God, in whatever place he may be, the Holy Spirit abides. The words spoken to the disciples are spoken also to us. The Comforter is ours as well as theirs. The Spirit furnishes the strength that sustains striving, wrestling souls in every emergency, amidst the hatred of the world, and the realization of their own failures and mistakes. In sorrow and affliction, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone,—these are the times when, in answer to the prayer of faith, the Holy Spirit brings comfort to the heart.⁴ Circumstances may separate us from every earthly friend; but no circumstance, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter. Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is always at our right hand to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer.⁵

TESTIMONY

Key text:
John 16:13

"No circumstance, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter."

1. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 671.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 251.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 805.
4. *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 51.
5. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 760.

Floyd Petersen is a science teacher at Kingsway College.

☐ September 6
Tuesday

The Treasure In the Vessel

by Watchman Nee

EVIDENCE
Key text:
2 Corinthians
1:21-22

**“Has it
really come
home to you
that wherever
you go
you carry
with you
the Holy Spirit
of God?”**

Do you know, my friends, that the Spirit within you is very God? Oh that our eyes were opened to see the greatness of God's gifts! Oh that we might realize the vastness of the resources secreted in our own hearts! I could shout with joy as I think, "The Spirit who dwells within me is no mere influence, but a living Person; He is very God. The infinite God is within my heart!" I am at a loss to convey to you the blessedness of this discovery, that the Holy Spirit dwelling within my heart is a Person. I can only repeat: "He is a Person!" and repeat it again: "He is a Person!" and repeat it yet again: "He is a Person!" Oh, my friends, I would fain repeat it to you a hundred times—*The Spirit of God within me is a Person!* I am only an earthen vessel, but in that earthen vessel I carry a treasure of unspeakable worth, even the Lord of glory.

All the worry and fret of God's children would end if their eyes were opened to see the greatness of the treasure hid in their hearts. Do you know, there are resources enough in your own heart to meet the demand of every circumstance in which you will ever find yourself? Do you know there is power enough there to move the city in which you live? Do you know there is power enough to shake the universe? Let me tell you once more—I say it with the utmost reverence: You who have been born again of the Spirit of God—you carry God in your heart! . . .

Do you realize what happened at your conversion? God came into your heart and made it His temple. In Solomon's days God dwelt in a temple made of stone; to-day He dwells in a temple composed of living believers. When we really see that God has made our hearts His dwelling place, what a deep reverence will come over our lives! All lightness, all frivolity will end, and all self-pleasing too, when we know that we are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells within us. Has it really come home to you that wherever you go you carry with you the Holy Spirit of God? You do not just carry your Bible with you, or even much good teaching about God, but God Himself.

The reason why many Christians do not experience the power of the Spirit, though He actually dwells in their hearts, is that they lack reverence. And they lack reverence because they have not had their eyes opened to the fact of His presence. The fact is there, but they have not seen it. Why is it that some of God's children live victorious lives while others are in a constant state of defeat? The difference is not accounted for by the presence or absence of the Spirit (for He dwells in the heart of every child of God) but by this, that some recognize His indwelling and others do not. True revelation of the fact of the Spirit's indwelling will revolutionize the life of any Christian.

Excerpted from Watchman Nee, *The Normal Christian Life*, (Kingsway Publications, 1957), pp. 95-97.

**September 7
Wednesday**

Watchman Nee was a great Chinese writer and preacher of this century.

How to Live a Spirit-filled Life

by Jim Ryan

HOW TO
Key text:
John 14:16, 17

God has promised not just to be with His children, but even to live in us. We are called, then, to live a Spirit-filled life.

We all want to be good Christians, displaying the fruits of the Spirit and winning others to Jesus. However, it seems the longer we're converted the more we tend to become just "nice people." We may even tend to become more concerned about our image in the church than our relationship with God.

Let's consider the disciples before and after the resurrection. We see two entirely different types of characters. Before: fighting, seeking to be first, self-centered. After: all of one accord, sharing, willing to serve. The reason for the change: they were filled with the Spirit (Acts 2:4).

We have witnessed friends and relatives who make tremendous strides in their spiritual lives during evangelistic meetings. They come eagerly each night to hear God's Word, to be with God's people and to share their growing experience. We are all thrilled to see the changes. However, soon after baptism they stop growing and become like the rest of the lukewarm Christians or leave the church altogether.

What happened to change the disciples after the resurrection and our friends at evangelistic meetings? Also, what keeps some of us alive as born-again Christians?

1. Spending time in Prayer.
2. Studying God's Word.
3. Sharing with others what God is doing for us.

Sounds too simple, you say. No, this is all it's really about. God asks us to have a relationship with Him and it's based on the above methods of communication. If we communicate we'll be filled with the Spirit, emptied of self.

If this isn't convincing, do the following little exercise.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 -Relationship

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 -Communication

On the top line rate your relationship with God, 10 being the best. Be honest. Pray before you grade yourself. After you've done this, rate, on the line below in the same manner, the amount of time spent communicating with God. You'll probably find the numbers almost equal. From this we realize the importance of communicating with God. And doing it is very simple.

On which side of the resurrection do you live? How much time do you spend communicating with God?

A Spirit-Led Church

by Al Keiser

OPINION

Key text:
John 3:8

One of the exciting things happening in many Christian churches is renewal. It's a renewal based on the power of the Holy Spirit and has dramatic impact on community and brotherhood. For too long we've overlooked the Holy Spirit and when we do refer to Him we neutralize Him by calling Him "It."

Since the Holy Spirit is God it's unlikely we will be able to package Him neatly and how He will manifest Himself. When Jesus was talking with Nicodemus He described the Holy Spirit as the wind; and the wind blows where He wills (John 3:8). This means no traditional boundaries are safe.

First, people are freed to love one another. One of the distinctive, telling marks of the current renewal is the Christian camaraderie within these groups. Prejudices fall away, there's a concern for unity; a general freedom pervades the group. Ephesians 4:29-32 suggests we "be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other" (NIV). In this way we won't "grieve the Spirit" but will build up others and thus the church.

