

March 2010

GLAD TIDINGS

“I will make you fishers of men”



We continue our series

*Fundamental Beliefs,
three and four*

*GOD the eternal Father
and
GOD the eternal Son*

*National Conference
Details on back*

Inside

Fundamental Beliefs

Editorial	3
The Head of the Family	4
Why Did Christ Die?	8
Dial Daily Bread	12
Unity of Father and Son	13
Comments From Our Readers	14
Christ Our Righteousness, 1	15
Christ Our Righteousness, 2	22
YAC Report	27
God As Father	28

Seventh-day Adventists accept the Bible as their only creed and hold certain fundamental beliefs to be the teaching of the Holy Scriptures. These beliefs, as set forth here, constitute the church's understanding and expression of the teaching of Scripture. Revision of these statements may be expected at a General Conference session when the church is led by the Holy Spirit to a fuller understanding of Bible truth or finds better language in which to express the teachings of God's Holy Word.

This issue will be dedicated to fundamental beliefs, numbers 3 and 4 (see below).

3. The Father

God the eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. The qualities and powers exhibited in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also revelations of the Father. (Gen. 1:1; Rev. 4:11; 1 Cor. 15:28; John 3:16; 1 John 4:8; 1 Tim. 1:17; Ex. 34:6, 7; John 14:9.)

4. The Son

God the eternal Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became also truly man, Jesus the Christ. He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God. By His miracles He manifested God's power and was attested as God's promised Messiah. He suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for our sins and in our place, was raised from the dead, and ascended to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf. He will come again in glory for the final deliverance of His people and the restoration of all things. (John 1:1-3, 14; Col. 1:15-19; John 10:30; 14:9; Rom. 6:23; 2 Cor. 5:17-19; John 5:22; Luke 1:35; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 2:9-18; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; Heb. 8:1, 2; John 14:1-3.)

The purpose of this newsletter is to share the good news of Jesus Christ as the foundation of effective personal and public evangelism to the world, to encourage the use of and share more effective methods and resources.

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Editorial

A Father and a Son

Far from a cold, sterile dissertation, the thought of Father and Son should call to our minds the imagery and comfort of family—the warm fire-side, the fond feelings of home, the security, safety, and abiding trust that we have always cherished and desired in our own families.

And the fundamental nature of a belief in a heavenly Father and His Son is to say that our identity—who we are—is, or should be, bound up with the truth of who they are. This should be not just a discussion, but an experience!

Truly, God is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. His Son shares the same character and attitude. This was shown in the manner in which our salvation was achieved, in the investment and very personal sacrifice that both the Father and the Son made in the plan of salvation.

Not content to be a Father and a Son without us, they, along with the Holy Spirit made sure that “unto us a Son is born,” who became forever one with the human race. And more than this, we were brought back into the family, because this Son born to us became our “Everlasting Father,” the second Adam, to redeem in Himself all that was lost to humanity in the fall of the last Adam.

Wouldn't you be excited about a phone call from a probate attorney with the news that you were the heir of a wealthy family, even if you knew nothing about it before that call?

Would the attorney be nervous about sharing the good news with you? Would he be afraid you would refuse the inheritance because you didn't want to claim your identity in that family?

As we share with others the good news, the evangel, our evangelism is lacking unless we are actually living proof of the family of God. We must have the love—the life—of God in our hearts. Then we can share the news that God included them in His family and that an inheritance is already given them in Christ. Then the decision is theirs to make. Do they want to be part of the family in Christ? Do they want their inheritance, already obtained for them in Him?

*Just how near the Son has come to us is the burden of W. W. Prescott's message, **The Head of the Family**. Not only did Christ die in our place, he died our death of separation from God as us, to experience and reveal to us the terrible nature of sin. E. J. Waggoner's article, **Why Did Christ Die?**, shares how the Father's rich love was expressed toward us in reconciliation and remission in and through the death of the Son. **The Unity of Father and Son** shows that there is no difference whatsoever in their love and compassion toward every human being.*

And Elder Bill Lehman, a more modern author and preacher of the gospel, reminds us that the Father and the Son long to come into our hearts, that their great love for us, their very life, will shine out from us—in reality, the only way true evangelism happens. This will be more catching than a flu pandemic, so that the whole earth will be lightened with the glory of God. And the promise is that it will!

Is that not great news, news worth telling?

Send us your stories of what God is doing as you live and share this good news. Share this magazine with one of your friends and have them share with us their response

—Todd Guthrie, evangelism editor

The Head of the Family



as the Divine-Human Family. In Eph.3:14,15 we read: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." The whole family in heaven and earth. And it will be our purpose to consider this idea of the family, but from this special stand-point, the Divine-Human family; and our topic for this hour will be to consider the Head of the family.

I would like to call attention, first, to the fact that the human family, considered as a human family, has one common Father. Acts 17:24-26. "God that made the world and all things therein, see-

THE one object in all our Bible study should be, not to establish theories, but to feed upon the living word. And it seems especially desirable to call attention to this principle when a large number of us who are accustomed to teaching the word come together to make a special study of it. Hence the principle should not be to learn some theory which we can tell to others, but to obtain a life which may be lived before others; and this will be the purpose in our study of the word, - simply to feed upon the word which is Spirit and which is life. And this will be the case, no matter what special phase of truth we may study. Our whole purpose will be to break the bread of life so that we may together feed upon it.

The subject which we will consider together, for a time at least, during this Institute may perhaps be designated

ing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; neither is worshiped with men's hands, as though he needed anything, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men." This is our authorized version; the revised version leaves out the word "blood." "And he made of one every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth." Hath made of one all nations of the earth; that is, Adam was the father of the human family as a human family; and when God created Adam he created the whole human family. He created all nations that are upon the earth when he created Adam. That is, in creating Adam and conferring upon him the power to beget in his own image, he saw, as it were, a fountain of life in him; and when he created Adam, he saw in Adam every human being that has been or will be

upon the face of the earth, and he created every human being upon the face of the earth in Adam.

You will see how this thought is suggested in the 25th chapter of Genesis, where the birth of Jacob and Esau is recorded. Verses 19 to 23 give the record. But I call special attention to the 23rd verse. When Rebecca inquired of the Lord, he answered her, "Two nations are in thy womb." Two nations—Jacob and Esau. In Jacob, God saw all the descendants of Jacob; in Esau, God saw all the descendants of Esau; and so, as he viewed it, there were two nations struggling together.

The same thought is further emphasized in Hebrews 7:9,10: "And as I may say so, Levi also, who received tithes, payed tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchisedec met him."

These scriptures are sufficient to bring out the principle, that in Adam were all the descendants of Adam, as he was the common father of the human family. but Adam the first failed in his work, and so there came Adam the second. 1Cor.15:45 and onward: "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven." And this second man, the Lord from heaven, sustains the same relation to his family that Adam sustained to his family. That is, he became the second father of the family.

In Col.3:9,10: "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the

God the eternal Father is the Creator, Source, Sustainer, and Sovereign of all creation. He is just and holy, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. The qualities and powers exhibited in the Son and the Holy Spirit are also revelations of the Father.

new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Eph.4:22-24: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Dr. Young's translation of this same text gives a little different wording, which is important. Instead of reading, "Which after God is created in righteousness," he translates more literally, "Which according to God was created in righteousness."

Now with these scriptures before us, we can see readily the teaching. Adam was the first man, and by yielding to sin, he received sin into human flesh, and his flesh became sinful flesh. Christ was the second man, the second father of the human family. He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth. After humanity in Adam had admitted sin into the flesh, that became the old man, and the old man is humanity with sin working in it. That is to say, the old man is humanity under the control of the devil, and those who are in that condition are spoken of by the Saviour in John 8 as being of their father the devil. 42nd verse and onward: "Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do."

The old man is humanity with sin working in it; the old man is humanity under the control and direction of the devil. The new man is humanity with divin-

ity in it, and above all and first of all, the new man is Christ Jesus, "which according to God was created in righteousness and true holiness." So we are instructed to put on the new man. Rom.13:14.

"Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ," the new man, "and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof."

Now how did Jesus Christ become the second father of the human family? and what does it mean to us that he did become the second father of the human family? This is told in Heb.2:14: "Forasmuch then as the children" [he is the father] are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Notice carefully; it is because the children were partakers of flesh and blood that he also himself likewise took part of the same flesh and blood. Why? In order that he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.

This thought is suggested in 1st John 3:5." And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins." Notice what it says. "Ye know that he was manifested." He WAS MANIFESTED to take away our sins. How was he manifested? He was manifested in the flesh; by becoming partaker of flesh and blood he was manifested. John says in the first chapter and second verse, "For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." And he was manifested to take away our sins;

and he was manifested by taking part in flesh and blood, that he might be seen, capable of being looked upon. but he was manifested to take away our sins. For it was necessary, in order to take away our sins, that divinity should suffer. But how could divinity suffer simply and solely as divinity for the sins of humanity? So divinity was clothed with humanity, was manifested in humanity, that there might be a human side to divinity for the suffering; that it might be possible for divinity to present a human side for the suffering; that there might be, as it were, a vulnerable side to divinity, that divinity might receive the wound: because prophecy said that his heel should be bruised, and that must be in humanity. There must be a human side to divinity in order that divinity might suffer in humanity. But divinity must suffer to take away our sins, so divinity was manifested, put into humanity, clothed with a body; clothed with flesh, with our flesh, in order that divinity might present a side capable of receiving the wound; so, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us," and he partook of the same flesh and blood in order "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might deliver them who through fear of death [and death comes only through sin] were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

How did he take upon him that nature, that flesh and blood? He did it by birth, by being born of a woman, and the agency through which he was born of a woman was the Holy Spirit. Luke 1:35: "And the angel answered and said unto her, the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son

of God.” But he was also the Son of Man, and the head, the second head of the human family was a man, the new man, the divine-human man, the man Christ Jesus.

Now what does it mean to us that Jesus Christ became the second head of this human family? It means this: Just as, when Adam was created, all the members of the human family were created in him, so also when the second man was created “according to God in righteousness and true holiness,” all the members of that family were created in him. It means that, as God saw in Adam all the members of the human family, so he saw in Christ, the second father of the family, all the members of the divine human family; so he saw in him all his sons, all his daughters, all his descendants; all that belong to the family. No matter whether they were born into the family or not. Before Jacob and Esau were born, God saw two nations there. No matter whether born into the divine-human family or not, yet God created in Christ Jesus, the new man, all the members of the divine-human family that should afterward be born into that family.

Now the fact that Christ took our flesh, and that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, means a great deal more than that there was a good man who lived then, and set us a good example. He was the second father, he was the representative of humanity; and it was when Jesus Christ took our human nature and was born of a woman, that humanity and divinity were joined. It was then that Jesus Christ gave himself, not simply *for* the human family but *to* the human family. That is to say, Jesus Christ joined himself to humanity and gave himself to humanity, and identified himself with humanity and became humanity; and he became we, and we were there in him. It means that Jesus Christ in himself joined humanity and divinity to all eternity to take our human nature and retain it to all eternity, and is today our representative in heaven, still bearing our human nature, and there is a divine-human man in heaven to-day—Jesus Christ.

Read it in Heb.10:11,12: “And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but this man after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever sat down on the right hand of God.” There is a man sitting on the right hand of God, and we sit there in him. That is what this scripture in the seventh of Hebrews, to which we have referred, has illustrated, how it is that God saw in Adam all the human family, and how that when he created Adam he created all the human family. This Scripture means a great deal more than that. Read again Heb.7:9,10: “And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father when Melchisedec met him.” When Abraham paid tithes to Melchisedec, Levi paid tithes in him, for he was in the loins of his father when Melchisedec met him. All that Abraham did, Levi did in him.

... as God saw in Adam all the members of the human family, so he saw in Christ, the second father of the family, all the members of the divine human family; so he saw in him all his sons, all his daughters, all his descendants; all that belong to the family.

Read further in the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians, verses 21 and 22: “For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.” You may stop a moment to think that they both came by a tree; death came by a tree, life came by a tree. Adam ate of the forbidden fruit of the tree, so death came upon the human family. Christ bore all our sins upon a tree, and by that means brought life to the human family. “By man came death; by man came also the resurrection of the dead, for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” Adam is the man through whom death came; Christ is

the man through whom comes the resurrection from the dead.

