

COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY

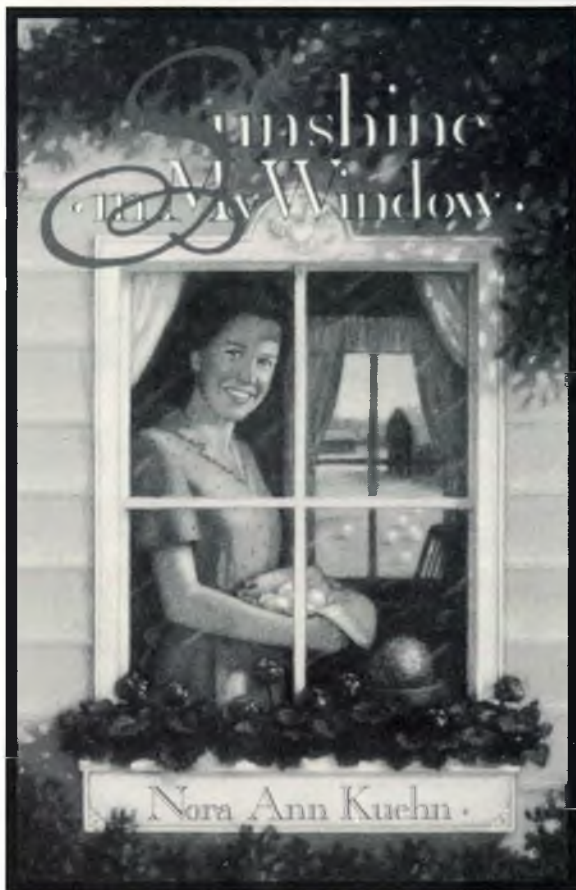
A General Conference Church Ministries Publication

April-June 1990

The Magna Carta of Christianity

Galatians





Discover True Courage! *Sunshine in My Window*

by *Nora Ann Kuehn*

Did you ever meet someone who always seems to land on his feet?

Kate Gills was a woman who knew sudden tragedy. A young widow, she wondered if the sun would ever shine on her life again.

Sunshine in My Window is a heartwarming story of true grit and solid family values that shows how God made all things possible for Kate's young family.

Pick this book up, and you won't be able to put it down!

Now available at your Adventist
Book Center. Paper, 96 pages.

© 1990 Pacific Press Publishing Association 2978.

Galatians—The Magna Carta of Christianity

Editorial office
Department of
Church Ministries
General Conference of
Seventh-day Adventists
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904
Place orders with
Pacific Press Pub. Assn.
P. O. Box 7000
Boise, Idaho 83707

Staff

Editorial Director: George E. Knowles
Editor: Graham Bingham
Managing Editor: Laurell Peterson
Editorial Secretary: Andrea Kristensen
Pacific Press Editor: Lincoln Steed
Marketing: Bob Gorton
Sales Office: Shirley Sayers
Publisher: Pacific Press

Editorial Team

Graham Bingham, Chairman
Andrea Kristensen, Secretary
Karen Flowers
Richard Fredericks
Erwin Gane
Randal Wisbey

Reading Committee

Graham Bingham	David Jarnes
Lyndelle Chiomenti	George E. Knowles
Karen Flowers	Israel Leito
Richard Fredericks	Tim Poirier
Erwin Gane	Ted Wick
Frank Holbrook	Randal Wisbey

The COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY is written by faculty, students, and friends of the Seventh-day Adventist colleges and universities around the world.

1. Together We Stand— Divided We Fall	6
2. Apostolic Credentials	14
3. Confronting Hypocrisy	22
4. The Exchanged Life	32
5. God's Amazing Grace	42
6. Redemption Through the Cross	50
7. Why Bother About the Law?	58
8. The Law: Our Custodian	68
9. Adopted by Grace	76
10. The Faith-and-Works Controversy	86
11. Responsible Freedom	96
12. Learning to Walk	104
13. Truth or Consequences	112

Scripture versions used in this quarterly, other than the King James Version, are as follows:

Bible texts credited to Jerusalem are from *The Jerusalem Bible*, copyright © 1966 by Darton, Longman & Todd, Ltd., and Doubleday & Company, Inc. Used by permission of the publisher.

Scripture quotations marked NASB are from the *New American Standard Bible*, © The Lockman Foundation 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977.

Texts credited to NEB are from *The New English Bible*. © The Delegates of the Oxford University Press and the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press 1961, 1970. Reprinted by permission.

Texts credited to NIV are from the *Holy Bible, New International Version*. Copyright © 1973, 1978, International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

Texts credited to NKJV are from *The New King James Version*. Copyright © 1979, 1980, 1982, Thomas Nelson, Inc., Publishers.

Bible texts credited to Phillips are from J. B. Phillips: *The New Testament in Modern English*, Revised Edition. © J. B. Phillips 1958, 1960, 1972. Used by permission of Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc.

Bible texts credited to RSV are from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyrighted 1946, 1952 © 1971, 1973.

Bible texts credited to TEV are from the *Good News Bible—Old Testament*: Copyright © American Bible Society 1976; *New Testament*: Copyright © American Bible Society 1966, 1971, 1976.

COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY (ISSN 0744-2939). Published quarterly by Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1350 North Kings Road, Nampa, ID 83687, U.S.A. One-year subscription in U.S.A., \$9.60; single copy, \$4.25. One-year subscription to countries outside U.S.A., \$12.60; single copy, \$4.25. All prices at U.S.A. exchange. Second-class postage paid at Nampa, ID. When a change of address is desired, please send both old and new addresses.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY, P. O. Box 7000, Boise, Idaho 83707, U.S.A.

Send editorial inquiries to COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY, 12501 Old Columbia Pike, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904, U.S.A.

Send circulation inquiries to Pacific Press Publishing Association, P. O. Box 7000, Boise, Idaho 83707, U.S.A.

Contributor Profile

Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland

Lessons 1-4

Campus Editor: Randal Wisbey

Contributors:

Joan Angelo Adams

Anthony Daniels

Grant Leitma

Marvin Adams

Kathleen Farkash

Bertram L. Melbourne

Darla Bahnsen

Richard Fredericks

Sandoval Melim

Eddie Braga

Susan Harrington

Rick Moyers

Janet Braga

Robert Hernandez

David Potts

Christopher V. Cassano

Chester Hitchcock

Alice F. Rich

Joy Cassano Coleman

Angela Holdsworth

Darcy Smith

Kenneth L. Coleman

Jeanne Johansen

Ricky E. Williams

Willow Brook SDA Church, Boonsboro, Maryland

Lesson 7

Editor: Andrea Kristensen

Contributors:

Bill Barney

Gail R. Hunt

Peter J. Trepper

Christopher Blake

Jim Reddick

Gerald Wheeler

Philip Crouch

Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska

Lessons 9-12

Campus Editor: Rich Carlson

Contributors:

Trisha Baker

H. Ward Hill

Yaw Ofori-Amanfo

Dlorah Burgeson

Mary Langenback

Angela Rexin

Rich Carlson

Crystal Lofton

Siegfried H. Roeske

Ron Carlson

Mike McConnell

Gudrun Stille

Steve Creitz

Virgil Minden, Jr.

David K. Tan

Stacie Greer

Jim Mules

Garry L. Treft

JanaLee Gueck

Ralph E. Neall

Mark Welch

Melissa Hanson

David Nowack

Donald Yancheson

Loma Linda University, School of Public Health, Loma Linda, California

Lesson 13

Campus Editor: Julio C. Tabuenca

Contributors:

Cami Dale

Fred Riffel

Sigve Tonstad

Darla A. Lee

Serena Tonstad

Wes Youngberg

Robert Lee

Special Contributors

Peter Chiomenti, a copy editor at the Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, Maryland, is the author of Lesson 6.

Evert McDowell, former news editor for the Adventist Development and Relief Agency International (ADRA), wrote Lesson 5.

Stuart Tyner, the author of Lesson 8, is director of marketing at Loma Linda University, Riverside, California.

This Quarter's Artist

Karen Larson's interest in the visual arts began in her earliest years in Lexington, Massachusetts, where she grew up. For as long as she can remember, she has liked to draw and paint.

As a ninth-grade student she began to sell her watercolors on commission. Throughout high school she took art classes and continued to refine her skills.

Currently a sophomore art major at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, she is studying for a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree. She plans to attend graduate school to pursue her interest in art.

Karen's career goals include children's book illustration, graphic design/commercial illustration, and painting. She notes, "Whatever I do with art, I want to do for God."

Getting the Most Out of the Collegiate Quarterly

Facts You Should Know

The COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY is based on the conviction that there is transforming power in the Word of God and that one important way of tapping into that power is through group study. It is prepared with Adventist college students and young adults particularly in mind. Its purpose is to provide this group with a resource for devotional study on mutual topics, which can then be discussed together each week in Sabbath School.

Additionally, many who use the adult quarterly find that the COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY, since it deals with the same topics as the adult, enriches lesson study and discussion as a supplemental aid.

Adventist colleges and universities, along with young-adult church groups, work together in producing the quarterly. The writing at each school is coordinated by the campus chaplain's office. Approximately 200 individuals contribute to the quarterly each year.

Circulation of the COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY is about 25,000.

Pointers for Study

1. The Bible passage to be studied for each week is indicated in bold type on the introduction page (Sunday's lesson). Read this entire passage in conjunction with the quarterly introduction to give you an overview of the lesson.

2. The Bible passage for the week is divided into sections on the Logos pages (Monday's lesson). When studying this section, carefully reread the Bible passages indicated in the bold headings before reading the comments beneath the heading.

3. Read the remainder of the sections for the week with the perspective you have gained from your own study of the biblical passage.

4. Keep in mind the purposes of each section of the quarterly:

Introduction (Sunday) is designed to get your attention and focus your thinking on the week's theme.

Logos (Monday), as described above, is a guide for direct study of the Bible passage for the week.

Testimony (Tuesday) presents Ellen White's perspective on the lesson theme.

Evidence (Wednesday) approaches issues raised by the lesson from a historical, scientific, philosophical, or theological perspective. It is likely to be the most scholarly article of the week.

How-To (Thursday) discusses what the "theory" in the lesson means for day-to-day living.

Opinion (Friday), a personal viewpoint on the lesson, is meant to encourage further thought and discussion.

5. Through prayer, open your mind to the Holy Spirit's guidance as you study.

The CQ and the Church

The COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY is the General Conference-approved quarterly for the collegiate/young-adult age group. It upholds the beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. *However, its contents should not be regarded as official pronouncements of the church.* Particularly in the Evidence and Opinion sections, views that are only individual opinion, not official denominational positions, are expressed.

Faith Is Like . . .

by Graham Bingham

Have you ever taken a sentence-completion test designed to help you express how you feel about a subject? Example: *College is like taking out the garbage*—you have to do it, but it's no fun; or *College is like a new pair of glasses*—it helps you see things more clearly.

These sample sayings contrast the way two people might feel about something. Actually, most words we use do express our feeling tone. And our feelings often keep us from understanding the meaning behind the words.

Have you ever thought seriously about your feelings toward the word *faith*? To help you think about them, complete this statement: *Faith is like . . .*

trying to hop a freight train—you want to jump on, but you're afraid you might not make it.

a warm shower—it washes away tension and makes you feel clean and ready to go.

a TV dial—when you turn to the proper channel, the TV set does the rest.

walking a tightrope—you don't dare lose concentration for a second lest you fall.

Hopping a freight train and walking a tightrope are poor pictures of faith. They both focus on human effort—everything depends on us. And when we start to think that faith is something we do, we lose the whole meaning of Christian faith and the secret of freedom, power, and joy.

The Bible makes it clear. When we say that we have faith, we're not really talking about ourselves. We're saying instead that God is trustworthy and is doing something exciting in our lives.

During this quarter you are invited to take part in an adventure—an adventure that can make your life and relationship with God fresh and different. You're invited to study the book of Galatians and discover what faith really is. When God invites you to believe in Him, He's not asking you to try harder. He's asking you to allow Him to work His miracles in you.

That's what the Christian faith is all about. It's about God, who loves you and reaches out in Jesus Christ to touch your life and do wonderful things *for* you, *in* you, and *through* you. If faith feels heavy or scary to you now, by the end of this quarter's lesson studies it should feel less like an effort and more like an ongoing adventure. So grab hold! You have nothing to lose and everything to gain!

Lesson 1, April 1 - 7

Together We Stand—Divided We Fall



“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:8, NIV).

Sunday, April 1

Standing Together . . . Falling Apart

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Acts 1, 8-11, 13-15

It was noon recess, and six of us were prisoners in our own snow fort less than 100 feet from the school. Our captors, part of that malevolent horde known collectively as the Big Kids, amused themselves by throwing iceballs at anyone unfortunate enough to be caught outside the fort. Half an hour crawled by, and they showed no signs of boredom. The fort had no bathroom, and panic was setting in. Our thoughts turned to methods of escape. Paula went first. The only girl in the group, she suspected that all males were afflicted with that dreaded childhood malady known as cooties. She voiced this opinion to Timmy, who threatened to wash her face with snow. Paula screamed and ran for the school building. She covered less than 30 feet before a Big Kid (who undoubtedly suffered from a terminal case of cooties) caught her and washed her face anyway. She retreated, sniffing, to the relative safety of the snow fort.

I went next. A crafty and smug third-grader, I struck out across the field, brimming with confidence. Surprise was on my side, and I was making good progress when my boot caught on a strand of barbed wire, and I plunged, thrashing, into a drift. My pursuers were on me in an instant. I

retreated in humiliation, my shirt full of snow, looking like a huge bipedal tortoise.

Marty tried next. A die-hard fan of old war movies, Marty fashioned an impressive helmet from a Superman lunch box and donned it proudly. Thus protected, he strode manfully toward the school. Before he had traveled 15 feet, Buddy, the star pitcher in Pony League, rose up out of hiding and launched an iceball. The projectile clanged noisily off the Superman helmet, and Marty staggered back stunned.

One by one, each member of our band of prepubescent fugitives tried—and failed—to reach the school building. Finally, wild-eyed and desperate, we loaded our arms with snowballs, swore our loyalty to one another, and charged, en masse, toward the safety of the school.

I learned several things the winter I was 10. I learned not to run across snow-covered fields when I didn't know where the fences lay, and I learned that lunch boxes make poor armor. I learned about friendship, and I even learned some things about Big Kids. Perhaps most important, though, I learned of the strength that lies in unity.

That strength is essential to our survival; our success depends upon it. Without it, we are certain to fail—more victims of the Big Kids.

by Christopher V. Cassano

Chip Cassano is a junior English and journalism major at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

A Dynamite Witness

LOGOS

Acts 1, 8-11, 13-15

Theme: Relating to Differences of Understanding. *Under divine guidance and the wise administration of its leaders the church can remain true to the gospel of Christ. Unity among its members must be maintained in spite of their differing cultural and religious backgrounds.*

With the experience of being with Jesus still fresh in mind, the early disciples were eager to carry the good news of salvation to the world! But they couldn't do it alone. They had to be united. And so do we. Our advantage lies in the fact that we can learn from them. So let's tune in and take note of the joy of unity and the pain of fragmentation as it played out in the lives and work of early Christians.

1. Into All the World

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8, NIV).

These last words of Jesus are the crux of the message of Acts. It is a definite message for a definite time. And would Jesus be with them? Definitely! The word *will* is used twice in this one verse.

First, it is associated with power. Jesus said, "You will receive power." The word *power* has its origin in the Greek word *du-*

namis, from which we get "dynamite." The glorious news of Jesus' perfect life, triumphant death, and glorious resurrection is dynamite! That's the dynamite message that the disciples were to take to the world.

Second, Jesus said, "You will be my witnesses." The disciples had witnessed Christ's life and ministry firsthand. So they were not asked to go to the world with a nebulous theory, but with news about someone they had eaten with, talked to, prayed with, laughed with, cried with, and looked forward to seeing soon! (See Luke 24:46-48, NIV.)

The good news about Jesus would break the bounds of stuffy tradition and go to all the world. No one was to be excluded. And through this message the world would be united in love for God.

How is the "dynamite" of Jesus' love affecting your life in 1990? What can you do to share it with others?

2. The Gospel Beyond Judea (read Acts 8:4-40)

As the early Christians traveled from place to place they continued to share the message of salvation with all who were willing to hear. And there were different responses to the preaching of the message. Acts 8:4-40 records two such responses.

In story one the saying that "the best things in life are free" proved true when Simon learned that we can't buy salvation (verse

by Darcy Smith

Darcy Smith is a junior communication major at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

20). Then in story two we see the joy of new life in Christ as an Ethiopian eunuch found Christ in prophecies that were once a mystery.

What can I do or say this week to help people realize that God's offer of salvation is free, that it cannot be bought?

3. The Gospel to the Gentiles (read Acts 9-11)

The message of God's salvation was not to be broadcast on just the home turf. Through the leading of the Holy Spirit the good news went *even* to the Gentiles (10:45). This was accomplished with the conversion of an unlikely candidate. Could God use someone who was trying to destroy His fledgling church? Yes! He changed a name and a heart, and then Paul set out to change the world. God is full of surprises.

He chose to surprise the world by His choice of people to spread the gospel, and He surprised a Jewish church with the fact that His love was also for the Gentiles.

4. Paul's First Missionary Journey (read Acts 11:19-21; 13; 14)

At first glance it would seem a paradox that something meant to scatter would bring unity. But that's the picture we see in Acts 11:19-21. Persecution scattered the early church, but it served also to bring more people to faith in God. Unity may not always mean being physically close together, but spiritually close. Christ is the hub of the Christian church, and each disciple is a spoke. So even if spokes get farther apart from one another, they are united if they stay connected to the hub. After all, what use would a hub be without spokes? If the early Christians had not clung to their faith in

Jesus, how could the church have grown as its members were scattered into different parts of the world? Unity of purpose enabled the gospel to be carried to undreamed-of places.

On Paul's first missionary journey there were many different responses from people to the gospel. Read the story in Acts 11:19-21, including chapters 13 and 14, and decide what response most resembles your attitude toward God's gift of salvation.

5. The Jerusalem Council (read Acts 15)

In Acts 15 we follow the church as it moved into more sophisticated levels of development. In fact, we even see one of the first Annual Councils! Here problems and false claims were discussed openly, conclusions were reached, and a letter was drafted to take to believers. Again we observe a God-centered striving toward unity in the church.

But then, ironically and sadly, we end the unity with disunity. Interpersonal disagreements in the church cause sadness just as corporate disagreements do. If Paul and Barnabas had taken the same approach toward solving interpersonal problems as the council did with corporate misunderstandings, the outcome might not have ended in a split. We are also thankful that a reconciliation was made later. But this may serve to remind us that church leaders were human then just as they are today.

How should we respond to the decisions made by church leaders?

How do you deal with interpersonal disagreements? Do you work them out with open, honest communication, or do you prefer the "silent treatment" approach? Which approach works best? Why?

A Church United

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Acts 1:14

The disciples of Jesus are a prime example of “together we stand, divided we fall.” Take, for example, Ellen White’s comment concerning the arrest of Jesus: “The disciples were terrified as they saw Jesus permit Himself to be taken and bound. They were offended that He should suffer this humiliation to Himself and them. They could not understand His conduct, and they blamed Him for submitting to the mob. In their indignation and fear, Peter proposed that they save themselves. Following this suggestion, ‘they all forsook Him, and fled.’”¹

But after Christ’s ascension to heaven the disciples experienced real unity. “The disciples did not now mourn over disappointed hopes. They had seen the risen Saviour, and the words of His parting promise echoed constantly in their ears. In obedience to Christ’s command, they waited in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father—the outpouring of the Spirit.”² “Putting away all differences, all desire for the supremacy, they came close together in Christian fellowship.”³

Just as Jesus’ disciples often misunderstood His words and actions, so church members often

misunderstand the words and actions of our church leaders. Ellen White provides practical counsel to all those who would cause disunity in the church because of dissatisfaction.

“Some have been dissatisfied and have said: ‘I will not longer pay my tithe, for I have no confidence in the way things are managed at the heart of the work.’ But will you rob God because you think the management of the work is not right? Make your complaint, [1] plainly and [2] openly, [3] in the right spirit, [4] to the proper ones. . . . But do not withdraw from the work of God, and prove unfaithful, because others are not doing right.”⁴

“Things will go wrong because of unconsecrated workers. You may shed tears over the results of this; but don’t worry. The blessed Master has all His work from end to end under His masterly supervision. All He asks is that the workers shall come to Him for their orders, and obey His directions.”⁵

“I am instructed to say to Seventh-day Adventists the world over, God has called us as a people to be a peculiar treasure unto Himself. He has appointed that His church on earth shall stand perfectly united in the Spirit and counsel of the Lord of hosts to the end of time.”⁶

1. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 697.

2. *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 35.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

4. *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 249.

5. *Christian Service*, p. 243.

6. *Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 397.

by Chester Hitchcock

Chester Hitchcock is a junior theology major at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

Wednesday, April 4

Uniformity Versus Unity: Only One Gospel

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Gal. 1:6-8, NIV

True Christian unity is never built on intolerant uniformity (“Everyone here must think the same way about everything, or he’s out!”) nor, conversely, on apathetic tolerance of any and every deviant idea or behavior (“That’s your opinion, and that’s OK; I have my opinion” or “What’s true for you may not be true for me, but go for it”). One, in misguided religious pride, demands too much; and the other, in humanistic pride, worships autonomy, denies God’s authority, and demands nothing except to be left alone. Both in their own way destroy Christian unity.

The common unity (community) of the Christian church has one source and one foundation. The source is God’s grace—His unearned, undeserved saving love for sinners who turn to Him. This grace comes to everyone in and through the authentic and only gospel of Jesus Christ—the church’s only true foundation (1 Cor. 3:11; Rom. 1:16, 17). Paul describes this gospel in Galatians 1:3-5. It allows for a diversity of opinion and maturity on many things in the Christian’s experience and growth (5:1-16), but it never tolerates diversity con-

cerning God’s way of salvation through the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ (1:9; 2:4, 5).

One great mark of all cults and of every perversion of true Christianity is that all such movements invariably put *something* (often a very good thing) other than the New Testament gospel as the central focus of their message and experience. They make some other “special truth(s) or doctrine(s)” the great testing point and interpretive center by which all things are judged. When *anything*—even a very good thing—takes the primary focus of a Christian movement or individual away from God’s grace through the work of Christ, it becomes antichrist. “There is one great central truth to be kept ever before the mind in the searching of the Scriptures—Christ and Him crucified. Every other truth is invested with influence and power corresponding to its relation to this theme.”*

As Adventists with many beautiful truths, we must especially guard against this tendency to religious idolatry. The Sabbath, the gift of prophecy, denominational loyalty, character development, final events . . . they are all important, but they are not the gospel. They are spokes in the wheel, but the gospel of Christ is the hub that keeps them together (unified) and gives them meaning.

*The SDA Bible Commentary, Ellen G. White Comments, vol. 6, p. 1084.

by Richard Fredericks

Richard Fredericks is an associate professor of religion/theology at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

The “New Idea” Syndrome

HOW-TO

Key Text: Acts 11:17

Imagine the grief suffered by Christians through the years because they have believed *mistakenly* that Jesus would be unhappy with a “new idea.” For example, put yourself at the breakfast table in a conservative Christian home in Jerusalem when the story is told of Paul’s preaching the gospel to Gentiles. If there was one thing the Jews had learned through their long and painful history, it was never to involve themselves with outsiders. In the past this had usually meant trouble—big trouble! Can you imagine mother and father discussing in front of the kids the pros and cons of the gospel’s going to the Gentiles? After all, these parents desperately want *their* children to grow up Christian and not experience the punishment that would *surely* come from such apostasy.

In more recent times, picture the grief within the church when Copernicus rediscovered that the earth was *not* the center of the universe. This “new idea” was declared heresy because theologians would have to change many of their “bits of logic” based on the “fact” that the earth is the center of God’s universe. Today we smugly snicker over their *uneducated* views. But the truth remains that many a Christian family self-destructed in heated arguments over what God wanted them to do and think.

So how can we attain unity and still have a diversity of thinking? Here are some suggestions:

1. Act Christian about things that you believe are not Christian. So often it is tempting to slander those who slander or criticize.

2. Ask yourself, not whether Jesus would *approve* of a specific behavior, but what He would *do*.

3. Remember that progress can come from disagreement. The reason we have conflict is that reasonable people perceive facts differently.

4. Remember that if an issue is genuinely important, then God cares more about it than we do. Our task is to act responsibly in the areas in which we have agreement. Beyond that we must learn to trust God if we believe He is in ultimate control.

5. Learn to love the *people* on both sides of an issue. It is always the behavior or idea that we may disagree with, *not* the person. And what if *we* are the ones who are finally shown to be shortsighted? We still want others to love us—even when our ideas are crazy.

REACT

In points 1-5 ask yourself how you would be different if you followed these suggestions.

by Ricky E. Williams

Ricky E. Williams is the vice-president for advancement at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

Friday, April 6

Mission and Unity

OPINION

Key Text: 2 Cor. 5:20

Have you read or heard about Vision 2000, Harvest 90, and the Caring Church? Phrases like these have been used by the church as a method for clarifying its mission and for establishing a sense of unity. Slogans are typically used by advertisers and institutions who try to sell an idea or concept to the public for profit. In a similar way, the church would like to see a spiritual profit made in growth and renewal. We seem to be faced with this issue: Can the church really motivate people to desire Jesus Christ or to represent Him to others through the use of slogans? Did the apostle Paul rely on slogans before he set out on his first missionary journey?

A careful study of church history informs us that our early church leaders were men and women of great confidence and trust in God. People like William Miller, Joseph Bates, James and Ellen White, and Josiah Litch knew they had a mission. When they studied and spoke, they did it with a sense of purpose and conviction. They were committed to the mission of the church. Each one had a personal experience with Christ and desired to witness His soon return. Their lives were a testimony to Jesus and to the gospel mission, which naturally provided a sense of direction and unity.

Scripture is clear about the mission of the church. We are called to be "ambassadors for Christ" (2 Cor. 5:20, NKJV). Each of us has been called to minister for Christ. We are called to be witnesses to His power and His enabling grace through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives (Acts 1:8). Because of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of Paul, his mission statement was straightforward: "For to me, to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21, NIV). Similarly, when we exercise personal faith and possess a sense of mission like Paul, we will be a light to the world. When the mission is distinct and evident in the lives of Christians, divisive and problematic issues in the church become less apparent.

The church must discover anew what its mission is before we will have unity in theological and personal standards. If the church is to rely only on slogans for emphasizing unity, it would seem to place less confidence on what Scripture suggests is the mission of the church. Human speculating, devising, and planning must give way to "What saith the Lord?" We must ask ourselves the question: Do we want more slogans and programs or more Christians who have been born again and can testify that Christ's love is greater than anything Satan can devise?

REACT

In your opinion, what is the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church?

by Grant Leitma

Grant Leitma is an associate professor of psychology at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

Lesson 2, April 8 - 14

Apostolic Credentials



“Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father” (Gal. 1:3, 4, NIV).

Sunday, April 8

Eat Less and Exercise!

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Gal. 1

Whenever I could get ahold of the comics, I always used to look forward to reading the satire "Bloom County." Drawn by Berke Breathed, this nationally syndicated comic strip managed to make fun of just about anything. Though not always gentle, Breathed's satire playfully pointed out some of the faults and inconsistencies in life.

To introduce this lesson, I recall a selection from the sole "Bloom County" book in my possession, *Billy and the Boingers Bootleg*.^{*} In the course of the book, Opus the Penguin decides it is high time that he lose some weight. But how? His friend Milo, whom Opus has appointed as his diet coach, quietly says, "Eat less and exercise."

But Opus wraps himself up in all the latest methods of weight loss. He ponders broccoli and bean-bath diets, nearly strangles on an elastic belt, gets clobbered over the head with a baseball bat during his "negative reinforcement" sessions, and gets bruised by the vacuum as Milo attempts a

primitive "liposuction."

Though Milo has said all along, "Eat less and exercise," he allows Opus to experiment with popular dieting methods to his heart's content. By hurting himself one way or another, Opus discovers that the fad methods of losing weight aren't so good after all. Finally he must face the facts. There is only one healthful way: eat less and exercise. Milo is right.

In Galatians 1 Paul is more direct. Astounded that members of the church are "turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all," he seeks to help them avoid hurting themselves, and he gives credit for the gospel to God, quietly keeping himself as an instrument, not seeking to popularize himself. Therein lies the theme for this week.