Second, the Spirit, because He is God and because the wind blows wherever He pleases, can also break down traditional boundaries in church structures. If the church is to accomplish the task of bringing to the world the message of love there must be enough flexibility in its structure to permit this to happen. The Spirit has eyes that see opportunities long before we do. But most important, these opportunities can only be taken advantage of on the grass roots level. That is, the mission of the church will only be successfully implemented as local congregations break out in, by and through the power of the Spirit. If the structures in the local congregation or in the broader denominational framework are so rigid that the Spirit is prevented freedom to operate as He wills, then would not this rigidity be grieving the Spirit?

**"Denom-
inational
structures
will have to
gear
everything
down to
the local
congregation."**

In order to prevent ourselves from grieving the Spirit we need to be receptive to His biddings and movements. We need earnestly to pray for insight to perceive, and for wisdom and courage to respond.

Denominational structures will have to gear everything downward to the local congregations. Currently there is an inexorable, upward flow within the structure. Perhaps this is caused by having too many administrators and too many administrative levels.

For example, the present Adventist structure with conferences and unions was set up in 1901 when means of transportation and communication were limited. That's hardly the case now. If unions were eliminated and conferences were reduced in number much more money could remain in the local churches. This would provide them with more resources for pressing their mission as *they* see it on their level. More resources give the local church more opportunity to do a greater variety of tasks, or to do one task more thoroughly. It gives the local church more opportunity to follow the biddings and leadings of the Spirit.

The challenge that confronts us is to order our lives and the church so as to give the Spirit of freedom to control us. Certainly we can't have the temerity to even attempt to control Him. Who can control the Wind?

REACT
Lesson 11

1. Explain the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the "seventh subculture" referred to in the Introduction (see 1 Cor. 12:12, 13).
 2. What do each of the 30-second spots say about this seventh-subculture? Describe the commercial that you would like to make in response to the want ad in the Introduction.
 3. The Logos and Testimony articles discuss several functions of the Holy Spirit. Identify as many as you can and discuss the importance of each.
 4. Watchman Nee (Evidence) argues that a true appreciation for the awe-inspiring fact that the Holy Spirit as the personal God dwells within would bring victory over sin and an end to worry. Do you agree? Explain. If awareness of the Holy Spirit is the key, how does one cultivate awareness?
 5. The How To author suggests that there is a direct correlation between the amount of time spent communicating with God and the degree to which one is filled with the Spirit. Do you agree? Explain.
-

September 11-17

The Joy of the Spirit-led Life

“For the kingdom of God is . . . joy in the Holy Spirit”
(Romans 14:17, NIV).



Join the Dance!

INTRODUCTION

"True revelation of the fact of the Spirit's indwelling will revolutionize the life of any Christian." With statements like this in the last week's Evidence, Watchman Nee provided a powerfully enlarged concept of the significance of the Holy Spirit.

This week, as we examine ways in which this concept works itself out in our lives, we'll find that joy is one of the central features of this Spirit-prompted revolution. Furthermore, we'll notice that this joy is something beyond the bubbly, ephemeral emotion often associated with the term.

In fact, Paul makes the astounding assertion that we should "Be joyful always" (1 Thess. 5:16, NIV). How is this possible? Perhaps it is, as Thomas Merton suggests, through attuning our lives to a mirthful reality greater than ourselves.

"What is serious to men is often very trivial in the sight of God. What in God might appear to us as 'play' is perhaps what He Himself takes most seriously. At any rate the Lord plays and diverts Himself in the garden of His creation, and if we could let go of our own obsession with what we think is the meaning of it all, we might be able to hear His call and follow Him in His mysterious, cosmic dance. We do not have to go very far to catch echoes of that game, and of that dancing. When we are alone on a

starlit night; when by chance we see the migrating birds in autumn descending on a grove of junipers to rest and eat; when we see children in a moment when they are really children; when we know love in our own hearts; or when, like the Japanese poet Basho, we hear an old frog land in a quiet pond with a solitary splash—at such times the awakening, the turning inside out of all values, the "newness," the emptiness and the purity of vision that make themselves evident, provide a glimpse of the cosmic dance.

"For the world and time are the dance of the Lord in emptiness. The silence of the spheres is the music of a wedding feast. The more we persist in misunderstanding the phenomena of life, the more we analyze them out into strange finalities and complex purposes of our own, the more we involve ourselves in sadness, absurdity and despair. But it does not matter much, because no despair of ours can alter the reality of things, or stain the joy of the cosmic dance which is always there. Indeed, we are in the midst of it, and it is in the midst of us, for it beats in our every blood, whether we want it to or not.

"Yet the fact remains that we are invited to forget ourselves on purpose, cast our awful solemnity to the winds and join in the general dance."¹

1. Thomas Merton, *New Seeds of Contemplation* Copyright © 1961 by The Abbey of Gethsemane, Inc.

D. F. M.

☐ September 11
Sunday

Bent Towards Life

by Judy Duncan

LOGOS

The last decade has bequeathed us to a marvelous assortment of electrical apparatus with which to torture the human hair into submission. People like myself, who have painfully straight hair, may apply these magic wands to the unobliging locks and then watch them bounce out into beautiful curls. When the heat is on the hair it bends it in a certain direction. So what happens when the heat is on the Christian? Satan is the most innovative creator of torments for Christians. For many years now he has been thinking up ways to make Christians bend in his direction, and sometimes they do.

Yet often when Christians face adversity they turn from the one who's causing it and grow closer to the One who can save them. Isn't that the most logical thing to do? Times of distress are never comfortable for anyone, but they are not without rewards for the Christian who trusts in God's leading. James writes, **"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance"** (James 1:2, 3, NIV).

What kind of people will stand firm among their trials and count themselves fortunate? It cannot be those still governed by the sinful nature because Paul points out in Galatians 5:19-21 that the sinful nature is given to immorality, idolatry, jealousy, anger and drunkenness. Not exactly endearing qualities and certainly not ones that would be worth enduring tribulation for. But then Paul tells us in verses 22 and 23 exactly what makes the difference in the human life: the Spirit.

