

# 1888 *Message Study Committee* Newsletter

“One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up every other,  
Christ our righteousness.” E. G. White, *Review and Herald*, December. 23, 1890

Volume 24 Number 1

## The Laodicean Flu

Editorial

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Does the Lord know how it feels to be nauseated? He has a message for the “angel” of the church in Laodicea: “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.” Revelation 3:15, 16.

Years ago, our missionary friends visited modern Laodicea in Turkey. Ancient Laodicea was a resort area that featured warm mineral springs that people could bathe in like natural hot tubs. These springs still exist, and it’s still possible to swim there. The father of this family decided to drink some of this lukewarm water. The urge to vomit came immediately!

The question for us today is this: “What is making the Lord so sick He feels like throwing up?” It’s not winding roads. The text says that it’s us – His people – who are responsible for His sickness. How can we help?

The answer is in the text: “Be zealous and repent.” (verse 19). We ourselves are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. We’re so used to our wretchedness that we don’t even notice! We need the eye salve of discernment to see ourselves as He sees us, and the white raiment of Christ’s righteousness to cover our nakedness.

More than a hundred years ago, the Lord in His mercy sent God’s people a message that would cure the Laodicean condition – the spiritual blindness and nakedness that exists among us. “For years the church has been looking to man and expecting much from man, but not looking to Jesus, in whom our hopes of eternal life are centered. Therefore God gave to His servants a testimony that presented the truth as it is in Jesus, which is the third angel’s message, in clear, distinct lines” (*Testimonies to Ministers*, p. 93).

“The Lord would have these grand themes studied in our churches, and if every church member shall give entrance to the word of God, it will give light and understanding to the simple” (*Ibid.*, p. 96). 

# Rags to Riches

“We are pensioners,” says Waggoner. “Beggars, miserable, and poor, and naked.” But he does not leave us so. In the third chapter of Romans, he finds a practical gospel which is gold tried in the fire, and white raiment, and eyesalve, to God’s end-time people.

In our study of the first and second chapters [of Romans] we have found that knowledge without God is foolishness and immorality, and that a high profession, or, as Paul states it, circumcision of the flesh profits nothing, where the thing which that sign was given to indicate – the righteousness of God by faith, the circumcision of the heart – is not present.

Chapter 3:1-4: “What advantage then hath the Jew?” “Chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God.” Abraham was led out from amidst heathenism, from faith to faith, and his descendants were beloved for their father’s sake. To them God committed his truth. They failed to realize what the profit of being a Jew was, and rested confident in their high profession, with the thought that God must think more of them than any other people. God had given them the light that they might carry it to others. But filled with pride they did not do the work, and God bore with them generation after generation.

During the captivity he revealed to Daniel that he would yet wait 490 years longer for his people to carry the light to the world. The carrying of the gospel to the Gentiles was a work which God all along the centuries had been working with the Jews to get them to perform, but they refused. Yet God cared for the Gentiles, and “left not himself without witness.” Do we not see a tendency among us as a people to boast of the light we have, and to feel that the Lord must have a special regard for us as a people? But he has given us the light only that we may carry it to others. If we boast of the light, but do not carry it to others, God will bear with us long, but finally some one else will take our place and do the work.

God has sworn to Abraham, and his promises will be fulfilled, even though men do not believe. Verses 3

and 4: If none are found with the faith of Abraham, God is able of the stones to raise up children unto him. God is himself on trial before the universes, and Satan and evil men have always charged him with being unjust and arbitrary; but in the judgment all the universe will say, “Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.”

Verses 9-18: All are in sin. There are no two ways of salvation. “The way of peace they have not known.” Here is the touch-stone, showing the difference between the true Jew and the Gentile. The children of faith will have this peace—the peace which Christ had—continually with them.

Verse 19: “Under the law” is a mistranslation. It means in the law, or within its jurisdiction. By this law all the world becomes guilty; no man has any advantage over any other in the sight of the law.

Verse 20: Some people feel apprehensive lest laying stress on such texts as this should discredit the law. But God who wrote the text, may be left to care for the honor of his own law. It is to the everlasting credit of the law that it cannot justify the transgressor. The law requires in man the perfect righteousness manifested in the life of Christ. No man ever lived as Christ lived. All are guilty. The perfection and majesty of the law leads sinners to cry out, “What shall we do?”

Sometimes the idea obtains that if Christ would only wipe out the record of the past, the individual might then get along very well. That was the trouble with the Jews (Romans 10:2, 3). There is not a man on earth who in himself can do one deed as pure and as free from selfishness as though Christ had done it. “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.” A sermon not preached by faith is a sin to be repented of. Much missionary work has been done by us all, that is to be repented of.

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# Heart IRCUMCISION

*“For ye are all the children of God  
by faith in Christ Jesus.”*

*Galatians 3:26*

Like Noah, Abraham was chosen by God to play a key role in His plan of salvation for the human race. Both men were called at a time in earth's history when it looked like no righteous people existed and the human race was hopelessly lost. Only eight “souls” were saved in the ark when the worldwide flood came and destroyed the rest of the human race. Abraham and his household are recorded as true worshipers of God at the time of God's call to Abraham. His story is recorded in the book of Genesis and he becomes a key figure in Israel's history found in the rest of recorded scripture. Paul has this to say in Galatians 3:26-29: “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Abraham's experience is important to everyone practicing Christianity today.

When God called Abraham, He promised him at least seven things in Genesis 12:2, 3.

1. “I will make of thee a great nation.”
2. “I will bless thee.”
3. “[I will] make thy name great.”
4. “Thou shalt be a blessing.”
5. “I will bless them that bless thee.”
6. “I will curse him that curseth thee.”
7. “In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

Abraham took God at His word and made his journey to the land of Canaan. His exercise of genuine faith produced works that brought him into the land that was

promised to him. Scripture records that Abraham lived a life of faith. Abraham's record also shows that his faith wavered at times and in an effort to make God's promises a “joint effort” he committed an act of unbelief. However, God did not abandon him. He came back to Abraham time after time and reiterated His promise(s) to him.

When Abraham was ninety-nine years old, God renewed His covenant with him. “And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God” (Genesis 17:6-8).