Are you looking for the perfect gospel? Face the facts. There is just one "healthful" gospel. And that gospel is that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, became a man, lived a perfect life, and died in our place so that if we accept His mastery of our lives, we will be saved. As you study the lesson this week, don't forget Milo, Opus, and fad diets.

^{*}Berke Breathed, *Billy and the Boingers Bootleg* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1987), pp. 108-111.

by David Potts

David Potts is a senior business administration major at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

The Divine Origin of Paul's Gospel

LOGOS

Gal. 1

Theme: A Message From God.

Paul's message of salvation by grace did not come from any human source. God gave him special revelations that not only invested him with apostolic authority but also clarified, for the church in every age, the relationship between grace and works. To accept Paul's gospel is to accept the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave it to him.

1. The Divine Origin of Paul's Apostleship (read Gal. 1:1-5)

"Paul an apostle—not from men nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead" (verse 1, RSV).

Besides identifying himself as author and the Galatians as addressee, Paul uses the letter's prescript for another significant purpose. He had not met the criteria Peter had enunciated for apostleship (Acts 1:21, 22). His Galatian opponents, urged on by Judaizers, had thus been undermining his authority and challenging his gospel. The prescript therefore asserts validation of his apostleship.

Paul's claim of a divine source for his apostleship is inescapable. Not only does he negate human origin or instrumentality for his

call, but also he suggests that those who would challenge his apostleship would be questioning divine prerogatives. Paul's appointment to mission originated with Christ and His Father.

Had Paul given the precise location of his addressees, he would have done us a great service. Unfortunately he did not; he only names them. In his expression of greeting he wishes his readers grace and peace. These are not just polite clichés. Grace here is not just a good wish for salvation. Paul uses it to refer to God's decisive saving act in Jesus through His sacrificial death.¹ It is the resurrected Lord's sovereign gift. Those who would question the gospel really needed it.

Peace here is more than the absence of strife. It implies more than the Hebrew *shalom*.² It connotes wholeness and is a mediated gift of the resurrected Lord. Peace is effected through the cross, which is an intersection of vertical and horizontal beams. Thus, peace has vertical and horizontal dimensions. Its possession brings a newness to our Godward and humanward relationships.

Paul offers the Galatians these gifts but notes their source. They are from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. He is not satisfied, however, with naming Jesus as a source. He must demonstrate His preeminence, for He is Lord. He is the One "who sacrificed himself for our sins, to res-

by Bertram L. Melbourne

Bertram L. Melbourne is professor of biblical studies and Greek at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

cue us out of this present age of wickedness" (Gal. 1:4, NEB) and freely bestow these gifts on us. This is the key notion and theme of Galatians.

2. Attempts to Delude (read Gal. 1:6-10)

The purpose of the letter expresses Paul's chagrin at the rapidity with which the Galatians were transferring their loyalty from the One who had graciously called them, to a different kind of gospel. He states that their new choice was "no gospel at all." They had made an ill-advised choice, since there is in reality no other gospel.³ He indicates that the disturbers were really trying to pervert Christ's gospel and to divert their attention from Christ.

Convinced of the divine origin of his gospel, Paul asserts that even if he or an angel from heaven should proclaim a gospel other than the one received by the Galatians, the proclaimer should be accursed (verse 8).

Behind Paul's questions in verse 10 one catches a glimpse of the charge brought against him. Apparently his opponents claimed he was softening the weight and demands of the gospel to attract Gentile converts. He forthrightly dismisses such an absurd notion by stating, "If I were trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ" (NIV).

3. The Divine Origin of Paul's Gospel (read Gal. 1:11-14)

"I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it" (verses 11, 12, NIV).

Paul begins the body of the let-

ter by delineating the source of his gospel. The precise claim he had made for his apostleship he now asserts for his gospel. He neither received it from man nor was taught it by man. It came through a direct revelation from Jesus Christ. He validates its authenticity and power by appealing to its transforming power in his own life. He reminds his readers of his former life in Judaism. He had mercilessly persecuted the church, attempting to annihilate it. He tells how he had advanced beyond his peers "in the practice of our national religion" (NEB) because of his zeal for the ancestral traditions. The course of his life was transformed when God—in keeping with a prenatal choice—graciously revealed His Son in him and set him apart for Gentile evangelization. He submits that following this dramatic event he neither consulted with a human being nor went to Jerusalem to meet the apostles. He went to Arabia and later returned to Damascus.

He implies therefore that his gospel rests on neither human authority nor a human source. This conclusion is reinforced by the fact that his first visit to the Jerusalem leadership occurred three years after his conversion and was a "get-acquainted" meeting. It lasted only 15 days, during which he met only Peter and James. To vindicate himself and silence his opponents, he presents God as witness to his veracity.

How do we treat people who hold views with which we disagree, or who disagree with our views? Can we separate disagreement with our views from disagreement with us as individuals?

1. H. H. Esser, "Grace," *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979), vol. 2, p. 118.

2. A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1931), vol. 4, p. 7.

3. Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Epistle of Paul to the Churches of Galatia*, *The New International Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1953), p. 48.

Tuesday, April 10

True Change

TESTIMONY

Key Text: 2 Cor. 5:17

As you study about Paul you cannot help being impressed with the paradoxes in his life. He went from persecuting Christians to preaching the gospel they believed. It was a change from one extreme to the other. What caused such a change?

“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.’ 2 Corinthians 5:17. . . . Like the wind, which is invisible, yet the effects of which are plainly seen and felt, is the Spirit of God in its work upon the human heart. That regenerating power, which no human eye can see, begets a life in the soul; it creates a new being in the image of God.”¹

God changed Paul’s life. For a bond to occur in a relationship between two people, one person needs to have what the other lacks. Love grows stronger when one person longs to be more like the other person. The same is apparent in

our relationship with God. Upon meeting Him, we see our need and long for what only He can provide. Then we give ourselves to Him because we love Him.

“In the heart renewed by divine grace, love is the principle of the action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, subdues enmity, and ennobles the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life and sheds a refining influence on all around.”²

Love for God allows Him to make the necessary changes in us as He did for Paul.

REACT

1. God can change people drastically. What would you say is the most drastic change He has wrought in your life?

2. Whom do you know who was once very hostile to the Christian faith but is now a sincere follower of Jesus? What brought about this change? What hope does this give you?

3. How could you help a person hostile to the gospel be more receptive?

1. *Steps to Christ*, p. 57.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 59.

by Robert Hernandez

Robert Hernandez is a theology/psychology major at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

Wednesday, April 11

Now Hear This!

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Rom. 16:17, 18

Paul was not pleased! This is putting it mildly. He was working in Corinth, but he had not lost his concern for the other established churches. He had dealt with trouble before, but this time things were different. Paul was cut to the heart; his soul was stirred. Things were very wrong in Galatia. He knew it, and he had to do something about it in a manner that would have impact.

There were false teachers in Galatia, and their influence was spreading. The problem was like a growth that needed a quick laser operation. The Galatian church was plagued with division and heresy. They were guilty of mingling Jewish tradition with the truth of the gospel. To Paul the situation was critical.

His introduction to the letter is only 24 verses long, but it surely packs a wallop. Paul knew that the people of Galatia needed a strong, yet loving, reprimand. They were not living right, and he knew he had to do something about it—soon. There was no beating around the bush. This was serious business, and he would treat it that way.

The introduction of the Galatian letter is in some ways similar to, yet different from, other letters he wrote. His greeting to the people is similar to that in his letter to the Romans (see Rom. 1:7). Yet he reminds them of

his identity and the basis for his power and authority (Gal. 1:11). Paul is not giving this a soft sell.

He had to communicate with the Galatians in a manner that would make a difference. These folk were blatant in their open, unmasked renouncing of Jesus and the gospel. Fortunately, Paul had the wisdom to deal with different classes, minds, and varied circumstances. He was wise and enlightened by the Spirit of God, and he had received his formal education and schooling in Jerusalem. His manner was sharp and decisive.

Like any good manager (or parent), Paul got to the matter quickly and decisively. He used techniques of positive reinforcement developed years later by B. F. Skinner.

1. He identified the problem and how to handle it.
2. He acted immediately in dealing with the problem.
3. He stated the basis of his authority.
4. He appealed to conscience.

We can learn a great deal from Paul and the way he managed the Galatia situation.

REACT

1. Do we see any of the traits of Galatia in the church today?
2. What can we do when we observe people drifting away from the church's biblical foundations?
3. How might Paul handle problems in the Seventh-day Adventist Church today?

by Joan Angelo Adams

Joan Angelo Adams is a financial consultant and serves as president of Columbia Union College's national alumni association.

God's Word: An Owner's Manual

HOW-TO

Key Text: Gal. 1:6-9, 12

My roommate just purchased a brand new Honda Accord—the car she's always wanted. Buying a car takes thoughtful planning and research. Cars these days are intricately put together. They are computerized and constructed for efficiency, endurance, and smooth driving. They also have many gadgets inside and out. She would not want to start driving the car without first knowing how everything works.

By now she has waded through dealer incentives, credit options, warranties, and licensing. But she still doesn't know her car. So, how does she proceed in getting acquainted with it? Does she ask me? (All I've heard is that Hondas are great on maintenance.) Does she just drive until the need arises to use something? No. The owner's manual is the source of information for all the devices on the car. To know her car, she must acquaint herself thoroughly with the manual, and then she'll know exactly how to run the car at peak performance. Once she is confident in handling the car, she then could explain its features to someone else considering purchasing a Honda Accord.

How does Paul's sharing of his experience of God's call fit into new cars and our lives? Here are some suggestions:

1. Go to the source when searching for truth. Hear the gospel from Jesus. As Paul points out in verse 12, he was not taught by, nor did he receive the gospel message from, human sources. He received it by direct revelation from God—the Source. To know Jesus today we must go to the source too—Scripture.

2. Don't turn to a different gospel, and don't let people throw you into confusion. In verses 6-9 Paul realizes that the Galatians were allowing themselves to be persuaded by false gospels. He writes to them saying he cannot understand how they could allow this to happen. The same applies when we buy a car today. We must be careful that salespeople do not persuade us with untrue sales talk so that we end up buying a car that is not for us.

3. When you purchase a new car, follow the instructions in the owner's manual. God created and redeemed us, and everything necessary for our present and future welfare can be found by following His manual—the Bible.

REACT

1. What confuses you most about the Christian faith? How do you deal with confusing thoughts?

2. What are some of the different gospels within the church today? What has this done to the church?

by Jeanne Johansen

Jeanne Johansen is a senior English major at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

Friday, April 13

On the Road to Baltimore

OPINION

Key Text: 2 Tim. 4:7

In Galatians 1:14 Paul writes, "I was advancing in Judaism beyond many Jews of my own age and was extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers" (NIV). To understand exactly what Paul gave up, I've tried to imagine what it would be like to be in his shoes.

Suppose that, while driving to Baltimore one night, I'm suddenly blinded by a flash of light. I manage to get my car off the road. As I sit, blinded, heart pounding, with cars whizzing by, a voice booms down from heaven. "Rick, Rick," it thunders, "everything you've lived and worked for in your life is wrong. I want you to quit your job, give away your money, and travel the world, converting everyone you can to the New Age movement."

It would be pretty hard. Imagine giving up everything you've worked for, everything you believed in, and doing a complete about-face. Paul did it, and that's why his story means so much to me.

The SDA Bible Commentary says, "Prior to conversion Paul had been considered a rising star of first magnitude in the sky of Judaism" (vol. 6, p. 940). Paul was a zealot. He believed

passionately in Judaism, observing the law, and eradicating the scourge of Christianity. He had been well educated and was appointed to the Sanhedrin, the ruling council of the Jews.

But for Christ, he gave it all up. What did he get in return? He was stoned, cast into prison, beaten, tried before Agrippa, shipwrecked, and (according to tradition) beheaded by the emperor Nero.

By reminding the Galatians of his past experience and the life he now lived to preach the gospel, Paul tried to demonstrate to his audience the value of the gospel. Even though he eventually died for his new faith, Paul had no regrets (see 2 Tim. 4:6).

So here comes the real test. I'm sitting, blind, in my car. Or on my knees, or at my desk—it doesn't really matter. God speaks to me, and I hear. But carrying out His will means giving up things that are important to me—money, position, the esteem of others. Can I do it? Can you?

REACT

1. Do you think that following God's call will always lead to success?

2. How do you think Paul's dramatic conversion experience influenced his message to the Galatians? What effect do you think it had on his audience?

by Rick Moyers

Rick Moyers is director of public relations at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

Lesson 3, April 15 - 21

Confronting Hypocrisy



“But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13, NIV).

Sunday, April 15

Piety's Only Skin-deep

INTRODUCTION

Scriptures: Gal. 2:1-14;
Acts 15:1, 2

There once was a man named
Paul,
Who among the Gentiles walked
tall.
He preached salvation,
Not condemnation,
And converted them one and all.
Paul was prompted to go to
Jerusalem
And report his good news to the
brethren.
To Barny and Titus
He said, "They can't fight us
For bringing God's love to the
heathen."
When they arrived, to the leaders
they said,
"By God we have been led
To teach the sinners
How to be winners."
But the leaders bickered instead.
They claimed, "Jewish law says to
circumcise."
Right away Paul knew they were
spies.
They didn't want to save—
Only to enslave
The Gentiles with legalistic lies.
But bad judgments Paul didn't
heap.
He thought, *Piety's only skin-deep.*
On Jewish soil
Peter toils;
From the Gentile harvest I'll reap.
The apostles approved of Paul's
calling.
His sermons of love were
enthraling.

All men were his brothers;
He hated no others.
Discrimination against them was
galling.
To the Antioch church one day
Peter came from far away.
He sat down to eat
Next to a Gentile's seat.
But his feet were fashioned of clay,
For when James and his friends
came in,
Peter showed his weakness to
sin.
He left the table
As soon as he was able;
He couldn't be seen with unclean
men.
This might not have been so bad
If Peter hadn't started a fad.
But all the Jews followed;
Even Barny was swallowed
By hypocrisy that made Paul mad.
Paul knew the truth of God's good
news:
It wasn't meant just for the Jews.
In front of the crowd
He addressed Peter aloud.
"What a double standard you use!
You were born a Jew, not a
Gentile,
Yet you adopt the latter's lifestyle.
But when it comes to the line,
You change your mind,
And on Gentiles, Jewish law you
pile."
Hypocrisy's a hard thing to get
rid of.
Even Peter fell to its devious
shove.
But we can strengthen our defense
And not live on pretense
If with *all* people we share God's
love.

by Angela Holdsworth

Angela Holdsworth is an assistant video producer at the General Conference and a recent graduate of Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

When It Is Crucial to “Rock the Boat”

LOGOS

Gal. 2:1-14; Acts 15:1, 2

Theme: Progress Despite Conflict. *When disagreements arise in the church, God leads His people through them to an understanding of the truth. When the truth is accepted, harmony is reestablished.*

Occasionally in life we are counseled not to “rock the boat.” Usually this is sound advice if the matter is personal, trivial, or even peripheral to the identity or mission of the church organization.

But in Galatians 2:1-14 Paul clearly teaches and models when we must, at any or all costs, confront—even oppose—individuals or systems. And that time, says the great apostle, is when “*the truth of the gospel*” (verses 5, 14) is in jeopardy of distortion or compromise. Galatians 2 deals with two such historical instances in Paul’s ministry.

1. Review of Galatians 1

In chapter 1 Paul makes two fundamental, indeed awesome, assertions:

a. *There is only one gospel.* Regardless of his glory, position, or prestige, any person who denies this gospel by teaching another “gospel” is anathema—damned, under the curse of God. Paul includes himself, his fellow apostles, and even the angels in this twice-repeated warning (verses 7-9; see

also Jude 3, 4 and Rev. 14:6-10). Paul defines the true gospel as the proclamation that Jesus, through His sacrificial death in our place and “for our sins,” has “rescue[d] us” from bondage to this evil age according to “the will of our God and Father . . . who [has] called . . . [us] by the grace of Christ” (Gal. 1:3-6, NIV). Or, as he says in chapter 2, the truth of the gospel is that we are declared righteous and accepted before God on the basis of our faith in Christ and His finished work alone.

b. *Paul claims that the gospel he preaches is not one of his own private interpretation, nor was it devised by any human group. Rather it is God’s own gospel received by Paul through a “revelation of Jesus Christ” (read Gal. 1:10-12).* Here Paul closes the door for those who would seek to diminish his proclamation of the gospel as simply his view, or even as the early-church view. Christ Himself declared Paul His chosen instrument (verses 15, 16; cf. Acts 9:15) to proclaim the only true gospel.

Since this gospel is “the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth” (Rom. 1:16), we can now quickly understand the drama and urgency of the two stories in Galatians 2:1-16.

2. Scene 1: Jerusalem (read Gal. 2:1-10)

Paul quickly sets the stage by

by Richard Fredericks

Richard Fredericks is an associate professor of religion/theology at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

saying that 14 years after the glorified Christ arrested and converted him on the road to Damascus he received a "revelation" from God to return to Jerusalem for his first full-fledged conference with the other apostles (verses 1, 2; cf. 1:16-24). The stakes in this conference are high.

A group of Jewish Pharisees who had accepted Christ (Judaizers [see Acts 15:1-5]) had dogged Paul's steps throughout his early years of sharing Christ. (Unfortunately, they dogged his steps to the end, and their spiritual descendants are still within the church today.) Now he would confront them in Jerusalem (church headquarters) before the other apostles. Their attack was twofold.

First, they said Paul was a sham apostle not on a par with the apostles in Jerusalem whom they claimed to represent (though that was subsequently denied by the other apostles [see Gal. 2:6-10; Acts 15:5-29]). This attack was important, second, because their real goal in undermining Paul's authority was to pervert the gospel.

The Judaizers taught that genuine faith in Christ's (all-sufficient and finished) work was helpful as a first step toward, but not enough for, an assurance of salvation. To it must be added individual obedience to all the particulars of the law, and then perhaps a man might someday hope to be justified before God (read Acts 13:39; cf. 15:1, 5-11). It was Judaism in a Christian guise. Once again obedience to the law became the *method* of salvation rather than the person's *response* to God's salvation, which was by grace through faith alone. The Judaizers taught that the righteousness offered through the substitutionary work of Christ (His doing and dying) was neither finished nor sufficient for salvation. Rather, the real focus of sal-

vation was the believer's own experience. Believers must complete their salvation by observing the law.

The symbol of all this was circumcision. Unless a Gentile believer was circumcised (the sign that demonstrated he kept all the law of Moses [15:1, 5]), the Judaizers declared that he was neither accepted by God nor acceptable at the table of the Lord during Christian fellowship. Rather than salvation by faith in Christ alone that produces the fruit of good works (Gal. 5:6), this was salvation by faith in Christ plus one's own victorious life and achievements (see Paul's response in 3:10-13; 5:4).

In Scene 1 Paul confronts this challenge by bringing to Jerusalem with him a *non-Jewish, uncircumcised Gentile* believer named Titus (2:3). Will the apostles refuse to accept Titus until he is circumcised? Will they make additional demands concerning the law before they accept him as an equal brother in Christ, equally justified before God by faith in Christ alone? If so, the Jewish and Gentile churches might have severed. The stakes were high. But on this issue Paul knew he had to rock the boat.

Truth triumphs. Titus is accepted without circumcision. And to Paul and Barnabas, Titus's mentors in the faith, the Jerusalem apostles, including Peter, extend the right hand of fellowship as a sign of equality (verses 9, 10). Thus, says Paul, the Judaizers' attempt to turn the Christian message of salvation by grace alone in Christ back into the slavery of a Jewish message of salvation by personal righteousness was defeated, "*so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you*" (verse 5).

3. Scene 2: Antioch (read Gal. 2:11-16)

Peter knew the truth of the gospel as Paul taught it. He too had received a direct revelation from Christ that demonstrated God's acceptance of all, Jew and Gentile equally, who put their faith in Christ for salvation (read Acts 10). But he was a man who, apart from the power of the Spirit, could be intimidated by what others thought of him. This is the background of the second drama in Galatians 2.

After the encounter with Paul and Titus in Jerusalem, Peter came to Antioch for a firsthand look at the growing Gentile church there (verse 11). When he arrived he ate and fellowshiped openly with the Gentiles as equals. Indeed, said Paul, he "live[d] like a Gentile and not like a Jew" (verse 14). But then Judaizers, reportedly sent by James, the brother of Jesus, came to check up on things. Peter, "because he was afraid" (not out of theological conviction), now withdraws from the Gentile believers and holds himself aloof from them, carrying all the other Jewish believers—even Barnabas—along with him in this act of hypocrisy (verses 12, 13).

Again the stakes were high for the future of the church. Peter is denying the gospel, not by his teaching, but by his actions. By not accepting the Gentile Christians as equals, Peter implies God doesn't accept them as equal to Jewish Christians. By refusing to sit with them at table, Peter implies they aren't acceptable at the table of the Lord. His withdrawal indicates they must first do something, go beyond simple and wholehearted faith in Christ, achieve a certain level of obedience, not as a fruit, but as the grounds of salvation and acceptance.

The issue is serious and public. Paul rocks the boat again. His response to Peter, the Lord's chosen, a fellow apostle, is also serious and public. He opposes Peter to his face in front of them all (verses 11, 14). He calls Peter down from his hypocrisy and exposes his duplicity, but not out of viciousness or because of a violent and combative temperament. No, on the nonessentials, Paul pleaded for, and practiced, tolerance and charity (see Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 8; 9:19-23). The issue is vital (the life of the church is at stake) and crucial (the cross of Christ is being undermined). Peter is not being "straightforward about *the truth of the gospel*." The situation is not trivial, because it attacks justification by faith alone through the finished and perfect work of Christ—plus nothing. No matter what the cost, Paul needed to stand against this threat—and so must we.

"If you would gather together everything that is *good* and *holy* and noble and lovely in man and then present the subject to the angels of God as acting a part in the salvation of the human soul or in merit, the proposition would be rejected as *treason*."*

Adventists practice open communion by which any professing Christian of any denomination can join us in partaking of the bread and the wine. How does Galatians 2:11-16 relate to this? Is such openness a good thing or a compromise of our distinct identity?

Do we sometimes treat other genuine Christians as inferior to us? Why? What is the importance, and the danger, of our distinctive doctrines?

**Faith and Works*, p. 24. (Italics supplied.)

Tuesday, April 17

Jew and Gentile

TESTIMONY

Key Text: 1 Cor. 14:32, 33

“When Peter, at a later date, visited Antioch, he won the confidence of many by his prudent conduct toward the Gentile converts. For a time he acted in accordance with the light given from heaven. He so far overcame his natural prejudice as to sit at table with the Gentile converts. But when certain Jews who were zealous for the ceremonial law, came from Jerusalem, Peter injudiciously changed his deportment toward the converts from paganism. A number of the Jews ‘dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.’ This revelation of weakness on the part of those who had been respected and loved as leaders, left a most painful impression on the minds of the Gentile believers. The church was threatened with division. But Paul, who saw the subverting influence of the wrong done to the church through the double part acted by Peter, openly rebuked him for thus disguising his true sentiments. In the presence of the church, Paul inquired of Peter, ‘If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to

live as do the Jews?’ Galatians 2:13, 14.

“Peter saw the error into which he had fallen, and immediately set about repairing the evil that had been wrought, so far as was in his power. God, who knows the end from the beginning, permitted Peter to reveal this weakness of character, in order that the tried apostle might see that there was nothing in himself whereof he might boast.”¹

“The history of this departure from right principles stands as a solemn warning to men in positions of trust in the cause of God, that they may not fail in integrity, but firmly adhere to principle. The greater the responsibilities placed upon the human agent, and the larger his opportunities to dictate and control, the more harm he is sure to do if he does not carefully follow the way of the Lord, and labor in harmony with the decisions arrived at by the general body of believers in united council.”²

REACT

1. What position did Peter, James, and John hold in the early church?

2. Of what importance is the approval of Peter, James, and John to the message of Paul? Why?

1. *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 197, 198.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 199.

by Darla Bahnsen

Darla Bahnsen is a senior music major at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

Resolving Disagreement and Conflict

EVIDENCE

Key Text: 1 Cor. 8:2, NASB

Galatians 2:1-14 describes, among other things, the conflict-resolving strategy Paul used when a “fierce dissension and controversy” (Acts 15:2, NEB) arose in Antioch between him and certain Jewish Christians from Judea who taught that male Gentile believers must be circumcised according to the law of Moses. To resolve the conflict, Paul, Barnabas, Titus, and some others were sent to the church’s headquarters in Jerusalem. Later on, writing to the Galatians about this same event, Paul states that he went to Jerusalem because God told him he should (Gal. 2:2, NEB), and he describes how at headquarters he met privately with those who “seemed” to be leaders (NIV), stating all along that “I neither know nor care” what they were (verse 6, Phillips), and emphasizing that their “importance” made no difference to him (NEB). He also adds that he refused to bend to Judaizers (legalistic Jewish Christians), who slipped into the meeting and urged that Titus, his Greek companion, be circumcised, or, as Paul says, be enslaved (verses 4, 5, NASB). Later, Paul continues, when Peter—one of the “pillars” of the church (verse 9)—visited Antioch, he publicly denounced this leader’s “hypocrisy” because

Peter withdrew from eating with Gentile Christians when representatives of James (another of the “pillars”) arrived from Jerusalem (verses 11-14).

Paul appears to have used a bilateral strategy to “resolve” this conflict. On the one hand, perceiving that the Judaizers’ demands upon Christianity might reduce it to a Jewish sect, and Gentile Christians to second-class believers, Paul fought with “vehemence and passion”¹ for its universality. But, on the other hand, in seeing that his commission “could not be effectively discharged except in fellowship with Jerusalem,”² he sought its approval. Thus “harmony” was reestablished.

A few questions appear in order. Does Paul’s strategy indicate his desire to resolve the conflict or rather his determination to make sure that his opinions prevailed? Does he visit the leaders in Jerusalem in order to “obey” and “submit to them” (Heb. 13:17, NASB), or rather to seek their approval for what he already believed and did? Were you a leader, how much credibility would you lend to a church member who pointed to personal dreams and revelations as the reason for disregarding “sacred” traditions of the church? And how would you react to this person’s inconsiderate view of leadership?

Was harmony reestablished because of or in spite of Paul’s

by Sandoval Melim and Susan Harrington

Sandoval Melim is an associate professor in the Department of English/Modern Languages, and Susan Harrington is an assistant professor in the Mathematical Sciences Department at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

strategy? Considering what happened to others who disagreed with their churches before and after Paul, one could easily be led to admire the large-mindedness of the Jerusalem church. Paul was lucky. Jesus, Savonarola, Huss, Jerome, and many others paid with their lives for disagreement with their churches.

And again, what makes Paul

right and the Judaizers wrong? In the end, who decides what is the truth into which the Holy Spirit leads? A group of leaders? The assembled church? An individual believer? When disagreement swelled into conflict in the sixteenth century over a similar issue (whether salvation is a gift or a reward), who was right—the church or the monk?

1. L. Coleman, D. Rydberg, R. Peace, and G. Christopherson, eds., *The New Serendipity Bible Study Book* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), p. 357.

2. F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids: William R. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1977), p. 152.

Put It to the Test

HOW-TO

Key Text: Acts 15:1, 2

The problem Paul faced in Galatia was the undermining of his preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ by false brethren who argued that there were discrepancies between Paul's gospel message and the other apostolic teachings such as those of Peter and James. In so doing, these false brethren sought to discredit Paul's teachings to the Gentiles, citing that Paul didn't preach circumcision and wasn't leading the Gentiles to salvation. The outcome of the meeting between Paul and the other apostles at Jerusalem in Acts 15:1, 2 was that Paul's message to the Gentiles was indeed consistent with the message of the church. The accusers of Paul were actually the ones leading the people away from God by false teachings.

Today we are met with groups, inside the church and out, that have many different philosophies and understandings regarding Christianity and salvation. As with Peter and Paul, some groups agree on fundamental principles but differ in style and approach to the gospel and its message. On the other hand, unfortunately, other groups' interpretations of the Bible differ greatly from the true meaning of the Scriptures. When we are faced with such a dilemma, we would be wise to put such teachings to the test.

1. Ask the Spirit for guidance. John 16:13 explains that anytime we seek to understand the truths of God, we should ask the Spirit of truth to guide.