When the Holy Spirit is truly established in the heart the fruits of the sinful nature are replaced by the fruit of the Spirit: **"love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, humility and self-control"** (Gal. 5:22-23, NIV). Paul went so far as to say, **"Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires"** (Gal. 5:24, NIV). Only through this identification with the cross is it possible to experience Christ within (Gal. 2:20, NIV).

I have yet to find anyone in this world who has no worries or troubles. That in itself is not surprising, but the fact that people still cling to their human nature and all its wretchedness when they could have the lovely character of God Himself in their lives is certainly amazing.

Someone who wants to have curly hair may entwine it with all kinds of hot gadgetry in an effort to look more attractive and consider this a worthwhile activity. Yet so often we Christians will not surrender our old natures for the more attractive one given by Christ. We are scared of adversity. While millions are allowing Satan to bend them towards extinction, so few will let Jesus bend them toward eternal life.

"Since we live by the Spirit," Paul urges, **"let us keep in step with the Spirit"** (Gal. 5:25, NIV).

selected by Kurt Davis

Joy at Midnight

"When men shall revile you, and persecute you," said Jesus, "rejoice, and be exceeding glad." And He pointed His hearers to the prophets who had spoken in the name of the Lord, as "an example of suffering affliction, and of patience" (James 5:10). Abel, the very first Christian of Adam's children, died a martyr. Enoch walked with God, and the world knew him not. Noah was mocked as a fanatic and an alarmist. "Others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment." "Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection" (Hebrews 11:36, 35).

. . . Great is the reward in heaven of those who are witnesses for Christ through persecution and reproach. While the people are looking for earthly good, Jesus points them to a heavenly reward. But He does not place it all in the future life; it begins here. The Lord appeared of old time to Abraham and said, "I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward" (Gen. 15:1). This is the reward of all who follow Christ. Jehovah Immanuel—He "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge," in whom dwells "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:3, 9)—to be brought into sympathy with Him, to know Him, to possess Him as the heart opens more and more to receive His attributes; to know His love and power, to possess the unsearchable riches of Christ, to comprehend more and more "what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:18, 19)—"this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord" (Isa. 54:17).

It was this joy that filled the hearts of Paul and Silas when they prayed and sang praises to God at midnight in the Philippian dungeon. Christ was beside them there, and the light of His presence irradiated the gloom with the glory of the courts above. From Rome, Paul wrote, unmindful of his fetters as he saw the spread of the gospel, "I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice" (Phil. 1:18). And the very words of Christ upon the mount are re-echoed in Paul's message to the Philippian church, in the midst of their persecutions, "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice" (Phil. 4:4).¹

TESTIMONY

Key text:
Philippians 4:4

1. *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 33-35.

Kurt Davis is youth pastor of the Des Moines Seventh-day Adventist Church.

September 13
Tuesday

Jesus' Least Visible Attribute

by Johann Baptist Metz,
selected by Don C. Royal

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Psalm 16:11

Christian joy—we can say perhaps that it is the willingness to recognize this deadly world, painfully torn and hostile to itself, as capable of acceptance, as hidden reason for thankfulness. A treatise on Christian joy would then be a treatise on the difficulty of saying yes when there is so much to which we must say no, when in fact we cannot say that all's right with the world as it is. This is why Christian joy, more than all the other Christian virtues, will have to take care that it is not misused by reactionary interests and ideologies. Its willingness to accept is in no sense an uncritical affirmation of existing earthly conditions. It includes a willingness to act firmly to make the lives of others acceptable to them and a reason for thankfulness for them. Christian joy is nothing without love. Joy without practical interest of love is self-deception; love without the friendliness of joy degenerates into mere domination with a veneer of morality.

“Joy without the practical interest of love is self-deception.”

. . . But what form does the mysticism of Christian joy take then, not just in impotent gloom and sadness, but in the passion of anger and opposition which rises in us when we, as Christians, look suffering and oppression in the face? To answer this, definitions and arguments are no longer enough; we need reports and accounts of real experience of joy. But did anyone ever read the lives of the saints as verifications of the Christian message of joy, as accounts of the “joy of a Christian man” commended to our imitation? And what about Jesus himself? What do we know about his joy? What are we told of it? Is it not almost his least visible attribute? To talk about this more than about any other aspect of his character are we not driven to speculation? The tradition includes reports of his grief and reports of his anger. What about his joy? What about his mirth even? Could Chesterton have been right after all in the suggestion he made at the end of his *Orthodoxy*? I apologize particularly to exegetes here for ending this article by quoting his remarks:

The tremendous figure which fills the Gospels towers in this respect, as in every other, above all the thinkers who ever thought themselves tall. His pathos was natural, almost casual. The Stoics, ancient and modern, were proud of concealing their tears. He never concealed His tears; He showed them plainly on His open face at any daily sight, such as the far sight of His native city. Yet He concealed something. Solemn supermen and imperial diplomatists are proud of restraining their anger. He never restrained and asked men how they expected to escape the damnation of Hell. Yet He restrained something that He hid from all men when He went up a mountain to pray. There was something that He covered constantly by abrupt silence or impetuous isolation. There was some one thing that was too great for God to show us when He walked upon our earth; and I have sometimes fancied that it was His mirth.

Excerpted from “The
Theology of Joy” *The
New Concilium: Religion
in the 70's* (1974, Vol.
5, No. 10), pp. 10-12.

September 14
Wednesday

Don C. Royal is an intern in chiropractic medicine
in the Chicago area.

Finding the Joy Again

by Don C. Royal

If you think back to the time you became a Christian you may remember weighing the sacrifices of the Christian life against the promises of a better life. You decided you must have this better life. And life was better for quite a while; in fact it was a lot better. But eventually your better life developed a hitch. You lost your job; your wife got pregnant (again); you discovered that Christ's imminent return has been imminent for nearly two thousand years; you found theological disagreement in your church family.

If you're in a situation like this I have a few suggestions to help you emerge unscathed.