This passage coupled with Hebrews 13:20, 21 clearly indicates that Abraham was in a “New Covenant” relationship with God. Paul in Galatians 3:14-18 states that God's covenant with Abraham was nothing else but God's promise to him. From these passages as well as the story of Abraham we learn that God's everlasting covenant is not a joint agreement but a unilateral promise of God to mankind.

In Genesis 17, God introduces circumcision to Abraham. “And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you” (Genesis 17:11). When Paul expounds on this text, he says that this token was a sign or seal. “And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which [he had yet] being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that

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# The Laodicean Message

“I [Ellen White] was shown that the testimony to the Laodiceans applies to God’s people at the present time, and the reason it has not accomplished a greater work is because of the hardness of their hearts. But God has given the message time to do its work. The heart must be purified from sins which have so long shut out Jesus. This fearful message will do its work. When it was first presented, it led to close examination of heart.”

That is what it is going to do at this time. Let it do its work then. But there has been an intervening time since it was first presented. I read further: “Sins were confessed, and the people of God were stirred everywhere. Nearly all believed that this message would end in the loud cry of the third angel. But as they failed to see the powerful work accomplished in a short time, many lost the effects of the message.”

They gave it up, as this testimony that has not yet been published says: “The sins of Israel must go to judgment before hand. Every sin must be confessed at the sanctuary. Then the work will move; it must be done now. The latter rain is coming on those that are pure—all, then, will receive it as formerly. None receive the latter rain but those who do all they can. Christ will help us. All could be overcomers by the grace of God through the blood of Jesus. All heaven is interested in the work. Angels are interested.

“God can make them a host against their enemies. Ye give up too quick. Ye let go too soon, that arm! The arm of God is mighty. Satan works in different ways to steal the mind off from God. Victory, victory! We must have it over every wrong. A solemn sinking into God. Get ready. Set thine house in order.”


But when it was first presented, because it didn’t

do the work “in a short time,” they said, “The time hasn’t come,” and so they gave up and missed it. Again I read from *Testimony*, Vol. 1, page 186: “I saw that this message would not accomplish its work in a few short months. It is designed to arouse the people of God, to discover to them their backslidings, and to lead to zealous repentance, that they may be favored with the presence of Jesus and be fitted for the loud cry of the third angel. As this message affected the heart, it led to deep humility before God. Angels were sent in every direction to prepare unbelieving hearts for the truth.”

That is where we are. While that message is preparing us for the loud cry, God is sending angels everywhere to prepare people for the truth. And when we go forth from this Conference with this message as it is now, the people will hear it.

“The cause of God began to rise, and his people were acquainted with their position. If the counsel of the True Witness had been fully heeded, God would have wrought for His people in greater power. Yet the efforts made since the message has been given, have been

blessed of God, and many souls have been brought from error and darkness to rejoice in the truth. God will prove His people.”

The particular point I wanted to read is this, that it is to prepare us that we “may be favored with the presence of Jesus, and be fitted for the loud cry of the third angel.” Then what is it that fits us for the loud cry of the third angel? The Laodicean message. 

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# *The* SEEKER OF YOUR *Heart*

How badly does God want your heart? How serious is He about saving you? To what lengths will He go to make sure that you have had more than enough opportunities to understand who He is and how low He is willing to go to rescue you from sin and destruction?

This morning I read a familiar old story with which you are well acquainted. An incredible part

of the answer to the question above was buried right where I least expected it to be. Maybe you've already found this di-

amond-in-the-rough, but I never saw it until now.

It's about those hard-hearted, abusive, power-hungry, Scripture-perverting, deceitful priests and rulers who lorded it over God's people at the time when the Christ-child was born. These men had been blessed above all others. They had the sacred scrolls that contained the Word of God's love to the human race. But instead of letting God's Word change their own hearts; instead of taking the light and running out into the darkness, they hoarded and hid the light and tried to use parts of it to glorify themselves and further their own ends.

God had every reason to be fed up with these pretenders. He had already gone more than the second mile to get their attention. You'd think this would be a great time for Him to pass them by and move on to others who might be more receptive.

But no. As resistant and selfish and prideful as these men were, God's heart still yearned over each one. In a brilliant move which only the heart of a

tender, loving Father could devise, God used some honest-hearted, obedient, heathen "wise men" and a wicked king to put the Jewish leaders under imperial orders to search their own Scriptures. In spite of themselves, they had to be reminded of the times in which they lived, and of the coming of the Christ-child! In order to be lost, these priests


and rulers had to persistently shut out the light of God's love which shone brighter and brighter in the face of His Son for the

**In order to be lost, these priests  
and rulers had to persistently shut  
out the light of God's love.**

next thirty-some years. Some of them did just that. But, Oh! The Father's persistence did pay off in the lives of a few of them. And how His heart of love rejoiced over Joseph of Arimathaea, and Nicodemus, and the others.

If we're honest, every one of us has to admit that God has been working just that hard at getting our attention. I see that this assignment to prepare the Newsletter for publication is one of His ways of nudging me into deeper study of His beautiful plan of redemption. And now it is in your hands. He is using it to reach out to you – again.

Like the priests and rulers of Israel, we will see that the message of God's love makes Him the hero and lays our own glory in the dust. But oh, what a glorious message it is! And how powerful for the saving of a lost world. How our Father's heart yearns over His earthly children.

What will you do with the light that shines on your path today? How will you respond to His great love? 



# Christ Inspires Souls With Confidence in God

“Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world:  
and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith”

1 John 5:4


What kind of faith is it that overcomes the world? It is that faith which makes Christ your own personal Saviour—that faith which, recognizing your helplessness, your utter inability to save yourself, takes hold of the Helper who is mighty to save, as your only hope. It is faith that will not be discouraged, that hears the voice of Christ saying, “Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world, and My divine strength is yours.” It is the faith that hears Him say, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

The reason why the churches are weak and sickly and ready to die is that the enemy has brought influences of a discouraging nature to bear upon trembling souls. He has sought to shut Jesus from their view as the Comforter, as one who reproves, who warns, who admonishes them, saying, “This is the way, walk ye in it.” Christ has all power in heaven and in earth, and He can strengthen the wavering, and set right the erring. He can inspire with confidence, with hope in God; and confidence in God always results in creating confidence in one another.