2. Examine the teaching to see whether it coincides with Scripture. Second Timothy 3:16 states, "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness" (NASB). Therefore, our principles and philosophies are to be scripturally based.

3. See whether Christ is the central focus. Scripture repeatedly tells us that only through Christ can we achieve salvation. People without Christ as their center are doomed. Only through the grace of God can humans ever hope to achieve salvation.

4. Observe the fruits of such a teaching. In Matthew 7:15-23 Jesus addresses this issue by saying that we can identify false teachings by their fruits. A bad tree cannot produce good fruit, and a hypocrite cannot live by his own teachings.

REACT

What Christian brother or sister have you clashed with recently? How did the two of you resolve things? What else could you do to make this relationship more harmonious?

by Anthony Daniels

Anthony Daniels is a senior medical technology major at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

Friday, April 20

I'll Have the Salad, Please

OPINION

Key Texts: Gal. 2:12, 13; 1 Cor. 8:9

I remember being out with some newfound friends from church and hearing somebody say, "I'm hungry; let's grab a bite to eat." I suddenly found myself suggesting a place I'd been going to for years.

As we all piled into the car, I mentally started to go over the menu. Let's see. . . . I'll probably have the Frisco burger deluxe, a large platter of homefries, and a double chocolate malt. As I gave the driver the next compass heading, I began to think of those wonderful fries, you know, the kind cut into huge wedges with the skin still on, and then fried to perfection—and I started a Pavlovian response.

My mind was reeling with the thought of that cold malt hitting the back of my throat, and I could almost smell the aroma of the grilled onions sizzling atop a piece of melted cheese perched on a charbroiled burger nestled on sourdough bread. Then a horrifying thought crossed my mind. What if everyone else is vegetarian!

Oh, no! This changes everything. But wait! A brilliant idea. I decide to order last so I can see what everyone else is having; that way I don't have to be the odd one. What a smart cookie!

The waiter comes to me first,

but I feign indecision and my plan begins to take shape. Then it happens. My worst gastronomical nightmare comes true. "I'll have the egg salad sandwich, please." "Make mine a Swiss cheese on rye with a slice of tomato." "H'mmm, I want a grilled cheese and a large glass of milk." On it goes, and I begin to wonder whether these people know that cattle ranchers in Texas are depending on them. I know the original plan was for humans to eat fruits, vegetables, and nuts, but this is ridiculous. Finally the waiter is through taking everyone else's order, and I can put it off no longer. The familiar smell of the notorious Frisco burger at another table sends my olfactory nerves into overdrive. I hear the whine of the malted-milk machine in the background and begin to feel lightheaded. Before I can stop myself, I uncontrollably blurt out, "I'll have the salad, please."

REACT

1. Should you allow other people's lifestyle choices to affect your decisions and behavior, especially if both are within the guidelines of the church? Why or why not?

2. Was it hypocritical to order vegetarian?

3. What do you think when people tell you they left the church because there were too many hypocrites?

by Janet and Eddie Braga

Janet Braga is codirector of cooperative education, and Eddie Braga is director of admissions marketing at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

Lesson 4, April 22 - 28

The Exchanged Life



“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20, NIV).

Sunday, April 22

White Lines, White Lies, White Lives

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Gal. 2:15-21

Anyone who has been around me for a moderate length of time has probably noticed a fine, white scar above my upper lip. I've had it since I was 6, and it probably wouldn't have been a scar if I hadn't continually picked at the scab. But despite my efforts, the cut eventually healed.

My friends now politely avoid mentioning the scar; but back a few years when they and I were younger and less concerned with manners, the question was boringly predictable: "How'd you get that scar on your face?" My answer was equally consistent: "Our dog scratched me."

It was a perfectly plausible story (we had a strange dog), but it wasn't true. As a matter of fact, it was an outright, premeditated lie—a lie I told successfully for perhaps a dozen years.

At this point you're probably expecting me to divulge the true story of what actually happened, and I *will* tell you that the lie was invented to cover up the fact that I'd been doing something I shouldn't have been doing. But I'm not going to tell you what really happened—because I no longer know. I told the lie for so long that I have

completely forgotten the truth.

Now, there are obvious moral implications of this little tale, and every time I look at my face in a mirror they come rudely to my attention. I'd like to share with you just a few of the things that scar has taught me.

1. *I may forget what made the scar, but that will not make the scar go away.* Disobedience caused the problem, and blaming the problem on something else can never change the consequences; it can only eclipse the truth.

2. *I no longer pick at scabs.* Dwelling on past mistakes doesn't make them heal faster; it simply increases the marks they inevitably leave behind.

3. *I know cuts heal.* God promises me unconditional healing for the wounds in my life if I will only let Him work.

4. *I avoid situations where I can get hurt.* Healing is good; healing is important in my life. But that is not the end of the matter. It is equally important that I learn what things can hurt me, and avoid them.

I disobey and get hurt; that is sin. I turn away from past mistakes and look for healing; that is repentance and conversion. I am healed; that is justification. I learn how *not* to get hurt; that is sanctification.

by Joy Cassano Coleman

Joy Cassano Coleman is secretary to the chaplain at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

How to Render Christ's Death Meaningless

LOGOS

Gal. 2:15-21

Theme: Victory Through Justification. *Victory over sin comes only to those who enjoy present salvation in Christ. The experience of justification, constantly renewed to the believer, is the power for holy living. Human attempts to earn salvation by obedience to law are fruitless. Conformity to God's law results from the experience of justification.*

A few preliminary remarks are necessary before we study the Logos section this week. First, we assume you read the Logos section in Lesson 3, since this article is a continuation. Second, it would be helpful to read all of Galatians 2, especially verses 15-21. Third, we need to define the key term: *justification*.

1. Justification Defined

The Greek term is *dikaiosune*, which is usually translated as "justification" or "righteousness." "To be justified" and "to be righteous" are synonymous statements coming from the same term in the original New Testament language. *Justification* is a legal term used in the setting of judgment and the courtroom. "To be justified" means a judge renders a verdict; he declares someone on trial not guilty, acquitted, freed from charges. It is a declaration

of innocence. The opposite of justification is condemnation.

Justification, then, is not a process. Neither is it based on our previous personal experience. Our personal experience of Christian growth and character development is important and is referred to as sanctification or holiness. We are commanded to perfect our sanctification in the fear of God (2 Cor. 7:1). But we are never commanded to perfect our justification. Our justification is God's verdict of acquittal for us (Rom. 8:33) based on Christ's sacrificial work (Heb. 10:14)—a work to which we cannot add anything and need not add anything. This verdict we receive from God through faith alone in Christ's doing and dying plus nothing: "For our argument is that a man is justified by faith quite apart from success in keeping the law" (Rom. 3:28, NEB).

With justification as the root, the fruit is always holiness in the life; but the fruit (personal holiness) and its root (acquittal before God based solely on Christ's perfect life and atoning death) must never be confused. Justification by faith, or, if you prefer, righteousness by faith, is not concerned with the believer's experience, but is based upon God's declaration of acquittal and acceptance of an ungodly sinner (see 4:5), bestowed the moment the sinner turns to Christ in repentance and faith for salvation.

The Bible does not say that if

by Richard Fredericks

Richard Fredericks is an associate professor of religion/theology at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

we achieve victory, we *will be* justified (in the future), but that *in Christ* (i.e., based solely on Christ's perfection) we *have been* accepted (in the present) as perfectly righteous in God's judgment (see 5:1). "There is therefore [even] now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (8:1, NASB).

This also means the focus of "righteousness by faith" is not on faith, but on Jesus Christ. The phrase does not mean that the quality of our faith *makes us* righteous, but rather that Christ, in whom we place our faith, *is our righteousness*. We are not saved by our faith or any other personal quality or achievement; we are saved solely by the righteous life, death, and resurrection of Christ, in whom we put our faith. The key is not the quality or purity of our faith, but the quality and purity of Jesus, who is the only legitimate object of saving faith.

2. Gal. 2:15-21

Paul has just rebuked Peter for expecting the Gentiles to achieve something that Peter himself no longer tries to achieve (verse 14)—to win God's approval by "living like a Jew." Now Paul shows how futile that is, and in so doing he introduces a key word in the Epistle. He uses it four times in its verb or noun form in verses 16-21. The word is *justification*.

In verse 16 alone he repeats one assertion three times for emphasis. It is not simply redundant though. He makes the same statement first in a general sense ("a man"), then in a personal sense ("we"), and finally in a universal sense ("no one"). To paraphrase, Paul says: "Look, Peter, not a man or woman, including us—indeed, not a single person anywhere or at any time—can be justified through attaining an adequate level of obedience to God's law, 'because by observing the law

no one will be justified'" (NIV).

The law is the holiest standard given to humankind. Nothing defective is in its rules. If a person wanted to justify himself, no better method would be available anywhere than obedience to the law. But Paul says that no one before or after conversion—including the Spirit-filled apostles of Christ—can gain heaven that way. And the good news is that God does not intend us to make law the *means* of being justified. Justification is not "by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus" (verse 16, NASB).

The Judaizers hated this idea. Their hope of salvation was based on their own victorious life apart from Christ. Paul describes their great goal in Romans 10:3 as being a lifelong attempt of seeking to establish their own righteousness by obedience to the law. But Christ is the end of that. That is not our task. Righteousness was Christ's task, and He finished it for all who believe (see verse 4).

So what do the Judaizers do when faced with this truth? Galatians 2:17-21 tells us as Paul repeats and responds to their counterargument (just as he did in Romans 3 and 6). The Judaizers say: "OK, Paul, if that is so, then we can just go on sinning with no moral responsibility. We can do as we like, since we are saved by Christ's righteousness, not ours! How dangerous!"

Paul doesn't respond by backing down—or by watering down the gospel. He begins by responding to their assertion that the gospel makes Christ "the minister of sin" with a strong oath: "God forbid." He goes on to say that the justified man does not rebuild experientially what the cross of Christ destroyed legally—the sinful life (Gal. 2:18). No, rather, "through the law I died to the law" (verse 19, NIV). By Christ's

death the law's demands were met fully at the cross; the law can require nothing more of the Christian who is "in Christ." The goal of that sacrifice is not justification for a sinful life, but rather justification from sin's guilt in order that "I might live for God" (NIV).

In other words, I no longer need constantly to be preoccupied with myself (the essential sin) in an effort to get good enough to be saved. I'm freed from all that, so that my focus *as a saved individual* can be other-centered, on following the will of Him who saved me. And so Paul repeats himself again in verse 20: "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (NIV).

The interesting thing is that some present-day Judaizers, clearly thwarted by the New Testament condemnation of legalism ("My obedience saves me"), have circled around and tried to use verse 20 out of context to reintroduce a new "mystical" legalism that says:

a. Christ is perfect.

b. Christ lives in me (literally), so that it isn't me, but Him, doing everything.

c. And since He is perfect and is doing everything in me, then I can be perfect and therefore justified by my (His) acts of obedience in keeping the law.

Thus, *my* victorious life rather than *His* historical and perfect life becomes the basis for salvation. In this sham theology salvation once again comes because of my experience and what I do for God, rather than because of God's graciousness and what He has

done for me in Christ. Such a theology makes a number of false assumptions. We will mention only two. First, Jesus Christ does not literally live in the believer. He is seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven (Heb. 10:12, 13). But He is present "by faith" through His Spirit.

Second, the work of the Spirit of Christ within us is not a substitutionary work. The Spirit convicts, comforts, guides into truth, and helps us. But He does not possess us, take us over, and do the act for us. The Bible does not say, "Christ does all things for me," but rather, "I can do all things through Him [Christ] who strengthens me [by His Spirit]" (Phil. 4:13, NASB). The only substitutionary work necessary in the plan of salvation was finished 2,000 years ago on Calvary and accepted as adequate by God at Christ's ascension.

To make sure his beautiful affirmation of the reality of the believer's new life in Christ was not misconstrued into some new "mystical" legalism, Paul adds, "I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!" (Gal. 2:21, NIV). If anything in our experience is the *basis* for justification, then the cross of Christ is meaningless.

How does regeneration, or the new birth, relate to justification? (See John 3; Titus 3:5-7.)

Faith is the only condition upon which justification can be obtained. But what does faith in Christ mean? (See James 2:19, 20; Rom. 10:6-10; Selected Messages, book 1, pp. 389-398.)

Is there a relationship between justification and sanctification? Why or why not?

Tuesday, April 24

Christ Liveth in Me

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Gal. 2:20

“But Christ liveth in me” (Gal. 2:20). What an intriguing statement! Like Nicodemus, we might ask, “How can such a thing be possible?”

Ellen White mentions several ways we can witness Christ living in us:

1. **“You may show by your life what the power and grace of God can do.”**¹ A wife sat waiting to visit her dying husband in an intensive care unit. Nearby she noticed an elderly woman weeping. She approached her and put her arms around her and sat quietly with her. When an individual can look above her own pain and suffering and reach out to another, you can be sure she is doing so by the grace of God.

2. **“Converse with God and contemplation of things above transform the soul into the likeness of Christ.”**² Perhaps this is why Jesus allowed Saul to be physically blinded from the Damascus encounter. Saul had three days to concentrate totally on “things above.” The Messianic prophecies came into clear focus as Saul carefully reviewed the Holy Scriptures.

3. **“Let your heart be softened and melted under the divine influence of the Spirit of God. You should not talk so**

much about yourself, for this will strengthen no one. . . . Talk of Jesus, and let self go.”³ Talking about self allows no room for growth. To look at one’s own successes, ideas, goodness, problems, or sadness will never result in growth, solutions, or happiness. Many people try to rid themselves of “self” by concentrating on fixing what is wrong in their lives. This only deepens the problem because the concentration is even more deeply pivoted on “self.” The only thing that works is to dwell on Christ; only then will a person see beyond self.

4. **“The welfare of your soul and your eternal happiness depend on whether your foundation is built upon Christ.”**⁴ People look to huge salaries, the perfect job, and the perfect spouse to bring happiness. The Bible suggests that happiness comes to those for whom God is Lord.⁵

5. **“The good works of God’s people have a more powerful influence than words.”**⁶ At the death of Dorcas the disciples sent for Peter. When Peter came to the upper room, the mourning widows carefully showed Peter the tunics and other garments Dorcas had made. Like the tunics and other garments, our good works can leave impressions of love and caring.

6. **“When we possess true meekness and lowliness we are so lost in Christ that we**

by Alice F. Rich

Alice Rich is a junior theology major at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

do not take neglect or slights to heart; we are deaf to reproach and blind to scorn and insult.”⁷ “Lord, do not hold this sin against them” (Acts 7:60, RSV). True meekness and lowliness in heart were evident in the life of Stephen. That he could utter these words is

proof that Christ was dwelling in him.

REACT

1. What is proof in your life that Christ is dwelling within?
2. How can you show the power and grace of God by your life, works, and words?

1. *Testimonies*, vol. 4, p. 349.

2. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 145.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 320, 321.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 145.

5. Psalm 144:15.

6. *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 443.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 567.

Wednesday, April 25

“Jesus Saves, But . . .”

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Gal. 2:16

Galatia was a region in northern Asia Minor that came under Roman rule in 25 B.C. As Christianity spread, many churches blossomed in the region—among them Pisidia, Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. It is these churches that the apostle Paul addresses in his Epistle to the Galatians.

The reason for Paul’s writing was a problem that seemed to plague many churches after his departure. Religious activists, known as Judaizers, were influencing the minds and theology of the Galatian churches and confusing them as to what kind of gospel was being preached and what should be believed. These false teachers presented to the people a way of salvation other than that which Paul had earlier proclaimed. Their view of salvation stressed only a need to keep the law, both moral and ceremonial, while the gospel Paul preached emphasized salvation by grace through faith in Jesus.

Paul, like every other person who puts himself into his work and yearns for the salvation of people, is quick to rebuke the philosophies that have so soon sullied the purity of the gospel. “I marvel that you are turning away so soon,” he writes, “from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel. . . . But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you

than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:6-8, NKJV). Paul calls these teachers of another “gospel” accursed twice to emphasize their danger to true believers.

Paul stresses to the churches of Galatia that nothing can or should be changed in the beautiful plan of redemption God has made available through Jesus Christ. Nothing can be taken away from it, for then it would be incomplete; and nothing can be added to it, for it is perfect. A curse rests upon those who would tamper with the gospel.

Paul insists that people must be made to feel free in Christ and not put again in bondage. This symbol of freedom was intrinsically meaningful to the people of Galatia, for the area was infamous for its illegal slave trade. To the apostle Paul the gospel was nothing if not true freedom.

We still face the same problem today as Paul’s churches did almost 2,000 years ago. People will tell us to do one thing or another to merit salvation. Always when we accept those conditions Christianity becomes a burden and is no longer Christianity. God wants us as free today as He ever did. Nothing has changed. Nothing can be added to or taken away from the wonderful work God has accomplished through His Son. We should search diligently, day by day, for the freedom that comes from loyalty to the one true gospel of Jesus Christ; and God, true to His covenant, will not fail us.

by Kenneth L. Coleman

Ken Coleman is a senior theology major at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

The Gift—Take It; It's Yours

HOW-TO

Key Text: Gal. 3:2

The concept of justification by faith is difficult for many people to accept. We get so caught up in keeping the law and doing this or that right that we forget who gave us the law and what exactly was intended by it. God gave us His law out of love in order to make our lives happy, not to be a burden. Why, then, has it become such a chore for many to keep God's law? The answer is simple: God's true character and love for people have been pushed into the background.

God's main goal for each of us is to accept the salvation He offers. It is a gift, and the choice is ours. We can do nothing of ourselves to be worthy of this gift. Jesus has freely provided it by dying on the cross. More than 2,000 years ago He paved the way to justification and salvation with His blood.

Justification by faith is a beautiful truth. But how can it be part of our experience?

1. Realize our condition. We are all sinners (Rom. 3:23). Recognize the fact that no matter how hard we try or how good we seem to be, in Christ's eyes our own righteousness is as filthy rags. It is human nature to have a proud spirit and to want to do things on our own, but Jesus calls us to depend on Him.

2. Come to Christ just as we are. This is why justification by

faith is so beautiful. We don't have to wait to come to Christ until we feel worthy of God's love. If we did that, we'd be waiting all our lives. We have only to desire His love and accept by faith what He offers, and God takes care of the rest.

3. Submit ourselves to Christ. This act is a daily part of our spiritual life. It is easy to let our eyes wander from Christ, as Peter's did while he was walking on the water. And, like Peter, we fall when we start depending on ourselves rather than on Jesus. We should ask God daily to take control of our life, and have faith that He will do so.

4. Walk in faith. As Joshua walked in faith with his army at the Battle of Jericho, so we can walk in the same faith. When God's love becomes real to us, the attractions of this earth lose their sparkle and charm, and obeying God's law becomes a pleasure rather than a chore. When we walk with God the desire for earthly things dies because we see clearly that the life God offers is the life of abundance.

REACT

1. What does it mean to be *justified*? Why is this impossible to accomplish by keeping the law? Why do you think this was a problem with the churches of Galatia?

2. In what sense was Paul "crucified with Christ"? How did this release the power of God in his life?

by Kathleen Farkash

Kathleen Farkash is a sophomore elementary education major at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

Friday, April 27

How Cheap Is Grace?

OPINION

Key Text: Gal. 2:21

I was sitting in the chapel in academy. It was the final night of Week of Prayer. I was observing some of my fellow students getting up, repenting, and asking forgiveness for things they had done.

I remember the anger: I felt I had been cheated. How could they have done their own thing all these years, then ask for forgiveness and suddenly be accepted? I had worked too hard, avoiding temptation, trying my utmost to be good and to gain the respect of the faculty.

It was like a game. I had done all the work, and they had gotten lucky and won equal rights to the "spoils."

What a cheap shot! Just watch, in a few weeks they would be right back enjoying all the "pleasures of sin," only to repent next year at yet another Week of Prayer. They had the best of both worlds, I thought.

I reasoned that maybe I too could enjoy the "pleasures of sin for a season" and ask for forgiveness at the right moment and be saved. I never really did, because I would have been too embarrassed, but the thought crossed my mind many times.

However, my Christian experience was not all "peaches and cream." I couldn't figure out why I was so angry with repentant sinners. I remember trying to force myself not to be angry. It didn't

work. I finally came to the realization that it was impossible for me alone to remove my anger, and so, humbled, I went to my knees and asked God to do it.

I have a friend who, when asked, "How are you?" responds, "Compared to what?" It surely does make a difference to what you compare yourself. When I compared myself to many of my fellow students, I thought I looked pretty good; but when I compared myself to Jesus Christ, I looked pretty bad.

Many centuries ago when Christ walked and talked on the earth He was the most critical of the inward sins of pride and jealousy. For years I could never see why. Then one day it became clear. The inward sins are the easiest to hide, the hardest to change, and, in the long term, the most destructive.

I slowly began to understand justification. Something that I cannot control will always be in my life—whether it is visible to others or not. Only by beholding Him will the depths of my soul ever be changed, and then I can't even take the credit for it.

REACT

1. To whom do you most often compare yourself in your Christian life? Why?

2. Do you agree with the premise that inward sins are the easiest to hide, the hardest to change, and the most destructive? Explain.

3. Do you feel more sinful as you get closer to Christ? Why?

by Marvin Adams

Marvin Adams is assistant director of academic support programs at Columbia Union College, Takoma Park, Maryland.

Lesson 5, April 29—May 5

God's Amazing Grace



“The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: ‘All nations will be blessed through you.’ So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith” (Gal. 3:8, 9, NIV).

Sunday, April 29

Liberation Reconsidered

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Gal. 3:1-9

The tanks reached the outskirts of Paris in the evening of August 23, 1944. Early the next morning they moved into the city. Hesitantly at first, the people of Paris came out to see whether what they saw was really true. With the realization that the liberating forces had arrived at last, the Parisians rushed into the streets. In joy, men and women climbed onto the tanks to greet the soldiers, showering them with champagne and flowers. It was a day none of them ever forgot.

Four years before, the scene had been different. On June 6 and 7, 1940, Paris had learned the ominous news. The French fronts of Somme and Aisne had completely collapsed under the assault of the German blitzkrieg. Cold fear had gripped the city. Throughout the three days of June 11-13, thousands had jammed the roads leading south out of Paris. A hazy smoke from burning oil depots had hung over the city. The roads had been choked with cars, trucks, carts, wagons, and people on foot, all fleeing, hoping to escape the coming armies.

Adding wanton destruction to the confusing hell of heat and desperation on the roads, enemy

planes had strafed and bombed the fleeing refugees. By the evening of June 14 Paris had fallen.

But now four long years of occupation were over. Gone were the curfews. Gone was the fear of the dreaded SS. No longer would rations be imposed by an occupying force. No longer would there be the feared deportations to death camps. No longer would Paris be ruled by a foreign power.

Starting in the early morning of August 26, 1944, crowds began to gather in the center of the city. At three in the afternoon General Charles de Gaulle arrived at the Arc de Triomphe. He relighted the Eternal Flame on the memorial to the Unknown Soldier below the Arc and turned to face the Champs Elysees. It was a sea of people packed from curb to wall on either side. Men and women hung from windows and crowded on the rooftops. Flags hung from every building and almost every window.

As De Gaulle started out, the cheering rose to a tumultuous roar. The lines of police at the curbs bent and swayed under the pressure of the exuberant crowds. Paris was free again. Is it possible to imagine that they would ever want to be in bondage to enemy forces again? This week we explore the Christian life of freedom, which begins with the acceptance of Christ as Saviour.

by Evert McDowell

Evert McDowell was news editor for ADRA at the time of writing.

Foolish Effort

LOGOS

Gal. 3:1-9

Theme: How to Begin. *The Christian life begins with the acceptance of Christ as our Saviour. It is through Christ alone that we receive salvation.*

Up to this point in the Galatian letter, Paul has been defending the gospel of grace and his apostolic calling by points drawn from his own experience. Paul shows that (a) he was called by God (“the gospel . . . is not something that man made up” [Gal. 1:11, NIV]), (b) the apostles accepted him (“the man who formerly persecuted us is now preaching the faith” [verse 23]), and (c) he did not preach for personal gain (“I no longer live, but Christ lives in me” [2:20, NIV]). Now Paul turns his attention to the Galatians’ own experience.

1. Foolish Galatians

“You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified” (Gal. 3:1, NIV).

The word Paul uses here for “foolish” is different from the word used by Christ in the parables—the “foolish” man who built his house on the sand (Matt. 7:26) or the five “foolish” virgins (25:2-12). The word for “foolish” used in the parables denotes mental deficiency, stupidity. (What kind of man builds his house on the

sand? An idiot.) However, the word Paul uses has a different connotation. It refers to one who is intelligent but isn’t using his or her brains.

Paul is saying the Galatians ought to know better because the doctrine of salvation by works foolishly denies the necessity for grace and makes meaningless the death of Christ. Such a doctrine is so irrational that Paul’s only explanation is that “someone must have hypnotized you or bewitched you (not literally). After all, didn’t I vividly portray Christ’s death to you?”

“This, then, is the gospel. It is not a general instruction about the Jesus of history, but a specific proclamation of Jesus Christ as crucified (cf. 1 Cor. 1:23; 2:2). The force of the perfect tense of the participle (*estauromenos* [word for crucified]) is that Christ’s [sacrifice] . . . was completed on the cross, and that the benefits of His crucifixion are for ever fresh, valid and available. Sinners may be justified before God and by God, not because of any works of their own, but because of the atoning work of Christ; not because of anything that they had done or could do, but because of what Christ did once, when He died. The gospel is not good advice to men, but good news about Christ; not an invitation to us to do anything, but a declaration of what God has done; not a demand, but an offer.”¹

Why is it so easy to fall into

by Evert McDowell

Evert McDowell was news editor for ADRA at the time of writing.

thinking that we must do something on our own to earn our salvation?

2. Belief or Effort? (read Gal. 3:2-5)

"Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?" (Gal. 3:3, NIV).

Paul continues his argument that the Galatians' defection to works of the law is incomprehensible. "Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law?" (verse 2), he asks. The obvious answer is no—impossible. The Galatians could not have received the Spirit through observing the law, because they had never kept the law in their lives. They were pagans. They received the Spirit at their conversion, and they were converted when they believed, not after they had believed and observed the law for a time.

"This, then, was the fact of their experience. Paul had come to Galatia and preached the gospel to them. . . . They had believed the gospel. . . . They had neither submitted to circumcision, nor obeyed the law, nor even tried to. All they had done was to hear the gospel and believe, and the Spirit had been given to them. These being the facts of their experience, Paul argues, it is ludicrous that 'having begun with the Spirit,' they should now expect to complete 'with the flesh.' This was another way of saying that, having begun with the gospel, they must not go back to the law, imagining that the law was needed to supplement the

gospel. To do so would be no 'improvement' but 'degeneracy.'¹

What gives God pleasure—belief or deeds? Or both? Why?

3. The Argument From Scripture (read Gal. 3:6-9)

"Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham" (verse 7, NIV).

Paul clinches the argument by citing the example of Abraham. Those corrupting the Galatians, urging them to make works of the law the basis of salvation, probably taught that to become true "sons of Abraham" or "heirs of the promise" one had to be circumcised. Paul meets this argument directly. Abraham was blessed through faith, not circumcision (obedience to the law). How was Abraham justified? Paul answers this by quoting Genesis 15:6: Abraham "believed God," and this was "credited to him as righteousness."

"The gospel offers blessings; what must we do to receive them? The proper answer is 'nothing!' We do not have to *do* anything. We have only to *believe*. Our response is not 'the works of the law' but 'hearing with faith,' that is, not obeying the law, but believing the gospel. For obeying is to attempt to do the work of salvation ourselves, whereas believing is to let Christ be our Saviour and to rest in His finished work."³

Do we really do nothing to be saved? What about "after" we are "saved"? Is there such a thing as "after"?

1. John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Galatians: Only One Way* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1968), p. 70.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 75.

Believe the Promise

TESTIMONY

Key Text: John 20:31

From the simple Bible account of how Jesus healed the sick, we can learn a valuable lesson on what it means to believe in Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins. "Let us turn to the story of the paralytic at Bethesda. The poor sufferer was helpless; he had not used his limbs for thirty-eight years. Yet Jesus bade him, 'Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.' The sick man might have said, 'Lord, if Thou wilt make me whole, I will obey Thy word.' But no, he believed Christ's word, believed that he was made whole, and made the effort at once. . . .