First, realize that the problem is with you and not with the situation in which you find yourself. Yes, the situation is bad, but the outcome will be determined by you and not by the situation. Example: Two men go to war. One returns physically intact but emotionally shattered; the other returns physically crippled but happy and a lifelong Christian. Good things come out of bad situations and vice versa. Change your perceptions so you see the bright side of every situation. This makes life a lot more fun and aggravates the Devil considerably.

Secondly, our short-sightedness needs treatment. We're awfully quick to forget what God has done for us, not the least of which is putting up with our short-sightedness. Like the Israelites in the wilderness we forget how bad things were in Egypt and at the same time forget the promise of paradise. To cure nearsightedness one should read Job periodically; a trip through Exodus from time to time wouldn't hurt either. God is not punishing us, He's doing surgery.

Lastly, persist; nothing lasts forever. Of course if you're one of the few people for whom things are going well, you can ignore the fore-going and pray that God will pull the rug out from under you so you can grow some.

HOW TO
Key text:
2 Corinthians
4:16-18

The Untouchables

by Kurt D. Davis

OPINION

Key text:
Matthew 5:3-12

The Christian religion life boasts of bestowing the most exquisite experiences known to humanity. Its literature overflows with words like peace, rest, love, and joy. Yet we Christians are discomposed at the apparent lack of these graces in our experience. How do we reconcile this incongruity and/or get these graces that are billed as a main attraction for the Christian life?

For the answer to what we might reasonably expect in the way of joy, let's look for a moment at the model man, Jesus. I think we would all agree that Jesus had the fruits of the Spirit fully developed in His own character. What, then, does His life show us of joy? One important thing we notice is that it is not what we thought it was. It's not a Pollyanna experience of maddeningly idiotic smiles in the face of every setback. We read of Him crying, sighing, and groaning, but never laughing. We see Him hunted and hassled, despised and rejected, abused, derided and crucified. This was the common fare—the rule rather than the exception for His life. Yet, being a man of godly sorrow He remains our model of joy. Perhaps we could stand to re-evaluate our expectations: do we want warm, fuzzy feelings, or the deep, inward joy that characterized Jesus' life?

"Do we want warm, fuzzy feelings, or the deep, inward joy that characterized Jesus' life?"

So what were the elements of joy from His life of sorrow that He wanted to pass on to His disciples—to us? The clue can first be found in the paradoxical beatitudes that describe the persons who are *truly* happy (Matt. 5:1-12). Notice, oddly enough, that it is those who are poor, who mourn, who are meek, are persecuted, etc., that He insists are happy despite their circumstances.

Why so? Three reasons are apparent. First, though buffeted from without and haunted within, at heart they know they are doing the only thing they rightfully can do—searching for truth and following it as they know it. So, they are at peace with themselves despite the knowledge of their spiritual poverty. Second, though cursed by man, they are at peace with God. They are in step with the stars. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Rom. 8:31), rings in their ears. The only one who really matters has approved them. Finally, they are assured of a future reward that will require them their present trouble. This assures them that their efforts will endure eternity. It gives them meaning.

These, then, are the ingredients of real joy: peace with one's self, peace with God, and a knowledge that the present has meaning for the future. These are the things that make one's joy "untouchable" by circumstances. And as we grow into the graces of meekness, spiritual poverty, purity, and etc., the more these three ingredients will be present in our lives, making us "The Untouchables."

Recommended Reading:
Henry Drummond,
"Pax Vobiscum" in *The
Greatest Thing in the
World, and Other Ad-
dressses* (New York:
The Mershon Company,
Publishers, n.d.).

September 16
Friday

Kurt D. Davis is youth pastor of the Des Moines
Seventh-day Adventist Church.

REACT
Lesson 12

1. According to Paul, it is those who have crucified the "sinful nature" or "flesh" who experience the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, etc. (Gal. 5:22-24). What does he mean by crucifying the sinful nature? How is this done?
2. Do you agree with Kurt Davis' characterization of Christian joy (Opinion)? How would you describe the joy that issues from the Holy Spirit?
3. James urges us to view our trials as "pure joy" (James 1:2). In what specific ways can adversity be viewed as a source of joy (see vs. 3, 2 Cor. 12:7-10, Phil. 3:10-11 for some clues)? If something is thought of as "pure joy," how can it still be considered a problem or trial?
4. What do you think Thomas Merton (Introduction) means by urging us to "let go of our obsession with what we think is the meaning of it all" and "cast our awful solemnity to the winds and join the general dance"? Do you think his advice is valuable? Does glimpsing the "cosmic dance" have anything to do with the joy that comes through the Holy Spirit?
5. Johann Baptist Metz (Evidence) relates Christian joy to "saying yes when there is so much to which we must say no." What does he mean by this? How does he qualify this concept? What is your reaction to his views?
6. Do the Gospels ever portray Jesus as laughing or joyful? To what extent, or in what way, did the "man of sorrows" also experience joy?
7. Do we have any evidence that God has a sense of humor? What is your reaction to G. K. Chesterton's conjecture (cited in Evidence) that God's mirth was too great a reality for humans to bear, so Jesus veiled it?

September 18-24

Fulfilling the Law of Christ

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2, RSV).



The Least of These

INTRO- DUCTION

"Leaning on the Everlasting Arms"—would we be entirely out of place if we changed the song title to "Leaning on the Christian Brothers and Sisters?" Certainly Christ is the only One who can hold us up and it is He who can make us strong. But what about the lonely, unlovely, poor, and dejected individuals who don't know how to take their burdens to Christ because they have never been shown love and concern? Surely it must be somewhat difficult for the insecure to trust an intangible God when they have never been able to trust people.

The Christian is to be a light to the world, reflecting the character of Christ. Why would anyone want to become a Christian if all they know about Christians is unfriendliness and selfishness?

In a recent film, "Kevin Can Wait," Jim, a young man, was seeking to work for God in a great way. When an angel, named David, came to him and relayed the message that God had heard his prayers and had great plans for him, Jim became excited. At once he envisioned himself as the minister of a large church, a missionary in an uncivilized, dangerous land, and even the host of a TV program called, "The Electric Churchman."