Read also Romans 5:12 and onward. As we read this scripture, bear these principles in mind, and this parallel between the first Adam and the second Adam, and what we gained through the first Adam and what we gained through the second Adam. From the first Adam, sin, transitory life, death; from the second Adam, righteousness, life—eternal life. “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” Revised Version, “for that all sinned.” Just one act in a point of time wholly past. For that all sinned; for all did sin.

“For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed where there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure (or type) of him that was to come. But not as the offense, so also is the free gift; for if through the offense of one many be dead (Revised Version, many died) much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification,” or righteousness. So the contrast is between condemnation and justification, or righteousness. Death came by sin. “For if by one man’s offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore, as by the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made [or ‘became,’ or Dr. Young’s translation, ‘many were constituted’] sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made [or constituted] righteous.”

Now see the contrast between the first

Adam and the second Adam; the first father of the family and the second father of the family. From one, judgment to condemnation; the other, justification of life. Through the disobedience of one, many were constituted sinners; through the obedience of one, many were constituted sinners; through the obedience of one, many were constituted righteous in him.

And the idea further that Jesus Christ gave himself to us. Think of that for a moment. It is not that Jesus Christ, as some one apart from us, as it were entirely outside of our connection in any way, just simply came forward and said, "I will die for man." No, he became man, and divinity was given to the human family in Jesus Christ. But divinity was joined to humanity by



birth, and Jesus Christ became flesh and blood relation—near of kin to every one of us.

Read the foreshadowing of that in Lev.55:47-49: "And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother that dwelleth by him wax poor, and sell himself upon the stranger or sojourner by thee, or to the stock of the stranger's family, after that he is sold he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him, either his uncle or his uncle's son may redeem him, or any that is nigh of kin unto him of his family may redeem him; or if he be able, he may redeem

himself." Now that is where humanity is. Humanity is sold under sin. Now if humanity is able, it may redeem itself. Is it able? Is humanity able to redeem itself? No. Well, then, some one that is nigh of kin may redeem it. But who is nigh of kin that is able to redeem it? He who took part of our same flesh and blood. So that, as is expressed in Eph.5:30, "We are members of his body and of his flesh, and of his bones." And he is nigh of kin.

Now read again in Heb.2:11, and see how this relation is recognized. "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren." You remember in his last prayer, just at the

close of his work (John 17:26), he says, "And I have declared unto them thy name." "I will declare thy name unto my brethren." And he did it; and one of his last words was, "I have declared unto them thy name." They were his brethren. "I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Behold, I and the children which God hath given me." Second father of the family. Behold the children.

Mark 3:31: "There came then his brethren and his mother [Now these

were those that were actually related to him by the ties of the natural flesh], and standing without, sent unto him, calling him. And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? And he looked round about on them that sat about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother." That is, whoever is born into this family of God is as closely related to Jesus Christ, and that by flesh and blood, as is a mother to her own son.

Read in Luke 11:27,28, and it is a touching thought: "And it came to pass as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked." As this woman looked upon Jesus Christ and heard his teachings, there arose in that mother's heart a feeling of what a wonderfully blessed thing it must be to be so closely united to that man as is a mother to her child. What did he reply? Oh, he said, "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it." Because they are united every one of them to him just as is a mother to her own child. That is, by the very closest ties possible in this world is every son of God united to Jesus Christ, his Brother, his Father, his Saviour, his Redeemer. ✨

—W. W. Prescott, February 4, 1895, *General Conference Bulletin*, pp. 8-11.

Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.
Revelation 4:11



Why Did Christ Die?

THE fact that this question has been asked in all seriousness by an active Christian is sufficient reason for considering it, apart from the fact that it touches the very core of Christianity. It shows that the fundamental principles of the Gospel are not so generally understood as people are wont to imagine. This is not because they are so obscure and complex as to be beyond ordinary comprehension, but because they have been so thickly enveloped in the fog of theological terms. Those terms are the intention of men, and have nothing to do with the Scriptures. *If we are content with the simple statements of the Bible, we shall see how quickly its light dispels the fog of theological speculation.*

“Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.” 1 Peter 3:18. That is a sufficient answer, but we will read further. “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” 1 Tim. 1:15. “Ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him is no sin.” 1 John 3: 5. “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” 1 John 1: 7.

Read again: “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, be-

ing reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” Rom. 5: 6-10.

Once more: “And you, that were sometime enemies, and alienated in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight.” Col. 1: 21, 22. “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.” 2 Cor. 5: 17-19.

All men have sinned. Rom. 3: 23; 5:12. Sin is enmity against God. “The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” Rom. 8: 7. In one of the texts above quoted we read that men need reconciliation, because they are enemies in their minds by wicked works. Therefore since all men have sinned, it follows that all men are by nature the enemies of God; and that also is what we read in Rom. 5:10, above quoted.

But sin is death. “To be carnally minded is death.” Rom. 8: 6. “By one man sin came into the world, and death by sin.” Rom. 5: 12. Death came in by sin, because it carries death concealed within it. “The sting of death is sin.” 1 Cor. 15: 56. Sin when it is full grown bringeth forth death. James 1: 15.

Sin is death, for the reason that it is enmity against God. God is “the living God.” With Him is “the fountain of life.”

Ps. 36: 9. Christ is called the “Author of life.” Acts 3: 15, margin. Life is the grand characteristic of God. “He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.” Acts 17: 25. “In Him we live, and move, and have our being;” “for we are also His offspring.” Verse 28. The life of God is the source of every created thing; and apart from Him there can be no life.

But righteousness, as well as life, is the grand characteristic of God. “There is no unrighteousness in Him.” Ps. 92:15. “As for God, His way is perfect.” Ps. 18: 30. *Since the life of God is the source of all life, and all depend on Him, it follows that His righteousness is the standard of righteousness of all intelligent beings; for God’s life is nothing but righteousness. Therefore **life and righteousness are inseparable.*** “To be spiritually minded is life.” Rom. 8: 6.

Now since God’s life is the standard of righteousness, it is evident that everything that is different from the life of God is unrighteousness; and “all unrighteousness is sin.” But if the life of any being is different from the life of God, it must be because His life is not allowed free course through that being. But where God’s life is not, there is death. Whoever is out of harmony with God—enmity against Him—has death working in him, and death for his inevitable portion. So it is not by an arbitrary decree that the wages of sin is death. That results from the very nature of things. Sin is opposition to God—rebellion against Him—and is utterly foreign to His being. It is separation from God, and separation from God is death, because there is no life outside of Him. All that hate Him, love death.

Let us now sum up the case of the relation between the natural man and God. (1) All have sinned. (2) Sin is enmity

against God; it is rebellion. (3) Sin is alienation from God; men are alienated and enemies in their minds by wicked works. Col. 1: 21. (4) Sinners are "alienated from the life of God." Eph. 4: 18. But **God in Christ is the only source of life for the universe**, and therefore all who are thus alienated from His righteous life are by the very nature of things doomed to death. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." 1 John 5:12.

RECONCILIATION

From all that has preceded it is very evident that *the only object that Christ could have in coming to earth and dying for men, was the reconciliation of man to God, so that he might have life.* "I am come that they might have life." John 10: 10. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." 2 Cor. 5: 19. "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in His sight." Col.1: 21, 22. Christ suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, "that He might bring us to God." 1 Peter 3: 18. "If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." Rom.5: 10.

"But," someone will say, "You have made the reconciliation all on the part of men; I have always been taught that the death of Christ reconciled God to man; that Christ died to satisfy God's justice, and to appease Him." Well, we have left the matter of reconciliation just where the Scriptures have put it; and while they have much to say about the necessity for man to be reconciled

to God, *they never once hint of such a thing as the necessity for God to be reconciled to man.* To intimate the necessity for such a thing is to bring a grave charge against the character of God. The idea has come into the Christian Church from the Papacy, which in turn brought it from Paganism, in which the only idea of God was of a being whose wrath must be appeased by a sacrifice.

Stop a moment, and think what reconciliation means. The existence of enmity is the only necessity for reconciliation. Where there is no enmity, there is no necessity for reconciliation. Man is by nature alienated from God; he is a rebel, full of enmity. Therefore man needs to be reconciled-to have his enmity taken away. But God has no enmity in His being. "God is love." Consequently there is no necessity for Him to be reconciled; there is no possibility of such a thing, for there can be no reconciliation where there has been no enmity.

Again: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3: 16. Surely, they who say that the death of Christ reconciled God to men, have forgotten this blessed text. They would separate the Father and the Son, making the former the enemy, and the latter the friend, of man. But God's heart was so overflowing with love to fallen man, that He "spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all;" and in so doing He gave Himself,

We needed life, and Christ *alone* had life to give; but *the giving of life is dying.* His death reconciles us to God, ***provided we make it our own by faith.*** We are reconciled to God by the death of Christ, because in dying He gave up His life, and He gave it to us. Being made partakers of the life of God, *through faith* in Christ's death, we are at peace with Him, because ***one life is in us both.***

for "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself." The Apostle Paul speaks of "the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." Acts 20: 28. This effectually disposes of the idea that there was any enmity toward man on the part of God, so that He needed to be reconciled. The death of Christ was the expression of God's wonderful love for sinners.

Consider further what reconciliation means. It means a change on the part of the one reconciled. *If one has enmity in His heart towards another, a radical change must take place in him before he is reconciled.* This is the case with man. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. 5: 17, 18. But to speak of the necessity for God to be reconciled to man, is not only to say that He cherished enmity in His heart, but to say that God was partially in

the wrong, and that a change had to take place in Him as well as in man. If it were not in the innocence of ignorance that men talked about God's having been reconciled to men, it would be blasphemy. That is one of the "great things and blasphemies" that the Papacy has spoken against God. Let us not echo it.

God is. He could not be other than He is, and be God. He is absolute and unchangeable perfection. He cannot change. Hear Him: "I am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Mal. 3: 6. Instead of having to change and be reconciled to sinful man, in order that they might be saved, the only hope for their salvation is the fact that he never changes, but is everlasting love. He is the source of life, and the standard of life. When any beings are unlike Him, the difference is on their part, and not on His. He is the fixed standard, to which all must conform, if they would live. God cannot change to accommodate the desires of sinful men, but simply because such a change would lower His dignity, and make His Government unstable, but because He cannot be other than He is, "He that cometh to God must believe that He is."

Just a thought concerning the idea that Christ's death was necessary to satisfy outraged justice. Christ's death was necessary to satisfy the love of God. "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Rom. 5: 8. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son." *Justice would have been met by the summary death of the sinful race.* But God's love could not suffer that. So we are justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Through faith in His blood, God's righteousness—which is His life—is declared upon us, and thus He is just, and at the same time the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Rom. 3: 21-26. The reason why it was necessary that Christ should die, in order that men might be saved, will be considered in the next edition of this article.

Why have we dwelt so long upon the fact that man must be reconciled to

God, and not God to man? Because in that alone is man's hope. If God ever had any enmity in His heart against men, there would always arise the torturing thought, "Perhaps He is not yet sufficiently appeased to accept Me; surely He cannot love so guilty a being as I am." And the more one realised his guilt, the greater would be his doubt. But when we know that God never had any enmity towards us, but that He has loved us with an everlasting love, and that He has loved us so much that He gave Himself for us, that we might be reconciled to Him, we can joyfully exclaim, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

REMISSION

Freedom from sin, or at least from its consequences, is what men have been seeking ever since the fall. Sad to say, however, the great majority have sought it in the wrong way. It was with a lie against the character of God, that Satan caused the first sin, and he has been vigorously engaged in trying to induce people to believe that lie ever since. So successful has he been, that

The case, therefore, stands thus: All have sinned. Sin is enmity against God, because it is a condition of alienation from the life of God. Therefore sin is death. The one thing, then, that man stood in need of was life, and this is the one thing that Christ came to give. In Him was life that sin could not touch, and that could triumph over death.

the mass of mankind regard God as stern and unsympathetic, a being who regards man with a coldly critical eye, and who would much rather destroy than save. In short, Satan has largely succeeded in putting himself in the place of God, in the minds of men.

Thus it is that much of the worship of the heathen is, and always has been, devil-worship. "But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God; and I would not that ye should have fellow-

ship with devils." 1 Cor. 10:20. Consequently all heathen worship springs from the idea that a sacrifice must be made to appease the wrath of their God. Sometimes this sacrifice is in the shape of property, but often it is of the person. Thus arose the great hordes of monks and hermits among the heathen, and later among the professed Christians, who borrowed their ideas of God from the heathen. These thought to gain the favour of God by scourging and torturing themselves.