"In like manner you are a sinner. You cannot atone for your past sins; you cannot change your heart and make yourself holy. But God promises to do all this for you through Christ. You *believe* that promise. You confess your sins and give yourself to God. You *will* to serve Him. Just as surely as you do this, God will fulfill His word to you. If you believe the promise—believe that you are forgiven and cleansed—God supplies the fact; you are made whole, just as Christ gave the paralytic power to walk when the man believed that he was healed. It is

so if you believe it.

"Do not wait to *feel* that you are made whole, but say, 'I believe it; it *is* so, not because I feel it, but because God has promised.' . . . "Some seem to feel that they must be on probation, and must prove to the Lord that they are reformed, before they can claim His blessing. But they may claim the blessing of God even now. They must have His grace, the Spirit of Christ, to help their infirmities, or they cannot resist evil. Jesus loves to have us come to Him just as we are, sinful, helpless, dependent. We may come with all our weakness, our folly, our sinfulness, and fall at His feet in penitence. It is His glory to encircle us in the arms of His love and to bind up our wounds, to cleanse us from all impurity. . . . It is the privilege of all who comply with the conditions to know for themselves that pardon is freely extended for every sin. Put away the suspicion that God's promises are not meant for you. They are for every repentant transgressor. Strength and grace have been provided through Christ to be brought by ministering angels to every believing soul. None are so sinful that they cannot find strength, purity, and righteousness in Jesus, who died for them."*

*Steps to Christ, pp. 50-53.

by Evert McDowell

Evert McDowell was news editor for ADRA at the time of writing.

Wednesday, May 2

Passive Deliverance

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Gal. 3:1

“It is wrong to suppose that for Paul faith is a meritorious act on man’s part, which wins salvation, or even, in a more modern way of speech, a creative moral principle in itself. Paul does not, in fact, speak when he is using language strictly, of ‘justification by faith,’ but of ‘justification by grace through faith,’ or ‘on the ground of faith.’ This is not mere verbal subtlety. It means that the ‘righteousness of God’ becomes ours, not by the assertion of the individual will as such, but by the willingness to let God work. The critical moment in the religious life, according to Paul, is the moment when one is willing to ‘stand still and see the salvation of God.’ We can see how he came upon the thought. Paul had supposed that he was securing ‘righteousness’ by a life of feverish activity, self-assertive, competitive, violent. It all did nothing but involve him more deeply in moral impotence. Then he was struck down. ‘Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?’ was the confession of surrender, the word of ‘faith.’
Naked I wait Thy love’s uplifted stroke.

My armour piece by piece Thou hast hewed from me.

I am defenceless utterly.

Such is the tone of saving faith in

God. It is surrender. As related to Jesus Christ, it is expressed in the saying, ‘I am crucified with Christ’—or at least that is part of the meaning of those pregnant words. For the cross of Christ manifests utter self-abandonment to the will of God. When Paul sought to recall his Galatian converts to the full meaning of their faith, he reminded them how he had ‘depicted Christ crucified before their eyes,’ and that had inspired their surrender to God. . . .

“There is a real moral and religious revolution here. A legal religion lays all the emphasis on what a man *does*, or wills to do. The power of the will, the self-assertive element in us, is brought into the foreground. In direct contrast to this is the religion which says that not what we do, but what God does, is the root of the matter. ‘It is not a matter of deeds done, lest anyone should boast.’ Righteousness is not the offering of sacrifice, the doing of good deeds, the entertaining of right opinions, or any of the things whereby the self is asserted. It is the quiet acceptance of that working of God whereby we are saved. ‘It is good that a man should both trust and quietly wait for the Lord.’ The immense energy of the religious life is rooted in a moment of passivity in which God acts. There is, in fact, no ultimate deliverance from sin apart from this.”*

*C. H. Dodd, *The Meaning of Paul for Today* (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1970), pp. 108-112.

by C. H. Dodd

C. H. Dodd (1884-1973) was an English New Testament scholar and theologian.

The Question of Salvation

HOW-TO

Key Text: Gal. 3:6

“How can sinners be ‘justified,’ accepted in the sight of God? How can a holy God forgive sinful men, reconcile them to Himself and restore them to His favour and fellowship?”

“Paul’s answer is straightforward. Salvation is possible only through the atoning death of Jesus Christ on the cross. The Epistle is full of the cross. Paul describes his preaching ministry as ‘placarding’ Christ crucified before men’s eyes (3:1) and his personal philosophy as ‘glorying’ in the cross alone (6:14). But why was the cross the subject of his preaching and the object of his boasting? What did Christ do on the cross? Consider these three statements in Galatians: He ‘gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age’ (1:4); ‘the Son of God . . . loved me and gave himself for me’ (2:20); and ‘Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us’ (3:13). That is to say, the sense in which He *gave Himself for us* is

that He gave Himself *for our sins*, and the sense in which He gave Himself for our sins is that He *became a curse for us*. This phrase can mean only that God’s ‘curse’ (His righteous displeasure and judgment), which rests upon all who break His law (3:10), was transferred to Christ on the cross. He bore our curse that we might receive the blessing which God had promised to Abraham (3:14).

“What, then, must we do to be saved? In a sense, nothing! Jesus Christ has done it all in His curse-bearing death. Our only part is to believe in Jesus, to trust Him without reserve to apply to us personally the benefits of His death. . . . If we contribute our works to the winning of salvation, then we detract from the adequacy of Christ’s work. If in His death He bore our sin and curse, then the cross is a sufficient sacrifice for sin and nothing whatever needs to be added to it. Such is the ‘stumbling-block of the cross’ (5:11), because it tells us that salvation is a gift freely bestowed on the ground of Christ’s death and that to it we can contribute precisely nothing.”*

*John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Galatians: Only One Way* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1968), pp. 187, 188.

by John R. W. Stott

John R. W. Stott is rector emeritus of All Souls’ Church, Langham Place, and director of the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity.

Friday, May 4

Flying With One Foot on the Ground

OPINION

Key Text: 2 Tim. 1:9

"We cannot save ourselves. It is the work of God. Creation cannot create itself. God has to do it. Only in the fuzzy-minded thinking and in the aberration of a pseudoscientist does something ever come out of nothing. Only in the demented mind does inanimate matter create personality and mind and intelligence. Rather, God has to create. Creation cannot create itself.

"A temple cannot build itself; an architect, a contractor, and a builder have to raise it. The dead cannot raise themselves; they cannot bring themselves to life and immortality. Neither can the lost sinner save himself. God has to do it for him. Good works do not avail. All of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. Grace, mercy, resurrection, forgiveness, salvation, and deliverance come from God's mighty hands. God saves us! Our good works, our songs, and our praises are in thanksgiving for what the Lord has done for us.

"This marvelous work of grace that God has wrought in our souls is not partial or fragmented; it is wholly and completely done in Christ. It is not a piece of salva-

tion or a gesture toward deliverance. It is not a suggestion of what God is able to do. It is a work wholly, completely, and marvelously finished by our Lord. What a marvelous thing God has done for us in saving us! It is not partly done but wholly done. It is not something in which He has done some and we have done some. But all of it is of God through His grace. Any man who thinks that he is saved partly by trusting Jesus and partly by his own good works has never trusted Jesus. . . .

"A man may go to the airport to take a plane ride, and he might say, 'I do not trust this thing; so when I fly, I am going to keep one foot on the ground.' That man is not going to fly! I think one of the craziest things I ever heard was about the man who got off a plane and said, 'But I did not put my whole weight down!' I either trust or I do not trust. I either fly or I do not fly. I take off or I stay on the ground.

"It is exactly that way with our blessed Lord. I either trust Him or I do not. It is not partly of Him and the rest of me. It is completely of Him. Any good that I might do is not a cause of my salvation; it is a consequence of my salvation."^{*}

^{*}W. A. Criswell, *Great Doctrines of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), vol. II, pp. 62, 63.

by W. A. Criswell

W. A. Criswell is pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas.

Lesson 6, May 6 - 12

Redemption Through the Cross



“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree’ ” (Gal. 3:13, NIV).

Sunday, May 6

Silver, Mocha, and Righteousness by Faith

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Gal. 3:10-18

As a copy editor for the Review and Herald Publishing Association, I read manuscripts weeks, even months, before their publication. So by the fall of 1988 I had read what I considered to be a year's worth of 1888/Minneapolis centennial articles. And I was beginning to question whether I really understood righteousness by faith. It seemed to have been theologized beyond comprehension. After coming across the term *forensic grace* (and I mean no disrespect for its author), I wondered whether the small band of Jewish zealots, fishermen, and tax collectors could have understood such a term. And if they could have, how would they have been able to generate enough enthusiasm to "turn the world upside down"?

Frankly, I was trying to dodge articles on 1888 and righteousness by faith.

But I came to terms with my dilemma one Sabbath morning while I was lecturing my dogs. (Pet owners will understand.) Silver and Mocha had awakened me at 5:30 to convey their desire to visit the backyard. As I stood at the door, waiting for them to finish their rounds, I decided to have a piece of Danish. (Don't get sidetracked. This is about righteousness by faith, not health reform.) Before continuing

my Sabbath morning routine that would buff and polish me for early service, I was going to have a treat. And the dogs, who were in by now, were letting me know in no uncertain terms that they thought they deserved some (if not all) of what I was eating.

I really didn't want to share any of my pastry with them. But because I loved them, I knew I would. And so began the lecture: I was not giving them this treat because they were deserving of it. After all, they had awakened me at 5:30 a.m. to do what they should have done before they went to bed. Neither were they deserving because they insisted on pawing at my bare legs or for their stab at obeying after months of obedience school. Nor were they deserving for being tremendous watchdogs in a neighborhood so safe that even after we accidentally left the front door unlocked all day, no thief took advantage of an easy day's work. No, I gave them a treat because I love them and because they love me whether I have food, whether I yell at them, whether I'm depressed, or whether I'm in a good mood.

Then it occurred to me that this was the same as righteousness by faith. God forgives and declares me righteous, not because I deserve it, not because of who or what I am, but because He loves me—and I, Him.

by Peter Chiomenti

Peter Chiomenti is a copy editor at the Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, Maryland.

Don't Lose Sight of the Big Picture

LOGOS

Gal. 3:10-18

Theme: Salvation Available to All. *Christ paid the price for every one's sins. Those who accept Him as Saviour are fully justified—freed from the law's curse. The justified person, who enjoys a covenant relationship with Christ, obeys God's law.*

When we study some of the theological themes of the Bible, it is sometimes easy to lose sight of the big picture. Whether we study the Old Testament or the New Testament, righteousness by faith as emphasized by Paul or our Christian duty as emphasized by James, we discover one, and only one, overriding theme—the restoration of the relationship with God that man lost when sin entered the world. Without this theme of salvation the Bible becomes nothing more than a collection of ancient writings. That is why, even though there is a man-made tension between faith (grace) and works (law), there is never any competition between them. Let's look at some of the themes in the scripture for this week to see how they relate to salvation.

1. Justification Available to All (read Gen. 22:1-18; Gal. 3:14; Rom. 5:12-19)

"And I will put enmity between

you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel" (Gen. 3:15, NIV).

From His curse on the serpent in Eden, it is clear that God meant to restore the original relationship man had with Himself. Since there was no division of mankind (there being only two), this promise was clearly meant for all of humanity.

God is just as clear in His desire to save all of mankind when He says in Genesis 22:18 that all nations on earth will be blessed because of Abraham's obedience. Abraham, by faith, passed the test Adam and Eve failed in Eden. Abraham obeyed God and was willing to sacrifice his only son. Nevertheless, Abraham's righteousness (by faith) was not sufficient to save even himself. Review Romans 5:12-19 to see that it took the death of Christ to make salvation possible for Abraham, as well as for all of humanity.

2. The Curse of the Law
(read Gal. 3:10, 13, 14)

"All who rely on observing the law are under a curse" (Gal. 3:10, NIV).

So much for relying on self! Galatians 3:13 echoes Deuteronomy 21:22, 23, which says that a person guilty of a capital offense is under God's curse and is to be hanged on a tree. It is no mere coincidence that Christ, in saving us

by Peter Chiomenti

Peter Chiomenti is a copy editor at the Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, Maryland.

from sin (a capital offense), took the curse on Himself and was hanged on a tree—the cross.

3. Justified by Faith (read Gal. 3:11, 12; Rom. 1:17)

“Behold, he whose soul is not upright in him shall fail, but the righteous shall live by his faith” (Hab. 2:4, RSV).

Obviously, righteousness by faith is not a concept that originated in the New Testament. But because the Jews, and thus the early Christians, placed such an emphasis on the law, Paul had to remind them that “no one is justified before God by the law” (Gal. 3:11, NIV). The law sets the standard but provides no means for achieving it. (See Rom. 3:23.) If we cannot earn our salvation, then our only hope is in the gift of Christ, our righteousness. (See 1 Cor. 1:30.)

4. The Law Does Not Abolish Faith (read Gal. 3:15-18; Gen. 22:15-18)

“The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. . . . The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise” (Gal. 3:16, 17, NIV).

Obviously, righteousness by faith came well before Habakkuk’s time. It was well established even in Abraham’s time. (See Gen. 15:6.) In fact, God did not give the ten-commandment law in written form for more than 400 years after He gave the promises that sustained the faith of Abraham. Paul makes it plain that God did not intend that the commandments should replace the promise given to Abraham

and thus to mankind. If the law cannot sustain faith, if we are not justified by keeping the law, and if the law did not abolish faith, why did God give it? He gave it to us as a complement to our faith—to convict us of our sin and show us our need of Christ. (See Rom. 3:19-25.)

5. Faith Does Not Abolish the Law (read Rom. 3:31; James 2:17-19)

“Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did” (James 2:21, 22, NIV).

In Habakkuk 2:4 the word *faith* can also be translated as “faithfulness.” Faithfulness implies much more than intellectual assent. After all, even the devils believe (James 2:19). Faith implies a loyalty and willingness to please the one to whom we are faithful. If we want to please God, we will want to be like Him and reflect His character. Jesus summed it up in John 14:15 when He said, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments” (RSV). (See also verse 23.)

Are faith and works equal parts of the salvation process? Why or why not?

What role does the law play in your life today? Do you think this is a good or bad role? Why?

Which is easier for you to understand—faith or works? Why? What does this tell you about yourself? What can you do this week to increase your level of faith?

Hearts Renewed by the Holy Spirit

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Rom. 8:1-4

"The same law that was engraved upon the tables of stone is written by the Holy Spirit upon the tables of the heart. Instead of going about to establish our own righteousness we accept the righteousness of Christ. His blood atones for our sins. His obedience is accepted for us. Then the heart renewed by the Holy Spirit will bring forth 'the fruits of the Spirit.' Through the grace of Christ we shall live in obedience to the law of God written upon our hearts. Having the Spirit of Christ, we shall walk even as He walked. . . .

"The apostle Paul clearly presents the relation between faith and 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 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 . . . 8:3, 4."¹

One of the most severe tests of loyalty and love for God came to

Abraham. "It was to impress Abraham's mind with the reality of the gospel, as well as to test his faith, that God commanded him to slay his son. The agony which he endured during the dark days of that fearful trial was permitted that he might understand from his own experience something of the greatness of the sacrifice made by the infinite God for man's redemption. No other test could have caused Abraham such torture of soul as did the offering of his son. God gave His Son to a death of agony and shame. The angels who witnessed the humiliation and soul anguish of the Son of God were not permitted to interpose, as in the case of Isaac. There was no cry, 'It is enough.' To save the fallen race, the King of glory yielded up His life. What stronger proof can be given of the infinite compassion and love of God? . . . The trial was far more severe than that which had been brought upon Adam. . . . The command to Abraham demanded the most agonizing sacrifice. All heaven beheld with wonder and admiration Abraham's unfaltering obedience. . . . God's covenant, confirmed to Abraham by an oath before the intelligences of other worlds, testified that obedience will be rewarded."²

1. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 372, 373.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 154, 155.

by Peter Chiomenti

Peter Chiomenti is a copy editor at the Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, Maryland.

Wednesday, May 9

Standing on the Promises

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Luke 1:54, 55

The Reformer who is most often linked to righteousness by faith is Martin Luther. Ultimately it was his belief in this doctrine that would separate him from the medieval church with its system of prayers to the saints, indulgences, and penance. Today we will look at some excerpts from *The Magnificat Translated and Expounded by Dr. Martin Luther, Augustinian*. *The Magnificat* is the song of Mary from Luke 1:46-55, and the excerpts are Luther's exposition on verse 55: "As he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his posterity for ever" (RSV).

"Paul, in Galatians 3, says that God gave the promise to Abraham 400 years before He gave the law to Moses, lest any should claim that, by the law or the works of the law, he had merited this promise and this act of grace. . . .

"God's promise to Abraham is written more particularly in Genesis 12 and 22 and is quoted in many a passage. It runs: By myself have I sworn: in thy seed shall all races or people of the earth be blessed. . . . Abraham and all his posterity are chosen and redeemed; and we, too, cannot but be redeemed thereby, for

the words include Christ, and promise Him as the Saviour of the world. . . . Apart from this divine word, no one would have been saved, even if he had done every possible good work. . . .

"Apart from Christ the whole world, with all its accomplishments and knowledge, lies under sin and condemnation. . . . Not some but all nations are blessed in the seed of Abraham; therefore apart from that seed, Abraham would not have blessed all nations. What need would God have to promise a blessing in full earnest with solemn oath, if blessing and not downright curse had already been there? . . . So completely has mankind suffered destruction through Adam's fall that he and his nature and his being are born under a curse. . . .

"God can fulfill what He promises, and has done so. . . . By the Holy Spirit and without any act of man's He made Abraham's seed into a Son born in the course of nature from one of his descendants, Mary. . . . Indeed this is that very seed of Abraham which blots out the malediction from all the world. . . . God's promise is not false; and the promise was made to Abraham and his seed, not for one year, nor for a thousand years, but for all times, from one generation to another without ceasing."*

*Martin Luther, *The Magnificat Translated and Expounded*, Dec. 20, 1520.

by Peter Chiomenti

Peter Chiomenti is a copy editor at the Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, Maryland.

Coping With the Do's and Don'ts

HOW-TO

Key Text: Matt. 22:37-40

Adventists have never been known as a “don't worry—be happy” church. On the contrary, other denominations often accuse Adventists of being uptight legalists. But isn't the law important? And how do we reconcile the law to the doctrine of righteousness by faith?

First, the law *is* important. God would never have given it if it were of no consequence. Furthermore, the manner in which He gave the law was meant to be impressive (Ex. 19:16-24).

Many argue that Christ's death abolished the need for the law. But Christ gave no such indication. When He turned away the accusers of the adulteress, He admonished her to go and sin no more. (See John 8:10, 11.) As Jesus prepared His disciples for His eventual return to heaven, He gave them this instruction: “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (14:15).

The question, then, is not Should I obey the law? but How and why do I obey it?

The “why” is relatively easy to answer. Remember John 14:15 and Matthew 22:37? It is because we love Jesus, which indicates a special relationship between God and His people. We have a variety of relationships that the Bible uses as illustrations. Of course, there is

the parent-child relationship, in which all of us are involved in one form or another. This relationship reflects the God-human relationship. (See Matt. 6:9.) There is the husband-wife relationship. This represents the church-God relationship. (See Hosea 4:12, 13; 9:1; Isa. 61:10; Rev. 21:9.) Finally, the relationship between Christ and the individual is represented by friendship and the sibling relationships. All these relationships include love, trust, loyalty, and a desire to please.

The “how” part of the relationship doesn't necessarily lend itself to any checklist, but it is important, because maintaining the relationship and keeping the law are two sides of the same coin. If we want to please God, we will want to be like Him. When Moses asked to see God's glory, God showed him these attributes: mercy, graciousness, and abundance of goodness and truth (Ex. 34:5, 6). Christ echoed these positive attributes in Matthew 25:34-40 when He suggested that we feed the hungry, care for the stranger, clothe the needy, and visit the prisoners. James, in his short Epistle, gives practical advice regarding Christian living. And while carefully fulfilling all the requirements set out in James will not save us, following James's advice in order to express our love and loyalty to God is certainly keeping His law.

by Peter Chiomenti

Peter Chiomenti is a copy editor at the Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, Maryland.

Friday, May 11

Ours Is Not to Reason Why

OPINION

Key Text: 1 Sam. 16:7

When you were a small child corrected by an adult for some minor infraction, the first word out of your mouth was probably "Why?" *Why* do I have to tie my shoes, make my bed, clean my room, put away my toys, or be on time for supper?

The adult usually saw this as a challenge to his or her authority. The adult's response probably varied, but when boiled down, it usually meant "Because I'm bigger, and I can make you sorry you didn't obey me."

As you grew older, the need to assert yourself became even more important. You found that there were many more opportunities in life, and you became eager to "make your mark in the world." Today as you ask "Why?" there are many more authority figures to tell you, "Because I told you so." There are your parents, of course, but now there is school, church, your boss at work, and in some cases the government. Sometimes it seems that the essence of good citizenship is just to shut up and do as you are told. Ours is "not to reason why";

ours is "but to do and die."

But this is definitely not what God had in mind for the Christian. "Why" is at the very heart of righteousness by faith. Why does God ask me to obey certain laws? Why is there sin, suffering, and a need for salvation? Why here? Why now? And, of course, Why me?

God wants you to ask, "Why do I keep the law?" Your answer is the difference between a cold, legalistic religion and one that sustains you because of your relationship with Jesus Christ. God has anticipated your question. That is the reason for the law and the prophets, the Gospels and the Epistles, and, in these last days, Ellen White, or the Spirit of Prophecy.

But the subject is righteousness by faith, and by now you are all too well aware that not all the sources listed above answer all the whys. But God does have an answer for those questions that seem unanswerable. Paraphrased, it would go something like this: "Remember all I did for Israel and the early Christians? Remember what I've done for you so far? As I told My friend Job, 'Trust Me.'"

You *can*, you know.

by Peter Chiomenti

Peter Chiomenti is a copy editor at the Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, Maryland.

Lesson 7, May 13 - 19

Why Bother About the Law?



“What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator” (Gal. 3:19, NIV).

Sunday, May 13

Routine Physical

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Gal. 3:19, 20

Bob decided it was time to get a routine physical. It wasn't that he'd been feeling ill. He just wanted to be sure everything was OK. Life was going well, he was in line for a big promotion, and, in fact, he'd never felt better.

Imagine his shock as the doctor broke the news that his tests had revealed a deadly disease that, if not treated immediately, could prove fatal.

Bob was devastated, and when the doctor prescribed his medication he became angry and insisted that it was just a matter of a needed change of lifestyle. He refused to take the prescription despite the doctor's warning! Because of his attitude, the doctor gave him a general list of do's and don'ts that he said would help—only, however, if he took the additional medication.

In this story we find a man who thinks his life is great until he takes the trouble to have a pro-

fessional examination. We see a man who is resentful of his condition—who refuses the doctor's help and thinks he can make it on his own.

In life we have no way of knowing whether we are spiritually sick unless we bother to take a "physical." The test of the law is the standard by which we are measured. It is by looking at the law that we know we are in need of help. The Doctor—Jesus—has provided 10 specific notes on how we may go about having a better life. However, the changes cannot be achieved without the power of additional medication—the Holy Spirit.

You can live your life without the physical, but if you don't make the effort to find out your condition—or if you refuse the medicine—you must be prepared to accept the consequences.

The law does have a purpose. The purpose, however, is not to change us, but to show us where we need to change. It is only when we look to the law for something it cannot give that we begin to wonder why it exists.

by Philip Crouch

Philip Crouch is a member of the Willow Brook, Maryland, Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Why the Law?

LOGOS

Gal. 3:19, 20

Theme: How God Revealed the Gospel. *During the Old Testament period God's primary revelation of His will and of the gospel was given on Mount Sinai in the form of law: moral, ceremonial, and civil. At the beginning of the New Testament period much more was revealed about the plan of salvation through Jesus and the cross. Although the moral law is unchangeable as God's standard of righteousness, Christ's life and death provided a much greater revelation of this standard and of the character of God.*

Sometimes it takes an outsider to see the obvious.

Many Christians, especially Protestants steeped in the Reformation, have seen the New Testament writings as revealing a struggle between faith and works, of law versus grace. While legalism is a problem that threatens the Christian, that is not the exact issue Paul and other New Testament writers were dealing with. Part of the confusion results from the use of the term *law*.

In English and Greek the Greek word translated as "law" (*nomos*) means "rule," "principle," or "law" and thus has a primarily legal implication. But when the New Testament writers used the Greek word *nomos* it was actually a translation of the Hebrew word *torah*. And *torah* has the meaning

of "direction" or "instruction" and stands for "all the revealed will of God, or any part of it."¹

Torah was God's revelation of Himself and His plans for His people—both what He wanted to do for them, and what He wanted them to do for Him. "To the devout Jew, God's 'law' [*torah*] was equivalent to His plan for the salvation of the world. It is in this sense that Isaiah says 'the isles shall wait for his law' (Isa. 42:4)."² Thus *torah* was far more than what we think of when we hear the term *law*. And it is here that the outsider's viewpoint mentioned at the beginning helps us to understand why Paul makes such statements as Galatians 3:20, 21.

Jewish students of the New Testament (yes, there are such people—you can even get a degree in New Testament studies at the Hebrew University in Israel) have been pointing out for some time a fact that Christian Bible scholars are also rediscovering. The conflict in Paul's writings is not one of law versus grace so much as it is which revelation of God actually saves the believer and should have his primary allegiance—that of Judaism or Jesus Christ.

The New Testament Jewish leadership and even many followers of Jesus said that one was saved through biblical religion as it was known in New Testament times (what we refer to today as Judaism) and all that it involved. In sharp contrast Paul emphatically declared that no religious

by Gerald Wheeler

Gerald Wheeler is a book editor at the Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, Maryland.

system would ever save anyone—only Jesus could save a human being.

Many Christians felt that belief in Jesus was not sufficient for salvation and taught that Judaism as a religious system with all its practices was just as necessary as Jesus—if not more so—for the Christian to achieve salvation. If Judaism was needed to save anyone, then by obvious implication Jesus' death on the cross was not a complete source of salvation.

Naturally Paul would oppose such a view. In doing so, he came down hard on Judaism as a *means of salvation*. His readers understood that when he employed the term *nomos* he was referring to everything about the religion—its Scriptures, practices, and teachings, not just scriptural commandments, whether moral, ceremonial, or civil in nature. But although he rejected Judaism as a *means of salvation*, that did not mean that he spurned such things as its Scriptures and those teachings that we would think of as law in the moral sense. Paul, as scholars are increasingly recognizing, was a devout Jew and honored his biblical heritage.

Having downplayed law to uphold Christ, he had to find a way of keeping his readers from making the mistake of rejecting law altogether. He had to explain the purpose behind Old Testament religion, especially its biblical commandments. The apostle used a number of approaches, several of which appear in the passage under study.

First, Paul says that law and

other aspects of biblical religion were needed "because of transgressions" (Gal. 3:19). In the words of John R. W. Stott, "The function of the law is not to bestow salvation, however, but to convince men of their need of it."³ Paul expands this theme in the book of Romans (see 3:20; 4:15; 7:7).

Earlier the apostle had stressed the promise that God had made to Abraham that He would bless the Gentiles, or people of the world, through him (Gal. 3:14). The law would be an aid to God's people until the Promised One came with the only avenue to eternal life. The arrival of Christ did not abolish the law as a guideline to show the believer should walk in the way of faith, but gave it an additional perspective.⁴

Second, Paul contrasts the *torah* of biblical religion with the *torah* of Jesus by employing the Jewish belief that the law came through an intermediary, then arguing that the revelation of God through Jesus was direct. The revelation of God through Jesus was far superior to that given at Sinai—so much so that it could save, while the revelation of Sinai, the law, could not. The law was good, but Jesus was best, and the believer must never put the law on a par with Him.

Paul's contemporaries mistook the way God outlined to His people laws for living for the only way He had established for salvation. The same danger faces His people today. We must always remember that the law shows how we should live, but Jesus stands revealed as the one and only way of salvation.

1. *SDA Bible Dictionary*, p. 641.

2. *Ibid.*

3. John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Galatians: Only One Way* (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1968), p. 89.

4. Jews, when speaking of the law, use the Hebrew word *halakah*, which means "rule" or "practice." It comes from a verb that means "to go" or "to walk." Interestingly, one of Paul's favorite expressions is "to walk" in Christ and the Christian life.

The Law Is for Us!