While Jim fantasized, David encouraged him to befriend a lonely mechanic named Kevin. But Jim didn't have time for Kevin, for he was too busy entertaining the "important"

Christians, and trying to impress the angel David.

David could not seem to make Jim recognize the importance of the oppressed and lonely, those insignificant by worldly standards. So the angel purposefully changed himself into insecure, dull, old and ugly individuals and put himself into situations where he would confront Jim.

After shunning and ignoring a camouflaged David, Jim urged his angel friend to tell him the great plans that God had for him. David then revealed to Jim that he was the unemployed teenager from a broken home, and the old man who never went to church because no one cared enough to take him.

Dismayed, Jim exclaimed, "David, if I had known it was you I wouldn't have acted the way I did."

"Jim," the angel replied, "you love me now but you didn't love me when I was a social outcast. It isn't fair to love people only if they meet your criteria, you must love them for what they are and for what they can become through Jesus."

Jim found out that God did indeed have big plans for him and he started fulfilling those plans with Kevin.

"The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me'" (Matt. 25:40, NIV).

S. D. P.

Faith Expressed Through Love

LOGOS

We've seen this quarter that Paul and James had contrasting short-term objectives in writing the two letters we've studied. It is equally true, however, that they shared a common long-range goal. They wanted to see vital faith thriving in the lives of their readers.

Such a living faith, says James, always manifests itself tangibly. He asks, "What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? . . . [F]aith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead" (James 2:14, 17, NIV). In other words, "without works faith is no faith at all any more than a corpse is a man."¹ Paul concurs, describing the faith-works dynamic as the central feature of the Christian's life: "The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love" (Gal. 5:6, NIV).

Paul gives an important specific on how active faith demonstrates when he writes, "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2, NIV). In the Christian community, no one should be left to struggle alone with his anxieties, perplexities or traumas. Burden-bearing implies sensitivity to the needs of others and a willingness to help in whatever way possible. As the Jerusalem Bible renders it, we should "carry each other's troubles."

The "law of Christ" that is fulfilled when we demonstrate this selfless concern for others is probably the "law which Christ laid down" when he summarized the whole OT law in the twin commandments of love for God and one's neighbor.²

In fact, earlier in the Galatian letter, Paul echoes the words of Jesus with a slight variation. "The entire law is summed up in a single command: 'Love thy neighbor as yourself'" (Gal. 5:14). And, James picks up on the theme by referring to the commandment to love one's neighbor as the "royal law" (James 2:8).

So fulfilling the law of Christ does not mean adherence to the checklist of rules and regulations. Rather it means commitment to the principle of love supremely exemplified in a person, Jesus Christ. "In place of the law as a written code is now the law of Christ. This 'new law' cannot be reduced to specific rules but goes far beyond legislation. No set of rules can tell one how to bear the burdens of another (Gal. 6:2); only love can dictate such. However, the law of Christ, which is the law of love, does fulfill the Law. Love will not commit adultery, or lie or steal or covet, or do any wrong to one's neighbor (Rom. 12:8-10)."³

Is the principle of love truly viable in a world of social and economic systems which thrive either on repression or competition? Can others-centeredness survive in a world which operates on the principle of self-centeredness? Paul encourages us not to let circumstances or appearances cause us to turn back from centering our lives on the principle of faith expressing itself through love. "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to the family of believers (Gal. 6:9, 10, NIV).

D. F. M.

1. James B. Anderson, *The Epistle of James* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1976), p. 124.

2. F. F. Bruce, *Paul, Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977), p. 201.

3. George Eldon Ladd, *Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974), p. 509.

Building One Another Up

If you have love in your heart, you will seek to establish and build up your brother in the most holy faith. If a word is dropped that is detrimental to the character of your friend or brother, do not encourage this evil-speaking. It is the work of the enemy. Kindly remind the speaker that the word of God forbids that kind of conversation. We are to empty the heart of everything that defiles the soul temple, that Christ may dwell within. Our Redeemer has told us how we may reveal him to the world. If we cherish his Spirit, if we manifest his love to others, if we guard one another's interests, if we are kind, patient, forbearing, the world will have an evidence by the fruits we bear, that we are the children of God. It is the unity in the church that enables it to exert a conscious influence upon unbelievers and worldlings. . . .

God does not want us to place ourselves upon the judgment seat, and judge each other. But how frequently this is done! Oh! how careful we should be lest we judge our brother. We are assured that as we judge, we shall be judged; that as we mete to others, it shall be measured to us again. . . . When we see errors in others, let us remember that we have faults graver, perhaps, in the sight of God, than the fault we condemn in our brother. Instead of publishing his defects, ask God to bless him, and to help him to overcome his error. Christ will approve of this spirit and action, and will open the way for you to speak a word of wisdom that will impart strength and help to him who is weak in the faith.

The work of building one another up in the most holy faith is a blessed work; but the work of tearing down is a work full of bitterness and sorrow. Christ identifies himself with his suffering children; for he says; "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." If all would carry out the instruction given by Christ, what love and unity would exist among his followers! Every heart has its own sorrows and disappointments, and we should seek to lighten one another's burdens by manifesting the love of Jesus to those around us. If our conversation were upon heaven and heavenly things, evilspeaking would soon cease to have any attraction for us. We would not then be placing our feet on the enemy's dangerous ground. We would not then be entering into temptation, or falling under the power of the evil one. . . .

Christ is our example. He went about doing good. He lived to bless others. Love beautified and ennobled all his actions, and we are commanded to follow in his steps. Let us remember that God sent his only begotten Son to this world of sorrow, to "redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Let us seek to comply with the requirement of God, and fulfill his law. "Love is the fulfilling of the law," and He who died that we might live, has given us this commandment, that we should love one another as he has loved us; and the world will know that we are his disciples, if we have this love one for another.

TESTIMONY

Key text:
John 13:34-35

**"Love
beautified
and ennobled
all his
actions . . ."**

Review and Herald,
June 5, 1888.