The prophets of Baal cut themselves with knives, "till the blood gushed out upon them" (1 Kings 18:28), hoping thereby to induce their god to listen to them. With the same idea of God, thousands of so-called Christians have worn hair shirts, walked barefoot on glass, made pilgrimages on their knees, slept on the hard floor, or the ground, and scourged themselves with thorns, starved themselves nearly to death, and set themselves the most impossible tasks. But nobody ever found peace in any of those ways, because no man could get out of himself that which was not in him, and righteousness and peace are not in man.

Sometimes this idea of propitiating the wrath of God has taken an easier form, that is, easier for the worshippers. Instead of sacrificing themselves, they have sacrificed others. Human sacrifices have always been to a greater or lesser extent connected with heathenism. Men shudder as they read of the human sacrifices offered by the ancient inhabitants of Mexico and Peru, and by the Druids; but professed (not real) Christianity has its awful list. Even so-called Christian England has made hundreds of burnt offerings of men, for the purpose of turning away the wrath of God from the country. Wherever there is religious persecution to any degree, it springs from the *mistaken idea that God demands a victim.* This is shown by the words of Christ to His disciples: "The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." John 16: 2. All such worship has been devil worship, and not worship of the true God.

Just here somebody has remembered that it is said in Heb.9: 22, "Without the

shedding of blood there is no remission;" and this makes him think that after all God did demand a sacrifice before He would pardon man. It is very difficult for the mind to rid itself of the idea received as a legacy from Paganism, through the Papacy, that God was so angry at man for having sinned, that He could not be mollified without seeing blood flow, but that it made no difference to Him whose blood it was, if only somebody was killed; and that since Christ's life was worth more than the lives of all men, He accepted Him as a substitute for them. This is almost a brutal way of stating the case, but it is the only way that the case can be truly presented. *The heathen conception of God is a brutal one, as dishonouring to God as it is discouraging to man*; and this heathen idea has been allowed to colour too many texts of Scripture. It is sad to think how greatly men who really loved the Lord, have given occasion to His enemies to blaspheme.

"Apart from shedding of blood there is no remission." What is remission? It means simply "sending away." What is to be remitted, or sent away? Our sins, for we read that "through faith in Christ's blood the righteousness of God is declared for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God." Rom. 3: 20. So we learn that apart from the shedding of blood there is no sending away of sins.

What blood is it that takes away sins? Only the blood of Christ, "for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." "Ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him

is no sin." 1 John 3: 5. "Knowing that ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver and gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers; but with precious blood, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ." 1 Peter 1: 18, 19. "If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." 1 John 1:7.

But how is it that the shedding of blood, even the blood of Christ, can take away sins? Simply because the blood is the life. "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul." Lev. 17: 11. So when we read that apart from the shedding of blood there is no remission, we know it means that no sins can be taken away except by the life of Christ. In Him is no sin; therefore when He imparts His life to a soul, that soul is at once cleansed from sin.

Remember that Christ is God. "The Word was God," "and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself." God gave Himself in Christ for men, for we have read of "the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." The Son of man, in whom was the life of God, came to minister, "and to give His life a ransom for many." Matt. 20: 28.

The case, therefore, stands thus: All have sinned. *Sin is enmity against God, because it is a condition of alien-*

ation from the life of God. Therefore sin is death. The one thing, then, that man stood in need of was life, and this is *the one thing that Christ came to give. In Him was life that sin could not touch, and that could triumph over death.* His life is the light of men. A single light may make ten thousand other lights, and still not be diminished. No matter how much sunlight any person receives, there is just as much for everybody else; and if there were a hundred times as many people on earth as there are, there would be no less sunlight for each one than there is now. So with the Sun of Righteousness. He can give His life to all, and still have as much left.

Christ came to *impart the life of God to man, for it is that that they lack.* The lives of all the angels in heaven could not have met the demands of the case; not because God was so inexorable, but because they could not have imparted any life to man. They had no life in themselves, but only the life that Christ imparted to them. But God was in Christ, and in Him God's everlasting life could be given to everyone who would receive it. Remember that in giving His Son, God gave Himself, and you will see that a sacrifice was not demanded to satisfy God's outraged feelings, but that, on the contrary, *God's inexpressible love led Him to sacrifice Himself, in order to break down man's enmity, and reconcile us to Himself.*

"But why could He not give us His life without dying?" That is to say, Why could He not give us His life, and still not give it? We needed life, and Christ alone had life to give; but *the giving of life is dying.* His death reconciles us

THE SON'S PERFECT RELIANCE ON THE FATHER

Because Christ came, not in His own name, but in the Father's name, because "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Cor. 5:19), His words and works—His very life—were the Father's, and not His own. "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am (He), and that I do nothing of Myself; but as the Father hath taught Me, I speak these things." John 8: 28. "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself; but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works." John 14: 10. He lived by the Father, (John 6: 57), His life was but God's life in Him in its fulness, so that it could be said that God purchased the church "with His own blood." Acts 20: 25.

—E. J. Waggoner, *Present Truth*, United Kingdom, September 16, 1897, p.579.

to God, **provided we make it our own by faith.** We are reconciled to God by the death of Christ, because in dying He gave up His life, and He gave it to us. Being made partakers of the life of God, *through faith* in Christ's death, we are at peace with Him, because **one life is in us both.** Then we are "saved by His life." Christ died, but He still lives, and *His life in us keeps us united to God.* The imparting of His life to us frees us from sin and the continuing of it in us, keeps us from sin.

"In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." John 1: 4. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John 8: 12. Now we can understand how it is that if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." His light is His life; walking in the light is walking in His life; and **when we thus walk, His life is flowing through us,** a living stream, cleanses from all sin." "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift." His life is light, and will dispel all earth's darkness. In His light (life) we shall see light. Only as we consider hard questions in the light of His life, can we understand them.

"What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" Rom. 8: 31, 32. Let the weak and fearful sinner take courage, and trust in the Lord. *We have not a God who demands a sacrifice from man, but one who in His love has offered Himself a sacrifice.* We owe to God a life perfectly in harmony with His law; but since our life is just the opposite of that, God in Christ has substituted His own life for ours, and so we can offer up "spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Then "let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plentiful redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities." Ps. 130: 7, 8. (*Emphasis supplied*). ☘

—E. J. Waggoner, September 21, 1893, Present Truth, United Kingdom, pp. 383-388.

EVERYBODY knows the little song, "Jesus Loves Me, This I Know." But does the Father also love us? And did He love us before Jesus died for us? YES! "God [the Father] so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son . . ." (John 3:16). If He so loved us BEFORE Jesus died for us, then was He reconciled to us BEFORE Jesus died? YES! Did the sacrifice of Jesus reconcile the heart of the Father to us? No, for He was already in a state of being reconciled to us, not that any change in Him was at any time necessary. This reconciliation of the Father to us was not accomplished by the sacrifice of Jesus. The correct word to say is that the sacrifice of Jesus demonstrated the fact of His already being reconciled to us (Rom. 5:6-11, 15-21). So let us delete the word "accomplished" by the cross and substitute the right word, which is "demonstrated" there.

But what does this actually mean to us? And what does it mean to the souls for whom we pray and to whom we want to witness? It means that the Father has no chip on His shoulder against anyone personally; He loves "all men," even "the world," sinful as it is. It follows therefore that God treats every person as though he/she were righteous, even though he/she is not. God loves the person, but He still hates the sin; but the sinner (that's everybody) must learn to believe that the Father loves him just as much as the Son loves him, and the Father loves him as much as He loved His Son (!!). But the Father loves the sinner so much that He wants to separate him from the sin—which otherwise will actually kill him/her.

But the problem is that the sinner (that's everybody) loves the sin; how can we be separated from that which we have been born and bred to love? The answer: at the cross—where the Son of God built that bridge across the dark chasm of our alienation from God. He also suffered alienation from His Father when He cried out on the cross, "My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matt. 27:46). No sinner ever felt such horror of separation from God as did Jesus in that hour! He was "made to be sin for us" (2 Cor. 5:21). Now the message of the cross says to us, "You be reconciled to God!" (5:20). The Father has proven His reconciliation to us; now let the truth melt our stony hearts.

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UNITY OF FATHER AND SON

CHRIST says, "I and my Father are one." This we must accept as an absolute fact in the sense in which he designed it. He prayed to the Father for his disciples, "that they may be one, even as we are one." John 17:22. The union between the Father and the Son is the same as should exist between brethren in the faith. It is a union of thought and purpose. See 1 Cor. 1:10. The will of one is the will of the other. The language of Christ was, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." Ps. 40:8. Again, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." John 14:10. A closer union than this cannot be imagined. So close is the union that Christ is called God, as in Isa. 9:6, and Titus 2:13. In talking with the young man (Matt. 19:16, 17) he himself plainly showed his right to be called God. The apostle Paul, speaking of Christ, says that "in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." Col. 2:9.

This fact of the unity of the Father and the Son, must of necessity be true at all times, and under all circumstances. Let us see. Jesus is known as the Saviour, the Redeemer of the world. It is through his blood that we have redemption (Col. 1:14), and besides his name there is no salvation in any other. Acts 4:12. But if he and the Father are one, the Father must have had an equal share in the work of redemption. And so it is. The plan of salvation was not devised and executed by Christ apart from the Father. It is God's love that is commended to us in the death of Christ. Rom. 5:8. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish,

but have everlasting life." John 3:16. When Christ was on earth he was doing the Father's work, for he said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." John 4:34. And in harmony with this idea were his words to Mary, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Luke 2:49.

The message that he bore was from the Father. He himself said, "My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me" (John 7:16): "For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." John 12:49. And so Paul says that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." 2 Cor. 5:19. Therefore whatever memorials of redemption are observed, must be in honor of God as well as of Christ.

Again, God is best known as the Creator of the world. This, indeed, is that for which he would be remembered, for his creative power is that which distinguishes him from false gods. See Jer. 10:10-12; Ps. 96:5; 2 Cor. 8:5, 6; Acts 14:15. But if Christ and the Father are one, then Christ must have shared equally with the Father in his work of creation. And so he did. "In the beginning was the Word, and

the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ... All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made." John 1:1-3. Of the One through whose blood we have redemption, Paul says that "by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." Col. 1:16, 17. And finally, Paul exhibits the unity of Father and Son in both creation and redemption, in these words: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." Heb. 1: 1, 2. Thus we learn that it was through Christ that God made the world, and through Christ that God conveyed to lost man his message of mercy. In Christ God's will is made known and executed, and thus it is that he is called "the Word of God." ✨

—E. J. Waggoner, *The Signs of the Times*, November 20, 1884.

Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. John 14:10

Hi 1888 Family:

I am getting a blessing from the latest "Glad Tidings."

Keep up the good work with the Holy Spirit guiding you! It is a beautiful magazine.

Sincerely,
Harry Hartmann

1888 Glad Tidings:

I thank the Lord for your steadfastness and faithfulness to the Seventh-day Adventist message and to the special message of 1888 to prepare God's people for His soon coming.

Please remain true to these special messages. We are praying for you and this ministry. I wish we could give more. ... Thank you for your newsletter and books from time to time. They are a blessing to God's people in these last days of this world's history.

Your brother in Jesus,
Dean Shears and family

Comments from our readers

Dear Brethren:

This is a letter of thanks and appreciation for the publications I received. Our people are greatly blessed.

Praise God, I am still active in my ministerial labor at my age of 80 years. Soon, I will lay down my armour and pass it on to others.

I wonder if you can still send more of your publications. I am sorry I do not have dollars to make my orders. I am praying that someone can be my sponsor.

I am praying for God's continued blessing upon your publication ministry. I want to thank you in advance, when you can send me another shipment.

Very sincerely yours in God's service,
Pastor Benjamin C. Guevara
Sorsogon, Philippines

Thank you for keeping the 1888 message [abiding] in our lives. ...
—*Bob and Sharon Fulford*

Dear friends:

I just came across one of your magazines yesterday. I read it and like it.