TESTIMONY

Key Texts: Neh. 9:13; Rom. 7:12

During a recent visit to the Grand Canyon my wife was attracted to an unusual storefront display. It consisted of a pair of eyeglasses and a safety razor. The caption explained that these were the only belongings found from a man who years ago had disobeyed the rules and gone hiking and camping alone in the canyon. In spite of many posted warnings, he had ventured into the vast canyon wilderness alone without registering with the officials. The lesson was that those familiar with the rigorous demands of the area had provided rules that, when followed, would enable flatlanders safely to experience the joys of the canyon.

The Creator surely knows what is best for man's happiness. "Adam and Eve . . . had a knowledge of the law of God. . . . Adam taught his descendants the law of God, and it was handed down from father to son through successive generations. . . . Noah taught his descendants the Ten Commandments."¹ "Ten precepts, brief, comprehensive, and authoritative, cover the duty of man to God and to his fellow man; and all based upon the great fundamental principle of love."²

The purpose of Christ's coming

to earth was to reveal to man God's character as expressed by the law. "As the condition of the people began to open to His mind, He saw that the requirements of society and the requirements of God were in constant collision. . . . Their [the people's] service was a mere round of ceremonies; the sacred truths it was designed to teach were hidden from the worshipers. . . . Jesus had come to teach the meaning of the worship of God."³ "As He swept away the rubbish under which the truth had been buried, they thought He was sweeping away the truth itself."⁴ "As He went about doing good, and healing all who were afflicted by Satan, He made plain to men the character of God's law and the nature of His service. His life testifies that it is possible for us also to obey the law of God."⁵ Christ's mission was that of "saving life and bringing happiness to multitudes. . . . Christ was a living representative of the law."⁶

"Men may profess faith in the truth; but if it does not make them sincere, kind, patient, forbearing, heavenly-minded, it is a curse to its possessors, and through their influence it is a curse to the world."⁷

REACT

How are the Ten Commandments relevant to your life today?

1. *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 363.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 305.

3. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 84.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 307.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 287.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 310.

by Jim Reddick and Bill Barney

Jim Reddick, a supervisor in the West Virginia Department of Human Services, resides in Martinsburg, West Virginia. Bill Barney is a contractor in the same town.

Wednesday, May 16

An Inward Solution, Not an Outward Conformity

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Gal. 3:19, 20

What purpose does the law serve in the Christian life? It becomes the Christian's standard of behavior by setting forth the principles that are to govern his or her life. But the law itself is powerless to bring about any outward conformity of behavior. Only Jesus can do that through an inward solution (see Heb. 8:10).

In Romans 7:7-9 Paul exclaims, "Does it follow [then] that the Law itself is sin? Of course not. What I mean is that I should not have known what sin was except for the Law. I should not for instance have known what it means to covet if the Law had not said You shall not covet" (Jerusalem.)

Now, Paul is not saying that he was perfect before knowing the law. He is saying, "I thought everything would come out all right, because I was keeping these outward things."

In this cultural setting he was comparing himself to the externalized form of the commandments common to the Jewish tradition. But as he came face to face with the last commandment, which required that he not covet, he realized he was a sinner.

It was at this point that Christ could speak to him. It is at this point that we realize our need of an internal solution. The law requires perfect conformity, exter-

nally and internally. Try as we may, we cannot keep this law perfectly in our own strength.

In Matthew 22:37-39 Jesus shows us the positive commands. "*You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. . . . You must love your neighbor as yourself*" (Jerusalem).

This love is internal, not external. We can appear to take the lists of do's and don'ts that religious organizations make and keep them. An internal change isn't necessary for us to keep up that appearance.

However, as we see Jesus' summary of the law here in Matthew, we face the true requirement of this law of love—an internal requirement of loving my fellowman as I love myself.

God knows us. He knows that we are sinful. Our thought life is murky and filled with covetousness. The problem is that we are often blinded to the fact of our own sinfulness.

When the law convicts us of this realization, we are then ready to give up our own feeble efforts. At that point Jesus can take up our case and bring about an inward solution to the sin problem through a personal relationship with Himself (see Rom. 13:8-10). He is not only the lawgiver on the throne but the law keeper in our hearts. And we must daily depend on His life to flow outward through ours.

by Gail R. Hunt

Gail R. Hunt is the manager of development and direct sales for special projects for the Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, Maryland.

Unchanging Law—Unchanging Love

HOW-TO

Key Text: Matt. 5:17, 18

Our loving heavenly Father is eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, and unchanging. "The law of God existed before man was created. The angels were governed by it. . . . After Adam and Eve were created, God made known to them His law. It was not then written, but was rehearsed to them by Jehovah. . . . After Adam's sin and fall nothing was taken from the law of God. The principles of the ten commandments existed before the fall, and were of a character suited to the condition of a holy order of beings. After the fall, the principles of those precepts were not changed, but additional precepts were given to meet man in his fallen state. . . . The system of sacrifices was to teach man humility, in view of his fallen condition, and lead him to repentance, and to trust in God alone, through the promised Redeemer, for pardon for past transgression of His law."¹ The revelation of God's will and character was written at Mount Sinai and given to His people. God's law was and is God's love.

1. The Human Impact

The Creator of the universe, the Creator of humanity, provides mankind with operational instructions. Just as a manufac-

turer provides an operational manual for optimum performance of a product, God provides His law as the operational guide to a joyful and abundant life. In this fallen world sin continually impacts us, but how much of its effect we could avoid if we followed God's precepts! Consider for a moment the magnitude of suffering in the world because people do not follow God's law. Consider, if you will, the impact of only this one law: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." If the world as a whole kept this law, imagine the suffering that would be eliminated! Gone or much reduced would be the heartache and emotional pain that unfaithfulness brings, the large number of illegitimate and unwanted children, the vast number of abortions, the high incidence of venereal disease, and the great number of divorces, with resultant family destruction. The impact on the world population of keeping just this one law is mind-boggling. Imagine a world where every living being kept *all* of God's laws!

2. Christ—the Way Home

"The transgression of God's law made it necessary for Christ to die a sacrifice, and thus make a way possible for man to escape the penalty, and yet the honor of God's law be preserved."² Christ's sacrifice was the ultimate example of love. Jesus came and

by Peter J. Trepper

Peter J. Trepper practices dentistry in Frederick, Maryland, after serving five years as dental director of Hongkong Adventist Hospital.

died to give life more abundantly. Life here and now, free from guilt and shame.

God does not change; His law does not change. His promises are true. Through infinite love for His fallen beings He has made possible our way home. Oh, what glory that will be!

REACT

1. With the obvious benefits of following God's law, why do you suppose so many have refused His guidance? Why do we refuse to obey His law at times?

2. How did Christ's sacrifice on the cross change the relationship between God and humanity?

1. *Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 3, pp. 295, 296.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 296.

How to Keep Your Brains From Falling Out

OPINION

Key Texts: Rom. 13:10; 1 John 4:8

Recently I was leafing through a magazine called *The Sun: A Magazine of Ideas*. My brother, who is into the New Age movement (although he would smite me mightily for that characterization), sends the magazine to me in hopes, I think, that my Christian worldview will be broadened. Much of the writing is enigmatic and mystical; stories often end with lines such as: "And the sky turned a little paler," as though nature were actually God Him/Her/It/self.

The most recent issue of *The Sun* carried an article written in diary form. Through the author's entries we learn that her husband is in love with another woman. He hasn't consummated the relationship, however, and he asks the author whether she would mind if he did. She tells him it's none of *her* business what they do, so they attend to their desires.

This arrangement continues for some time, during which the author is surprised by her feelings of resentment toward the couple, although she still warmly greets the woman at church. The author wonders why she is not open-minded enough to accept gracefully what is happening.

Soon the husband tires of the other woman. But eventually the author herself finds fulfillment in

an illicit, passionate affair with—you'll never guess—the same woman.

I read this article twice to see whether I got it right, punctuating each reading by smacking the desk and exclaiming, "Oh, no! . . . Come on! . . . Oh, no!"

It is true: we can be so open-minded that our brains fall out.

More to the point, many people today assert that "everything is relative." They agree with Gustave Flaubert, who wrote, "There is no such thing as reality. There is only perception." At the core of the New Age movement lies the belief that reality is what each of us decides it is. We create reality.

New Age seekers (more than 60 million people in the United States believe in reincarnation) see the answers to life's questions as resting strictly within themselves. The search is ever inward. And reality, including ethics and morality, is always fluctuating: today it's perfectly fine for my husband to have an affair with a woman; tomorrow it's all right for me to also.

In contrast, the Bible asserts that an unchanging reality lies outside ourselves. We call this other-than reality *God*. We call God's character *love*. And, oddly enough, the how-to of this love we call *law*.

To ask, "Why the law?" (Gal. 3:19) is to ask, "Why this type of love?" and ultimately, "Why this God?"

by Christopher Blake

Christopher Blake is the editor of *Insight* and *Insight/Out* magazines at the Review and Herald Publishing Association, Hagerstown, Maryland.

In her book *Out on a Limb*, Shirley MacLaine writes, "You are God. You know you are divine." Thus, everything imaginable today, no matter how brainless or preposterous or wicked, is believed and followed. As G. K. Chesterton wrote, "When a man ceases to believe in God, he does not believe in nothing; he believes in anything."

But for Christians, our God, our standard, our schoolmaster,

our law, is *outside* ourselves. We humbly assert that we are not the answer. Our search for love does not end in self-seeking.

I think that's the broadest worldview possible.

REACT

1. To what degree do we create our own reality?

2. How does following Someone who is outside keep our brains inside?

Lesson 8, May 20 - 26

The Law: Our Custodian



“But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe” (Gal. 3:22, NIV).

Sunday, May 20

On the Way to School

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Gal. 3:21-25

I rode a bus to school every day in the seventh grade. Five or six of us lived close enough to attend the little Adventist school, but far enough away so that our parents couldn't get us there without help. So the concerned and generous people in our church bought a little yellow bus and paid Kathy Baughman's mom to pick us up every morning and drive us through the canyon, down the highway, and up the hill to school. And every day at exactly 3:15 Kathy's mom would show up in front of the school and drive us all the way home.

Kathy's mom and her little bus provided a great deal of regularity in my seventh-grade life; I needed a great deal of regularity that year. My sisters and I were new in the school, and we didn't have many friends. Our parents' marriage was quickly dissolving, and we were experiencing the common insecurities of such a situation. Spiritually, while most of the other kids were deciding to be baptized, I was unsettled. My pastor's invitation to join the baptismal class interested me. But my father's cynicism confused me. And my mother's religious heritage, complete with a huge load of guilt and a preoccupation with making ourselves worthy, frustrated me and left me feeling defeated and cold.

But every morning at 7:05, and every afternoon at 3:15, there was Kathy's mom in the little yellow bus. When it was cold outside the bus was already warm. When the weather was hot the bus was cool. Whenever I was late and had to rush, the bus ride calmed me down. We never had a flat tire. We never ran out of gas. We always arrived on time.

Kathy's mom didn't teach me any math that year. She didn't increase my vocabulary or expand my social-studies horizons. I didn't perfect my penmanship in the bus or practice playing the piano. My schooling took place in school. All Kathy's mom did was get me there. So, thank you, Mrs. Baughman, wherever you are. Without you I never would have gotten to the seventh grade.

Nor could I have hoped to understand Galatians 3 nearly so well. Now when I hear that the law is our guardian to take us to Christ, I think of Kathy's mom driving that little yellow bus through the canyon, down the highway, and up the hill to school. On the way to school she was in charge. But when I got to school I was no longer under the supervision of Kathy's mom. There was no opposition between Kathy's mom and the school. Each was a necessary part of my education. But when it came time for graduation, what counted was what had happened in school, not what had happened on the bus.

by Stuart Tyner

Stuart Tyner is director of marketing at Loma Linda University, Riverside, California.

Paul's Difficult Passage

LOGOS

Gal. 3:21-25

Theme: Where Would We Be Without the Cross? *Would obedience to the Ten Commandments have saved fallen human beings if there had been no cross? Of course not! Would the sacrifices and offerings of the Old-Testament period have resulted in salvation for those who offered them by faith if there had been no cross? Indeed no! Salvation for humanity in every era has depended on the sacrifice and ministry of Jesus Christ. This fact was ignored by the Jewish legalists who deceived the Galatians. Paul answered them by contrasting the situation "under the law" (before the cross) with the situation after Christ paid the penalty for sin.*

"One of the most difficult passages that Paul ever wrote." That's the opinion of no less a Christian authority than the great teacher William Barclay as he begins his commentary on this part of Galatians. "So difficult," in fact, continues the Scottish theologian, "that there are almost 300 different interpretations of it!"

Perhaps the passage is more difficult for Christians who have always seen the law in its proper perspective. However, for those of us who have struggled (experientially, if not doctrinally) with the correct emphasis between Christ's righteousness and our own good

works, the passage has a disturbing clarity.

1. Working Together

"Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law" (Gal. 3:21, NIV).

There is only one way to infer conflict between God's law and God's promise, and that is to assume that God gave the law as a means of salvation, that His intention was for us to keep the law in order to achieve our own justification. That was the position taken by Paul's opponents in Galatia. Jesus dealt with such people on a regular basis. The early church combated the influence of such schismatics over and over again (in fact, had Marcion had his way in the middle of the second century, we wouldn't even have this passage in the Canon!). And it's a position we still must struggle against, for it is so difficult completely to lay the glory of man in the dust and accept from Jesus what it is not in our power to do for ourselves (see Ellen White, *Review and Herald*, Sept. 16, 1902).

"Many are losing the right way, in consequence of thinking that they must climb to heaven, that they must do something to merit the favor of God. They seek to make themselves better by their own unaided efforts. This they can never accomplish. Christ has made the way by dying our sacrifice, by living our example, by becoming

by Stuart Tyner

Stuart Tyner is director of marketing at Loma Linda University, Riverside, California.

our great high-priest. He declares, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.' If by any effort of our own we could advance one step toward the ladder, the words of Christ would not be true."¹

2. Prisoners of Sin

"Scripture makes no exceptions when it says that sin is master everywhere" (Gal. 3:22, Jerusalem).

In the historical equivalents of the first-century world, Paul faced the same tragedies we face today: innocent bystanders gunned down in a convenience-store robbery, helpless people lost in the crash of an airplane with mechanical problems, civilian victims of mindless wars, starving children in famine-ravaged lands. Every night's newscast is filled with tears for victims of the latest tragedy.

Relating to such suffering is never more difficult than when one puts the blame, directly or indirectly, on God. From the balcony of a small church, I faced that challenge at the funeral of a small boy when the officiating pastor said, "This is God's will."

In the face of such blasphemy, how comforting it is to find Paul putting the blame squarely where it belongs: "Sin is master everywhere," he reminds us. We are prisoners of sin (see NIV). If God were responsible, what hope would we have for a better life in heaven? But because we know that our enemy has done this (Matt. 13:28), we can be confident in the final destruction of pain and sorrow and tears when "the

old order of things has passed away" (Rev. 21:4, NIV).

3. Our Custodian (read Gal. 3:23-25)

"So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law" (verses 24, 25, NIV).

"Before faith came. That is, before the mystery of how God could save men by faith alone was clearly revealed in the incarnation, perfect life, vicarious death, and glorious resurrection of our Lord,"² God gave us the law as a description of a perfect society, one that operated by perfect love and resulted in perfect obedience to the will of God. The immediate impact of the law was to point out to us in perfectly understandable terms just how far away we were from that perfect society.

Then, through the explanation of His plan to redeem us, God drew us away from focusing on our imperfect ways and placed our gaze on His goodness and love while we were still His enemies (see Rom. 7:7-13; 2:4). Now we see that the entire matter of salvation is "on a different plane—believing instead of achieving" (3:27, Phillips).

How does the law lead us to Christ?

What does this say about the law? about Christ?

Why do you think God chose faith as the key to a relationship with Him?

1. Ellen White, *Review and Herald*, Nov. 4, 1890.

2. *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 960.

His Obedience, My Surety

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Rom. 5:8-10

“Christ gave His life to redeem humanity, and He calls upon men and women to make every sacrifice in their power to glorify God by placing light in contrast with darkness. Christ gave His life as a sacrifice, not to destroy God’s law, not to create a lower standard, but to maintain justice, and to give man a second probation. No one can keep God’s commandments except in Christ’s power. He bore in His body the sins of all mankind, and He imputes His righteousness to every believing child.

“Christ is our example in all things. He has magnified the law and made it honorable. By His unwavering obedience He testified to the truth that God’s law is the standard of righteousness for all men. God requires of man nothing that is impossible for him to do. He ‘so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.’ Possessing our nature, though unstained by sin, and tempted in all points like as we are, Christ kept the law, proving beyond controversy that man also can keep it.

“The fiat has gone forth, ‘The wages of sin is death.’ The sinner must feel his guiltiness, else he will never repent. He has broken

the law, and in so doing has placed himself under its condemnation. The law has no power to pardon the transgressor, but it points him to Christ Jesus, who says to him, I will take your sin and bear it Myself, if you will accept Me as your substitute and surety. Return to your allegiance, and I will impute to you My righteousness. You will be made complete in Me.”¹

“The law of ten commandments is not to be looked upon as much from the prohibitory side as from the mercy side. Its prohibitions are the sure guarantee of happiness in obedience. As received in Christ, it works in us the purity of character that will bring joy to us through eternal ages. To the obedient it is a wall of protection. We behold in it the goodness of God, who by revealing to men the immutable principles of righteousness seeks to shield them from the evils that result from transgression.”²

“God would have every member of His creation understand the great work of the infinite Son of God in giving His life for the salvation of the world. ‘Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. . . .’

“When he sees in Christ the embodiment of infinite and disinterested love and benevolence, there is awakened in the heart of the sinner a thankful disposition to follow where Christ is drawing.”³

1. Ellen White, *Review and Herald*, May 7, 1901.

2. *The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, vol. 6, p. 1110.

3. *Ibid.*

by Stuart Tyner

Stuart Tyner is director of marketing at Loma Linda University, Riverside, California.

Wednesday, May 23

Delivered to the Teacher

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Gal. 3:24

How did you get to school in your elementary years? Today's kids are shuttled to school in a bewildering variety of ways. In addition to the familiar school bus, car pools, city buses, subways, and even taxis transport school-children. And, of course, many kids simply go out the door and walk to school. It's not unusual to see a couple of second- or third-graders walking down the street with their backpack full of books and a Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle lunch box swinging by their side.

It certainly wasn't that way in Paul's day when he wrote what was translated in the King James Version as "the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ." The "schoolmaster" translation, and even the "tutor" of the New American Standard Bible and the New King James Version, seem to us to refer to a classroom situation with a professional teacher or assistant instructing the students. However, the Greek

word, *paidagogos*, does not mean "teacher" at all (see *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, p. 961). The Greek presents quite a different picture, one better captured by the translations "guardian," "custodian" (RSV), "in charge" of us (NIV), and "a strict governess in charge of us" (Phillips).

Barclay describes *paidagogos* as "a household servant. . . . He was not the schoolmaster. He was usually an old and trusted slave who had been long in the family and whose character was high."¹ This individual "accompanied the school boy to the school and back, and carried his books and writing utensils."² "He had nothing to do with the actual teaching of the child, but it was his duty to take him in safety to the school and deliver him to the teacher."³

"That—said Paul—was like the function of the law. It was there to lead a man to Christ. It could not take him into Christ's presence, but it could take him into a position where he himself might enter. It was the function of the law to bring a man to Christ by showing him that by himself he was utterly unable to keep it."⁴

1. William Barclay, *The Letters to the Galatians and Ephesians*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), p. 31.

2. Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), p. 177.

3. Barclay, p. 31.

4. *Ibid.*

by Stuart Tyner

Stuart Tyner is director of marketing at Loma Linda University, Riverside, California.

Unlocking the Prison

HOW-TO

Key Text: Gal. 3:22, 23

Have you heard the “law of distant distance” recently? That’s the interesting human phenomenon that occurs when we describe how far we had to travel to school in our childhood. It seems that the older we become, the farther we had to go to get to school when we were kids. When children complain about their 10-minute ride to school, parents tell them about their 20-minute ride. When grandchildren complain, their grandparents tell them about spending an hour *to walk* to school. When you hear someone talking about walking to school *barefoot* and *in the snow*, you can be sure you’re listening to a real old-timer.

A corresponding law operates in the spiritual realm. It goes like this: the farther you are away from Jesus, the more important your own efforts appear (see *The Great Controversy*, p. 473). It follows that the more merit you place on your own efforts, the less confidence you are likely to place in the merit of Jesus. But Paul reminds us that “the promise can only be given through faith in Jesus Christ and can only be given to those who have this faith” (Gal. 3:22, Jerusalem).

How strange it is that we so often choose to return to the prison from which we’ve been freed, that we insist on remaining prisoners when we’ve already been pardoned, that we continue to feel the necessity of calling attention to the part we play instead of rejoicing in what Christ has done. “Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed” (verse 23, NIV).

Whenever we are tempted to focus on our own efforts, whether the temptation is to place the importance on our good works or to feel defeated by our mistakes, we should meet that temptation by following Paul’s example and clear counsel:

1. Forget those things which are behind (Phil. 3:13).

2. Determine to know nothing but Jesus (1 Cor. 2:2).

3. Realize that Christ is now living in us (Gal. 2:20), and that every good thing we do, including our repenting and our overcoming, is His work in us (see Acts 5:31; 11:18; 1 Cor. 15:57; James 1:17).

4. Be confident that He who has begun the good work in us will carry it on to completion (Phil. 1:6, NIV), and that He will keep us steady and without blame until the last day (1 Cor. 1:8, Jerusalem).

by Stuart Tyner

Stuart Tyner is director of marketing at Loma Linda University, Riverside, California.

Friday, May 25

Afraid of Grace

OPINION

Key Text: Rom. 5:1, 2

Before you read today's section, answer the following question, by circling one response below: If Jesus returned today, would you be saved?

1. I definitely would be lost.
2. I probably would be lost.
3. I'm not sure whether I would be lost or saved.
4. I probably would be saved.
5. I definitely would be saved.

Recently I asked this same question, with the same set of responses, to a Sabbath School class of young adults. Their answers startled me. I had expected some degree of assurance. Some positive anticipation. Instead, I discovered anxiety. Ambivalence. Dread.

One confident person answered with a 5. One hopeful soul answered 4. Several unassuredly said 3. Everyone else said 1 or 2—if Jesus came today, they would probably or definitely be lost.

Of course, they knew their condition much better than I knew it. But these were bright, enthusiastic, well-scrubbed young Adventist Christians. They were graduates of Adventist academies. Most of them were attending Adventist colleges. They had taken classes in which they had thoroughly examined all the doctrines. All of them had attended Sabbath School and sung about Jesus' return for as long as they could remember. And now they were

afraid. The Second Coming held no joy for them. The end of the world was something to dread.

As we examined the reasons behind the fear, one stark fact continued to surface: dependence on Jesus, both as the guarantor of salvation (see Eph. 1:13, 14) and as the strength for daily victory (see John 15:3-5), was not a reality. They were, in Paul's brutally frank description, under the law, not under grace. And they were keeping themselves there. It was as though they were afraid of experiencing grace. Afraid that emphasizing Christ's work somehow makes salvation easy or cheap.

"I'm not good enough," one young lady admitted.

"I make mistakes every day," volunteered someone else. "I have to ask for forgiveness over and over again."

Condemned. Not forgiven. Not accepted. Not confident of God's word. The law was, in effect, canceling the promises of God.

But that's not the way Paul tells us it is supposed to be. The same law that points out our sin takes us by the hand and leads us to Jesus so that "we could be justified by faith. Now that that time has come we are no longer under that guardian" (Gal. 3:24, 25, Jerusalem).

The condemnation has been replaced by encouragement (Rom. 8:1). *We have peace with God* (5:1). His perfect love has driven out all fear (1 John 4:18). Including our fear of grace.

by Stuart Tyner

Stuart Tyner is director of marketing at Loma Linda University, Riverside, California.

Lesson 9, May 27—June 2

Adopted by Grace



“If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:29, NIV).

Sunday, May 27

A Reminder

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Gal. 3:26—4:20

“I want you to know how important you are to me, how you can be the creator of the person that is in me if you choose to [or maybe if I choose to let you]. You alone can break down the wall behind which I tremble. You alone can see behind my mask. You alone can release me from my shadow world of panic and uncertainty and loneliness. So please don't pass me by. I know it will not be easy for you. A conviction of worthlessness builds strong walls. And the nearer that you approach me, the blinder I may strike back. You see, I am to be fighting against the very thing I need the most. . . .

“But I am told that love is stronger than walls, and in this, lies my only hope. So beat down those walls with your firm but

gentle hands, for the child in me is very sensitive and can't grow behind walls. So don't give up. I need you.’

“We're more alike than we are different. All of us feel that. We need to have those bridges built between you and me, because we need each other. And the real you of you can only really grow with all the bridges intact of me, of someone else, of the person next to you.”*

This passage is a reminder to me that I cannot make it through life alone. That I am constantly dependent upon people and sources beyond my own self.

More important, though, it reminds me that I can be an essential element in helping others. It is my duty to accept my brother as, and where, he is and then help him in his walk with Christ. This week we will examine our relationships with fellow believers.

*Leo F. Buscaglia, *Living, Loving and Learning* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1982), p. 258.

by Garry L. Trefl

Garry L. Trefl is a senior institutional development major at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Maturity and the Law

LOGOS

Gal. 3:26—4:20

Theme: Christians Are Family Members. *Every true Christian is a son or daughter of Abraham, adopted into the family of God through his relationship with Christ. We must hold fast to this confidence, refusing to entangle ourselves again with the beliefs and practices that we gave up in order to unite our lives with Him.*

What is a good son? At birth, although he cries, messes, and can show neither appreciation nor affection, if he is alive, he is a good son. On his first birthday, although he neither makes his bed nor helps with household chores, if he sits up and smiles, he is a good son. When it's time to begin school his table manners may not be perfect, but if he's learning to be kind to others and minds the teacher, he is a good son. By the time he reaches 10, his personal appearance is still not a top priority, and fights with his brother are common, but if he's doing well in school and helps around the house, he is a good son. The teen years are always turbulent, but if he's not in trouble and comes home on time, he is a good son. Twenty-five years have passed since that miracle in the delivery room. He cleans his room, eats politely, combs his hair, no longer fights, and breaks no laws, but is he a good son?

What is the real measure of

goodness? Doing what we're told? Minding our parents? Breaking no laws? Embarrassing nobody? Holding a steady job? Providing for our family?

In the Galatian church Paul is dealing with a group of Christians who do not know what it means to "be good." Their problem is maturity. They have quit growing.

A child can be considered good at 6 because he always does what his parents say (even though his motivation comes from knowing that the alternative to obedience is discipline), but if he is still attempting to be good at 30 years old with the same motivation, he has never matured.

In the process of maturity one must cross a faint but definite line. It is the line between forced obedience and willing service.

Forced obedience is vital to immature people. Children cannot be left to choose whether they should go to bed, eat their vegetables, or go to school. They are told what to do. They are good if they obey.

1. We Are Sons (read Gal. 3:26-29)

When we make the decision to trust Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour, we become a member of God's family. As brothers and sisters in Christ we are equal (verses 28, 29), but not equal to God. When we become a child of God, we voluntarily place ourselves under His authority. This relationship is not one in which God is merely a friend

by Ron Carlson

Ron Carlson, a graduate of Union College, serves as pastor of the Sunnydale Academy church in Centralia, Missouri.

or companion. The relationship is a Father-son relationship.

2. Sonship Must Mature (read Gal. 4:1-7)

A young child and a slave are in a similar situation. Both are bound to do as they are told, and there are consequences for disobedience.

If my son wants a cookie, he must finish his meal. He decides to finish the meal so he can have a cookie, not necessarily because he likes the food. His choice makes sense. Many people come to Christ because it is the "sensible" (right) thing to do. When one considers that the wages of transgressing the law is death, choosing Jesus is rational. However, a forced obedience will not last. It will self-destruct. Paul was aware that the Christian life could begin with "right" choices (that is how his started), but he knew that a person could not mature simply by making "right" choices. There must be more.

3. Laws Are Not the Answer (read Gal. 4:8-16)

The Jews were eager to pile laws on people. Their motto would have been "Laws Are the Answer." If there is a problem, make a law against it. Their religion was one of restraint. Paul's religion was one of renewal (2 Cor. 4:16).