Every soul must have a realization that Christ is his personal Saviour; then love and zeal and steadfastness will be manifest in the Christian life. However clear and convincing the truth is, it will fail to sanctify the soul, fail to strengthen and fortify it in its conflicts, unless it is brought in constant contact with life. Satan has achieved

his greatest success through interposing himself between the soul and the Saviour.

Christ should never be out of the mind. The angels said concerning Him, “Thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.” Jesus, precious Saviour! Assurance, helpfulness, security, and peace are all in Him. He is the dispeller of all our doubts, the earnest of all our hopes. How precious is the thought that we may indeed become partakers of the divine nature, whereby we may overcome as Christ overcame! Jesus is the fullness of our expectation. He is the melody of our songs, the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. He is living water to the thirsty soul. He is our refuge in the storm. He is our righteousness, our sanctification, our redemption. When Christ is our personal Saviour, we shall show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light. . . .

Christ died because the law was transgressed, that guilty man might be saved from the penalty of his enormous guilt. But history has proved that it is easier to destroy the world than to reform it; for men crucified the Lord of Glory, who came to unite earth with heaven, and man with God. 

*Review and Herald*, August 26, 1890; also: *Reflecting Christ*, p. 21.

## Tithes and Offerings

We are strongly committed to our beloved Seventh-day Adventist Church. We believe all of our tithe belongs to God and is to be paid to the organized church. Over and above our tithe, we support financially the local church and all its programs, working together for the edifying of the body.

## *Religious Liberty within Christianity*

Is there a need for a mosque close to ground zero? The idea is provocative. Millions of Americans are furious. What are some of the issues involved? Is religious liberty part of the mix? Have you formed an opinion on the decision to build the mosque at the proposed location?

Perhaps no issue in recent memory has aroused so much passion and controversy as the proposed Islamic community center and mosque two blocks from Ground Zero. Will this be a “victory mosque” as some people believe?

Many who oppose the proposal call it the “Ground Zero Mosque.” It is a catchy title which paints a powerful image! About 70% of Americans oppose the “Ground Zero Mosque.” Perhaps many of them have been led to believe that there literally will be a mosque at Ground Zero.

The arguments about constructing the mosque close to Ground Zero can be reduced to two. Those who oppose building the mosque there claim that it is insensitive to people who lost loved ones in the Twin Towers destroyed on 9-11-2001. The second argument in favor of the mosque is that this is a religious liberty issue. This argument posits the idea that preventing the building of the mosque amounts to another step on the slippery slope toward losing our religious freedoms in America.

To complicate the second argument we learn the following. A Greek Orthodox Church just across the street from the World Trade center was obliterated in the blast on September 11, 2001. For nine years the New York Port Authority has refused to let them rebuild their church. During this time, the plans for a new mosque were approved by the city. Is this a federal constitutional issue on religious freedom or is it a local

jurisdiction that rejects and/or approves the building of churches, synagogues and mosques?

To add more fuel to the fire, two Muslims, Raheel Raza and Tarek Fatah, wrote a piece entitled “Mischief in Manhattan” in the Ottawa Citizen, August 17, 2010 and suggest anecdotally:

“Muslims know the idea behind the Ground Zero mosque is meant to be a deliberate provocation [toward] the infidel. The proposal has been made in bad faith and in Islamic parlance, such an act is referred to as ‘Fitna,’ meaning ‘mischief-making’ that is clearly forbidden in the Koran.

“The Koran commands Muslims to ‘Be considerate when you debate with the People of the Book’--i.e., Jews and Christians. Building an exclusive place of worship for Muslims at the place where Muslims killed thousands of New Yorkers is not being considerate or sensitive, it is undoubtedly an act of ‘fitna.’”

Again we ask, is the building of the mosque in the approved location in Manhattan an issue of religious liberty or one of insensitivity? With the above information we hope to whet your appetite for the great subject of religious liberty. There are very real and urgent reasons for understanding this important subject.

In this much-needed series of studies we shall consider the subject of religious liberty within Christianity (and to a lesser degree in Islam). We will take into account the biblical concepts, consider the Protestant Reformation belief system, and contrast society’s shifting attitudes with the un-bending principles of the word as we consider the effects of church-state relationships down to our present time. We must learn some principles and actions concerning liberty of conscience from past history and let that history be a guide for us in the future.

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# No Fear

One winter evening we gathered around our fireplace to welcome the Sabbath day with hymns of praise. We sang and played our instruments for a long time. It was cold, dark, and snowy outside, too dark to see much. In our living room, along the same wall as the fireplace is a full-length glass door. Outside the door is a small porch, with steps that lead to our woodshed.

With the peaceful strains of music filling our home, someone walked quietly over to the tall glass door and peered outside. Silently, he motioned for us to come and see.

We gathered around the door. There, looking at us with large, wondering eyes, was a creature with a grayish body not much larger than a squirrel's. It had big ears and a long tail with black and white rings.

Can you guess what it was? It wasn't a raccoon. It was a ringtail cat! And he was looking at us! These shy creatures are rarely seen. But curiosity overcame his natural fear and led him to our door!

I looked into his wondering eyes and gasped, "Oooohhhh! He's soooo cuuute!" Barely had the words escaped my lips than our timid visitor turned and fled across the porch and down the steps, disappearing over the snowy bank below.

The ringtail cat is not really a cat at all. It is a member of the raccoon family. It sleeps mostly in the day, and hunts at night. It lives in dry, mountainous, or desert regions of the western United States. Ringtails are reportedly easy to tame and were kept as pets by miners in years gone by.

Why did the ringtail run away?

Why are almost all wild animals fearful?

Fear is so basic it seems normal to us, but in the beginning, fear was not "natural."



When God created the animals on day six of creation week, they had no fear of man. Adam spent many happy hours meeting and naming all the creatures God had made. So when did animals become afraid of man? The answer to these questions, like so many others, can be found in the Bible.

1. Where is fear mentioned for the first



# in Heaven



time in the Bible?

The Bible says, “Then the Lord God called to Adam and said to him, ‘Where are you?’ So he said, ‘I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself.’” Genesis 3:10 (NKJV).