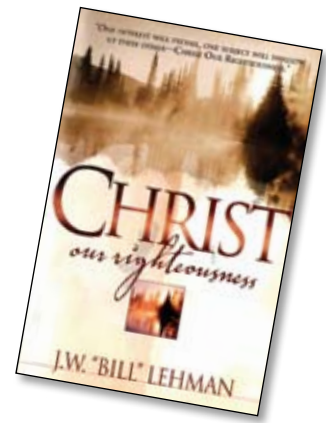
I need further information on the none meat eating belief of Seventh-day Adventists. I've also been trying to find an Ellen G. White commentary KJV Bible.

Now, please do understand that I am in prison and that I do not have any money to pay for anything. So I pray that you might be able to help me obtain these items. If not, then please do keep me in your prayers and possibly refer me to another possible source.

Thank you,
Michael G. Knight

Christ Our Righteousness

PART ONE—Today's Message



THERE are some today who minimize the message of Christ our righteousness, believing there are other topics far more important, such as the second coming of Jesus, some of the prophecies, our personal needs in the Christian life, and the law and the Sabbath. Some even say that Christ our righteousness is a fad that will soon pass away; and it might be that, but not because God planned for it to be that way.

All of these comments demonstrate a terrible ignorance of the scope and meaning of the topic of Christ our righteousness. Such a depreciation of the message often causes many to not see its true worth, value, and importance in their lives; and therefore they fail to experience Christ as their righteousness.

The following quote is one of the most significant things Ellen White wrote regarding the third angel's message: "Several have written to me inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel's message, and I have answered, 'It is the third angel's message in verity.'" E. G. Daniels, *Christ Our Righteousness*, p. 64. There are several other statements like this. "The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. ... It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God.... This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel's message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure." E. G. White,

Testimonies to Ministers, pp. 91, 92. The terms "justification by faith" and "Christ our righteousness" are used interchangeably; therefore, Christ our righteousness is the third angel's message, which we know to be the final message from God to the world in the last days.

"The time of test is just upon us, for the Loud Cry of the third angel has already begun in the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, the sin pardoning Redeemer. This is the beginning of the light of the angel whose glory shall fill the whole earth." E. G. Daniels, *Christ Our Righteousness*, p. 56.

Throughout the Spirit of Prophecy we find that the terms third angel's message, the Loud Cry of the third angel, justification by faith, and Christ our righteousness are all closely interrelated, and in fact synonymous. This message is unique in that, even though you can apply Christ our righteousness to a personal experience at any time in the Christian era, it has a special quality in the last days. Most will agree that these are the last days. The Loud Cry of the third angel is the last message according to the book of Revelation. There will be no greater message sent from God than this precious truth—the message of Christ our righteousness. This final message will lighten the earth with the glory (character) of God, bringing to a close God's final work upon the earth.

There are so few people who understand anything about this subject. We who proclaim to be ready for the coming of Jesus, and to be preparing the world for that event, sometimes depreciate the message that will finish God's work; and therefore think that we are

finishing His work without it. If there is any message today that is "present truth," it is the message of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ. It is our terrible ignorance of the scope and meaning of this topic that perhaps has kept us here so many years, when we thought He would come a long time ago. If this is the third angel's message, it is not only timely, but extremely urgent; for the alternative is for millions to be lost. Some people object to that, but you can object all you want. That is the way it is according to the Scriptures. You can argue with God, but I doubt that you will win.

In the stream of time, we live in a day of extreme emergency; yet somehow many who used to sense that have forgotten all about it. We do not like to be pressured anymore, or pushed; but time is pressing us and urging us. To sleep in this day and time is as dire as Christ painted it where He said, "in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Matthew 24:44. This message is vital to our correct understanding of the issues of our day and age. Without Christ our righteousness, we will misunderstand those issues and pervert them, and they will not mean to us what they should.

Many understand last day events and the third angel's message through a legalistic viewpoint, which brings about terrible misunderstandings for the third angel's message is Christ our righteousness in verity. To look at this message through legalism is to corrupt the message that God intended would finish the work. When we see all the issues of our day through the eyes of Christ and His righteousness, suddenly we will understand where we are in time and how urgent these days are. We will also have a

GOD THE ETERNAL SON became incarnate in Jesus Christ.

Through Him all things were created, the character of God is revealed, the salvation of humanity is accomplished, and the world is judged. Forever truly God, He became also truly man, Jesus the Christ.

He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived and experienced temptation as a human being, but perfectly exemplified the righteousness and love of God. By His miracles He manifested God's power and was attested as God's promised Messiah. He suffered and died voluntarily on the cross for our sins and in our place, was raised from the dead, and ascended to minister in the heavenly sanctuary in our behalf. He will come again in glory for the final deliverance of His people and the restoration of all things. (John 1:1-3, 14; Col. 1:15-19; John 10:30; 14:9; Rom. 6:23; 2 Cor. 5:17-19; John 5:22; Luke 1:35; Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 2:9-18; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; Heb. 8:1, 2; John 14:1-3.)

clearer vision of Christ and His righteousness.

The teeth in the Sabbath that makes it very urgent is the mark of the beast; and the teeth in Christ our righteousness is the fact that it is the third angel's message in verity—the Loud Cry. It is not something we can toy with like a cat with a mouse and say, "Well, I will decide later." Later may be too late. The urgency of the times prods us on to make a choice now and not tomorrow!

There are many similarities between Christ our righteousness and the third angel's message that we often do not see. The Loud Cry declares that "Babylon is fallen." Revelation 18:2. You must study about Babel and Babylon. Babylon is the symbol of self-righteousness—do it yourself in your own efforts and your own strength. As Nebuchadnezzar said, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built ... by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" Daniel 4:30. Babylon fell because that same spirit persisted in his grandson Belshazzar during the feast that night as described in Daniel chapter 5. Daniel reviews to Belshazzar the experience of his father, and he states there in verse 22, "And thou his son, O Belshazzar, hast not humbled thine heart, though thou knewest all this." That is, you knew all the experience of your grandfather, how he was humbled down to be like an animal because of his terrible pride and because of his contesting with God; though you knew all of this, you have not humbled yourself. Babylon is like that, and the Bible declares its fall.

The third angel's message has to do with commandment keeping, and Daniel 7:25 predicts a power that "thinks to change times and laws." Babylon prefers to have man made laws. In addition to this, in Revelation chapter 13, it says that all will be caused to worship this power and its commands. This is accomplished first of all by deceiving the masses with its miracles, and then forced by a decree prohibiting buying or selling for all who do not submit to their commands.

In Revelation 14:12, we are told that God's people keep His commandments. Why do they keep them? Are they forced to? Jesus said, "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." John 14:15. What a difference there is between causing them to worship, and wooing or winning them so that they love and obey Him.

Jesus taught that the law was supreme love for God and to love our neighbors as ourselves. In Revelation 18:3, in the loud cry of the third angel, we are taught that Babylon has an intimate love affair, not with Christ, but with "the kings of the earth." She loves, but not Jesus. In addition, she does not keep the second half of the Ten Commandments because she causes those that would not worship the beast to be killed, which is not exactly loving your neighbor as yourself. The mistreatment of human beings, the unkindness to others, is a part of the activities of the enemy of Christ; and yet they claim to be commandment keepers. They claim to obey God and to rightly represent Him in the earth. This is just a little birds-eye view of some of the aspects of the third an-

gel's message and the loud cry, and it helps us see how different it is from Christ our righteousness.

In opposition to this power will be those who will shine for Christ. Those who love God will truly obey Him; and they will also love their neighbors as themselves. This will be made manifest to the world.

We will be digging into the meaning of the third angel's message from the one viewpoint of Christ our righteousness (or justification by faith as we more often call it).

Here is the entire text of the message: "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, My people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." Revelation 18:1-5. This is what we call the "Loud Cry" of the third angel. It seems that as the third angel's message is going forth, another angel comes with power to make the message more effective.

Notice that “the earth was lightened with his glory.” What is the glory that lights up the earth in this message? It is not literally the angel. In the Greek language, the word for “angel” means “messenger.” This is a symbol of a message that sweeps the earth, like an angel encircling the globe. But it is not the glory of the angel. It is the glory of the message.

What is the glory that lights up the earth? “Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.” Isaiah 60:1-3. This is a command to stand up and shine. Why should we shine? Because “thy light is come.” Your light and my light; and the glory of the Lord is risen upon us just like the sun coming up in the morning. This is the prophecy of the light of Revelation 18:1 that something tremendous would happen to lighten the whole earth.

Jesus taught that “Ye are the light of the world.” Matthew 5:14. You! In Isaiah it says you are to rise and shine for your light is come. Jesus also said, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 5:16. Through good works light is to shine out to the world, and the result is that your Father will be glorified. The light spoken of here is good works, not just good words (although they might be pleasant, too). It is talking about good actions that the world will appreciate.

God shines light that gives us knowledge and understanding about His character. As we behold Jesus, we behold our heavenly Father, and a light, an understanding, comes into us; and the glory of His character becomes a glory to us, ...

Literally, the people involved in the Loud Cry will shine. In the book *Early Writings*, there are several places where it mentions this. “The work of this angel comes in at the right time to join in the last great work of the third angel’s message as it swells to a loud cry.” “I saw a great light resting upon them [God’s people], and they united to fearlessly proclaim the third angel’s message.” “The glory of God rested upon the patient, waiting saints, and they fearlessly gave the last solemn warning... .” “The light that was shed upon the waiting ones penetrated everywhere... .” “Servants of God, endowed with power from on high with their faces lighted up, and shining with holy consecration, went forth to proclaim the message from heaven.” “God’s people were strengthened by the excellent glory which rested upon them in rich abundance and prepared them to endure the hour of temptation.” E. G. White, *Early Writings*, pp. 277-279.

These quotations tell us that these people will literally shine in the radiance of God’s glory that rests upon them. When Jesus spoke about people seeing our good works and glorifying God, He was speaking about the light, or glory, streaming from the right kind of good works; and I hope you have not set your mind in a mold as to what those good works are. Too often our definitions are incorrect, compared to those Christ gives us.

How do the saints become so glorious that they shine like the sun? “So the followers of Christ are to shed light into the darkness of the world. Through the Holy Spirit, God’s word is a light as it becomes a transforming power in the life of the receiver. By implanting in their hearts the principles of His word, the Holy Spirit develops in men the attributes of God. The light of His glory—His character—is to shine forth in His followers. Thus they are to glorify God... .” E. G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 414. In other words, the world is to see God in His saints by seeing God’s character in them. This is what it is talking about when it says the earth is lightened with His glory.

You can get some idea about God’s glory being His character in the story of when Moses asked to see God’s glory. “And he said, I beseech Thee, shew me Thy glory. And He said, I will make all My goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord....” Exodus 33:18,19. “And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin... .” Exodus 34:6,7. This is the character of God; and His character is love. Our God is love. When He proclaimed His character, He proclaimed these attributes described here. Our God is love, and His love (His character) will be seen like glory; like the sun coming up in the morning, covering the whole earth.

The day when the earth will be lightened with His glory was prophesied in the Old and New Testaments. God will be seen as He really is, not as people suppose He is. There is a vast difference. Human beings will show the world what God is like.

This light is needed because Isaiah tells us that “darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee.” Isaiah 60:2. Into this darkness God’s glory will shine, and the world will see God as He is, manifested in His people.

“It is the darkness of misapprehension of God [we fear Him] that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted.” *Ibid.*, p. 415. That does not mean only the people in other churches. There are many of us who are fearful of God. We say, “But I have been sinning.” He knew that everyone had been sinning before He ever came to this world. “But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8. He knows you are a sinner, but that does not chase Him away, or He would have never come in the first place. He takes the sins that separate

God and man out of the way. He is the only one who could do that. He is the sin bearer who carries them all away. They have all been laid upon Him; therefore they no longer separate. Why? Because Christ took them out of the way. There is no wall of partition dividing God and man anymore, which is misunderstood Old Testament theology that causes people to fear God. The Pharisees fled from Jesus in the temple, but the little children and the mothers stayed there. It is possible to become comfortable in the presence of God.

There is a gross misunderstanding about God. In fact, one of the largest tasks for the church to accomplish today is to gain a right understanding of God. Many of our students do not understand Him well. The same is true of many parents, church members, and pastors. We often present Him in a vastly different way than He really is. No wonder people are afraid of the God they imagine Him to be. Therefore people do not feel accepted because He seems to be so tyrannical, dictatorial, oppressive, and demanding. We always present Him as pointing the finger at us, so we cringe in our guilt. God is not like that. There is a darkness in the world, a misapprehension of God; and we must go back and present Him as Christ did when He walked this earth; for as Jesus said, "he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." John 14:9.