4. The Growth of Law to Love (read Gal. 4:18, 19)

The Galatians are reminded that the purpose of their (spiritual) birth was to have Christ formed in them (verse 19). Their conversion was not so they would do what Christ said, but so they would think as Christ thinks.

As a parent I understand that fighting is bad. Since my child

has a temper, I make a law: "No Hitting Your Brother." The "law" will keep a child from fighting. However, my hope is that someday my child will love his brother as I do. When love comes, the law is no longer necessary as an essential restraint. We no longer need to be restrained. I am faithful to my wife because I love my wife (not because of a law). I honor God's Sabbath because I love to rest in my Creator (not because of a law). I do not steal from my neighbors, because I respect and honor them (not because of a law).

5. The Urgency of Maturity (read Gal. 4:20)

Paul concludes this section by telling his readers that he would "change his tone" if he were talking and not writing. In other words, there would be an urgency in his voice.

If we, like the Galatians, begin regressing in our spiritual life, it is an urgent matter that there be a reversion of this downward trend. What is a good son? A good son is one who matures from restraint to renewal.

What does it mean to be a child of God? What are your rights in this relationship? What are your responsibilities?

In what way had the law become similar to the idols that the Galatians used to worship? Why would this be an easy trap for them? Does this mean that the law is bad? Why or why not?

Can a Christian mature to the extent that he/she is no longer responsible to the moral law? Why or why not?

How have you seen reversion or regression in your own spiritual life? Who helps you to recognize this and encourages you to continue your walk with God?

Fitting Adopted Heirs Together

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Gal. 3:28, 29

Isaiah was a maverick and way ahead of his time. "To Isaiah it was given to make very plain to Judah the truth that among the Israel of God were to be numbered many who were not descendants of Abraham after the flesh. This teaching was not in harmony with the theology of his age, yet he fearlessly proclaimed the messages given him of God and brought hope to many a long-ing heart."¹

Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles. In Romans 10:20 he calls Isaiah "very bold" because it was with this open attitude of Isaiah that Paul was able to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. The Jews had become convinced that the specialness of their adoption into the family of God set them above and separate from the rest of the world. But from the beginning it was not so. Abraham's covenant embraced all nations, and Jehovah declared, "I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:2, 3).

"In the renewal of the covenant shortly before the birth of Isaac, God's purpose for mankind was

again made plain. 'All the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him,' was the assurance of the Lord concerning the child of promise. Genesis 18:18. And later the heavenly visitant once more declared, 'In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.' Genesis 22:18.

"The all-embracing terms of this covenant were familiar to Abraham's children and to his children's children. It was in order that the Israelites might be a blessing to the nations, and that God's name might be made known 'throughout all the earth' (Exodus 9:16), that they were delivered from Egyptian bondage. If obedient to His requirements, they were to be placed far in advance of other peoples in wisdom and understanding; but this supremacy was to be reached and maintained only in order that through them the purpose of God for 'all nations of the earth' might be fulfilled. . . .

"No distinction on account of nationality, race, or caste, is recognized by God."²

According to Galatians 3:28, 29, our race, social class, and gender make no difference in our standing before God. We are all one in Christ, and even Abraham's offspring, though not of his nationality.

"The Jewish temple was built of hewn stones quarried out of the mountains; and every stone was

1. Ellen White, *Review and Herald*, May 7, 1901.

2. *The SDA Bible Commentary*, Ellen G. White Comments, vol. 6, p. 1110.

3. *Ibid.*

by Rich Carlson

Rich Carlson is the chaplain at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

fitted for its place in the temple, hewed, polished, and tested before it was brought to Jerusalem. And when all were brought to the ground, the building went together without the sound of ax or hammer. This building represents God's spiritual temple, which is composed of material gathered out of every nation, and tongue, and people, of all grades, high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned. These are not dead substances to be fitted by hammer and chisel. They are living stones, quarried out from the world by the truth; and the great Master Builder, the Lord of the temple, is now hewing and polishing them, and fitting them for their respective places in the spir-

itual temple. When completed, this temple will be perfect in all its parts, the admiration of angels and of men; for its Builder and Maker is God."³

God's people throughout the world are all one in the body of Christ, yet they are all different in regard to how and where they have been hewn—diversity within unity.

REACT

1. In all honesty, to whom do you feel superior? Why? How do you feel in light of Galatians 3:28, 29?

2. How will Galatians 3:28, 29 affect your attitude in relationships with people who differ from you?

1. *Prophets and Kings*, p. 367.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 368, 369.

3. *Testimonies*, vol. 9, p. 180.

Helping People to Belong

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Gal. 3:28

No two Christians are exactly alike. Some wear their hair quite long; others wear it fairly short. Some have black skin; others have skin that is yellow or white. Some have little education; others have graduate degrees. Some are poor; others are rich. And some enjoy using guitars and drums in church, while others are opposed to using such instruments.

The list could go on and on. All Christians simply do not have the same shape, size, personality, or background.

Check it out for yourself. In your own church you'll probably see different lifestyles, skin coloring, backgrounds, ages, talents, and preferences in church worship and music.

Though followers of Christ have numerous differences, they can experience a wonderful unity by recognizing that true believers are brothers and sisters in Christ regardless of their differences.

Think of some young person or adult you don't relate to very well. No matter what differences you have, if you truly love the Lord, you are God's family together. True, you may not feel as comfortable with him as with others, but differences need not keep you from accepting him.

You can experience a oneness and unity of heart with someone whose lifestyle, hair length, age, or social level differs from yours.

In fact, experiencing that unity is one way of expressing your faith. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all *one* in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28, NIV).

This feeling of "belonging" or "oneness" is particularly important when it comes to the youth of the church. As youth grow, they move from dependence on parents and church to independence. A natural part of this process includes a stage of "in-betweenness" when a young person's peer group is important. Belonging to a group, or fitting in with friends, is a normal, natural part of the adolescent's passage from childhood to adulthood.

Because of this, youth have a strong desire to be part of a group. The group gives them a sense of identity. Certain things, such as manner of dress, dating behavior, language used, and hairstyles are often dictated by the peer group. And even though a young person may not fully accept the practices of the group, he will often participate in order to be accepted as a member.

The groups to which young people usually choose to belong give them a sense of personal worth and acceptance. And this is where the church needs to learn an important lesson about retaining its youth. Because most peer groups are exclusive and unaccepting of nonconforming outsiders, the church needs to be distinctly different. The church needs to be the place where per-

by Graham Bingham

Graham Bingham is the editor of COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY.

sons (especially young people) are accepted regardless of their appearance, talents, or possessions. And then, hopefully, with much love and attention, youth will feel that they truly belong to the group called church.

REACT

1. Pretend that you are starting up a group. What would

you list as the most important requirements for membership? Why?

2. Compile a list of things that characterize your particular church fellowship. If a negative characteristic is listed, what could you do to help solve the problem?

3. If someone from the community visited your church, what do you think would be his overall impression? Why?

Now I Belong!

HOW-TO

Key Text: Ps. 103:13

It's a boy! Two feet long and 28 pounds. We proudly accepted Nathan Michael into our family on April 9, 1986. He is no longer a foster child and ward of the state. Now he is truly my little brother, part of our family. This means he's accepted no matter what he does. Those adoption papers have given him a home based on unconditional love. Sometimes he's a stinker, but he is *our* stinker. He's confident we will always love him.

Before his adoption Nathan felt there was always a chance he'd be sent away from our home. Other foster children had come and gone. Why not him? His future was insecure. Who would care for him? Where would he belong? Where would he end up? Because of these insecure feelings, Nathan used defense mechanisms to help him cope with life. Since he was a 3-year-old, his defenses included crying when left alone, fighting with other children for attention, or even trying to be unusually good so that he would be allowed to stay.

However, after the adoption was finalized, Nathan relaxed

and became himself. He knows now that he'll never be asked to leave. His confidence and self-esteem have soared.

This is what our adoption into God's family can do for us. Right now we can:

1. Be confident of our relationship as God's children.

God loves us unconditionally. Hence we are free to be ourselves and become more like our Father in heaven.

2. Put the old ways (defense mechanisms) behind us.

We no longer need to fit in with the world; we are part of a heavenly family.

3. Learn to rely on God.

As part of His family, we can rely on God's love. We can rely on His wisdom. We can rely on His promises.

4. Look forward to the future.

Our future is endless. On earth we can accomplish God's will for us. In heaven we will be part of the realized family of God.

Adoption is more than agreeing to care for the physical needs of someone. Adoption is unconditional acceptance and love for a *chosen* people.

by JanaLee Gueck

JanaLee Gueck is a senior psychology major at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Friday, June 1

“Brothers in Christ”

OPINION

Key Text: Gal. 4:14

Thick snow at night flies straight at a windshield. It nearly paralyzes the brain to sort snow from highway, especially when you've been on the road 12 hours and plan to drive another five.

We were in the mountains of Montana—headed for the flats and hopefully less snow. Spring break was nearly over, and it had been absolutely fabulous. Now my girlfriend and I were heading for my parents' place to recover before going back to classes. Heading back always seems harder and longer, and we were exhausted. But we couldn't stop in a motel (for obvious reasons), so we elected to keep going.

I was asleep when we totaled the car. Black ice and poor snow tires sent us spinning and slammed us into the guardrail. CRUNCH! We were fine physically, but Dawn was shaken pretty badly. This was her first wreck—she had been driving, and it was her mother's car. I did my best to calm her as we sat in the small bar in Basin, Montana, and waited for the wrecker. Hours and blizzards later we found ourselves, ironically, collapsed in a chilly motel room with two double beds. We were *stranded* in Butte, Montana.

It was St. Patrick's Day in Butte, and since everyone there is Irish on that day, everyone par-

ties! We did not. We became frustrated because, though it was Friday, everything was closed and we could get no help. Our only hope was to call the local pastor.

I had never met the man, but the young pastor turned out to be one of the kindest pastors I've met. He and his family instantly took us in, and within hours we felt at home. Any need we had they did their best to fill. They showered us with sympathy when we were in a rough spot (at that time we didn't know the car couldn't be fixed). They offered us anything and trusted us completely, and we tried to honor their trust by helping them the best we could. The pastor's wife was sweet and a marvelous cook. The pastor did his best to keep us entertained (he even took us on the most fascinating tour of my life—and in Butte!) and, most important, treated us with respect.

That's how God would have us treat others—like intelligent human beings—hurting, imperfect, but human like Jesus. I certainly learned a lesson from those people in Butte, Montana. They didn't seize a sudden opportunity for power, but opened their doors and became servants for the loving God.

REACT

How far out of your comfort zone would you go for someone you know? Someone you don't know? Should the two be different? Why or why not?

by Steve Creitz

Steve Creitz is a studio art major at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Lesson 10, June 3 - 9

The Faith-and-Works Controversy



“But what does the Scripture say? ‘Get rid of the slave woman and her son, for the slave woman’s son will never share in the inheritance with the free woman’s son’ ” (Gal. 4:30, NIV).

Sunday, June 3

Forgiveness at the Airport

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Gal. 4:21-31

"V.J., are you coming to the airport with us to get Dad?" Mom asked.

I shrugged my shoulders, but headed for the car.

Going to the airport to pick up Dad had always been fun. I liked to watch the airplanes land and guess which one would be Dad's. When the plane landed, I would race my brothers to see who could give Dad the first hug. It was a privilege to carry something of Dad's to the car. But this time I dreaded the meeting. All too soon we were walking down the causeway to the terminal. I walked more and more slowly, trying to delay the meeting. Mom noticed.

"V.J., why are you walking so slowly?" she asked.

I shrugged.

"Are you scared of Dad because you wrecked the motorcycle?"

I nodded.

About two weeks earlier I had wrecked our Honda XL 175 by sideswiping a wood-rail fence in our driveway. When the bike flipped to the right, I went flying to the left, where my throat and the fence met each other intimately, crushing my throat. I was fortunate to be alive, even though I couldn't talk. The bike's damage was minimal: taillight torn off, handlebar bent, and the bike scraped. It cost less than \$200 to

repair it. Medical bills to repair me ran into thousands of dollars, and we didn't know whether I would be able to speak again. Mom's perceptive question came because I had ridden the bike without permission.

"Dad understands and loves you," Mom continued. "We can repair the bike. We can't replace you."

"Yes, but that was when I was hurt and in the hospital," I wrote on the pad I carried. "But now I'm not there."

"Listen, V.J., the rules we have are just like God's laws—the Ten Commandments. They are there to protect you, not to punish you if you break them. Dad and I figure you have already punished yourself far worse than we ever would. Dad has already forgiven you—all you have to do is accept it."

When I saw my dad that night I gave him an extra big hug.

I believe that this illustrates the faith-works controversy we are studying this week. I had done wrong. But my dad forgave me, and I was covered by his grace. Did that mean I never had to obey him anymore? After all, I was covered by his grace. Do we have to obey God's rules, even though we are covered by His grace? Is obeying rules legalism? What is the true meaning of faith? Why are there rules to follow? Is obeying God's laws faith or legalism?

by Virgil Minden, Jr.

Virgil Minden, Jr., is a theology/business administration major at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

The Faith-and-Works Controversy

LOGOS

Gal. 4:21-31

Theme: Faith Versus Legalism. *Seeking salvation by works of law is living under the "old" covenant. By faith accepting salvation as Christ's gift of grace is living under the "new" covenant. The new-covenant experience results in works of faith and conformity to God's law.*

1. Abraham Acting Without Faith Represents an Old-Covenant Experience (read Gal. 4:21-25)

"One covenant is from Mount Sinai and bears children who are to be slaves: This is Hagar" (verse 24, NIV).

The "old" covenant in its most positive light was simply God's way of dealing with His people in Old Testament times. It was God's way of making known the provisions of His everlasting covenant to a people at a particular period in history. It was succinctly stated in Exodus 19:5: "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine." Ultimately it was necessary to obey the commandments in order to maintain the covenantal relationship. But the Jews failed to see that God's strength was necessary to enable them to

obey. It was these commandments that Jesus delighted to keep and that were written upon His heart (Ps. 40:8).

This covenant, which God made with His people at Sinai (Gal. 4:24, 25), was intended to be a vehicle of life. It provided for a sanctuary where God might come close to His people (Ex. 25:8). Offerings and a priestly ministry pointed to the provision of salvation through Jesus, the Lamb of God.

What was intended to bring life was largely perverted into an instrument of bondage. It became a system in which people felt that their salvation was assured by their ascribed membership in the group, which was indicated by their ritualistic observances ("We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man" [John 8:33]). They had received the law through the ministry of angels, but they had not truly kept it (Acts 7:53). They acknowledged the truthfulness of what God had revealed, but in heart they were far from Him (Isa. 29:13). By New Testament times the professed people of the Lord had fallen prey to what *The Desire of Ages* called the "greatest deception of the human mind in Christ's day," namely, "that a mere assent to truth constitutes righteousness."¹

Even in old-covenant times, however, some responded in faith and were saved. An example

by H. Ward Hill

H. Ward Hill is the vice president for academic administration and professor of sociology at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

would be the 7,000 who did not bow the knee to Baal. But the general tendency of the Jewish people was to lose a vital connection with God while professing allegiance to His instruction. This led to a hardened religiosity that shut out the indwelling of God's Spirit. This disappointing experience came to be identified with the "old" covenant. The apostle Paul suggests that those who are in slavery to their sins are represented by children born to Hagar, a slave woman. Abraham, the father of Hagar's children, while acting without faith, illustrates this "old"-covenant experience.

Did the apostle Paul include the Ten Commandments when he spoke of the "weak and beggarly elements" that led to bondage (Gal. 4:9)?

Why or why not?

2. Abraham's Acting in Faith Represents a New-Covenant Experience (read Gal. 4:22-31)

"His son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise" (verse 23, NIV).

When Abraham acted without faith, he did not act in contempt of God. Few people are comfortable for long while living in defiance of God. Even the natural heart retains a residue of conscience that makes it uncomfortable with blatant evil. The pleasure of indulging our impulses is curbed in the face of inner condemnation. We must therefore rationalize ourselves into a position where we may presume that we have God's favor. People generally seek a "method of forgetting God which shall pass as a method of remembering Him."² This tendency is seen in the parable of the son who de-

clared, "I go, sir," but never got past the promise (Matt. 21:28-30).

What God desired of Abraham was faith. For Sarah to bear a child at her age was outside human possibility. It was a spiritual expectation that could be met only by spiritual means.

The thought of reaching a spiritual goal or keeping a spiritual law without faith comes close to being a contradiction in terms. For instance, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart" is a fundamental spiritual law. If one had no faith in God, then how could one love Him?

Looking closely at Abraham's acting in faith, however, does *not* suggest a "let go and let God" posture. Abraham was to believe what God said and willingly cooperate with Him to achieve the desired end. Isaac arrived by the power of God, but there is no suggestion that it was a virgin birth.

Faith that does not include works is not true faith. Faith is a dynamic commitment to the kingdom of God that embraces the rules prevailing in that domain. The new covenant stresses divine enablement. But when God assumes an enabling role He does not annul cooperative effort on the part of the human subject. God does not accept total responsibility for obedience. He brings instead the inner compulsion of love.

The new covenant is not unconditional. It does not guarantee salvation unconditionally. If it did, then we could not be held accountable for our failures. If any were lost, it would be God's fault.

From the earliest days of the Christian church it has been difficult to define the human role in salvation without suggesting a form of salvation by works. The exercise of the will has been downplayed by vast segments of the church for this very reason. To them it is more palatable to have

God arbitrarily select who will be saved and who will be lost than to allow the element of choice. If salvation depends on a person's choice, then to some extent it depends on a human work. In every age God has said in effect, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Joshua 24:15). The last book of Scripture tells us that whosoever will may come (see Rev. 22:17).

No one wishes to challenge the thought that, from start to finish, salvation is the work of God. It is Christ in us who is the hope of glory (Col. 1:27). The new-covenant relationship calls for our cooperative response, for which we are empowered by the Spirit of God. To fail to see man's role both in his entrance into the new-covenant relationship and in the condition for continuing that relationship is to deny what has been called "Lordship salvation," which submits to the principles of Christ's kingdom. The alternative may be "cheap grace" or "easy believism." It "saves" in sins, not

from sins. It is a shallow and ineffectual faith.

Suppose we love God because we perceive Him as a heavenly parent who gives us anything we desire. In what way might this be dangerous to our salvation?

Suppose we thought of God as being very strict, yet we are determined to carry out His every wish. Is this a less dangerous or a more dangerous position than perceiving Him as an indulgent parent insofar as our salvation is concerned?

While the cloak of Christ's righteousness has "not one thread of human devising" in it, it "is not a cloak to cover unconfessed and unforsaken sin." Does this mean that as long as there are sins in my life over which I have not yet gained the victory, Jesus has not yet accepted me?

How would you answer those who say that Seventh-day Adventists are living under the old covenant rather than under the new?

1. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 309.

2. *The Great Controversy*, p. 572.

Tuesday, June 5

Faith—Thought or Action?

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Rom. 5:1, 2

Faith versus works—why does this seem to be such a big issue in our church? Debates are endless, but can we Christians of today reach a balance of ideas concerning this matter? What is faith? What are works?

“Come to Jesus, and receive rest and peace. You may have the blessing even now. Satan suggests that you are helpless and cannot bless yourself. It is true; you are helpless. But lift up Jesus before him: ‘I have a risen Saviour. In Him I trust, and He will never suffer me to be confounded. In His name I triumph. He is my righteousness and my crown of rejoicing.’”¹

Earth’s first family had opportunity to exercise faith through obedience to God. “By faith Abel offered God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was commended as a righteous man, when God spoke well of his offerings. And by faith he still speaks, even though he is dead” (verse 4, NIV).

Faith is a thought put into action. Faith by itself isn’t complete. Love of God in a commitment to Him is a revelation of faith acted out.

Abraham’s experience in trying to have a son by Hagar reveals what happens when we try to jump ahead of God’s plan for us; our situation grows worse with entangle-

ments of jealousy and mistrust.

“Tell me, you who want to be under the law, are you not aware of what the law says? 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 woman 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” (Gal. 4:21-24, NIV).

“Now you, brothers, like Isaac, are children of promise. . . . Therefore, brothers, we are not children of the slave woman, but of the free woman” (verses 28-31, NIV).

“While we are to be in harmony with God’s law, we are not saved by the works of the law, yet we cannot be saved without obedience. The law is the standard by which character is measured. But we cannot possibly keep the commandments of God without the regenerating grace of Christ. Jesus alone can cleanse us from all sin. He does not save us by law, neither will He save us in disobedience to law.”²

“Christ looks at the spirit, and when He sees us carrying our burden with faith, His perfect holiness atones for our shortcomings. When we do our best, He becomes our righteousness. It takes every ray of light that God sends to us to make us the light of the world.”³

1. *Faith and Works*, p. 37.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 95, 96.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 102.

by Crystal Lofton and Dlorah Burgeson

Dlorah Burgeson is an elementary education major, and Crystal Lofton is undecided. Both are freshmen at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

The Pressure of People, Places, and Things

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Gen. 15:4, 5

The culture and society in which we live can directly or indirectly influence virtually every decision we make. One decision with enormous impact on adult lives is the decision to have children. A comparison of the societal influences of ancient and current cultures on families reveals that the attitude about the importance of children for a family has changed a great deal over the millennia. For a North American couple in 1990 contemplating child-rearing, the following questions might well be asked: Should we have children? If so, should we have one or two? When should we begin? In contrast, the Middle Eastern society of the ancient Israelites and earlier cultures in the region had a completely different influence.

"The ancient Israelites' attitude could be summed up like this: 'We want children. We want them now. We will have as many children as we can because children are very important to us. In fact, we would rather be "wealthy" with children than with money.'"¹

Abraham and Sarah, the patriarch and matriarch of ancient and modern Israel, were profoundly influenced by such an attitude. Beyond the mere desire for children, Abraham needed an heir, a son.

During his time and culture, the integrity of the clan, the continuity of the family inheritance, and the passing on of the family name demanded an heir. Yet Abraham and Sarah were childless. (See Gen. 15:1—18:14; Ps. 127, 128; *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 317.)

For Sarah, childlessness contained even darker implications because barren women were considered to be under a curse. "It is hard for us to imagine how devastating these events would have been for the childless wife. She was spiritually ruined, socially disgraced, and psychologically depressed. She was married to a husband who wanted a child to assume the continuation of his family line. That husband might continue to love her but she felt that was a small consolation (1 Sam. 1:6-8). It was in fact a great mercy for a resentful husband could have made her life unbearable."² Sarah, however, was not without hope. God had promised an heir to Abraham. Yet somehow the fulfillment of God's promise was delayed.

Abraham and Sarah faced the choice of trusting God that "a son coming from your own body will be your heir" or devising their own solution that would satisfy their culture and its mores. Sarah made the choice, and Abraham accepted it. Soon after, Ishmael was born, Abraham's first son, from the slave girl Hagar. Thirteen

by David Nowack

David Nowack is an assistant professor of chemistry at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

years later, out of his body (Abraham's and Sarah's), God's promise was fulfilled with the birth of Isaac. At that point, unexpectedly, both the demands of their culture and God's promise had been fulfilled. Abraham had two heirs, a son of the "promise" and a son of the "flesh," or their own devising. It is from this story of Abraham's two sons that Paul drew an allegory in Galatians 4:21-30.

Abraham and Sarah fell prey to the pressures of their culture by trying to make their inheritance "sure" by their own actions. Paul uses this story to portray the distinctions that exist in the choices to be made by the Galatians. Should they return to the culture, attitudes, and actions of their Jewish ancestry, of which they claim to be heirs? Or should

they believe the promise of God when it comes to receiving their eternal inheritance? Paul's conclusion in the allegory is for the Galatians to deny their current culture and to live by the promises of God and by faith in Jesus Christ.

REACT

1. How are the pressures of our twentieth-century culture affecting our belief in the promises of God and our faith in Jesus Christ for our eternal inheritance?

2. The second coming of Christ is a promise just as sure as God's promise of a son for Abraham. Yet from our perspective today the Second Coming seems to be delayed. How can we strengthen our faith to overcome the "faith-weakening" effects of Christ's "delay"?

1. J. I. Packer, M. C. Tenny, and W. White, *Daily Life in Bible Times* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982), p. 59.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 62.

A Relationship of Meaning

HOW-TO

Key Text: Eph. 6:10

Heaven. It is a place that Adventists and most non-Adventists would like to be someday. Yet, for many people, the process of actually reaching the heavenly kingdom is still a mystery.

The problem lies largely in the fact that the Christian church—more specifically, the Adventist Church—has often forgotten the entire basis of our Christian life: knowing Jesus Christ. “Have a personal relationship with Christ” is a statement so often heard that it has become meaningless to many people. But a living and exciting experience with Christ depends upon our relationship with Him.

Unfortunately, many have fallen into the thinking that what we do, our deeds and works, is enough to get us into the gates of heaven. Have we forgotten that salvation is a gift—ours to take?

Our eternal life rests totally upon one thing: our acceptance of, and personal relationship with, Jesus Christ. Our “good deeds” come as a *result* of that. What a difficult concept to understand for those who have been so used to thinking in terms of behavior alone!

For us to keep from falling into the trap of righteousness by works, we must remind ourselves of some important points:

1. We need to commit ourselves to Christ each day of

our life. If we’ve been trying to battle the devil through our own powers, we’ve missed the whole point of the Christian experience with Christ. We must *allow* Christ to work *in* us, to work *with* us, and to work *for* us.

2. We can cultivate a relationship with Christ in the same way that we would with any other friend. Just as we must spend time cultivating a friendship, or any relationship, we must spend time *every day* with our Saviour.

3. We perform benevolent deeds as a result of our relationship with the Lord. Righteous deeds are not a *way* into heaven. They are a *result* of our experience and relationship with God. Heaven is a gift from God that we must accept simply by having a loving, honest, *personal* relationship with Jesus Christ. Paul said in Ephesians 6:10, “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of *his* might.”

Eternal life comes, not as a product of our deeds, but of our dependence on the might and power of God and our daily walk with Him.

REACT

If our “righteous” works would indeed have a causative bearing on our eternal destiny, in what way would it affect the act of God’s sacrifice of His Son, Jesus Christ?

by David K. Tan

David K. Tan is a second-year premed student at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Friday, June 8

Father's Robe or Father's Business?

OPINION

Key Text: Rom. 4:16 (Phillips)

Faith and works. Controversy indeed! Just listen. The great theologians are engaged in theological conundrums over which is important. The cart or the horse? Which pulls the other? The car or the engine? Faith and works are complementary. One is the outgrowth of the other. Jesus makes it so simple in the parable of the prodigal son.

In this parable the younger son gets a "bright and smart vision." He is mature enough to run his own affairs. He takes his inheritance and heads for "Hollywood," the pleasure city. Before long, he is milked dry and empty. In his misery he remembers that his dad makes royals out of mere servants. Why can't he go back home and let his father's merits, good name, and good reputation cover him? In penitence he goes back. And, truly, his father puts his own robe on him. He is "somebody" again. His older brother had stayed home. He had obeyed his dad and worked for him. He looked forward to a big inheritance someday. Therefore, his brother's homecoming upset him to no end. Why take a vagabond back? What did his father think of him anyway? For all his hard work and obedience, what had he received so far? Nothing. Nothing indeed!

Now the two boys show what

faith does and what works do. Faith makes one turn back to a father who is able to turn impossibilities into possibilities. The prodigal son was wretched, but he realized that his father's good reputation and dignity could make him respectable again. He reached out for it. And his dad puts his own robe on him and restores him to full sonship. His faith and confidence in his father changed the prodigal son's life completely.

Conversely, the holier-than-thou brother thought his obedience and hard work should earn him a bigger inheritance. And this is where he was wrong. If an inheritance were to be gained by hard work, then his father's servants probably deserved it more. And if it were to be gained on the basis of flawless behavior, his attitude, which showed that he was no better than his prodigal brother, would have disqualified him.

God's inheritance is a gift bestowed on sons. An unmerited favor. Faith makes it possible to turn to God to be "robed" in His righteousness.

REACT

1. Has there been a time in your life when you thought you were smarter than your parents or even God? What happened in such a situation? And what were the results of your "smart thinking"?

2. How can you give God the credit for the successes in your life?

by Yaw Ofori-Amanfo

Yaw Ofori-Amanfo is a theology major at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Lesson 11, June 10 - 16

Responsible Freedom



“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. The entire law is summed up in a single command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’” (Gal. 5:13, 14, NIV).