September 20
Tuesday

Fulfilling Humanity

by Kurt D. Davis

EVIDENCE

Key text:
Matthew
25:31-46

Often, when we talk about love fulfilling the law, we labor to prove that if one *really* loves he will be keeping all ten of the commandments automatically. Now, I believe that that is true. But such thinking can lead us to act as though commandment keeping were the reason for loving. Thus love is thought of merely as a means to an end. Failures to love, then, become breaches against tables of stone rather than against individuals, and individuals, including God Himself, are given second place. We must ever keep the perspective that Jesus had when He said, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath" (Mk. 2:27). Generalizing, we could say, "The law was made for beings, and not the beings for the law." This perspective will keep before us our responsibility to individuals whose unique dignity the law protects. Notice how Henry Drummond keeps this responsibility before us in the following excerpt from his classic exposition of 1 Corinthians 13, "The Greatest Thing in the World."

"In the book of Matthew, where the Judgment Day is depicted for us in the imagery of One seated upon a throne and dividing the sheep from the goats, the test of a man then is not, "How have I believed?" but "How have I loved?" The test of religion, the final test of religion . . . at that great Day is not religiousness, but Love: not what have I done, not what have I believed, not what have I achieved, but how I have discharged the common charities of life. Sins of commission in that awful indictment are not even referred to. By what we have not done, *by sins of omission*, we are judged. It could not be otherwise. For the withholding of love is the negation of the spirit of Christ, the proof that we never knew Him, that for us He lived in vain. It means that He suggested nothing in all our thoughts, that He inspired nothing in all our lives, that we were not once near enough to Him to be seized with the spell of His compassion for the world. It means that—

'I lived for myself, I thought for myself,

For myself, and none beside—

Just as if Jesus had never lived,

As if He had never died." [No reference cited]

"It is the Son of *Man* before whom the nations of the world shall be gathered. It is in the presence of *Humanity* that we shall be charged. And the spectacle itself, the mere sight of it, will silently judge each one. Those will be there whom we have met and helped; or there, the unpitied multitude whom we neglected or despised. No other Witness need be summoned. No other charge than lovelessness shall be preferred. Be not deceived. The words which all of us shall one Day hear sound not of Theology but of life, not of churches and saints but of the hungry and the poor, not of creeds and doctrines but of shelter and clothing, not of Bibles and prayer-books but of cups of cold water in the name of Christ. Thank God the Christianity of today is coming nearer the world's need. Live to help that on. Thank God men know better, by a hair's breadth, what religion is, what God is, who Christ is, where Christ is. Who is Christ? Where?—whoso shall receive a little child in My name receiveth Me. And who are Christ's? Every one that loveth is born of God."¹

"The words
which all of us
shall one Day
hear sound
not of
Theology but
of life, . . ."

1. Henry Drummond,
*The Greatest Thing in
the World, and Other Ad-
dresses* (New York:
The Mershon Company,
Publishers, n.d.), pp.
42-44.

Kurt Davis is youth pastor of the Des Moines Sev-
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September 21
Wednesday

How To Help a Friend

by Paul Welter

Editor's note: Part of "bearing one another's burdens" (Gal. 6:2) surely is helping friends who are in a predicament. Defining a predicament as a difficult situation with no easy or satisfactory solutions apparent, Dr. Welter suggests the following steps for helping:

HOW TO
Key text:
Philippians 2:4

1. **Get Involved.** An important way to work with persons in a predicament is to get involved with them. This means we talk with them, listen to them, and do some activities together.

2. **Avoid Giving Advice.** A student in the middle of a predicament came into my office and opened the conversation by saying, "I came to see you because I knew you wouldn't give me pat answers." Most people in predicaments do not want advice, perhaps because nearly all advice is from the giver's, not the user's, point of view. Advice works with a problem because it has a solution that does not depend on a point of view. But a predicament is a vastly more complex situation than a problem.

Have you had the experience of urging someone to do something and feeling his resistance? If we come up behind someone and push him, the chances are that he will dig his heels in right away. Most people don't want to be pushed. Newton's Third Law of Motion applies here, "For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction." When we advise somebody to do something, or push someone toward some action, that person will usually push back and resist. The helper therefore must find some other way to help than by giving advice.

3. **Work for Openness Rather Than Closure.** One reason we often give advice is that we want the other person to get the matter settled, to get on with it, to make the decision. Psychologically, we push for closure in many things. If we see a partially formed geometric design, we tend to close it in our minds. This tendency works well for us sometimes, and rather badly at others. Giving help is one venture in which working for speedy closure is usually nonproductive and sometimes even counterproductive.

Suppose your friend is involved in a predicament concerning her elderly father who has been living alone but is rapidly losing the ability to care for himself. There are two or three options open as a place for him to live. It is tempting to help your friend get all the information regarding each option and arrive at a rational decision as rapidly as possible. After all, the decision cannot be put off indefinitely. We often tend to see a person like this as being in a predicament regarding a *decision*. However, the predicament may be much deeper than the rational decision-making process. It may involve a psychological journey for your friend in which she moves from a "child" position in relation to her father to a position of care-giver or guardian of her father. To bypass this tremendous psychological need in a push for closure would do your friend a disservice.

Therefore, if we go into the helping venture without a personal need to arrive quickly at a "solution," we will listen much more carefully and will be far more open to where our friend is psychologically. Usually as we adopt this position, we help our friend to make the personal growth and necessary changes in points of view so he can begin to make decisions.

Paul Welter is a professor of counseling and educational psychology at Kearney State College, Nebraska.

September 22
Thursday

4. Show Respect. It is unlikely that we will be able to help a person whom we do not respect. If we feel our friend in "making a mountain out of a molehill," then this impatient attitude of ours comes across as a lack of respect. If we "can't understand" why it takes a person so long to make a decision, our arrogance may be taken as a lack of respect. Jesus demonstrated his respect for persons in the incident regarding the rich young ruler. He answered the young man's questions, and even told him what he would need to do to achieve his quest, but he didn't push him to do it.