The Bible says that into this darkness light will shine—the light of the glory of God. "At this time [when there is darkness in the earth] a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known [that is the message]. Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy, and truth." *Ibid.*, p. 415. Someone must do more than just speak about this. It is more than a proclamation. It is a demonstration, a manifestation, so that the world sees God in His people. His character is to be demonstrated in our lives.

The quote on page 415 continues on: "The children of God are to manifest

His glory. In their own life and character they are to reveal what the grace of God has done for them.

The light of the Sun of Righteousness is to shine forth in good works—in words of truth and deeds of holiness." He is counting on us to manifest Him to the world, to demonstrate what God's true character is really like—that He is truly a God of love.

He will make us like that. His goal for you is to make you a light of His glory—of His character—so that you might glorify Him in your good works. He is able to accomplish that, is He not? That should be our goal.

Isaiah wrote about this in slightly different language: "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain; O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!" Isaiah 40:9. Behold your God.

"Those who wait for the Bridegroom's coming are to say to the people, 'Behold your God.' The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love." *Ibid.*, p. 415. The world has not yet, apart from Jesus, seen God. Jesus was the only One who has truly revealed Him to the world; and now we understand there will be a message that will lighten the whole earth that will say, "Behold God in His people; and God is love." They will see that. There will be no last plagues until the world sees that God is love. There will be no return of Jesus until the world sees that God is love. This is the last message—the revelation of God's character of love.

We preach that Christ is coming back soon. Too often we only present a Christ that will be taking vengeance on those who know Him not. We

teach a Judgment going on, and you had better be ready or you will burn. Is that revealing a God of love? We are trying to frighten people into being ready, and that does not reveal God's love at all. God hates the sin, but He certainly loves the sinner. There is a great deal of difference between hating acts of sin and hating people. You and I might have some trouble making distinctions, but God does not. He does not hate the sinner. He loves the sinner; although He despises some of the things we do. Your parents do not like some of the acts you do, but they love you. You may not like some of the actions of your spouse, but you love your spouse. God makes the same distinctions. God is love, but how often we present Him as threatening us if we do not line up. God is a God of love and He is not like that. He woos us to His side. He does not drive us as the beast power does.

How is it that God's people will be like God in character? "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." 2 Corinthians 4:6. God shines light that gives us knowledge and understanding about His character. As we behold Jesus, we behold our heavenly Father, and a light, an understanding, comes into us; and the glory of His character becomes a glory to us, just as to Moses in the mount when he beheld the glory of God in the law and the sacrifice. The face of Moses shined so brightly that the people could not look upon him. This was a human being who had walked so closely with God that he literally glorified God physically as well as spiritually; for he was a reflector of that brilliance, of that light that he had beheld there in the mount.

This is a creative act. God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts. As He created light and darkness, so He creates light in the darkened minds of His people and the people of the world. He shines into their hearts.

Paul said that when the old man is put off, you are to be "renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the

new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Ephesians 4:24. That new creature, or creation, is a creative act. God makes a new person. And just like He caused the light to shine out of darkness back in the beginning, so He does now in you and in me. He wants to do this in the whole world in the last days.

Paul wrote about beholding His glory. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord [His character], are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Corinthians 3:18. As we fall in love with Him and become enraptured with Him, as we adore Him, as we are devoted to Him, we see His glory—His character—and we are changed into the same image; even from glory to glory, or from one degree to another, until we shall shine as the stars in their beauty.

Paul wrote that "we have this treasure [this glory, this character, this beauty] in earthen vessels [in corrupt human bodies], that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." 2 Corinthians 4:7. Everyone knows that fallen human beings are not like God. Everyone knows that in our corrupt bodies we cannot possibly produce a character like His. The entire world knows that for we have demonstrated it for six thousand years. Therefore, all the praise is to Him if men become like Him. When He shines into our hearts and changes us, and by beholding His glory we are changed from glory to glory, everyone will know that God has brought this about, and not man. The world will praise Him and not us, because the message is Christ our righteousness, not we our righteousness.

The first angel's message says that we are to "worship Him that made

heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Revelation 14:7. Worship the Creator. He is the only One who can make light shine out of darkness; and the minds of many today are darkened. That is why the Bible does not make sense to many people. That is why God's commands seem unreasonable. That is why we have so many frustrations and so many problems. Our minds are beclouded and dead in trespasses and sins. They must be "quickened by the Spirit." 1 Peter 3:18. He says He will shine into our minds, so that the darkness and mystery would be taken away; and you will say, "Oh, now I see!"

Just as God accomplishes the rising of the sun every day, He accomplishes the rising of the Sun of Righteousness in our lives. He accomplishes the glory of God in human beings—earthen vessels—in all their weakness and sinfulness. He accomplishes this until we are changed into vessels of beauty and of honor.

We become like Him while the others worship the beast and his image, which are man-made powers, and obeyed in man's strength; not transformed by the Divine One. What a difference. And so many of us, as we attempt to make ourselves better in our own strength, are joining with those who worship the beast and his image. It is all man made unless it is Christ our righteousness.

The distinctions have become wide between those who love Him and those who are being forced, or who are trying to force themselves, to love Him. One group trusts only Him and His righteousness, and not their own. They are recreated by His power and not their own. They are transformed

by His glory until all praise is to Him and not to themselves. The other group will take the praise to themselves for their own efforts to satisfy God's laws.

God's goal for you and for me is not to be good enough to be saved. This is one misunderstanding that must be taken away. Our goal is not to be good enough to be saved. It never has been that. **God's goal for every human being is to be like Him.** He wants to be seen in the world through us. The world understands us but they do not understand Him. It is that darkness that must be taken away. The world will see God in human beings before Jesus comes back. Christ our righteousness tells us that His glory is to be seen, and not ours. Ours is all contaminated, corrupt, and vile.

The goal of Christ our righteousness and justification by faith is not simply just to be good enough to get to heaven. That is an erroneous concept. It is not striving to be obedient. It is to be like Him. God does not want to come and pat us on the back and say, "You have done a good job." He wants to say, "You have honored Me; I will honor you. You have glorified Me, I will glorify you." The world cannot be saved by seeing us become better and better and better. It does not matter how good we become because the world will not be saved by our becoming good. The world will be saved by God. They must see Him, they must love Him, they must adore Him, they must receive His Person; but they do not know Him until they see Him in us. We will be a revelation of God to a dying world. John told us in very simple words that "when He shall appear, we shall be like Him." 1 John 3:2. Some people

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listen to this and become very discouraged. They say, "I can never become like Him." But the One who made something out of nothing, the One who made light to shine out of darkness, can make something out of nothing in you, too. If you understand the Creator, and the power of God unto salvation, which Paul defines as the gospel, it is not what you can do, but rather what He will do with you when He is permitted to do that.

"It is His glory to pardon the chief of sinners." E. G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 161. And His glory is His character. He says, "I don't care how bad you are. That doesn't bother Me or prevent Me from doing something for you. My character is manifested when I pardon the chief of sinners and transform them. Then the world truly sees that I am God; and a God of love and of might and power who loves humans so much that He can change the vilest of sinners." Then God is seen! Yet all the time we keep saying, "I am too bad!" So what! That is no problem to Him. He has been working with the bad for six thousand years. It is His glory to take care of the worst sinners. It does not bring praise to Him to take care only of fine, upstanding citizens who never had a sin in their lives; although there are not any like that—they just think they are. The ones who really bless Him are the ones that everyone thinks is

lost—the hopeless cases. They really honor His name when He converts them, do they not?

The Lord is capable. What do you think of God? Is He too small to accomplish His plans? We are everlastingly looking at weak self and becoming discouraged. He tells us to look to Him and be saved and to be transformed. It is His glory that is to be seen in our transformation, not ours.

When does the light of the angel come to lighten the earth? It is made clear in the Old Testament by the gospel prophet Isaiah. "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rereward [rear guard]." Isaiah 58:6. This verse begins with "Then." When is "then"? It is referring back to two previous verses. "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?" Verses 6,7. When this happens, "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning: and thy righteousness shall go before

thee." Then God will be seen.

"Thus in the night of spiritual darkness God's glory is to shine forth through His church in lifting up the bowed down and comforting those that mourn. All around us are heard the wails of a world's sorrow. On every hand are the needy and distressed. It is ours to aid in relieving and softening life's hardships and misery. Practical work will have far more effect than mere sermonizing. We are to give food to the hungry, clothing to the naked, and shelter to the homeless. And we are called to do more than this. The wants of the soul, only the love of Christ can satisfy. If Christ is abiding in us, our hearts will be full of divine sympathy. The sealed fountains of earnest, Christlike love will be unsealed." E. G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 417.

Christ wants to give each of us a tender heart that sympathizes with people, that has compassion as He had, that is sensitive to the needs of those around us. He will supply all their needs according to His riches in glory, no matter what those needs are. This goodness of God will be reflected and manifested in humanity. God will be seen in the person of His saints. This is what He is waiting for.

The Bible says the result of this light is that "the Gentiles [or unbelievers]



shall come to thy light, and the kings to the brightness of thy rising." Isaiah 60:3. A tremendous ingathering, or harvest of souls will take place. Multitudes came in at Pentecost. We are told that the Latter Rain will be even greater.

An Old Testament writer prophesied that "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Habakkuk 2:14. Here is Ellen White's comment on this Bible text: "Another angel comes down from heaven having great power, and the earth is to be lightened with his glory. The Spirit of the Lord will so graciously bless consecrated human instrumentalities that men, women, and children will open their lips in praise and thanksgiving, filling the earth with the knowledge of God, and with His unsurpassed glory as the waters cover the sea." *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 984. It will be so extensive there will be millions of people shining for God, filled with His glory and manifesting His character, and the whole earth will be full of His glory. Human beings, multitudes in every land, will shine for God, saying, "Behold your God. He is like us, and we are like Him."

We are to proclaim His glory and grace, not by sermons, but every moment and every hour of every day, wherever we live, wherever we go. We cannot preach the Loud Cry in words. We will live the Loud Cry.

It is God's glory to pardon the chiefest of sinners. It does not matter how vile you have been or how far you have gone. God will manifest Himself in you, He will glorify Himself in you, and the world will be amazed as they behold God in humanity. And then Jesus will come.

How He longs to come into your heart. How He longs to rise like the sun in the morning with light, warming us on the inside and the outside; and glowing in us, shining in us, until the whole life is so transformed that our very lips, our every act, manifests His love and His goodness; until we cannot contain and constrain ourselves.

We must shine for Him. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matthew 5:16.

It is our privilege to have that transformation, not tomorrow but this very day. God has been waiting many years to shine out into the darkness of this world through our lives. May His will be done for you and for me is my prayer in His precious name. ✨

—J. W. "Bill" Lehman, *Christ Our Righteousness*, pp. 1-11.

*I and my Father are one.
John 10:30*

Elder A. T. Jones,

God calls upon you to go out into the cities, and give the last message of warning. Look to God for your support as you go. Call the people together, and you will certainly not work in vain. Let the truth go forth as a lamp that burneth. No longer confine your efforts to one place. Let there be held, right where you are, a solemn convocation. Let there be a renunciation of self to God. Hold fast the beginning of your faith unto the end. Let not your faith waver. Go forth in faith....

"There are those who have never heard the message of mercy and warning. In the name of the Lord I say, Delay not. Proclaim the gospel message in the cities of America. Scatter the seeds of truth throughout these cities. Take with you reliable men, who with pen and voice will act their part in proclaiming the message of present truth to the world."

— E. G. White, Letter 187, 1905.

Christ Our Righteousness

PART TWO—The Starting Point of Righteousness

MUCH has been written by Seventh-day Adventist authors on the subject of Christ our righteousness. Beginning in 1888 and onward, there has been a great deal of difficulty with this subject. Our denomination faced a major crisis when in 1888, the finest leaders we had disagreed about this subject. Christ our righteousness has become such a volatile topic that when I first learned about it, my advisors in college told me to leave this subject alone, saying it would chase me out of the church. Yet I read in the Spirit of Prophecy and the Bible that this message is fundamental to the salvation of all who hear the gospel. A few people claim to know what it is all about; but there are some aspects of it that many apparently do not understand, for we as a people do not agree about this subject at all.