Sunday, June 10

The Path to Freedom

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Gal. 5:1-15

Millions of people are standing at the big imaginary gate. That big wonderful gate at the harbor of New York. Just why are these people waiting to get in? Freedom! These people are looking for wonderful freedom. The United States offers people the chance to be free. They can choose how they want to live their lives. They have freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom to choose a career, and, the most important, freedom to practice the religion of their choice.

People believe it is important to worship God in the manner in which they feel most comfortable. They don't want a government or ruler to tell them how to serve God. They desire to make that choice for themselves.

Many people today have the opportunity to be free, but they continue to be enslaved by drugs, alcohol, unbiblical sexual relationships, money-making schemes, and so forth. The road to freedom

for all people was bought at a tremendous cost. But that price was paid, and freedom is available to everyone. The cost was a Man's life. Jesus, the Son of God, gave up His life on the cross so that all humankind could be free.

When a person allows Jesus to come into his life he will be changed. The road is not an easy one, but Jesus can free you from the chains of addiction and bad habits. All you have to do is ask Jesus to come into your life. Tell Him you want to be free from slavery to sin. He loves you and understands how hard it is to resist temptation. He lived here on earth, and Satan tempted Him. Jesus never let Satan take over. He prayed to God for help and strength. We can do the same. Jesus can help us overcome sinful habits and resist temptation. He will do it for us if we let Him.

Just as people are waiting to get into the United States to experience freedom, so there are many people wanting freedom through Jesus. The good news is that you don't have to wait for Jesus. He is waiting for you!

by Trisha Baker

Trisha Baker is a junior social work major at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Responsible Freedom

LOGOS

Gal. 5:1-15

Theme: Faith Counters Legalism. *The legalist attempts to earn salvation by personal efforts. For the legalist, obedience to the law is a means of righteousness and acceptance with God. The faithful Christian's obedience to the law results from union with Christ. Such obedience gives evidence that faith is genuine. The legalist is judgmental of others, measuring worth by a subjective standard of holiness and failing to engage in realistic self-analysis.*

1. Freedom Through Christ (read Gal. 5:1)

Here Paul climaxes the first four chapters of his Epistle. To his converts who were almost persuaded to become circumcised and keep the rules of Jewish tradition, Paul insists that Christ set them free. Why should they return to bondage?

Why did Paul call this bondage, and why did he label it "another gospel" in chapter 1? After all, many of the practices they wanted to observe were given by God. Originally they were a sign of righteousness by faith.

Two reasons for Paul's strong condemnation were:

a. By Paul's time Jewish tradition included much more than God had commanded through Moses, and it had indeed become a yoke of bondage. Anyone who

scans the Talmud will soon see that the Jewish faith had become a religion of law with rules to govern every detail of life. The rules were no longer a sign of righteousness by faith, but the means of achieving it. This is why Paul called them "another gospel."

b. Ever since the days of Ezra, the law had served to divide Jews and Gentiles. This division was symbolized by the barrier in the Temple court, which warned Gentiles against venturing any farther lest they die. Thus the Gentiles were shut out from worshipping the true God, even though He had promised to bless them through Abraham.

In effect, observing Jewish traditions said that the blessings of Abraham were reserved for Jews alone and not for Gentiles. Paul says in Galatians 3:14 that "in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith" (RSV). So their going back to the sphere of law said that Christ had not yet kept His promise to bless the Gentiles.*

2. All the Way With the Law (read Gal. 5:2-4)

Twice in these three verses Paul emphasizes that the spheres of grace and law do not overlap. It is either one or the other for the Christian. "Christ will be of no value to you at all. . . . You have fallen away from grace" (verses 2-4, NIV). It would not be consistent for the Galatians to prac-

by Ralph E. Neall

Ralph E. Neall is chairman of the division of religion at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

tice circumcision only—they would have to go all the way and keep “the whole law.”

But this way of pleasing God was not God’s way. It substituted their own works for Christ’s works and in the process alienated them from Him. One is saved by grace, not by works. No matter how good they are, the works of a sinner are never good enough to please God. Only the spotless deeds of His Son are pleasing to the Father.

3. The Hope of Righteousness (read Gal. 5:5, 6)

Verse 6 gives us a succinct summary of the doctrine of righteousness by faith. We have righteousness imputed to us now, but we do not have it all imparted. That takes time. We confidently hope for the finishing touch when Jesus comes.

4. Dangers of Legalism (read Gal. 5:7-12)

We live in a day when most Adventist Christians will give at least lip service to the doctrine that we are saved by faith and not by works. But in actual practice we do sometimes depend upon works as the means of salvation. A little tends to contaminate “the whole batch of dough.” When Christians do not measure up to our expectations, we fall back on rules, especially when we hold some authority over others. We become impatient; it is hard to let the Holy Spirit do His work.

In verse 11 Paul seems to be contrasting himself with the

Judaizers. *They* were not being persecuted; Paul too could avoid persecution if he would agree with them. But he refused to compromise the gospel in any such way. He would not accept a gospel based on works. He would pay the price to keep it pure.

5. Balancing Truth (read Gal. 5:13-15)

Verse 1 left us the possibility of antinomianism (the idea that the law has no validity for Christians). But Paul never left that door open long. He never set men free from *all* obligations. We are free from the condemnation of the law, but we are not free to sin, for we now serve each other in love. This means that the Christian actually keeps the law when he loves his neighbor, for love is the fulfilling of the law.

Verse 15 closes this section with a wry comment on the Galatians’ lack of love. Legalists usually quarrel and complain, and Paul warns them against devouring each other. The way of legalism is the way of criticism and war; the way of grace is the way of love and peace.

How far can you go with Paul’s idea that the Christian is free? Would you dare say what he said in verse 1? Why or why not?

What problems might have resulted if the Galatians had made an extreme application of Paul’s challenge to live a free life? How is verse 13 a warning against this? What does this verse teach you about Christian freedom?

*T. David Gordon, “The Problem at Galatia,” *Interpretation*, January 1987, pp. 32-43.

Freedom in Christ

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Gal. 5:1-6

Ellen White gives us some background on what Paul faced during the apostasy in Galatia.

“Paul pleaded with those who had once known in their lives the power of God, to return to their first love of gospel truth. With unanswerable arguments he set before them their privilege of becoming free men and women in Christ, through whose atoning grace all who make full surrender are clothed with the robe of His righteousness. He took the position that every soul who would be saved must have a genuine, personal experience in the things of God.”¹

Ellen White also tells us of the flesh’s susceptibility to substitute ritualistic formality for a wholehearted relationship with Christ.

“To substitute external forms of religion for holiness of heart and life is still pleasing to the un-renewed nature as it was in the days of these Jewish teachers. Today, as then, there are false spiritual guides, to whose doc-

trines many listen eagerly. It is Satan’s studied effort to divert minds from the hope of salvation through faith in Christ and obedience to the law of God. In every age the archenemy adapts his temptations to the prejudices or inclinations of those whom 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 professing Christians, under pretense of honoring Christ, to cast contempt on the moral law and to teach that its precepts may be transgressed with impunity.”²

In addition, she warns of the danger of refusing the freedom that Christ gives. “Every soul who refuses to give himself to God is under the control of another power. He is not his own. He may talk of freedom, but he is in the most abject slavery. He is not allowed to see the beauty of truth, for his mind is under the control of Satan.”³

She leaves us with this truth: “Ceremonial sacrifices possess no value unless you discern their object, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.”⁴

1. *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 388.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 387.

3. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 466.

4. *Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 149.

by Mary Langenback

Mary Langenback is a nursing major at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Wednesday, June 13

Result or Cause?

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Rom. 4:11, 12

The Israelites corrupted the "law of Moses" by believing that salvation was achieved only through strict obedience to the law.

One example of this attitude is found in the rite of circumcision. Through Abraham, God established the circumcision of every male child as "a token of the covenant" between Himself and His people (Gen. 17:11). The circumcision itself was not a covenant, but a sign of "submission to the requirements of the covenant."* It is important to note that the circumcision of Abraham was "a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while still uncircumcised" (Rom. 4:11, NKJV). The act was the *result* of his faith, not the cause of it.

In the generations that followed, circumcision became an all-important ritual. It set the Israelites apart from other people, an external sign that they were God's chosen ones. They looked with pride on their symbol and viewed all uncircumcised peoples with contempt. They put their faith in the act, rather than recognizing it as a symbol of their justification by faith.

The apostles encountered this attitude during the early days of the church. A number of Jews,

converted to Christianity, maintained that it was necessary to observe the rigid laws and ceremonies of the Jewish system in order to be saved. They emphasized that all converted Gentiles must be circumcised (Acts 15:1, 5; Titus 1:10). This widespread movement caused such disagreement in the churches that it threatened their existence. Paul addressed the issue in letters to the Roman, Corinthian, Galatian, and Colossian churches. He pointed out that becoming an heir to the promise resulted, not from circumcision, but from walking "in the steps of the faith" that Abraham had before his circumcision (Rom. 4:12, NKJV). He warned that following the false teachings of the Judaizers would result in a meaningless relationship with Christ (Gal. 5:2). Paul was not attempting to underplay the significance of circumcision as a symbol of the covenant, but was trying to show that it was worthless as a means of earning salvation.

Outward acts do not bring about righteousness. We are not saved by our personal efforts. We are accounted righteous only by "faith working through love" (verse 6, NKJV), the result of a heart circumcised "in the Spirit, and not in the letter" of the law (Rom. 2:29, NKJV). Obedience to God's law is the *result* of our relationship with Jesus Christ, not the cause of it.

*The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 8, p. 211.

by Donald Yancheson

Donald Yancheson is a theology major at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

The Gift of Salvation: A Parable

HOW-TO

Key Text: Rom. 5:18

There once lived a man named Christian, who was in love with the King's daughter, Salvation. Christian longed for Salvation, but all of his efforts to secure her were in vain because he was a poor beggar with no money to pay the King for a dowry. Christian knew that in order to obtain Salvation, he must pay the sum of \$1,000,000. No man in Earthtown had that much money. In fact, all the wages in town added up to only \$1.00. No matter how hard Christian worked, he could never pay the enormous price required for Salvation.

One day a Stranger from far away visited Earthtown for a short time. He had heard of the terrible plight of Christian and his great love for Salvation. Moved with sympathy, the Stranger paid the price for Salvation and took her to meet Christian. When Christian saw his beloved Salvation he threw his arms around her and embraced her warmly. However, when she told him of the Stranger's wonderful gift his eyes flashed in anger, and he stormed out of the house with Salvation in pursuit. Grabbing the Stranger's arm, he pushed Salvation toward Him, declaring, "Take her! I don't need charity! I'd rather work the rest of my life at Sinners' Slaveyard than take your gift of Salvation!"

"Foolishness," one might say,

and that's right. The story is simply a figment of someone's imagination. Or is it? Could Adventists today react as Christian did toward God's gift of salvation? Obviously Christian did not understand the process of justification by faith.

However, the story of Christian could be changed to represent the justification process correctly. Christian was right to be in love with Salvation and to long to obtain her. All people on earth should recognize God as their Creator and long to serve Him eternally. Christian, however, did not know how to transform his love into faith in the Stranger. Adventists today must focus on the Saviour and rely on Him for salvation. Christian, instead, tried to earn Salvation through his works, even though his efforts were futile. The church too must realize that works without faith produce nothing. If Christian had accepted the Stranger's gift, he would have gained Salvation. Moreover, all Adventists must personally come into contact with their Saviour, accept His gift of righteousness, and allow His righteousness to change their life. Because all have sinned, all are condemned by the law that demands death as a penalty. They become children of God only through believing in Christ and allowing the Holy Spirit to change their life. God promises to help all who trust in Him. Because of justification, all are promised a happy-ever-after ending to the story of their life.

by Melissa Hanson

Melissa Hanson is an elementary education and English major at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Friday, June 15

Decisions

OPINION

Key Text: 1 Cor. 9:19

From amid the entanglement of a sheet, comforter, and pillow arose a partially unconscious figure. It was morning, and it seemed that I had just fallen asleep when my alarm beckoned me to begin a new day. After the usual morning rituals I made my way to the college to begin the week's midterm exams. At least I knew spring break would follow this routine of little sleep and much homework.

Oh, no! I had forgotten that today I had to decide whether or not I would serve as the pastor for the winter blind camp for Christian Record Services. Camp, you know, where sleep is often replaced by noisy campers and late-night dilemmas. I could hardly believe I had ever suggested I would do it. I needed a vacation desperately, and camp would take up eight of the nine days of spring break. Further, it would be unhealthy for me to deprive myself of a much-needed rest. But I was the camp's last chance for a pastor, for no one else the leaders had tried to get could do it. I wondered whether they could manage without me. It was not as though I had to work my way to heaven; it's grace, not works, that's going to save me.

This was my predicament.

Even though it was easy for me to justify turning down the job, I still felt the Lord wanted me to go, so I did. When I got back I was so run-down I caught a virulent virus that kept me in bed for a week. But through my misery I learned something that changed my perspective about Christian responsibility. Most of my decisions up to this point had made my interests and welfare paramount. I had never before seriously considered other people's interests and welfare as the basis for my decisions.

I knew by the end of camp that the sleep I had lost had been replaced by many precious experiences and rewards. I had been able to see the Lord move into the hearts of many hurting people. I had been able to see social, economic, and cultural barriers broken down and replaced by mutual respect and love. I knew good works wouldn't save me, but those good works had brought me closer to heaven. I knew I had the freedom not to be a slave to the task, but I learned that being a "slave" in Christ's work is the greatest of freedoms.

REACT

1. Why is it possible to find freedom in service?

2. Suggest ways we could be more sensitive to the needs of others in our decision-making.

By Mike McConnell

Mike McConnell is a senior theology major at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska, and the current Union for Christ director.

Lesson 12, June 17 - 23

Learning to Walk



“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” (Gal. 5:22, 23, NIV).

Sunday, June 17

The Perfect Perfection Plan

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Gal. 5:16-26

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such there is no law” (Gal. 5:22, 23, NIV).

* * *

I smiled with pleasure at the slip of paper tacked above my desk. Here before me I had the perfect perfection plan, the fruit of the Spirit. I was thrilled. Never before had I found something that so completely stated what I wanted to become. I vowed to myself that these were the qualities that I must attain for myself. I decided that if I tacked those words over my desk and looked at them, say 10 or 20 times a day, then perhaps I could accomplish my task of perfection.

Still going over the words—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, etc.—I quickly gathered up my books to rush to my 7:30 class. Though it was now 7:32, I felt a calm sense of triumph. Being late was no problem. As my perfection plan became a part of me, I knew that organization would replace chaos, and calmness would replace commotion in my life. With a little willpower and, of course, some help from God, I knew I could achieve my goal.

The day didn't go exactly as I had planned. I was late for my first class, and that was OK, but

in my second class the teacher gave a two-page “pop” quiz over the two chapters that I had somehow neglected to study. Leaving the class, I was in a very grouchy mood. The next thing I knew I was snapping at my best friend when she asked how I'd done on the quiz. At her hurt expression I felt a pang of guilt, but I couldn't bring myself to apologize. The rest of the day was a blur except for yelling at the little kid who made me spill a can of pop on my new blouse, and trampling across someone's flower garden in my hurry to get to work.

Storming into my room, I slammed my books down on my desk. A little note tacked above my desk fluttered as if to catch my attention. I ripped the note down and gave it a cursory glance—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness . . . I slowly crumpled the bit of paper and tossed it into the wastebasket. Sinking down on my bed, I wondered, *What went wrong?*

* * *

That's what this week's lesson is about. Maybe most people don't try to achieve perfection by using the “fruit-of-the-Spirit perfect perfection plan,” but most have a day-to-day struggle with themselves to overcome the “flesh” and achieve their idea of perfection. In this chapter of Galatians, Paul reveals a secret—maybe not the secret ingredients of a perfect perfection plan, but the secret of victory through Christ.

by Angela Rexin

Angela Rexin is a journalism student at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

The Spirit Versus the Flesh

LOGOS

Gal. 5:16-26

Theme: The Spirit Versus the Flesh. *The heart of Paul's message is that if you are infilled and led by the Holy Spirit, you are not "under the law" (Gal. 5:18). He does not mean that life in the Spirit releases a person from keeping the Ten Commandments. (Compare Rom. 8:3, 4.) In the context of the book his meaning is that the Spirit-directed life delivers the believer from (a) the futile attempt to earn his salvation by obedience to the law and (b) the inevitable spiritual failure and disaster that result from using the law as a means of salvation.*

1. The Battle of the Mind (read Gal. 5:17)

The battle of the sinner is in the mind. It is between the carnal nature and the spiritual nature, between the carnal forces brought to bear by the powers of evil, and the spiritual influences of God's Spirit and the angels (Eph. 6:12), between the "old man" and the "new man" (4:24). In this battle the carnal nature centers in self and sin; the spiritual nature centers in Christ and righteousness.

What suggestions can you come up with for winning the battle of the mind?

2. False Dichotomy

Many Christians have been led to believe that the sin problem is

centered in a person's body and that if his habits can be externally controlled, the sin problem will be solved. This is precisely the problem Paul addresses as he pleads with the Galatians not to return foolishly to the legalistic patterns of the Jewish religion. The Jewish leaders, following somewhat the Greek thinking, had unconsciously separated mind and body and were concentrating on the external pattern of body behavior. Paul, with his strong scriptural background, saw people holistically, not dualistically—as a unity, not a dichotomy. He saw that the mind and body work together as a unit, with thinking affected by behavior, and behavior directed and initiated by thinking. Evil habits are not really located in the flesh, but in the mind. (Locking up a man so that he cannot steal does not mean he is no longer a thief. On the other hand, separating the man from his habit may greatly influence his thinking and help him become an honest person.)

Therefore, Paul gives the secret of Christian living: "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5:16).

Why is spiritual meditation important for strengthening the well-spring of actions—the mind?

3. Victory Over the "Flesh" (read Rom. 8:3, 4)

Christ was "made . . . sin for us" (2 Cor. 5:21). Since the law failed because of the weakness of

by Siegfried H. Roeske

Siegfried H. Roeske is an associate professor of religion at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

humanity, God provided another method. Christ came to do what the law could not do (see Heb. 10:20). He took on human nature weakened by 4,000 years of sin. But despite the weakness of that nature, Christ conquered and was victorious over sin, condemning the sin that so "easily besets us." Now Christ, by coming into our lives, wants to conquer sin in us even as He conquered in His life.

It can never be our victory alone; it must be victory through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit will bring Christ's righteousness to every believing and repentant sinner and save from all sin—its guilt and its power.

4. Freedom From the Law Does Not Mean Freedom to Disobey (read Rom. 3:31)

a. In Galatians Paul is speaking to the person who, having once enjoyed newfound freedom in Christ, is again "putting himself under the law." However, the problem is not in the eagerness he shows to keep the law. The real problem is twofold. (1) He mistakenly feels he is "keeping the law" when, in reality, he does not understand the deeper meaning of law keeping—namely, complete loving (Gal. 5:22, 23). (2) He believes obedience to the law can earn salvation in some way (Rom. 3:28, 29). This ends in disaster.

b. Many Christians today are misled, thinking that because obedience does not have any merit-earning power, it follows that disobedience is a small matter to God. The Christian's proper reaction to the misuse of the law should be neither to reject and depreciate it nor to neglect true obedience. This is what the Gentiles do, and this also ends in disaster.

c. Obedience is not "slavery" to externals (Ps. 40:8; Heb. 8:10).

True Christians will not be "under the law" so far as "slavery" to externals is concerned. They will catch the spirit of the law, which is Christ Jesus. They will see law keeping and obedience as loving and serving Christ, who is the embodiment of the law of liberty (James 2:12). Obedience will not be "slavery," but a privilege. True Christians are particular in their obedience because they are particular in their love for Christ. "There is therefore now no condemnation to those which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:1). They will recognize that law keeping is really "love keeping" (see John 14:15; 15:14). They will want to obey, even in small matters, because they love the Lord.

d. The obedience of the carnal man and that of the spiritual man are of different quality. (See 1 John 5:2-4; Heb. 6:4-6.) (1) The carnal man's obedience is legalistic and shallow. He does not see his actions as expressions of faith and love or of the lack thereof. His obedience is usually a self-generated attempt to appear righteous in man's sight without the robe of Christ's righteousness. (2) The spiritual man's obedience has deeper motives. Sin to him is serious. It caused the death of the Son of God, and it causes the disintegration of the human personality (Rom. 6:23). The spiritual man sees his actions as an expression of his faith and love for Christ. Thus his obedience is deeper and broader, and it is always directed to Christ, not as a means of atonement for sin, but as an expression of praise for what Christ has done on Calvary.

Can our external behavior appear correct without the Holy Spirit as an indwelling power? Explain.

Producing Fruit

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Gal. 5:22, 23

The central theme of Galatians 5:16-26 is "the fruit of the Spirit." In this passage of Scripture Paul talks about good and bad fruit and the way to produce fruit. Ellen White defines the fruit we bear as "our words and actions."¹

But what importance does all this talk about fruit hold for us today? Ellen White says that "the fruit we bear is the only test of the character of the tree before the world. This is the proof of our discipleship."² We are to show our commitment to Christ by our fruit—our words and actions. Without this proof the world has no indication that we are Christians. God has called His disciples to be a distinctive people. A unique lifestyle distinguishes those who know Christ from those who don't.

How can the proper fruit be produced? "Prayers, exaltation, and talk are cheap fruits, which are frequently tried on; but fruits that are manifest in good works . . . are genuine fruits, and grow naturally upon a good tree."³ Christ is not looking for those things we "try on" ourselves. Good works are naturally produced by a good person. But doing

good things does not make a person good.

Jesus said in John 15:5: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me, and I in him, he will bear much fruit" (NIV). God promises to produce good works in our lives as long as we are one with Him. As we study His character revealed in the Bible, as we pray and commit ourselves to obedience to His will, we unite ourselves with Him and produce good works. Christ promises results.

How is this accomplished? Through the Holy Spirit. "The sap of the vine, ascending from the root, is diffused to the branches, sustaining growth and producing blossoms and fruit. So the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Saviour, pervades the soul, renews the motives and affections, and brings even the thoughts into obedience to the will of God, enabling the receiver to bear the precious fruit of holy deeds."⁴

As we bring ourselves into contact with Christ, His Spirit works in us, changing us, so that we become the kind of people who naturally do and say those things that glorify God before the world. We are also changed into the likeness of Christ and receive the fruits of joy and peace. What a blessing!

1. *Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 598.

2. *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 348.

3. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 24.

4. *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 284.

by Stacie Greer

Stacie Greer is a first-year nursing student at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Wednesday, June 20

The Flesh and the Spirit: Struggle and Victory

EVIDENCE

Key Text: Gal. 5:17

God's Spirit empowers us to live the Christian life. He releases us from the bondage of sin and our futile attempts to earn salvation through obedience to God's law. However, even with those acknowledgments, scholars have not agreed on how to interpret Galatians 5:17. On the one hand, it may mean a continual struggle between the flesh and the Spirit. On the other, it may mean that God promises us an absolute victory over sin. Both interpretations have elements of truth.

Romans 8 sheds light on the problem. In verse 2 Paul writes that the "law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death" (NASB). This indicates victory. But in verse 13 Paul says that if you are living by the Spirit, "you are putting to death the deeds of the body." Here the image is of a struggle. So the book of Romans points to the former interpretation of Galatians 5:17.

The concept that at conversion God promises us absolute victory over sin may seem weak when we consider that Paul was addressing backsliding Christians in Galatia. Obviously they had been converted, yet they were not perfect. The notion of never having a struggle with sin after conversion is akin to the "once saved, always

saved" theology. We could call it "once perfect, always perfect"!

We have seen that the Bible does point to a struggle in the Christian life. But what about victory? We can illustrate victory by thinking of a war. Many battles are fought in a war. Even though we will win many battles through the Spirit, many battles lie ahead. The Christian life of sanctification is a series of battles in the context of a war. It is not as if we are hit with a bolt of lightning and suddenly we are free from sin. Conversion is a daily occurrence.

The Holy Spirit is the source of all victory in our lives. It is only through the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit that we can produce the fruit of the Spirit. Paul advises the Galatian Christians, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (verse 25). Our part is to cooperate with God and allow Him to have free rein in our life. We can win the battles with God as our general!

REACT

1. Paul says, "Live in the Spirit." What does this mean? How do you do it?

2. In the list of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22, 23), which two are strongest in your life? In what two areas do you need the most improvement? How do you think you could improve? What is God's part and your part in this?

by Jim Mules

Jim Mules is a freshman theology and history major at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Chewing on Dry Crackers

HOW-TO

Key Text: Gal. 5:22, 23

Can you see J.R. in *Dallas* becoming a gentle lion; or Alexis in *Dynasty*, a kind and peaceful soul; or the people in *Knot's Landing*, honest and faithful? No? Me neither! But what about the cafeteria jokes below the belt line? Or the girl who is dating two boys at the same time, one at home and one on campus? What about that great, handsome guy who is too proud to say "Hi" to less fortunate students and only to those in the in crowd?

I think it is time to retrain our taste buds! A low-sodium, high-fiber, and vitamin-enriched diet enhances the quality of life and doesn't have to taste bad or be boring at the same time. Now, how do we go about liking a recipe that asks for love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control? We are not born with a taste for them, and today's values seem to be the opposite.

1. Breathe in deeply the fresh air of God's presence and help every morning. "We never become truly spiritual by sitting down and wishing to become so. You must undertake something so great that you cannot accomplish it unaided" (Phillips Brooks). To me the fruit of the Spirit is to realize that I need

help in dealing with people and situations, and that with God's help I can face every work of the day with energy and enthusiasm. Many slogans try to convince us that self-actualization is accomplished only by having our dreams fulfilled. However, fulfilled wishes bear children, and possibly we will never be truly satisfied. "Happiness doesn't come from doing what we like to do, but from liking what we have to do" (Wilfred Peterson).

2. Reduce your contact with high-cholesterol substances like certain friends, books, movies, and types of music that might deaden your spiritual sensitivity.

3. Don't assume you are already perfect. Sometimes I still get indigestion. Occasionally I wish I hadn't said or done something. It is by God's grace and His "antacid" that I become sweet and friendly again. He helps me to my feet after I have failed or had my self-esteem flattened. God knows we make mistakes, but He expects us to keep trying.

REACT

Have you ever chewed on dry crackers? After a while they become sweet and last longer than any candy bar! Crackers are probably much more healthful for you, as well. What spiritual lessons can you draw from this?

by Gudrun Stille

Gudrun Stille is a senior nursing student from West Germany.

Friday, June 22

How I Understand the Controversy Between the Body and Spirit

OPINION

Key Text: Mark 14:38

On Tuesdays and Thursdays I teach an advanced beginners' swimming class at the college pool. Today, once again, we worked on our dives. One of my students, Molly, was afraid to try her dive on the diving board, so I was tutoring her on the edge away from the board. She was fearful of letting her head go in first. By tilting it back, she tried to let her shoulders hit the water first. This produced a number of resounding belly flops, but she continued to practice with my encouragement. Sometime later she was able to complete a long, shallow dive. This was indeed progress, but a hands-over-the-head, legs-straight, head-down dive still seemed out of her reach.

This story illustrates well the fight that exists between body and Spirit. Our human nature is

afraid to dive headfirst into God's way. Our mind wants to, but our human nature fears that we will no longer be in control. God is standing there, coaxing, showing us by example the best way to hold our hands and keep our legs straight. But because we've experienced a few belly-flops, we're scared. That's the problem! We can't live God's way by doing it the natural way. Molly's problem was her feet moving. Instead of doing a half-somersault and just letting her feet follow the rest of her body, she would step off mid-dive and belly-flop. Her mind knew that her head needed to splash in first, but her body wouldn't let her. We need to keep *our* feet still. With our mind we need to choose to surrender to God and allow *Him* to work out His will in our life. Right actions are the result of a right relationship with Him. Our duty is to maintain that relationship by meeting with Him *every* day.

by Mark Welch

Mark Welch is a freshman theology major at Union College, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Lesson 13, June 24 - 30

Truth or Consequences



“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows” (Gal. 6:7, NIV).

Sunday, June 24

Lessons From the Peas

INTRODUCTION

Scripture: Gal. 6

I like snow peas. They're the kind you eat pod and all. Sweet. Crisp. Tender. Stir-fried Oriental style or simply raw in a tossed garden salad. Yummy. It's hard to get enough of them at more than two dollars a pound at the super-market.