Note: After man sinned, he became afraid of God, even though God had not changed. What

had changed was the heart of man. The animals, as well as all creation, suffered as a result of Adam’s choice.

2. When did the animals become afraid of man?

The Bible says, “And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be on every beast of the earth, on every bird of the air, on all that move on the earth, and on all the fish of the sea.” Genesis 9:2 (NKJV).

Note: After the flood, the Lord instilled fear of man in the heart of “every beast of the earth.” This fear would serve to protect both animals and man, but it would greatly diminish the affection and companionship man and beast had once shared.

3. Will man and animals someday be able to enjoy being together without fear?

The Bible says, “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered or come to mind.” Isaiah 65:17.


The Bible says, “ ‘The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent’s food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,’ says the Lord.” Isaiah 65:25 (NKJV).

Note: In the heavenly home Jesus is preparing for us, the animals will once again be tame and loving.

4. What gift has God given us to rid our hearts of fear?

The Bible says, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear. . . . We love Him because He first loved us.” 1 John 4:18, 19 (NKJV).

Note: God’s love is more powerful than fear!

I am looking forward to being with Jesus in heaven where all the animals will be tame, and none will be afraid, aren’t you? 

## Galatians:

## Paul's Angry Epistle

*Every truth in the word of God  
must be studied in the light of the Cross*

Seventh-day Adventists have typically argued that the law in Galatians was the ceremonial law. Just a few years ago, yet another book was published that continues this theme.

In contrast, E. J. Waggoner taught that the law referred to in Galatians included both the ten commandment and ceremonial laws. The debate over which law is dealt with in Galatians was the spark that ignited the fire of opposition to the 1888 message, and it actually began in 1886. Waggoner would eventually write a little book called "The Gospel in Galatians" as well as a verse-by-verse commentary on the same book.

I have entitled this discussion "Galatians, Paul's Angry Letter."

Why do I think Paul was angry?

Here are some clues: Paul says, "I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another, but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:6-9 NKJV).

Do you sense the intensity in Paul's message?

Paul had traveled to Galatia and taught them the gospel. But later, others came down from Judea and began to teach the Galatians a different gospel. In Acts 15:1 and onward we learn more about what happened in Galatia.

"And certain men came down from Judea, and taught the brethren, 'Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.'" These were the brethren who had begun to teach the Galatians another gospel. Paul was so upset he actually

said, "If anyone teaches another gospel, he ought to be lost (*my paraphrase*)!"

Those strong words lead me to believe Paul was angry. There is another clue in Galatians 3:1. Most translations say, "O foolish Galatians!" The translators may have actually softened what Paul said there. I believe that the New Jerusalem translation of the Bible actually gives us the word Paul used: "O stupid Galatians!" He was very upset. "Who has bewitched you," he says, "that you should not obey the truth?" And he's referring to the truth that he had preached to them – that is, the truth of the gospel. Paul says, "How can it be? I marvel and am amazed that you should turn away from the gospel of Christ to another gospel which is not another!" There is only one true gospel!

If you want to know what constituted the gospel that Paul preached, go over to the first chapter of Romans. Here he summarizes it beginning in verse one: "Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God, which He promised before through the prophets in the holy scriptures."

The apostle Paul says the gospel of God "concerns His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh." It is something very specific.

Unfortunately, many do not understand this. I can remember having a discussion with a pastor one time. I asked him a question. "What is the gospel?"

The response was, "Everything from Genesis to Revelation."

Many believe that if it's the truth, it's the gospel. But just because it is true, does not mean it's the good news. The Bible has a lot of things in it that are not good news.

I submit that everything in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation is related to the gospel. Everything is there to help us to understand the gospel. And the Servant of the Lord has something to say about everything in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation:

“The sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster. In order to be rightly understood and appreciated, every truth in the Word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary.” –Ellen White, *Evangelism*, p. 190.

Every truth in the Word of God must be studied in the light of the cross, because it’s there to help us understand the cross. Paul said, “The gospel concerns His Son, Jesus Christ,” (continuing in Romans 1) “who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead.”

From these texts we learn that the gospel concerns

- Christ, first and foremost.
- His genetic inheritance. He is born of the seed of David.
- His relationship to the Father and to the Godhead. He is declared to be the Son of God.
- His resurrection from the dead.

Christ’s identity – who He was physically and biologically; His divinity, His death and resurrection is the good news of the Gospel.

In 1 Corinthians 15:1 Paul helps us focus in a bit more clearly on the subject. “Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, and in which you stand. By which you are saved if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.”

What did Paul preach? The gospel! He says, “I delivered to you first of all that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3). That is the good news of the gospel.

In other words, our sins have all been taken care of. We don’t need to do something to take care of our sins or to earn the favor of God. For everything that we have ever done or ever will do that is out of harmony with God’s will, Christ has already paid the full price.

This is the gospel that Paul says he preached to the Galatians. But the Galatians had turned away from

Christ and Him crucified to another (false) gospel.

We get a little glimpse of what that “other” gospel is about in Acts 15:1. The brethren from Jerusalem came down and said, “Unless you are circumcised, and keep the law, you cannot be saved. You must do something to qualify for salvation.” This was the false gospel.

In Mark 16:15, Jesus is speaking to His disciples just before leaving. He says, “Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” Preach what? The gospel. “He who believes and is baptized will be saved. But he who does not believe will be condemned.”

How are men lost? How are they condemned? If they hear the gospel and reject it, Jesus says they shall be condemned. The brethren in Galatia were taught the gospel. Someone else came and suggested that Paul didn’t get it right, or at least he left off something essential. These newcomers taught them that in order to be saved they needed to do something besides believe the gospel that Paul taught them. As a result, Paul says that they were turning from the true gospel to a perverted gospel.

Jesus said, “If they hear the gospel, but choose rather to believe something else, they shall be condemned.” The grace of God, and the mercy of God had come to the Galatians. Now someone came to prevent them from receiving the grace of God and continuing in that grace. Paul wished that those people would be accursed, because they were hindering the grace of God. And Paul, I believe, was angry.

Many people have this notion that we should never be angry. Here I am, suggesting that the great apostle Paul, who wrote about half the New Testament, was angry. The gospel of Mark, chapter 3 tells a story of how Jesus went into the synagogue on the Sabbath Day and found a man who needed the grace and the mercy of God. This man needed healing. We pick up the story in verse 1. “And He entered into the synagogue again, and there was a man there who had a withered hand. So they (the Jews) watched [Jesus] closely, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath day so that they might accuse Him.”