In order to understand why some have fought violently against the message of Christ our righteousness, you must go back and look at what took place in 1888. There was an emphasis on the subject of justification by faith in Minneapolis that has almost never been presented since then. It is the negative side of justification by faith. You may think there is nothing negative about it. It is positive and hopeful, but there is a side to it that can be looked upon as very negative. I do not like to talk about negative things, but you will never understand unless I do. There is an aspect to this subject that, as first presented in 1888, some people detest.

This somewhat negative theme is the most basic element of the subject of justification by faith. Leaving out this theme prevents us from experiencing it. Justification by faith is not to be simply a theory, but an experience. It

is not enough to just understand it. It is something you must practice every day. We must put it into effect in our lives. It must do something for us, otherwise it is just an abstract theory that does no one any good. And we do not necessarily practice it just because we can preach about it or talk about it to our friends and neighbors.

This negative aspect to Christ our righteousness and justification by faith is the starting point for true righteousness. It was this aspect that brought so much opposition to the message of Jones and Waggoner in 1888. There was a lot of argument and debate over subjects like the Trinity, but those subjects did not intimidate people. This negative aspect that we are discussing caused much opposition, even though it was not argued or debated, or in fact even discussed to any significant degree.

This negative aspect is found in Ellen White's definition of justification by faith. "What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself." *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 456. We like the last part of that sentence where it talks about God doing for man that which we cannot do for ourselves. But many do not like the part about laying the glory of man in the dust. It is the work of God to lay the glory of man in the dust—those things about which we could boast. You cannot have the last part without also having the first part. You cannot have God do for you that which you cannot do for yourself unless first of all He lays your glory in the dust. So the negative part of justification by faith is having the Lord lay our glory in the dust.

How would you like to have been a prominent person living back in the days when this message was first taught? Imagine two messengers sent by God standing up and telling you that all your righteousness is "filthy rags." The implication is that, if Christ is your righteousness, then you do not have any. If He must be my righteousness, I cannot produce it of myself. Worse still, it says to me that all the righteous deeds I have been trying to do are not righteous. All the Sabbath-keeping, all the tithe paying, all the missionary work, all the preaching, all the Bible work—none of these are righteousness. If Christ must be your righteousness, then all of your righteousness is nothing. We must admit that we do not hear much about this. The reason is that preachers do not like to talk about it. The reason we preachers do not like to talk about it is because it condemns us as well as you. No one can escape, for it does not make any exceptions, except for Jesus.

We like to talk about the positive aspects of justification by faith—how Christ is my righteousness, how righteousness is a free gift, imputed and imparted to me; but we almost always leave out the part about laying my glory in the dust. Many just do not like it. But we cannot teach Christ our righteousness and justification by faith without putting this in. We have been trying to do it for a long time, and all we are doing is tickling our ears and not changing our hearts.

You can be as lost teaching and believing Christ our righteousness as you can by being a legalist and a Pharisee. There were some pretty prominent people in the 1888 movement (and afterwards) who believed this doctrine

and yet who are lost. The two most prominent men, Jones and Waggoner, went out, not because they were wrong about the subject, but apparently they got lost some place, didn't they? This is why people warned me that this is a dangerous subject.

The devil would like us to distort this subject. Why? Because when Christ our righteousness is correctly taught and preached, it deprives me of all that past righteousness that I thought was my ticket to heaven! When I almost had heaven in my grasp, some preacher comes along and tells me I am not going to make it because I do not have any righteousness of my own. I must have the Lord's righteousness to be saved. Therefore, our natural inclination will be to omit this from the subject, and only talk about the positive aspects.

depressed. How can we follow such failing leaders, they ask?

Ministers and church leaders have a terrible hang-up about this subject because we have to put up a façade to please the members. Imagine some well-known church leader in 1888 standing up and saying, "Brethren, I am sorry but I have to confess that I have been a very selfish man, a very proud person." That never happened. Some leaders feared that the people thought they were too perfect; and the people would wonder how that person ever got into such a high office. They would feel like they had been deceived. So those leading brethren imagined themselves being castigated and evicted by the members of the church—if they confessed their weaknesses and sins. Would you be big enough to do that?

that we must be righteous. The teaching of justification by faith says that we are not righteous, and if I am not righteous, I do not satisfy the Bible requirement. Therefore, I am a condemned, lost soul. That is the negative side of it. It turns people off when we preach the truth about justification by faith.

The Jews had the same problem. "For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Romans 10:3. This ignorance was willing. They learned about the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, but they rejected it. They were seeking to establish their own. Therefore they did not submit themselves to His. The next verse tells us "For Christ is the end [the fulfillment] of the law for righteousness to everyone

Before I chase you away, I must pause and say that in all of the preaching by Jones and Waggoner about the nothingness of man, they were always pointing out that God loved man and counted him so precious that He gave for man the most valuable thing in all heaven—the Lord Jesus. And the reason why sinners are valuable is because of the price paid for them, and because originally they were made in the image of God. It is not because we are so good, but rather because of what God made us in the beginning, and because of what God thought about us when He gave Jesus for us. It is God's estimation of man that makes us good and valuable, not our estimation of ourselves. In Christ we are valuable. In ourselves we are nothing.

When those men whom Ellen White called the "leading brethren" listened to Jones and Waggoner talk about this, they cringed to imagine themselves standing in the pulpit before the audience that had literally thought that they were faultless. Church members do often expect our ministers and leaders to be faultless; and I am amazed at how many young people think that preachers are a different order of being. When they discover we are not, they are greatly let down and almost

There were not many who were big enough then, and there are not many who would today. That is why we do not have altar calls in most of our churches anymore. That is why we do not require people to come down front and give their heart to Christ. That is degrading to some people, not elevating. Why do you require them to do that?

The correct preaching of justification by faith intimidates people, at least at the beginning. The Bible teaches us

that believeth." To those who believe that Christ is their righteousness, He is the fulfillment of the law for them. But if I am seeking to establish my own righteousness—even just a tiny bit of my own righteousness—will I ever accept His? It is impossible.

Somehow there must come an awareness of my condition before I will ever look for righteousness elsewhere. As long as I am satisfied with my own righteousness, or any portion of it, I will never seek righteousness from Him,

because I am content. If my Sabbath-keeping is good enough for me, if my tithe paying is good enough for me, if my work for the Lord is good enough for me and I am satisfied with it (rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing), I do not have need of His righteousness. I already have it, I have already attained. I can go to church every Sabbath and go home feeling very happy and content thinking I have got it made. I think that I literally do not need Christ as my righteousness. And if as a pastor I tell you that you do need it, many would say, "Why are you criticizing me? I am just as good as you are [and you are]; and therefore what right do you have to tell me I am not righteous?" We can rise up on our high horse and be intimidated by the whole thing, and go along accepting only our own righteousness. You would be amazed at how easily we can do this. We just automatically fall into this rut and go our own way, thinking we are not that bad and do not have to worry about any other righteousness. I have the truth, and I have been following it, have I not? So as far as I am concerned, that is righteousness, and that is good enough.

We like anything that elevates self, but we dislike anything that depreciates self. Nowadays preachers like to talk



about "self worth." It has a nice ring to it. You are somebody. Be proud of yourself. We talk about self-love, and we take that marvelous text "Love your neighbor as yourself," and conclude that if you do not love yourself you cannot love your neighbor. And we say, "Oh, goody! I always wanted to love myself, and now I am told it is alright." We have sensitivity sessions where we discover that the things we feared about ourselves, other people have, too. And since they are not afraid of them, why should I be? Maybe I am not so bad after all. We like all these things that enhance self, but don't tell us any more about the things that depreciate self.

Jones and Waggoner did not avoid the negative side of Christ our righteousness. In fact, Waggoner made it very prominent. Here are a few statements he made to the not-so-appreciative crowd there in Minneapolis. He used several texts from the Psalms. "When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers; the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; what is man, that Thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that Thou visitest him?" "My heart was hot within me; while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue. Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, which it is; that I may know how frail I am. Behold, Thou hast made my days as an hand-breadth; and mine age is as nothing before Thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity." "Put them in fear, O Lord: that the nations may know themselves to be but men." "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help." Psalms 8:3,4; 39:3-5; 9:20; 146:3.

Ecclesiastes 3:19,20 is another text he dwelt upon. "For that which befalleth the

sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast; for all is vanity."

There were two texts from Isaiah. "All nations before Him are as nothing; and they are counted to Him less than nothing, and vanity." "The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever," Isaiah 40:17; 40:6-8. All of these verses were put into Waggoner's preaching of justification by faith. He said these texts show that God is everything, and that man is nothing.

Before I chase you away, I must pause and say that in all of the preaching by Jones and Waggoner about the nothingness of man, they were always pointing out that God loved man and counted him so precious that He gave for man the most valuable thing in all heaven—the Lord Jesus. And the reason why sinners are valuable is because of the price paid for them, and because originally they were made in the image of God. It is not because we are so good, but rather because of what God made us in the beginning, and because of what God thought about us when He gave Jesus for us. It is God's estimation of man that makes us good and valuable, not our estimation of ourselves. In Christ we are valuable. In ourselves we are nothing.

You need to ponder for a long time that we, like the flowers and grass, are nothing. We do not worry when a blade of grass or a flower dies. It is here for a short while and then gone. Our goodness is like flowers that are here for a few days, and then gone. Can you put your trust in that? No, of course not. We must put out trust in something far better than that.

Waggoner also used some New Testament texts. "I am the Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do noth-

ing.” John 15:5. “For I know that in me dwelleth no good thing.” Romans 7:18. Can you imagine the apostle Paul, who did so much for the Lord at all times, saying this about himself?

Paul also wrote in Philippians 3:8 that he counted “all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.” Those things included monetary loss, losing his position in the Sanhedrin, and the prestige he once held amongst his brethren; but there was something else that Paul lost. He said he was a Pharisee of the Pharisees. A Pharisee is proud of his own righteousness. Paul had to discard his own righteousness. Paul had to look upon himself as having nothing but filthy rags, in and of himself, prior to the time of his conversion. Paul is talking about the willing death of self. What is good in self that it should be enhanced, or fostered, or that you should take credit for?

I have had people say to me, “Elder Lehman, you do terrible things to us. All my life I’ve looked forward to some kind of success or achievement, and now you come along and with one swoop you wipe me out and say I cannot have it.” This was not my idea. I did not invent it. It has always been in the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. Friend, if we have missed it, we have been deceived, and we have grossly neglected the things that will get us to the kingdom. These days I fear we are willingly neglecting some of these things. We keep hoping that there is some other way that we can circumvent the death of self, that some way we can have self and Christ as our righteousness at the same time. We keep hoping and praying that some magnificent pastor will come along who has deciphered the Bible correctly and can show us how to have both. Or perhaps someone will write a book that says we can have both, and that will allow self to be inflated all it wants, yet still have the righteousness of Christ.

Only needy souls will ever plead for the righteousness of Christ. Only

those who see themselves as unrighteous will sense a need for that. Only the ones who hunger and thirst for righteousness will request it. As long as you are content for self to do what it wants to, and call that righteousness, you will never hunger and thirst after His righteousness. Self must be cast into the dust. This is the beginning point for true preaching of justification by faith—the laying the glory of man in the dust, which is the work of God, and not the work of the preacher or anyone else. It is the work of God. He does it, which is a good thing for us; and we must accept it.

When the children of Israel came out of Egypt, they had many distortions of the truth. They lived in a heathen land where they had come to believe that God was angry with them, and that they must somehow appease Him and court His favor. They attempted to become righteous in their own energy and works. The Lord had to change that attitude. I sense that today He has the same job to do with many of us. The Lord gave them something called the old covenant, but they could not be saved under the provisions of that old covenant. God gave them that covenant to teach them lessons that they must learn, or they would never need Him. They would always be content in their own ways and in their own righteousness.

Ellen White explained the old covenant and why God gave it to the nation of Israel at Sinai. “Another compact—called in Scripture the ‘old’ covenant—was formed between God and Israel at Sinai ... The Abrahamic covenant ... is called the ‘second,’ or ‘new,’ covenant But if the Abrahamic covenant contained the promise of redemption, why was another covenant formed at Sinai? In their bondage the people had to a great extent lost the knowledge of God and of the principles of the Abrahamic covenant Living in the midst of idolatry and corruption, they had no true conception of the holiness of God, of the exceeding sinfulness of their own hearts, their utter inability, in themselves, to render obedience to God’s law, and their need of a Saviour. All this they must be taught [emphasis supplied]. God brought them to Si-

nai; He manifested His glory; He gave them His law, with the promise of great blessings on condition of obedience... . The people did not realize ... that without Christ it was impossible for them to keep God’s law Feeling that they were able to establish their own righteousness, they declared, ‘All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.’ Exodus 24:7... yet only a few weeks passed before they broke their covenant with God, and bowed down to worship a graven image. ... now, seeing their sinfulness and their need of pardon, they were brought to feel their need of the Saviour. ... Now they were prepared to appreciate the blessings of the new covenant.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 371,372.