Have you ever seen them grow? In spite of their luscious fruit, they have their weaknesses (as we all do). They don't stand up very well on their own but need constant support.

Selecting the right type of seed is important, since not all types of pea produce edible pods—in fact, some pods can be stringy and bitter. Some seed types are better suited for specific soil or weather conditions. If seed is too old, it may not sprout well.

No one's garden is without its weeds. But be gentle. More than once I've uprooted a precious pea plant by thoughtlessly yanking at some parasitic weed growing too close to it. Removal of those

pests is much less painful after the soil has been softened by a gentle rain.

Soil conditions can make a lot of difference in how well peas grow and produce. Soil that's loose, fertile, cool, and moist, yet adequately drained, is ideal for snow peas. Little can be expected from ground that's rocky, hard, or parched.

As in most worthwhile endeavors, effort and perseverance are essential. Simply preparing the soil and sowing seed are not enough. Plants need protection from insects, gophers, rabbits, and drought. It's worth it though. Few things are as awe inspiring or gratifying as seeing sprouts bursting from the dark earth, observing plants growing and blossoming, and finally picking and eating the mature fruit.

While undeniably essential, the gardener's effort is really minute compared to that of God in supplying the earth, sun, rain, and every other element necessary to provide a harvest.

We may learn a lot from a few simple pea plants.

by Robert Lee

Robert Lee is completing doctoral studies in health science at Loma Linda University's School of Public Health, Loma Linda, California.

Christ's Last Will and Word

LOGOS

Gal. 6

Theme: Living What We Profess. *If we profess to be spiritual Christians, we should live that way, treating each other kindly and gently. If we sow that kind of seed, we will reap that kind of harvest.*

1. Kindness

"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Look to yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burden, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:1, 2, RSV).

Paul sounds a little like Christ as He spoke the night before His crucifixion. That night He had said: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; even as I love you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34, RSV). It was simple, emphatic, and final. Simple—because "the law of Christ" has one commandment, not 10 or 1,000. Emphatic—because there is no acceptable substitute. A faith that has no concern for the spirituality and well-being of others has missed the point. Final—because it was Christ's last will and word. With unflinching consistency Paul makes it the last word of all his letters. Romans and Galatians, sometimes construed into letters of picky, abstract theology, are no ex-

ception. It is simple, indeed. "Love does no wrong to the neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10, RSV). "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2, RSV).

We draw three simple conclusions about "the law of Christ":

a. *It shows concern.* True love is not indifferent or passive. It is an active, creative force that intervenes in the sins and defeats of others. It may even be confrontational (Luke 17:1-4). One of the most stunning insights of Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon is that passive acceptance of the destructive patterns of the alcoholic by his loved ones may in fact steady and even accelerate the alcoholic's demise. They are now being described as "enablers" in the addiction process. Similar notions of acceptance and love may have contributed to the spiritual undoing of many brothers and sisters. Paul speaks with the tenor of active intervention: "restore him" (Gal. 6:1).

b. *It is kind.* It takes a delicate hand to help another person repudiate his or her sin, yet to know acceptance at the same time. Paul knew how to do it (see 1 Cor. 5:1, 2; 2 Cor. 2:5-8).

c. *It is careful.* Striving for the restoration of another person is not without its dangers. Paul evidently knew that many people thus occupied had been and could be overcome by false notions of "the good life."

by Sigve and Serena Tonstad

Sigve and Serena Tonstad graduated from Loma Linda University's School of Medicine in 1979. Presently they are completing residencies at Loma Linda. Serena is also working toward an M.P.H. in epidemiology.

What sorts of burdens do your friends carry? How could you help them with these burdens?

2. Realism (read Gal. 6:3-6)

"For if any one thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself" (verse 3, RSV).

People are not nothing. Paul is not saying that we are worthless. Everybody has gifts, talents, and assets. It is OK to shout: "I am somebody!" But preoccupation with oneself blocks the path to fulfilling "the law of Christ." False pretenses erect walls between people. True concern for others is possible only for the person who has a realistic view of himself. Then we shall see that we are all in the same boat, helplessly drifting in a sea of insecurity, sin, and broken resolutions. It is frightening to let the mask fall, but it is also liberating. Dignity grows out of humility. Self-assurance is the fruit of ruthless honesty. Relationships thrive on both. Those who face the truth about themselves are the most eager and effective in reaching out to others.

How concerned are you about creating a good impression? Is your concern greater or lesser than it used to be? Why?

3. Come Harvest (read Gal. 6:7-10)

"Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (verse 7, RSV).

Art Buchwald says that "you can fool all of the people all of the time." Years of practice have made us skilled in the art of making things look good when they really are not. Once in a while someone gets caught, as Ben Johnson did in the Seoul Olympics, but he was certainly not the only steroid-using athlete in town. Human beings can be easily mocked, and no one is more

easily mocked and deceived than the person in the mirror.

"God is not mocked." The harvest will show whether we have played religion or practiced it, whether we were in it for our own sake or for some other reason, whether we sought the prize of a new creation or were content with cheap imitations. And though we sometimes despair even as we have committed ourselves to the real thing, the word from Paul is to hang in there. "In due season we shall reap" (verse 9, RSV).

4. A New Creation (read Gal. 6:11-16)

"But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation" (verses 14, 15, RSV).

Paul urged the Galatians to fulfill "the law of Christ" by bearing one another's burden. But this is only the fruit of his message, not its focus. He was confident that the gospel would simplify life, transform people, heal relationships, and solve problems, but he was not in the lucrative business of giving good advice. To be sure, he said very little about how to do it. The circumcision of the Jews and the lack of it among the Gentiles were alike worthless in the new system. The cross of Jesus had brought in a new reality and created a completely different set of terms. Those who took pride in what they had were on the wrong track, and those who took pride in what they did not have were equally mistaken. The cross builds the new creation on its own terms.

What does it mean to have the cross as your model in daily life? How often do you think about the

cross each day? How do you think your life would be different if the cross were a more significant model for you?

5. Concluding Remarks

"Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus" (Gal. 6:17, RSV).

"Any questions?" That is how most teachers or lecturers finish

their presentations. Paul has a different conclusion. It is almost as though he does not think any questions will be necessary or even appropriate. His letter invites reflection, then action. It is time to join him or keep quiet. He has a mission. It is a serious, compelling business. He must go on, and so should we till we bear on our bodies "the marks of Jesus."

Tuesday, June 26

Brotherly Love

TESTIMONY

Key Text: Gal. 6:1-5

As members of the church family, it is our responsibility to look after the spiritual growth of our brothers and sisters. "We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves" (Rom. 15:1, NIV). Ellen White states that "he who ignores the grave necessities of his brother will in the providence of God be brought over the same ground that his brother has traveled in trial and sorrow, and by a bitter experience it will be proved to him that he is as helpless and needy as was the suffering one whom he repulsed. 'Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.'"¹

"The nearer we come to Jesus, and the more clearly we discern the purity of His character, the more clearly shall we see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the less shall we feel like exalting ourselves. . . . We shall know that our sufficiency is in Christ alone and shall make the apostle's confession our own: 'I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing.' 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of

our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.' Romans 7:18; Galatians 6:14."²

As you approach the one who has erred "you will call to mind the many times you have erred and how hard it was to find the right way when you had once left it. You will not push your brother into greater darkness, but with a heart full of pity will tell him of his danger."³ "In the spirit of meekness, 'considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted' (Gal. 6:1), go to the erring one, and 'tell him his fault between thee and him alone.' . . . Make no attempt at self-justification. Let all your effort be for his recovery. In treating the wounds of the soul, there is need of the most delicate touch, the finest sensibility."⁴

It is through God's strength that we can demonstrate such a high level of unselfish love for our Christian family. "All who consecrate body, soul, and spirit to God's service will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical, mental, and spiritual power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. Christ gives them the breath of His own spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind."⁵

1. *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 399.

2. *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 561.

3. *Mount of Blessing*, p. 128.

4. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 440.

5. *Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 306.

by Cami Dale

Cami Dale is finishing a Master in Public Health degree at Loma Linda University's School of Public Health, Loma Linda, California.

Who Is in Control of Your Life?

EVIDENCE

Key Text: James 2:14 (TEV)

Steve wasn't a Christian; in fact, he wasn't even sure that God exists. As a young boy Steve had attended a small church near Miami, Florida. However, what he heard from the pulpit and what he observed from members and clergy did not appeal to his sense of integrity. It wasn't long before he completely rejected "Christianity" as a philosophical basis for living. Firmly committed in his own mind to do his part in making this world a better place, Steve began searching for more practical truths to live by. As the years passed, Steve settled into a philosophy akin to secular humanism. Essentially he felt that man had within himself the resources to love and do good. God, he believed, was just a human invention leading to false hopes, unrealistic expectations, and abdication of responsibility. With this sense of accountability for his life, Steve began studying ways to improve his mental, physical, and emotional health.

At age 35, while attending a stress-management seminar in San Diego, California, Steve heard of Loma Linda University's School of Public Health. Learning about a doctoral-degree program that trained specialists in wellness and lifestyle intervention, he became excited about gaining skills that would enable him to help people stop smoking, eat

properly, lose weight, decrease risk factors for heart disease, and in general develop and maintain a more healthful lifestyle. Steve decided to quit his job and spend the next four years in the Doctor of Health Science program.

At that point Steve's path and my very different route merged into a highly structured and time-intensive academic schedule. Although I was 10 years younger and had little else in common with him, we became close friends.

Needless to say, attending a Christian college was awkward for him. On several occasions Steve confided in me that he couldn't understand the Christian mentality that would say, "Thou shalt not steal," then not think twice about making unauthorized copies of copyrighted computer programs without any intent to purchase them. Steve saw no merit in a religion or philosophy that focused on the letter (requirement-centered) rather than the intent of the law (truth- and fairness-centered).

One afternoon in a lecture on the determinants of healthful behaviors, our professor began to discuss "locus of control theory." This theory looks at the individual's perception of responsibility for life's outcomes and consequences. Simply stated, a person who credits failure or success to his own choices and actions is classified as having an internal locus of control. One who attributes failure or success to

by Wes Youngberg, D.H.Sc., M.P.H.

Wes Youngberg is director of Corporate Wellness at Loma Linda University's School of Public Health, Loma Linda, California.

chance or to a power outside his control is said to have an external locus of control. (In lifestyle counseling, understanding a person's locus of control is important in meeting his individual needs and changing certain health behaviors that increase the risk of preventable disease.)

After some classroom discussion on the implications of this theoretical model, Steve's facial expression gave evidence that a major question in his mind had been at least partially answered. He leaned over to me and in a tone revealing newfound truth whispered, "Christians have an external locus of control, don't they?" I was stunned. He was right. But surely there was an explanation for this.

Steve, a highly ethical secular humanist, now clearly saw Christianity as a crutch, an excuse for not accepting responsibility for one's actions. Confused, I turned to prayer. Knowing Steve's sincerity in seeking truth, I asked God to lead me to a logical explanation that would exonerate true Christianity within the context of the theoretical model. My prayer became an instrument by which God inspired me to seek out the answer.

With a little extra study of this model I learned that one who attributes his external locus of control to a "powerful other," such as God, can respond much differently

to life's challenges if he actually has a close and intimate relationship with Him. A true Christian seeks to obey God's will, including the greatest commandment of *love* (see 1 Cor. 13).

Steve was pleased to discover that while a true Christian gives his entire will to God, it is not to disavow responsibility for his actions. Rather, he does it to receive the ability to have total control over his life through the power given by Jesus. Christianity isn't a crutch or an excuse for passivity. It is an infinite source of power that a person needs in order to be truly in control of his life. Without Christ's death a person has no ultimate control of his destiny. How great a gift it is to receive the opportunity to regain control of one's eternal destiny!

Steve and I have since graduated and gone our separate ways. Recently I had the opportunity to confide to Steve that God had used him to teach me that He is the source of power but that it is completely up to me what I do with it.

REACT

1. What evidence in your life illustrates to others the positive difference Christ could make in their life?

2. What are the fruits of your experience with Christ? From what sources do you draw daily nourishment?

Cold or Kind?

HOW-TO

Key Text: Matt. 18:15-17

It was only a small comment, but the tone and decibel intensity gave it easy access into my “self-doubt closet.” I was devastated. Already nearly overwhelmed with bewilderment mixed with remorse, I needed support, not attack. Yet I felt I deserved neither.

We’ve all experienced it—and given it. Hurt, that is. Deep, wrenching, surprising—perhaps from a “best friend.” Sometimes well-meaning. At times poorly given. If Christ has granted us undeserved acceptance and support, in what practical ways can we assist others who, like us, err?

1. Eye surgery. First, submit to major surgery to “cast out the beam” from your own eye (Matt. 7:5). Pray until you can approach the erring person with a motive to win him, not to “give him what he deserves.”

2. Shoe fit. Try on his “shoes,” background, struggles. Has he been “overtaken in a fault”? Is he arrogant, belligerent, demeaning? What’s happening on the inside? Discouragement about school? Breakup in a relationship? Insecure future? Low self-esteem? How was it for you when your shoes didn’t fit well? (See *Testimonies*, vol. 1, p. 166.)

3. Proximity. Come close to the person in the wrong. Gossip *always* separates. Guard his feelings as you would your own. Keep-

ing the situation private, approach him kindly. If your effort is disregarded, take someone with you who can be objective. (You *could* be wrong.) Your goal is to seek the truth of the situation and win the person, not to protect your own skin.

4. Preparation. When you “restore” your friend, be specific and brief. Avoid mentioning his unrelated deficiencies. Assure him of your confidence and willingness to help in a specific way. (See *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 281.) Show how the Lord has helped you in your struggle to do right. Most of all, listen attentively and prayerfully to his thoughts.

Be on guard for “battle fatigue”—that weariness resulting from apparent failure or the “bother” of being your “brother’s keeper.” The adversary knows Christ has communication techniques that truly work, and he will try any scheme to prevent you from experiencing their exciting results! But, immersed in Christ’s security, we “glory in the cross,” demonstrating His acceptance and assistance to others where they are, producing fruit together.

REACT

1. Is it hypocritical to offer suggestions or correction to a friend when you are far from perfect yourself? Why or why not?

2. When is it appropriate to discuss someone else’s problems with a second person before talking to the offender yourself? Is this gossip? Why?

by Darla A. Lee

Darla Lee has a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree from Walla Walla College and a Master in Public Health degree from Loma Linda University.

Friday, June 29

Seed to Sow

OPINION

Key Text: Gal. 6:7

“For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7).

Many times while I was growing up, this verse was quoted to me as my hinder side was warmed for some seed of mischievousness I had sown. Somehow I got the idea that as long as I sowed the “right” seed I’d come out all right in the “great harvest.”

Although this verse may apply to individual good deeds or misdeeds, the context of the chapter suggests a much deeper meaning.

Paul nestles this concept between two primary foci. The first deals with meeting the needs of those who are hurting and discouraged, and who have slipped in their relationship with God (see verses 1, 3).

In contrast, Paul’s second focus is on the sowing of seed that produces merely external goodness (see verses 12, 13).

Regarding this second focus, E. J. Waggoner went so far as to say that such seed sowers “glory in the flesh of their ‘converts.’” If they can count so many as belonging to “our denomination” or cite so much “gain” in the past year, they feel virtuously happy. Numbers and appearances count for much with men, but for nothing with God.¹

Paul qualifies which focus of seed sowing the Christian should concentrate on by saying, “God for-

bid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (verse 14).

When the cross is our focus the seed we plant will be Christ’s. This is the same seed Christ sowed on earth: the seed of kindness, love, and helpfulness to those in need.

It wasn’t the theory of Christ’s teachings that causes Him to be remembered. Instead, it was His life of consistently fulfilling human need.

Paul also brings out the privilege of meeting human need “especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (verse 10). Does this seem to be the primary focus of God’s church today? Are we so focused on the front door of the church that we’ve forgotten the back door? How should Paul’s instruction, “especially unto them who are of the household of faith,” fit into the church’s seed-sowing and harvesting plans?

In my opinion, the Lord is not waiting for a larger church with more members who merely believe the same set of teachings. The Bridegroom is waiting for a bride so in love with Him that she can’t help but reveal that love by meeting human need around her and especially within her.

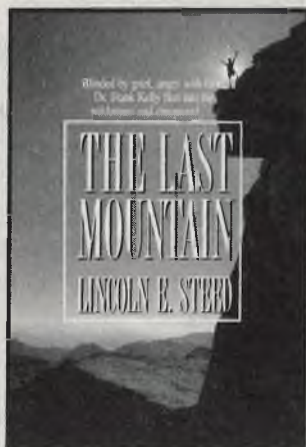
“Pure and undefiled religion is not a sentiment, but the doing of works of mercy and love. This religion is necessary to health and happiness. It enters the polluted soul-temple, and with a scourge drives out the sinful intruders. Taking the throne, it consecrates

by Fred Riffel

Fred Riffel, an intern pastor with the Iowa-Missouri Conference, is currently working on a Master of Public Health degree at Loma Linda University’s School of Public Health, Loma Linda, California.

all by its presence, illuminating the heart with bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. It opens the windows of the soul heavenward, letting in the sunshine of God's love. With it comes

serenity and composure. Physical, mental, and moral strength increase, because the atmosphere of heaven, as a living, active agency, fills the soul. Christ is formed within, the hope of glory.^{1,2}



THE LAST MOUNTAIN

A story of pursuit—the soul's restless pursuit of life's meaning . . . and God's relentless pursuit of that wandering soul. Though Frank Kelly ran, he couldn't have known what awaited him on . . . the last mountain.

Another fine book from Pacific Press.

Available from your Adventist Book Center or call 1-800-447-7377.

1. E. J. Waggoner, *The Glad Tidings*, p. 254.

2. *Messages to Young People*, p. 142.

Next Quarter's Lessons The Book of Psalms

For readers who have not yet received a copy of COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY for third quarter 1990, here is a summary of the first two lessons:

Lesson 1: *Tehillim*—Songs of Praise and Thanksgiving

Scripture: Ps. 150:2, 3

Theme: What Do the Psalms Have to Offer? The psalms are inspired prayer-hymns spoken or sung by God's servants of old, expressing praise and thanksgiving to an exalted God and bearing reassuring testimony to His grace and power in judgment and salvation.

Lesson 2: God's Blueprint for Happiness

Scripture: Ps. 1

Theme: Righteousness and Ungodliness Contrasted. The Lord's blessings now and for eternity are given to those who live by His instruction. Those who do not are called wicked ones. Their temporary existence will end in eternal extinction.

To order your personal copy of COLLEGIATE QUARTERLY, contact your Adventist Book Center, or write:

Pacific Press Publishing Association

P.O. Box 7000

Boise, ID 83707

Prices:

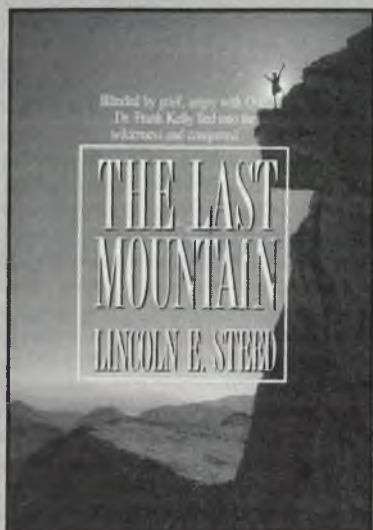
U.S.A.: One-year subscription—\$9.60

Single copy—\$4.25

Outside U.S.A.: One-year subscription—\$12.60

Single copy—\$4.25

Frank Kelly ran—but he couldn't hide!



Stricken by his wife's death in a rock-climbing accident, Dr. Frank Kelly fled from the society he despised and the God he blamed. His flight spanned continents, and the solitude of the untamed wilderness became his home.

Frank Kelly hid. But can a man hide from God? Author Lincoln Steed brings the drama of this true adventure story to life in *The Last Mountain*.

**A powerful story of the stubborn human spirit and
God's stubborn love.**

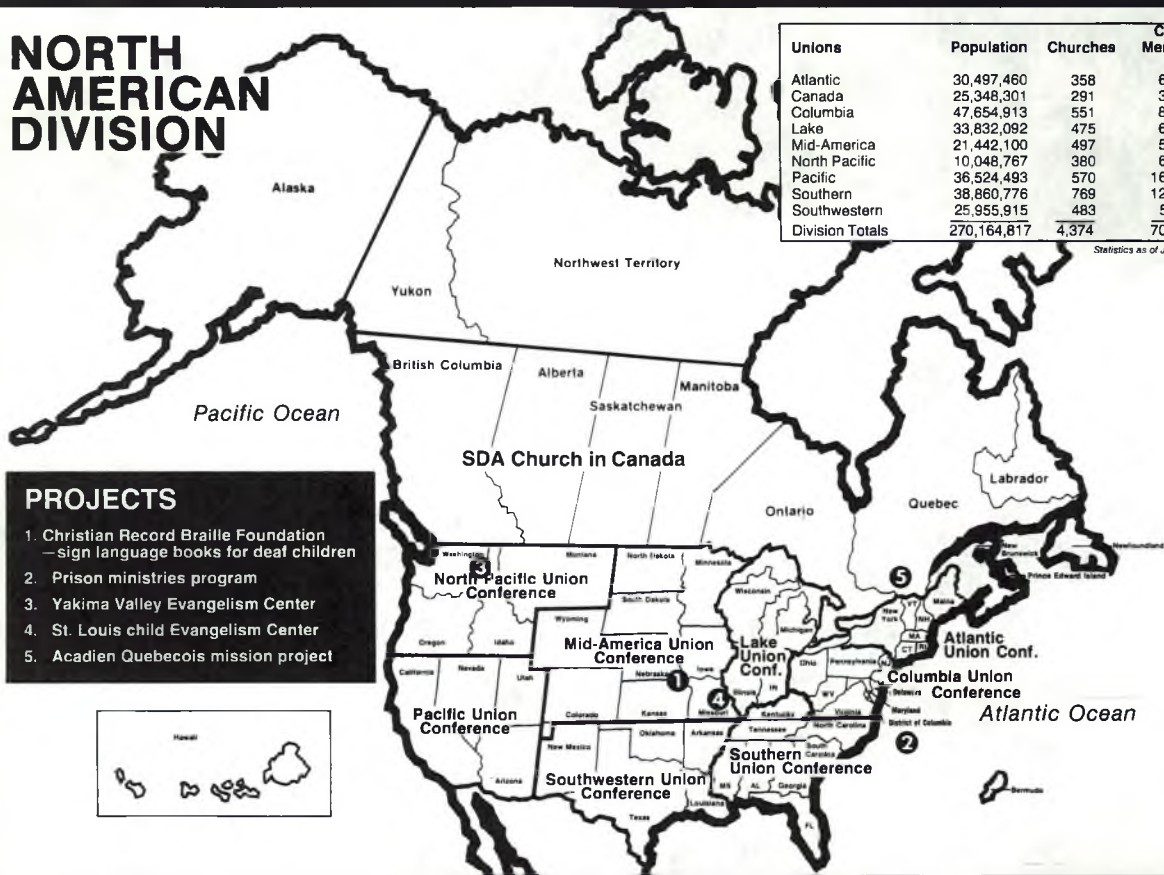
Available from your Adventist Book Center or
call 1-800-447-7377.



NORTH AMERICAN DIVISION

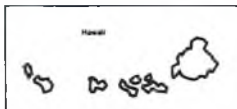
Unions	Population	Churches	Church Members
Atlantic	30,497,460	358	61,219
Canada	25,348,301	291	36,363
Columbia	47,654,913	551	81,181
Lake	33,832,092	475	64,703
Mid-America	21,442,100	497	54,859
North Pacific	10,048,767	380	67,569
Pacific	36,524,493	570	166,049
Southern	38,860,776	769	123,688
Southwestern	25,955,915	483	52,985
Division Totals	270,164,817	4,374	708,616

Statistics as of June 30, 1987



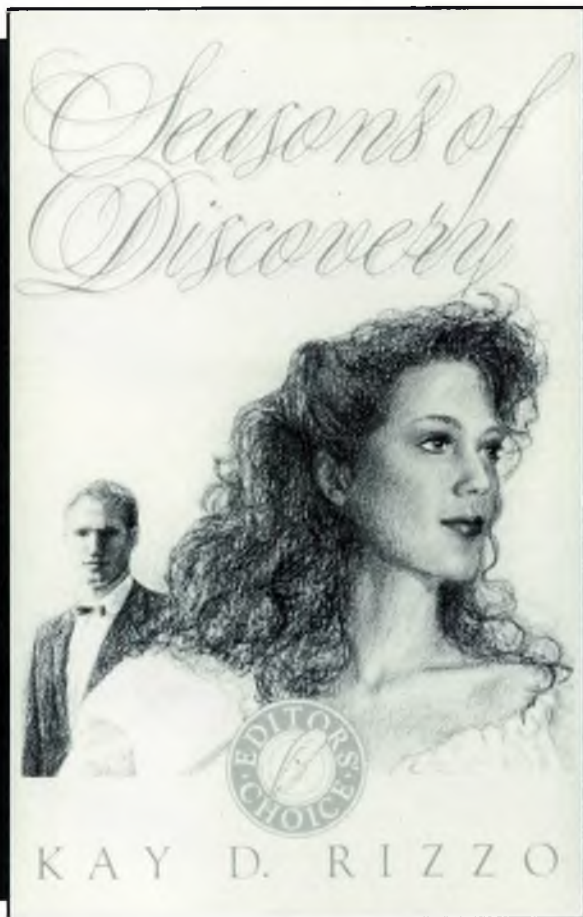
PROJECTS

1. Christian Record Braille Foundation
—sign language books for deaf children
2. Prison ministries program
3. Yakima Valley Evangelism Center
4. St. Louis child Evangelism Center
5. Acadian Quebecois mission project



Thirteenth Sabbath Offering
June 30, 1990

Introducing



Seasons of Discovery

by Kay Rizzo

Although from vastly different backgrounds, Kari and Marc are drawn together by love. They look expectantly toward their new life together.

But, storm clouds loom in the distance as Kari tumbles into the depths of alcoholism.

From bestselling author Kay Rizzo comes this bittersweet love story of triumph over pain.

Now available at your Adventist Book Center. Paper, 96 pages.



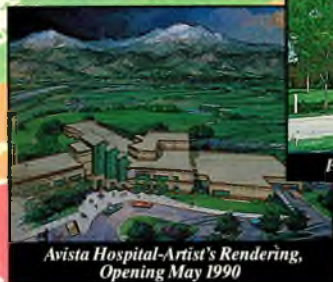
Platte Valley Medical Center



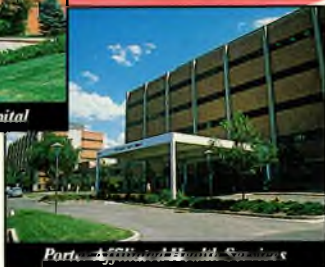
Littleton Hospital



Porter Memorial Hospital



*Avista Hospital-Artist's Rendering,
Opening May 1990*



Porter Affiliated Health Services

Picture The Perfect Career In The Perfect Setting

For your workplace or life pace, Adventist Health System/Rocky Mountain Region offers you the best of both worlds. Each of our modern, progressive Denver area facilities provides a state-of-the-art environment in its areas of specialization. Result: you can refine and expand your skills, complemented by the most advanced technology and a uniquely supportive, professional environment.

Our cost of living and housing is generally lower. Yet the quality of our life is a bonus in itself. Recreation is year-round and close at hand, nurtured by over 300 sunny days a year. Whether you prefer the ambiance of a serene, slow-paced community, or the excitement and cultural amenities of a cosmopolitan landmark, there's freedom to choose with our system. To discover more about career opportunities, contact the facility of your choice:

ADVENTIST HEALTH SYSTEM ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION

Porter Memorial Hospital

2525 S. Downing Street, Denver, CO 80210
(303) 778-5664

Platte Valley Medical Center

1850 Egbert, Brighton, CO 80601
(303) 659-1531 Ext. 402

Avista Hospital

100 Health Park Drive, Louisville, CO 80027
(303) 665-0609
(Opening date May 1, 1990, (303) 673-1000)

Littleton Hospital

7700 S. Broadway, Littleton, CO 80122
(303) 730-5886

Porter Affiliated Health Services

2525 S. Downing, Denver, CO 80210
(303) 778-5664