They didn’t want this man to be healed because their definition of Sabbath keeping would be violated if he were. Their “law” would be violated. In their minds, the law is up high, and the mercy of God is somewhere down lower – less important. Jesus comes in and says to the man who had the withered hand,

“Step forward” (v. 3). The Pharisees anticipate what Jesus is going to do, and they are upset.

Jesus turns to them, “And He said to them, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil? To save life, or to kill? But they kept silent.”

Notice what happens next. “And when He had looked around at them with anger ...” Who is this that is angry? Jesus is angry! He is grieved by the hardness of their hearts. And He says to the man, “Stretch out your hand.”

Why was Jesus angry? Because these good church folk were hindering the grace of God. As far as they were concerned, the law was of paramount importance, and mercy was optional.

The Sanctuary in the wilderness, you will recall, had an outer court, and a tabernacle in the middle, a holy place, and a most holy place. In the outer court was the altar of burnt sacrifice. This represents the cross of Jesus Christ. Inside the Sanctuary was the Holy Place with the shewbread representing the Bread of Life – Jesus Christ and the altar of incense representing the righteousness of Christ. The veil between the two rooms represents His flesh.

If you passed through the veil, you would see the mercy seat, which covered the law.

What these Pharisees had done was go into the Most Holy Place and get the Law and bring that Law out to the front gate. They said, this law is the first thing – the important thing. They turned God’s paradigm completely upside down.

The law was important to the Pharisees, but the mercy of God was not important to them (ch. 21:22). Jesus, understanding their paradigm, looked at them with anger before He said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.”

I suggest that the thing which angered Jesus also angered the apostle Paul. And so he wrote, “I marvel (I’m amazed) that you are turning from the grace of God and the gospel of God to another gospel.” He said, if anyone – even an angel from heaven – even if he’s the third angel – if he preached any other gospel, let him be accursed.” And then he repeats it. Just in case they may read over it the first time. “As I said before,” he says, “So say I again. If anyone preaches any other gospel than what you have received, let him be accursed.”

If Paul were here today, what would he write to the Remnant Church? Would he write, “Oh, stupid Seventh-day Adventists, who hath bewitched you?” Or would he rejoice in the gospel that we are preaching?

When we proclaim the gospel that Paul preached, it will make a big difference. It will turn the world upside down. I believe that gospel is clearly portrayed in the book of Galatians, which we shall be studying further in future issues of this newsletter. May God bless that study.

*Editor’s Note:* Paul’s letter to the Galatians came alive at the 1888 Message Study Committee’s 2010 National Conference at the Pioneer Memorial Church in Berrien Springs, Michigan. Seventh-day Adventists share much in common with the early Galatian church. Their success may be ours if we accept Paul’s counsel as they did. Upcoming issues of the 1888 Message Study Committee Newsletter will feature more messages from the National Conference.




## RELIGIOUS *Liberty*

(continued from page 7)

In our day the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States are the result, to a large degree, of the Protestant Reformation. Deliverance from the feudalism of the Dark Ages, by the gospel of Jesus Christ, to the freedoms we enjoy in America is a fascinating study that needs to be investigated.

In our series on religious liberty, we will consider the relationship between justification by faith and liberty of conscience, economics, capitalism and modern republican forms of government.

Another consideration will be today’s claim by the Catholic Church that she is the leading advocate and defender of religious liberty. She claims that the Vatican II document “Declaration on Religious Liberty: Dignitatis Humanae—The Dignity of Humanity” clearly spells this out. However, since its presentation during Vatican II, there has been an ongoing battle within the church of Rome over this document. The question being debated is whether the document, “Declaration of Religious Liberty,” is a contradiction or continuity of papal dogma.

We will also discuss the importance attached to this subject of liberty of conscience by Jones and Waggoner and Ellen White in their day. Was this topic a part of the message given to us at that time? Specifically, was and, is it joined to the “loud cry” message of righteousness by faith? If so, let us be informed and take heed. 

# Good News From the Book of Galatians

The epistle of Paul to the Galatians has, from the beginning, played a pivotal role in shaping our understanding of the “most precious message” presented at the 1888 General Conference in Minneapolis. For this reason, the 2010 National 1888 Conference was eagerly anticipated by attendees and presenters alike.

In 1886, G. I. Butler wrote an 85 page pamphlet entitled, *The Law in the Book of Galatians; is it the Moral Law, or Does it Refer to That System of Laws Peculiarly Jewish?* Dr. E. J. Waggoner promptly prepared a response entitled, *The Gospel in the Book of Galatians*. Thus, the book of Galatians, and the issues presented therein, laid the groundwork for the challenges at the Minneapolis General Conference in 1888.

Some may think that the book of Galatians is dry theology – a lengthy discourse on the law, the covenants, justification, Abraham, etc. The “Good News” theme of the 2010 National Conference makes it clear that the central point of the book of Galatians is gospel good news.

Throughout the conference, the speakers brought out the beauty of the gospel found in their respective assigned portions of the book of Galatians. The presentations were not a regurgitation of Bible commentaries or Biblical scholars. They were the simple truths of God’s word as understood through the individual study of each presenter. It was inspirational to see lay people studying the book of Galatians for themselves, and then sharing the truths that the Holy Spirit had illuminated during their own study. Everyone can study and understand the Bible, and share it with others in a clear and heart-warming manner.

Each speaker could say with E. J. Waggoner, “If all would study the Bible as prayerfully and as conscientiously as they ought, giving earnest heed to every word, and receiving it as coming directly from God, there would be no need of any other religious book. Whatever is written should be for the purpose of calling people’s attention more sharply to the words of Scripture; whatever substitutes any man’s opinions for the Bible, so that by

it people are led to rest content without any further study of the Bible itself, is worse than useless” (excerpted from the introduction to *The Glad Tidings*).