God gave the old covenant to teach His people some crucial lessons. In the process of learning those lessons, they “were prepared to appreciate the blessings of the new covenant.” Many today need to be taught those same lessons. They essentially come into the church under the old covenant. They hear the law and realize that it is good. They vow to keep it (go read your baptismal vows). Yet soon they realize that they cannot keep it in their weak flesh. So this next quote applies not only to the ancient Israelites, but to modern Israel as well: “Before there could be any permanent reformation, the people must be led to feel their utter inability in themselves to render obedience to God. ... While they trusted in their own strength and righteousness, it was impossible for them to secure the pardon of their sins; they could not meet the claims of God’s perfect law, and it was in vain that they pledged themselves to serve God. It was only by faith in Christ that they could secure pardon of sin and receive strength to obey God’s law. They must cease to rely on their own efforts for salvation, they must trust wholly in the merits of the promised Saviour, if they would be accepted of God.” *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 524. That is good news. We often do not like its implications, but it is good news.

Keeping these quotes in mind, look at these words from the gospel prophet. “Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably

to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished [no more strife, no more struggle, no more battling], that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." Isaiah 40:1, 2. Why does He say that? When Christ is your righteousness, what about the struggles? What about the wars? What about the battles? When Christ becomes my righteousness, the struggle to become righteous in myself ceases. The warfare stops. I am righteous only in Christ, never in myself. He is my righteousness. The struggle, the warfare, stops the instant I accept Him as my righteousness, as my justification. "Her warfare is accomplished ... her iniquity is pardoned." Therefore, "speak comfortably to her." You can take it easy now, for the warfare is over. Comfort the people with Christ our righteousness. You do not have to struggle to attain righteousness. In Christ you have attained. In Christ you have achieved. He is our victory. He is our success. He is the victor for all humankind. He is our King, and in Him we are accepted. We must cease to rely on our own efforts for salvation, and must trust wholly in the merits of the promised Savior, if we would be accepted of God.

"Come with humble hearts, not thinking that you must do some good work to merit the favor of God, or that you must make yourself better before you can come to Christ. You are powerless to do good, and cannot better your condition. Apart from Christ we have no merit, no righteousness. Our sinfulness, our weakness, our human imperfection make it impossible that we should appear before God unless we are clothed in Christ's spotless righteousness. We are to be found in Him not having our own righteousness, but the righteousness which is in Christ." "The righteousness of Christ is presented as a free gift to the sinner if he will accept it. He has nothing of his own but what is tainted and corrupted, polluted with sin, utterly repulsive to a pure and holy God. Only through the righteous character of Jesus Christ can man come nigh to God." *Selected Messages*, Book 1, pp. 333, 342.

This next quote is one to be treasured:

"None but God can subdue the pride of man's heart. We cannot save ourselves. We cannot regenerate ourselves. In the heavenly courts there will be no song sung, To me that loved myself, and washed myself, redeemed myself, unto me be glory and honor, and blessing and praise. But this is the keynote of the song that is sung by many here in their world. They do not know what it means to be meek and lowly in heart; and they do not mean to know this, if they can avoid it. The whole gospel is comprised in learning of Christ, His meekness and lowliness." *Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 456.

This subject is not a difficult one to understand, but it is a difficult one to accept. The proud heart rises up against it. A man in his late sixties who was a member of my church comprehended the thoughts of all this in a sermon I gave one Sabbath. He was usually a talkative man, but that day he was as silent as could be. At home while eating Sabbath lunch, he sat sullenly at the table with his wife and a lady who was a resident in their home. He did not touch a bite of food although his wife was an excellent cook. He just sat there and moped. After ten or fifteen minutes, he finally uttered, "If that preacher is right, everything I've been doing for the last forty years is no good." The two ladies, like a chorus that had rehearsed for years, responded, "That is right!" If you had hit him in the head with a ball bat, it would not have hurt as much.

That man literally did not speak for six straight weeks. He could speak, but he did not. After prayer meetings he would usually hang around outside and talk to everyone. He was an elder in that church. He had been after his son for over twenty years to go back to church. The son told me later that for some strange reason his dad had stopped nagging him. The man was in absolute misery. It was complete torture for him, night and day. He was distressed, frustrated, confused. He was completely upset, because he had lost his ticket to heaven; but it was a supposed ticket that would never get him there. His dear wife, who loved him very much, had longed for the day

when he would discover that all his righteousness is as filthy rags. For years he had treated her like many legalists and self-righteous people treat others who do not live up to their standards.

By observing others and myself, I have found that when you discover the negative side of justification by faith, it can be a most unpleasant experience. Some hang on the fence, vacillating back and forth. The Lord very patiently and kindly tries to comfort us, tries to help us make a decision. But until we turn our backs on vile self, we can never have Christ as our righteousness. I do not care how well you know this topic or how well you can teach it, or how much you say you believe it; until we turn our backs on self, Christ is not all in all, and we really do not need His righteousness. Ours is good enough.

The Lord wants us to have an experience where Christ is supreme, where He is unto us both salvation and righteousness. When Seventh-day Adventists in all walks of life become filled with the glory of this subject, when they make their decision for Jesus completely as their righteousness, as well as their Savior, the work will be finished in a hurry. We will see revivals everywhere. And then the Lord Jesus can say to us, "Well done, good and faithful servant."

May God help us to realize that the only thing we are going to lose is something very bad, which is sinful self; and that the Giver of every good and precious gift will take away no good thing from us. He will only take away the bad things. May we trust Him and look to Him for our righteousness, for this will make us extremely happy, and we will find tremendous comfort. "Speak ye comfortably to My people," the Lord says. ☞

—J. W. "Bill" Lehman, *Christ Our Righteousness*, pp. 13-21.



YAC at the Louisville GYC 2009 Conference

Youth in Action for Christ was present at the Generation of Youth for Christ Conference held at the Louisville, Kentucky, Convention Center December 30–January 3. YAC was well represented by Chairman Isaiah Horton, who is actively involved in sharing the message of righteousness by faith with other young people. Having a booth at GYC gave this new youth committee the opportunity to share an array of literature resources presenting the everlasting gospel of the Three Angels Messages, the gospel of Righteousness by Faith in verity—the message God commanded to be given to the world.

The GYC Conference theme “Unashamed!” was derived from Apostle Paul’s well-known proclamation in Romans 1:16: “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Jesus Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believes ...” Quite appropriately, Youth In Action for Christ—whose mission is “taking the in-depth gospel to youth”—distributed over 1,000 books. A total of over two thousand pieces of literature were given out, including booklets, pamphlets, Bible studies, and other items. Attendees were pleased that all of our resources were specific to the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ.

Among the free materials were publications by E. G. White, E. J. Waggoner, and A. T. Jones. These included Studies in Romans, the Glad Tidings, Lessons on Faith (Spanish version), Christ and His Righteousness, and Cristo Y Su Justicia. Christ in the Psalms by Jerry Finneman proved to be a favorite as well. The booklet, The Word was Made Flesh, by W. W. Prescott, containing the sermon spoken of so highly by E. G. White, was one of the most asked for items, along with Tempted Like as We Are, by A. T. Jones.

The YAC booth was located near the Andrews University and Gospel Ministries International booths. There, Isaiah Horton met and greeted numerous attendees from all over the United States, in addition to Canada, the Caribbean, England, Wales, Bermuda, Mexico, Argentina, Peru, the Philippines and other countries.

Over seventy-five persons signed up to receive further information on YAC and righteousness by faith resources for Bible study. Some volunteered to help support a YAC Righteousness by Faith newsletter. It was clear that a number of young people were already familiar with our history as Advent people, particularly as it relates to 1888 and the initial arrival of the latter rain. Others had some knowledge and were seeking a clearer assessment.

Students from Southern Adventist University, Oakwood College, Loma Linda University, Andrews University, Newbold College, and other Adventist universities also visited the booth. GYC was packed with four days of worship services, numerous workshops and conferences in which the Gospel of Jesus Christ was preached; the mission was studied and explored; and young people experienced practical missionary work in the greater Louisville urban area. YAC was honored to be present to encourage and support the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church in proclaiming the Third Angel’s Message. ☞

God As Father

Bob: **TODAY** on *Portraits of God* we're going to discuss an aspect of God's character that may sound a little obvious, given our content week-by-week, but we want to focus today on the concept of God as our Father. As I just mentioned, this may sound like a topic that is very evident, but we hope this study will serve as a reminder of the many and varied implications this truth has. Bill, why don't you start us off?

Bill: Well, Bob, let me begin by stating that I know of no other major religion of the world that worships some type of superior being who is seen in the role of "Father." Now, while I don't profess to be an expert or the ultimate authority on every jot and tittle of what is taught in those major religions, I think I am safe in suggesting that the Christian's belief in God as Father is unique among all these religions. The gods of other religions—and I utilize that word with a small "g"—are revered and worshiped but not in that particular context.

It's interesting that when Jesus gave instruction on what has become the model for all prayer, and includes the specifics of prayer and what constitutes the type of conversation we are to engage in with our God, we are instructed to address Him as "*Our Father.*"

That, without a doubt, was and is unique. When I say was unique, it is because even the chosen people of Christ's day were confused in their picture of God. They had come to view Him as very demanding and difficult to please.

Bob: Some listener might question your last statement, Bill, with "Is that really true?" And, if it is, is it such a big deal? To see just how corrupt Israel had become in their concept of God, listen to what the prophet Jeremiah describes in 7:31, "*And they (Israel) have built the high places of Tophet, to burn their sons and daughters in the fire, which I did not command, nor did it come into my heart.*"

God was lamenting their worship practices. It is hard to believe that His chosen people had come to that low a level in their worship—sacrificing children to appease their picture of God! We find such a thing unbelievable today. Well, God found it repulsive, too! Such a demand, as is mentioned here in this verse of Jeremiah, is foreign to the very heart and mind of God.

Of course, as more than one preacher has suggested, we need to be careful today that we present our children to God as Samuel's mother did—*living* sacrifices, as we are all to be. We've all seen some parents, Bill, who allow their children to pursue a lifestyle or career that has nothing to do with God or blessing others.

Bill: Amen to that, Bob! It pains me to see parents—well-meaning parents—foster a desire in their children to become successful in some specific field that has nothing to do with God's ultimate purpose for them in this life—be it in business, arts, sports or whatever.

Parents, ask for wisdom from the Lord in the training of your children, especially from an early age. Seek God for

what *He* wants them to be—not what *you* want them to be or what *they* think they would like to be, especially if it is not a life's work that will not give glory to God.

If we're not careful, we can repeat the mistake of those ancient Israelites who certainly should have known better—not in a sense of literal fire, of course, but in a sacrifice that has to do with worldly pursuits. There is always the temptation for parents to make their children famous and/or successful as this world sets those goals.

We might make mention here on that statement from Jeremiah you read a few moments ago, Bob—it was not that Israel had turned away from God to worship some other gods. They worshipped Baal because they understood Baal and God to be the same person. But what a misrepresentation of God Baal was!

It's not that many Christians today are in danger of turning away from the God that is revealed in scripture to Buddha or to the gods of Hinduism, although, I grant you, that does happen to some degree. No, the greater danger is that we would become confused on what the Bible reveals to us as the truth about God.

Bob: You have cited one of our burdens here on *Portraits of God*, Bill. It's not that we're in a controversy with Muslims, Buddhists or Hindus. What we're burdened by is the need for us as Christians to properly understand God and the truth about Him. Yes, we do believe that the major religions of the world have misconceptions about

Portraits of God is a radio broadcast heard on Christian radio in Boston and several other stations around the country. Its objective is to present the truths of scripture in light of the gospel and the Great Controversy over God's character. Bill Brace and Bob Hunsaker are co-hosts.

God, but we as Christians have yet to get it straight as well.