5. Be Concrete. One of the characteristics of effective helpers is that they get to the point, they are specific. The helper is able to share his own actual feelings. He avoids abstractness and favors concrete, substantive communication. Instead of saying, "I can see where this situation with your family has you in a dilemma," he may respond, "It looks as if you don't know what to do next because you and your husband don't agree on how to discipline your youngest child." As the helper becomes concrete, he enables his friend to talk more concretely and think more concretely. Thinking in concrete terms makes the predicament much more manageable.

The barrier to concreteness is usually not lack of language skills, it is rather that we are purposefully vague. We pull our punches because we think we may hurt the other person, or because we lack courage to risk possible misunderstanding. Actually, most people are quite resilient and we can say the truth in the plainest way possible without harming them. The exception to this occurs when we *want* to hurt the other persons. If this is the case, the chances are we will hurt them no matter how much we disguise the truth. If we feel any need at all to get revenge or to "teach them a lesson," of course we need to back off fast and not pretend to help.

A lack of courage was mentioned above. Sometimes we convince ourselves that the other person is fragile and cannot stand the truth, when the fragility is within *us*. It is not that the other person can't bear the truth, but that we *won't* bear it. God has made the human personality strong—able to bear the truth when it is clearly stated in a loving way.

The More Excellent Way

by Leon Morris

God does not love men because he finds them wonderfully attractive. His love is not limited to the beautiful, the good, the pious, the prayerful, or the kind. In fact, nothing in men can account for God's love; he loves because it is his nature to love.

That love means the cross, for God will do whatever is needed—even make a supreme sacrifice—to save the sinners he loves. . . . God's love is not simply a beautiful but detached emotion—it is a love that pays the price.

The cross is the measure of this love. Certainly there is no greater love than that which makes one lay down his life for others (John 15:13). It is easy to love when one can simply enjoy life with his beloved, making only minor sacrifices in the process. But it takes love of real quality to suffer deeply for someone who is not worthy. . . .

My first point, then, is that we know love in the New Testament sense only because we see it in the cross; my second point is that to see this love is to be affected by it. . . .

It is impossible to retain one's pride and self-sufficiency and at the same time have a proper appreciation of the fact that one is a sinner, saved only because the Son of God died on Calvary. The modern attitude that seeks success at any price, that is concerned only with personal achievement, no matter how much suffering this involves for others, cannot be embraced by anyone who has felt the impact of the cross. It is a humbling experience to know that all one's hopes for time and for eternity rest on what Christ has done, because one can do nothing to achieve salvation. This is an emphatic rejection of the approach of many in our modern world. Where that world affirms pride and self-sufficiency, the cross speaks of love and self-sacrifice.

And love begets love. When God's love reaches us, it transforms us. Truly understanding what Christ did in dying for us and truly responding to that love means becoming a different person. . . . This is not something we can do ourselves, and for this reason Scripture relates love to the activity of God's Spirit. Love is a sheer miracle, not the crowning human achievement.

Christian love means love for fellow Christians. This is admitted on every side, and it is important. The early church stood out against the background of pagan society because of the quality of brotherly love that was so characteristic of its membership. Pagans might mock the phenomenon of Christian love, as did Lucian of Samosata, or they might take it seriously, as apparently did those of whom Tertullian wrote. But they could not deny the fact that to be a Christian was to love the brotherhood.

A modern Christian does well to ask, "Why is this not the verdict of non-Christians today?" There can be few places—at least in the western world (and none that I know of)—where outsiders spontaneously comment on the love Christians show to one another. On the contrary, they often refer to Christians as people far too frequently occupied with bickering and backbiting. They see us as prepared to squabble bitterly and indefinitely over theological minutiae. They marvel at the multiplicity of our divisions and our readiness to make more. I am aware that much of this is false and malicious, and that our divisions are sometimes a matter of conscience. . . .

OPINION

Key text:
Matthew
22:37-40

"The modern attitude that seeks success at any price, that is concerned only with personal achievement . . . cannot be embraced by anyone who has felt the impact of the cross."

A prolific and highly respected New Testament scholar, Leon Morris retired as principal of Ridley College, Melbourne, Australia, in 1979.

☐ September 23
Friday

Granted that our critics are often bent on faulting us and that nothing we can do will please them in the end; yet I must still ask, "Why is the impression we make so different from that which our predecessors made? Were not their critics equally unsympathetic?" I can ask such questions, but I cannot answer them. I can only . . . plead with my fellow Christians, as I plead with myself, that we show more love within the Christian community. There of all places there should be love.

And, of course, love should not stop there. When we understand love in the light of the cross, we understand that love is to be shown to the unlovely and the unworthy. No one who takes the cross seriously can think otherwise. The Christian who has been transformed by God's love revealed in the cross cannot be other than deeply concerned for sinners. That is what love means. And as he responds to God's love he becomes a loving person. It is love that brought him life and therefore it is love that he brings to life.

The Christian who has come to understand the meaning and the place of love cannot but speak the word of love to the modern world. It is a world that says much about love but that understands love in its own self-centered way. Like the men of Qumran, modern man loves those he conceives to be "the sons of light" (i.e., those of whom he approves) and hates "the men of the pit" (those of whom he disapproves). His love is selective, and it centers on himself. He cannot conceive of love in the Christian sense as anything other than impractical idealism—an idealism of which he does not approve.

If it were not so tragic it would be funny that modern man dismissed Christianity and the Christian way of love on the ground that it does not work. Will anyone in his right mind claim that any of the modern alternatives do work? Certainly the stress on the self-centered life does not lead to blissful happiness; only fierce competition results when self-absorbed people confront each other. People try to get the better of each other, and in this sad process laws are broken, rights are violated—and police forces grow larger. Crimes multiply, crimes of violence being the most "popular," because violence is the simplest way for the physically strong to get their own way. The result is that everybody loses. We lose by the depredation we suffer, and we lose by the increased taxes we pay to support the protection we have come to need so much. The more self-centered our society becomes, the more crimes we commit, the more police we need, and the more jails we fill. There is scarcely the need to elaborate the point because life in any modern city is a vivid illustration of the truth that selfishness leads ultimately to suffering—for everyone. Where is there a system that works better than the way of Christian love?