The National Conference was organized so that the book of Galatians was broken down into 15 sections, covering the whole epistle. Clarity was brought to the issues of the new and old covenants, the nature and character of legalism, the true meanings of justification and justification by faith, the impact the gospel is meant to have in our lives, the strength of the spirit versus the flesh, and many other vital topics. By the end of the conference, attendees and presenters alike felt that their appreciation for, and understanding of the book of Galatians had been greatly enhanced.

In addition to this feast from the book of Galatians, there were daily workshops. Raymond Joseph lectured on the history of the Minneapolis General Conference in 1888, giving context to the gospel presentations that were occurring in the plenary sessions. Raymond Joseph’s talks were based on a brand new book by Ron Duffield entitled, *The Return of the Latter Rain*,\* which is arguably the best researched and most thorough book on 1888 history ever written. One speaker at ASI referred to *The Return of the Latter Rain* as a book that every Seventh-day Adventist ought to read.

Pastor Paul Penno’s workshop dealt with end-time issues in the book of Galatians such as the mark of the beast and facing the end times without fear.

Will Pergerson and Brian Schwartz were among the evening presenters. They encouraged all to apply the principles of the gospel in Galatians to their relationships with their families, their local churches, and their conference leadership. We were reminded that the knowledge of the 1888 message should humble us, and make us more supportive and encouraging towards our local and conference brethren and ministries.

The organizers of the 1888 National Conference and the board of the 1888 Message Study Committee

(continued on page 15)

(continued from page 3)

believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also” (Romans 4:11). Circumcision did not make Abraham righteous; it confirmed a righteousness that was already there. “And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness” (Genesis 15:6).

Circumcision was not the covenant; it was only a token, sign, or seal (of righteousness). This is a mistake that many make when they substitute the sign for the real thing. We have a little better insight into this “token” when we understand the Bible principle that a part represents the whole. Abraham’s circumcision illustrated that he no longer depended on his procreative ability to produce a son (the seed that was promised to him). After his circumcision, Abraham was entirely depending on God to fulfill the promise.


This faith experience, this total dependence on God is all that God ever wanted in the first place. The Bible calls this the circumcision of the heart. “Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your heart, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem: lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn that none can quench [it], because of the evil of your doings” (Jeremiah 4:4). “Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff-necked” (Deuteronomy 10:16). See also: Romans 2:29, Philippians 3:3, and Colossians 2:11-13.

The reason God calls for “heart circumcision” is that He wants to write His laws in our hearts. He wants to fulfill His new covenant promise to Abraham and us. “But this [shall be] the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jeremiah 31:33). See also Hebrews 8:10 and 10:16

The writer of Hebrews uses this concept in chapters 3 and 4. “To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation ... They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways ... Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God” (Hebrews 3:7, 8, 10, & 12). He concludes chapter three with these words: “So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.” This generation practiced circumcision of the flesh but their hearts were not circumcised. Their hard hearts were equated with unbelief.

In chapter four, the writer of Hebrews equates the total dependence on God found in heart circumcision with “Sabbath Rest,” and he links it with creation and the Ten Commandments. True Sabbath Rest is total dependence on God for everything, without any human additions. Adam and Eve did not contribute one thing to God’s creation. Their first full day on this earth was spent in joyous celebration of Sabbath Rest with their creator. They acknowledged their total dependence on God, their creator. The link to the Commandments is a direct reference to the Sabbath Day of the fourth commandment.

Like circumcision, the Sabbath (day) is a token, sign, or seal of our total dependence on God for our salvation and everything else. There is danger today of mistaking the sign for the “real thing.” All the Israel of the Exodus consisted of “Sabbath keepers,” but they never entered true Sabbath Rest. Paul warns us not to make the same mistake. We know that the end time test will be over the day. It is important for us to remember that if we don’t experience true heart circumcision and genuine Sabbath rest, we will never pass the test of true Sabbath keeping when that time comes.

My prayer is that each of us will experience genuine circumcision of the heart and exercise genuine faith in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, so that He can give us genuine righteousness as He did to Abraham. 

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## Rags to Riches

(continued from page 2)

There never was a better man than Paul, as a man. If any man outside of Christ ever did a good deed, Paul did. Yet he had to count all things he had but loss, that he might win Christ (Philippians 3:4-8). The psalmist says that God withholds no good thing from those who walk uprightly. If Paul, before he found Christ, had had something in his nature that was good, he might have taken these things along with him. But he counted all as loss.

Verse 21: The law will witness in the judgment to the righteousness that the sinner receives without the law, testifying to its perfection. Only instead of getting the righteousness out of ourselves, where there is none, we go to the fountain-head.

Verse 22: All men are on a level. We will be thankful that God is willing to save us as he saves others. The plan of salvation is one of giving and taking; giving on the part of God, and taking on the part of man. The pride of the heart resents this dependence upon God; but we are pensioners, beggars, miserable, and poor, and naked. The only thing for us to do is to buy the white raiment. This is offered without money and without price.

The prophet rejoiced in the Lord, because God had clothed him with the garments of salvation, and covered him with the robe of righteousness. We are not to put on the robe ourselves. Let us trust God to do that. When the Lord puts it on, it is not as an outward garment merely; but he puts it right through a man, so that he is all righteousness.

Sometimes we hear people talk as though we must ourselves put on a fairly presentable garment before we can ask for the white raiment. But it is the very need and helplessness of the beggar that recommends him to charity.

“All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” All men stand on the same level, and the offer of mercy is to whosoever will come and partake of the water of life freely. We are “justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:24).

--March 10, 1891, *General Conference Daily Bulletin*.



## Good News from the Book of Galatians

(continued from page 13)

would like to extend a special appreciation to the Pioneer Memorial Church and their pastoral staff for the use of their beautiful conference facilities. We would also like to express our appreciation for their encouraging words during the Conference. We pray that God will continue to bless their ministry in Berrien Springs and on the campus of Andrews University.

A special thanks to all the presenters – Mark Duncan, Steven Grabiner, Craig Barnes, Jerry and Shirley Finneman, Helene Thomas, Andi and Bob Hunsaker, Lyndi Schwartz, R. J. Gravell, and Glen Striemer. An extra special thanks also to the ladies who organized the children’s meetings led by Monica Campbell and Neta Natzke. The organizers would also like to thank Kimberly Latham for her hard work and dedication in the audio and video recordings of this conference.