Getting back to the Lord's prayer that begins with "Our Father." No doubt what heavily influences our concepts today on what the term "God our Father" implies is the relationship, or lack thereof, that we have with our own earthly fathers. Now, I think, Bill, in your recent interview with our mutual friends, Seneca and Patti, you referenced the high numbers of children who are born out of wedlock today. I know those numbers are staggering, for sure. And one of the consequences of "out of wedlock births" is that many, if not most, of those children will grow up without a father present. Yes, some of their parents may live together outside of marriage, but the vast majority of children are going to grow up without the biological father present. So it's harder for them to gain a true and attractive picture of God when their own father is not even present to begin with.

Bill: Bob, the devil is ever at work to destroy our picture of God and you have cited one large obstacle that he has laid down at this crucial juncture of this world's history. Yes, indeed, if you don't have a father present at all, your ability to gain the right understanding of God as a Father is greatly hindered. I want to encourage all those who are young, single women to remember this problem. In fairness to your future child, do you realize you are extending to him or her a very unfair disadvantage right from the beginning of life if he or she is without the biological father present and, I should add, in the state of marriage?

Social scientists tried to suggest for several decades that it didn't really matter whether a child had one or two parents in the home. They have now come to realize they were dead wrong. Children, if they are going to grow up to be balanced adults, do need two parents—the biological parents—in their young home life.

This is even more so for children in a Christian environment. I think many young women have been led astray by believing that as long as they are Christians and take their child to church each week, everything will be fine. Not so! Children need fathers present in the state of marriage in order to be given every advantage they can get to develop a proper and truthful understanding of God as their Father.

Bob: I'd like to point out something here about the concept of God's Fatherhood as it is brought out by Jesus in our passage. Fatherhood in the Lord's Prayer comes at the beginning, so that each one who believes in God can see that there is to be a special link, a special bond, between the believer, as a child, and God, as their Father.

We are delighted to speak of God as our Friend here on *Portraits of God*. That, indeed, is a concept that many Christians have never seen nor understood, perhaps. But what is even more emphasized in the scriptures is the truth that God *is* our Father.

Now Bill, I think I remember you mentioning one time that when you lost your father you also felt like you had

Fatherhood in the Lord's Prayer comes at the beginning, so that each one who believes in God can see that there is to be a special link, a special bond, between the believer, as a child, and God, as their Father.

also lost your best friend. Is that correct? So, a Christian who sees his God as the One who is also his best friend, will have a rich experience and a wonderful relationship. And that concept is built on the fact that God is, before anything else, our heavenly Father.

Bill: And that concept is, of course, based upon the fact that God is our Creator. I find it interesting, Bob, that the special call in the closing hours of earth's history is based upon this truth. Let me quote it, if I might. It is taken from Revelation 14:6, 7. The context of these verses is the second coming of Jesus Christ at the end of this world. The entire chapter has to do with that specific event. Here are verses six and seven: "*And I saw another angel flying in the midst of heaven having the everlasting gospel to preach to those who dwell on the earth—to every nation, tribe, tongue, and people—saying with a loud voice, 'Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment has come; and worship Him who made the heaven and earth, the sea and springs of water.'*"

Now the call, as I said, interestingly enough, is for us to worship God first of all as our Creator. *Creator* has as its core concept fatherhood. So our concept of God, our relationship with Him, is first to be based upon the fact that He is our Father.

Once again the devil, hard as work, has attempted to erase that concept from our minds, to blur it or to depreciate it. And we might say he has accomplished a great deal of success in this respect through the theory of evolution that is so prevalent today.

But I can tell you that as a father myself in the biological sense, fatherhood has within it a great deal of emotion and attachment. I have come to realize that the picture of God as my Father has been greatly strengthened through my own position as a biological father. I understand better why that concept serves as a basis for all the other concepts of God that are given note in the scriptures. It stands

supreme in the revelation of Him.

Bob: Of course, that is why God is referred to hundreds and hundreds of times throughout the scriptures as our Father. The family unit is the most sacred of all institutions in the Bible. And, it goes without saying, there has to be a father to make a complete family unit.

And, yes, we can speak of God as our Lord, our Saviour, our Husband, our Friend, etc., but those terms only have their full meaning in the context of His Fatherhood.



Unfortunately, what blurs many a person's accurate understanding of God's Fatherhood, especially from a young age, is how they are treated by their earthly father. Modern studies and research by social scientists have shown this to be more important than earlier generations have realized. There is a special and unique tenderness—an attitude of protection and pity, a jealousy, a deep love for your offspring that no other relationship in life can equal. As someone once said, "Once a parent, always a parent."

Bill: Yes, that is true, Bob! A parent never stops being a parent. Of course, we need to remember that when our children become adults themselves, we are to assume a different emphasis in our parenthood. A case in point—a person I am quite close to would chafe when his father would continue to constantly refer to him, in front of others, as "honey" even when in his twenties. Parents do need to let their children grow up!

But if you go to scripture you see a picture of God, above any other picture—and there are many of them—that portrays Him in His role as our parent. And not just as a parent, but a loving parent as well. And in that realm, or within those parameters, we see a love that is permeated with agape.

Listener, take a look at the many texts where God speaks of His love for you and me, and I think you will see that the love most emphasized there is in the context of His parenthood.

This is clearly and most obviously seen in the relationship between Jesus and His heavenly Father. For example, Jesus utilizes the word "*abba*" on one occasion; a word that is translated from the Aramaic into the English as "daddy." This took place at the time of His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane. Here it is in Mark 14:26, "And He said, '*Abba*, Father, all things are possible for You. Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will.'"

Now as any child knows who has a loving parent, in the time of duress there is one place where you will always find sympathy, tenderness, pity and care—and that is, from your parents! What a struggle as with each human parent, in a time of duress, to say "no" to your child! Can we begin to imagine how much these moments in the Garden as Jesus cried out in prayer, must have pained God the Father to the very depths of His being?

Bob: I don't think we contemplate how difficult those moments you just mentioned, Bill, must have been upon the heavenly Father of Jesus. It is one thing when we see a friend suffer, but a child's suffering is a whole different depth of pain to a parent. If Jesus is described as sweating great drops of blood in the Garden that night, what was the Father experiencing at that same time? Going on with the usual business of heaven? Or was His love so great for the Son that He too, in a sense, was dying emotionally in His inmost soul? Any parent who has to

watch a child go through physical or emotional pain and suffering, would know well the answer to that question! That brings me, now, to a whole different point—the deep, burden that our heavenly Father has for all His children to be saved. It may be that some individuals who are listening right now think of God as indifferent or only remotely interested in your ultimate destiny. There is nothing further from the truth.

Think of the shepherd that Jesus describes in Luke 15 who left the ninety-nine sheep behind and went out looking for the one lost sheep. That is a symbolic story that describes God the Father's great care for this one lost world in His great, vast universe. It describes also, each and every one of us, who are part of this great web of humanity. Please realize that God would have sent Jesus to die for you, if you were the only one in need of salvation on planet earth.

Bill: Let me go back to the Garden of Gethsemane, Bob. Your reference to the suffering of the Father at that time is a good one. We typically think of the suffering of Jesus but not of the Father—not only then, but also at the cross. I would suggest that in a sense the Father suffered more on those occasions. I don't think that any parent would disagree with me.

Many years ago I attempted by God's grace to minister to the family of a dying teenager. I can tell you that my heart went out as much, if not more, to the mother and the grandmother of the teenager as it did to him. I saw a degree of suffering in their hearts that is without parallel in this life. I've seen intimate friends suffer over the suffering of the other one; I've seen spouses suffer over the suffering of the other in a marriage; they can indeed be horrendous. However, I have never seen the degree, the depth of suffering, like what is in the heart of a parent as they see a child suffering.

I have seen many a parent who has never gotten over the loss of a child, even decades and decades later. Some parents never get over it. Some become absolutely dysfunctional.

Such events from life itself reinforce in my mind that God's ultimate revelation of Himself to us is as our Father. I told my daughter recently (who is the parent of her first child), "Corey, the most wonderful word you can ever, ever hear in this life is not your first name being uttered, or even some words of affection from a spouse, but the word, 'Mommy.'" I think she believes me, Bob!

Bob: Well, that brings us to our last point today, Bill. And we hope it completes the portrait we have tried to paint today about God. (And let's not leave mothers out of this picture. When we talk of God as our Father, we certainly want folks to see that we are talking about parenthood here—both fatherhood and motherhood.)

The Bible tells us that God's children, the human race, wandered away from Him through their choice of sin. I can imagine that Satan may have had the idea, that when he caused Adam and Eve to commit that first sin, that God would abandon them. How surprised he must have been when God uttered those words of promise in Genesis 3:15, "*And I will put enmity (hatred) between you (Satan) and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; He shall bruise (grind to powder) your head, and you shall bruise (grind to powder) His heel.*"

True parents never abandon their children when they go astray. On the contrary, they do everything possible to woo them back, to place their feet once again on the straight and narrow. (Bill, you've often said that many wayward children are going to come to their senses and be saved for eternity all because of praying parents, haven't you?)

The Bible tells us in Revelation 13:8 that Jesus was the "*Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.*" The Godhead had a plan in place right from the very beginning that if man were to sin, Jesus would become the sacrifice for those sins.

And so, it was through the cross that God wanted the whole universe to know the depth of His Parenthood—

that His love for each one of His children was, indeed, as strong as death itself. The gospel story ought to remind us that our heavenly Parents will go to any depth to reclaim us and to make it possible for all of us to have *at-one-ment* with them in heart and soul. If the cross doesn't convince us of that, what could?

Bill: How true, Bob. In conclusion, I would like to reiterate what we have been attempting to say today. It is this: in all the various and sundry revelations that God gives us of Himself in scripture there is no greater one than Him as our Father. That is why He utilizes that term to describe Himself with such great frequency in the Bible. Above all else, He wants us to remember His parenthood—not just parenthood in general, but *our* Parent. It is not by accident that at both the beginning of the Bible in the creation story and at the conclusion of Holy Writ we see an emphasis upon Him as our Creator. He is, indeed, our Father and He will *always* be our Father.

So please, listener, don't ever doubt but that God loves you. You are twice His child—through creation and redemption. He will never forsake you. Trust that. Revel in it! And may such a truth motivate you to a life fully consecrated to Him.

Perhaps you have never accepted these things. Perhaps you want to give your heart to such a Father right now. If so, He is more than happy to let you know that you are His child and He will eagerly forgive you. Wherever you may be—at home, in your car, with a circle of others—let Him take over your life at this moment. It will be the greatest decision you have ever made. Ask for forgiveness and accept Him as your Saviour and Lord. ✨

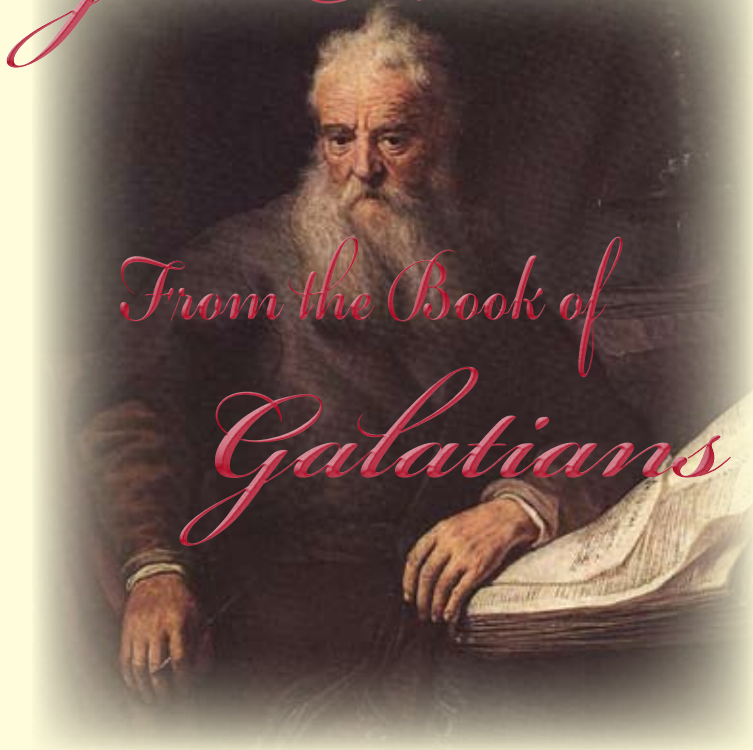
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