"They see us as prepared to squabble bitterly and indefinitely over theological minutiae. They marvel at the multiplicity of our divisions and our readiness to make more."

Excerpted from Leon Morris, *Testaments of Love*, pp. 271-279. Copyright © 1981 by William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. Used by permission.

1. Does Paul's call to bear one another's burdens and to do good "especially to those who belong to the family of believers" (Gal. 6:2, 10), indicate that we should have greater concern for fellow church members than we do for those outside the church? Explain why or why not.
 2. Is it possible to show the love that "fulfills the law of Christ" in the following settings? Explain.
 - a) on the football field
 - b) in a planning session to develop an advertising/marketing strategy for a product
 - c) running for public office
 - d) in grading students academic work
 - e) in the school cafeteria
 - f) in combat
 - g) in choosing a career
 - h) in the dormitory
 - i) other (you identify and discuss.)
 3. In the Evidence article, Henry Drummond implies that sins of omission will be of greater consequence on Judgment Day than sins of commission. Do you agree?
 4. Share your reaction to Paul Welter's (How To) suggestions for how to help a friend in a predicament. Do you agree that we should avoid giving advice? That we should not push too quickly for a solution? Explain.
 5. What in specific terms, do you think it means to "bear one another's burdens"?
 6. As a summary for this quarter's study, complete the following statements in as many ways as you can think of.
 - a) As a result of study and class discussion this quarter, I have, in a new way, come to understand that . . .
 - b) As a result of study and class discussion this quarter, I plan to begin . . .
-

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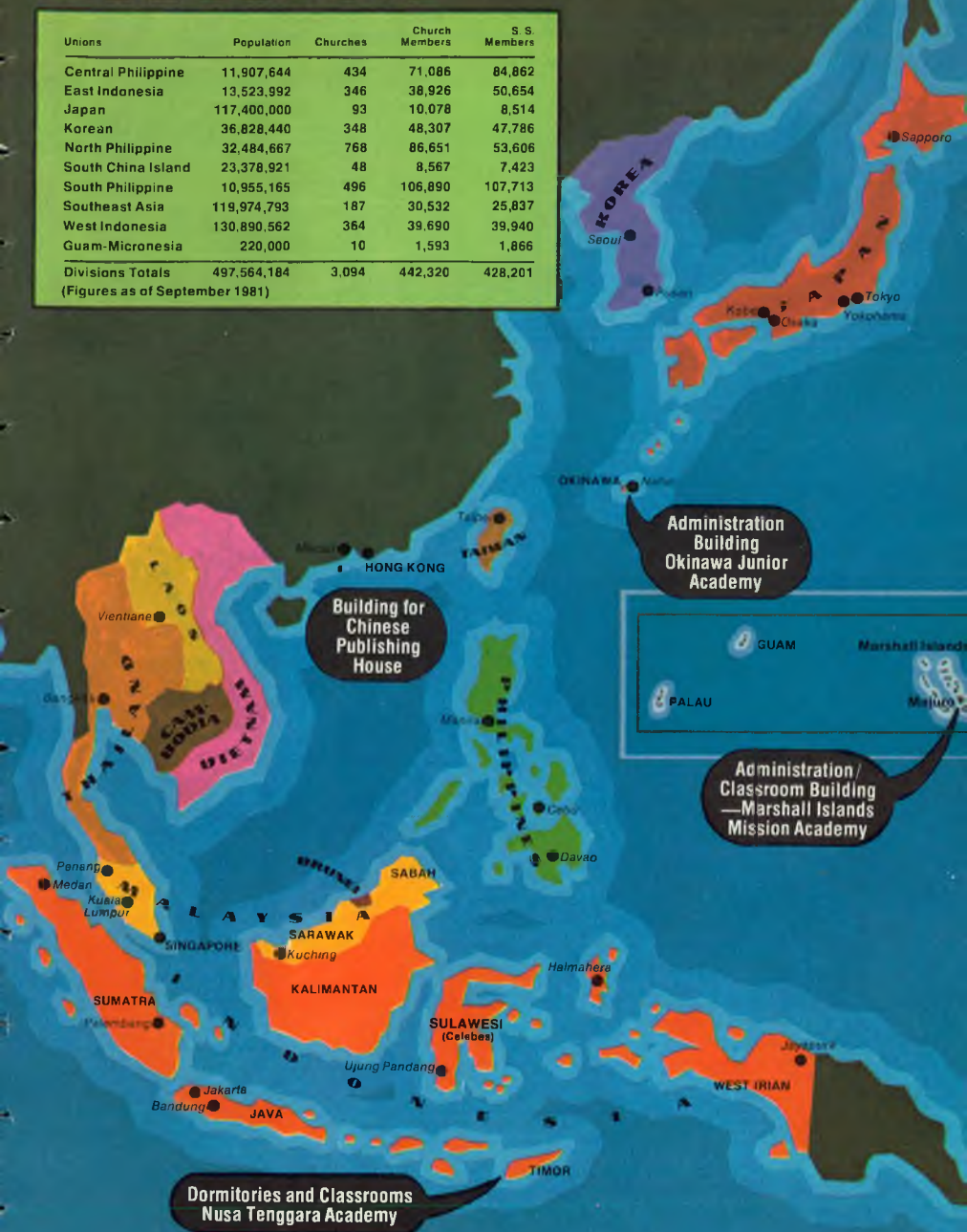
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Korean	36,828,440	348	48,307	47,786
North Philippine	32,484,667	768	86,651	53,606
South China Island	23,378,921	48	8,567	7,423
South Philippine	10,955,165	496	106,890	107,713
Southeast Asia	119,974,793	187	30,532	25,837
West Indonesia	130,890,562	364	39,690	39,940
Guam-Micronesia	220,000	10	1,593	1,866
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(Figures as of September 1981)



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MIND TO MIND



Pat Rogers
left, and
Ollie Lenox

*Two minds. One has the knowledge to care for the sick.
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