We encourage all to plan for and attend the 2011 National 1888 conference. The conference is going to be held on the LaSierra University campus, June 28 thru July 2. Please watch the 1888msc.org website for additional information on the speakers and theme of the conference. Together we will continue our study of what Ellen White called a “Most precious message.”

\* *The Return of the Latter Rain*, authored by Ron Duffield. See ad on page 20 for more details.

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## And The Evangelical Influence

Has Adventism taken a sleeping pill?

**God portrays His last day church as restoring the fullness of the “everlasting gospel” to the world. This end time church is clearly identified in Scripture.**

Many centuries ago the apostle Paul declared: “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith” (Romans 1:16, 17). This gospel of which he was not ashamed contained power, revealed righteousness, established faith, and enabled the just to live righteous lives by faith. These lives stood in stark contrast to the lives of the people about them.

In the Christian world today, faith is waning. It is increasingly difficult to tell the Christian from the world. Righteousness is seldom seen, seldom even mentioned. The reason so many of God’s professed people talk like the world, dress like the world, eat like the world, drink like the world, and act like the world is because they still think like the world. The Bible puts it this way: “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.” (Luke 6:43). Until we begin to think differently, we will not be able to live differently.

What has brought about this drastic, yet ever so subtle, change in the church of the living God? Why have the people of God lost sight of the gospel and the power it has to change lives and enable them to live above the world?

In the early centuries Christians began to “introduce new phases of doctrine, more pleasing to many minds, but not in harmony with the fundamental principles of the gospel” (Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the*

*Apostles*, p. 580). Early heretical groups such as the Judaizers, Nicolaitans, Gnostics and Docetists accepted teachings and practices that were totally foreign to “the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 1:3). Men such as Basilides, Valentinus, Marcion, Heracleon, Meander, Asclepiades, Theodotus, Hermophilus and Appollonides mutilated the word of God and perverted the gospel to the extent it was hardly recognizable. It was no longer, to them, “the power of God” (Romans 1:16).

Paul repeatedly warned the apostolic church of this corrupting influence and rebuked them for accepting a perverted gospel. “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” (Galatians 1:6-8).

“Open, unmasked error was supplanting the gospel message. Christ, the true foundation of the faith, was virtually renounced for the obsolete ceremonies of Judaism... most decisive measures must be taken, the sharpest warnings given” (Ellen G. White, *Acts of the Apostles*, page 385). “In writing to Corinth he manifests great caution and tenderness, but Galatia he reproves with abrupt severity” (Ellen G. White, *The Life of Paul*, p. 189). This is the only place in all his letters where Paul expresses astonishment rather than love and joy. The true gospel is the “power of God unto salvation,” but they were believing in salvation by a power other than God. “The doctrines which the Galatians had received, could not in any sense be called



the gospel; they were the teachings of men, and were directly opposed to the doctrines taught by Christ" (*Ibid.*).

Embracing any other gospel was an act of heresy in Paul's day, and the same holds true today. Heresy is still a sin against God, against the soul, against the truth of God's word, against the church of God, and against the world. It is even more important for us today to keep the true gospel and refuse a perverted gospel, for we live in the closing hours of earth's history. We cannot leave the path that God has set for us without bringing destruction upon ourselves and others.

The original controversy between the true and false gospel, Paul says, was "because of false brethren," but "we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you" (Galatians 2:4, 5). Once we accept error, the "truth of the gospel" can no longer continue with us. We must always walk "uprightly according to the truth of the gospel" (Galatians 2:14).

Paul called together the elders of the church of Ephesus and gave them a solemn warning: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:28-30). To Timothy he said, "some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Timothy 4:1), and "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Timothy 4:3, 4).

The result of accepting a perverted gospel is "a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof." Such people will be "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." People begin to "resist the truth" being "of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith." From such we are to turn away (See 2 Timothy 3:5-8).

Peter also sounded the warning: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (2 Peter 2:1, 2).

God portrays His last day church as restoring the fullness of the "everlasting gospel" to the world. This end time church is clearly identified in Scripture. A few of the pertinent points are noted below, though for the sake of space, we will assume the reader's familiarity with the prophecies in Daniel and Revelation which identify the Remnant.

It arises as the judgment begins in 1844 at the end of the 2300 year prophecy of Daniel 8:14. It keeps all of God's commandments, including the seventh day Sabbath. It has the "testimony of Jesus," which is defined as the "spirit of prophecy." It proclaims the three angel's messages of righteousness by faith. It is a world-wide movement that reaches "every nation, kindred, tongue, and people." It has the "faith of Jesus. It prepares people to receive the "seal of the living God." It's teachings come from the Bible rather than man-made tradition or devilish doctrines. It calls God's people out of Babylon and proclaims the "everlasting gospel." It warns that the judgment is taking place and calls the attention of the world to God as the Creator. It identifies and opposes the antichrist, revealing the mark

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assault?*

of the beast and warning against receiving the mark.

Only the Seventh-day Adventist Church meets all of these specifications. Does it not stand to reason that if this church is God's true "remnant" or last day church, that it would be not only the object of God's "supreme regard," but also the object of Satan's greatest animosity and assault?

In this warfare, Satan seeks to overthrow the remnant church by outward aggression and also through infiltration. Internal weakening of its structure, doctrines, and standards is the enemy's most effective strategy.

Outward assaults from false teachers, combined with internal degeneration of doctrines, standards and identity have weakened the Remnant just as it weakened the apostolic church. Perversions of the gospel creep into the Seventh-day Adventist Church just as they did into the Apostolic Church. When we see the false teachings, the worldly ways, the forms of godliness without its power, we realize the significance of the inspired words: "And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 12:17). We must "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 1:3).

On February 5, 1990 Christianity Today published an article about the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Reproductions and modifications of this article have surfaced in a number of media presentations. The original article, written by Kenneth Samples, was done in an honest and forthright manner. It points out some of the doctrinal differences within God's Remnant Church. Many of the laity are unaware of some of these differences. Following are some of the key points from the article.

"A problem in the past evangelical evaluations of Adventism has been the failure to recognize its theological diversity ... there is much debate in that denomination's circles concerning the meaning of such doctrines as the atonement, sin, Christ's nature, authority, and especially the meaning of righteousness by faith.

"The last three decades have brought much controversy to Seventh-day Adventism as key doctrinal distinctives were challenged from within the denomination. This in-house doctrinal debate has resulted in several distinct factions and strong disagreement as to which doctrinal perspective represents 'true Adventism.'

"Seventh-day Adventism is experiencing an identity crisis. Ironically, the present confusion is in direct

contrast to the confidence of Adventism's pioneers ...

"The early Seventh-day Adventist knew exactly who they were. They were God's 'remnant church.' 'A special people, with a special message, for a special time.'" (*Christianity Today*, February 5, 1990).

The article continues with this interesting and alarming statement. "While they sometimes recognized members of other churches as genuine followers of Christ, they believed that they were God's special movement in Earth's final days. This exalted identity remained intact until Adventism's encounter with evangelicalism in the 1950s ... Much of the doctrinal

controversy that emerged in Adventism in the last several decades can be traced to their interaction with evangelicals in the 1950s."

Fearful of being included in Walter Martin's book on cults, some well-meaning church leaders sought to "improve" on some of the Biblical beliefs which Adventists had held over the previous century. They published a book entitled *Questions on Doctrine* which produced more confusion than light. Notice Christianity Today's commentary on these changes.

"QOD (*Questions on Doctrine*) also repudiated such commonly held traditional Adventist doctrines as the notion that Christ had inherited a human nature affected by the Fall, and an understanding that last-days believers would achieve

sinless perfection. QOD was a clear statement of what would later be known as evangelical Adventism. It reflected a sense of change in how Adventists viewed themselves—and others."

The book *Questions on Doctrine* certainly did reflect a change in the way we viewed ourselves and others. The resulting confusion spawned many of the errors which have crept into the Remnant Church over the last several decades. The changes taking place within Adventism amaze even the rest of the Christian world,

*“Liberal  
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is not  
concerned  
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nineteenth  
century  
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*Christianity Today,  
February 5, 1990*

leading one Christian commentator to note that several Adventist congregations had adopted the worship style and kingdom theology of John Wimber's Vineyard Fellowship. The commentator thought this to be remarkable in a church that had hitherto steadfastly resisted charismatic influences. This development was touted as something that shows the "adaptability" of Adventism. Do we well to espouse such "adaptability"?

Confusion and compromise have led to many divisions within the church. However, notice what the evangelicals view as the main issue that we face. "The central issue: Adventism's uniqueness. Would it continue in the direction set in QOD? Or would Adventism return to more traditional understandings?" A return to our solidly Bible-based foundation is, I believe, the predominant issue with which we must come to grasp.

The evangelical world notes at least three divisions within the Seventh-day Adventist Church and has termed them "Evangelical," "Liberal," and "Traditional." Notice how they define these.

(Quoting again from *Christianity Today*) "Evangelical Adventism: Evangelical Adventism can be traced to the Adventist scholars who dialogued with Martin and Barnhouse, and who produced the volume QOD ... QOD had repudiated the long-standing Adventist belief that Jesus Christ had taken a sinful human nature at His incarnation." The rest of the Christian world observed that the Evangelical movement in Adventism "continued to evolve throughout the 1970s, with two of the strongest advocates being Australian born scholars Robert Brinsmead and Desmond Ford." According to evangelical scholars, these men's understanding of righteousness by faith turned Seventh-day Adventists from the error that "had plagued Adventism throughout its history." What was that great error that had "plagued" us throughout our history? It was the belief that righteousness by faith encompassed both justification and sanctification and not the evangelical position of "justification only."

Another interesting observation made by Christianity Today has to do with the education of Adventist pastors. "In the 1950s and 1960s, many Adventist students began receiving graduate degrees from non-Adventist universities. In many cases, the schools attended by these Adventists were theologically liberal. Thus Adventist scholars were influenced by modern biblical criticism and liberal theology ...

"Unlike other types of Adventism, Liberal Adventism is comfortable with diversity of practice and pluralism of thought. While it emphasizes Adventism's

distinctiveness (Sabbath, health), it sometimes seems to ignore historic Christian orthodoxy. Liberal Adventism is not concerned at all with maintaining a 'remnant' identity like that of the nineteenth century pioneers."

"QOD's evangelical emphasis had robbed Adventism of some of its distinctiveness ... particularly ... the sanctuary doctrine and the human nature of Christ ... Traditional Adventism also has a distinct view concerning righteousness by faith." This Christianity Today acknowledges, stands "in direct contrast" to the one held by the Evangelical Adventists. Those who have consistently held the biblical positions on *Righteousness by Faith*, presented by Ellen White, A. T. Jones, and E. J. Waggoner, since the 1888 General Conference in Minneapolis call for a return to the Biblical beliefs and practices held by the pioneers and supported by the Spirit of Prophecy prior to the compromises of the 1950s and onward.

Since they recognize "that there is a powerful traditionalist segment that desires to retain Adventism's 1844 'remnant' identity," the evangelical world is watching closely to see whether the Seventh-day Adventist Church will return to its biblical beliefs and identity or succumb to the liberal or evangelical segments that have come into the church.

The editor of *Christianity Today* concluded his article by stating, "If Seventh-day Adventism is going to be blessed of the Lord, its identity must come from a fidelity to the everlasting gospel." To this I must respond with a heart-felt amen. If we are indeed suffering from an "identity crisis," then it must mean we have lost our "fidelity to the everlasting gospel" and have a variety of perverted gospels being proclaimed in our midst today. Therefore, we must begin by asking "What is the everlasting gospel?"

*"If Seventh-day Adventism is going to be blessed of the Lord, its identity must come from a fidelity to the everlasting gospel."*

*Christianity Today,*  
February 5, 1990.

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**The latter rain began to fall.**

**The Loud cry was beginning to go forth with great power!**

**Who stopped the rain, and why?**

Ron Duffield, a fifth generation Seventh-day Adventist, writes: "The driving force behind this study is to understand our history correctly" (p. 19). One reader stated, "Beginning with the earliest statements by Sister White on the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, Duffield takes the reader on a chronological journey of events pertaining to the latter rain and loud cry. The trip is both heartwarming and devastating." Why is this journey into the past necessary? Ellen G. White writes: "**We have nothing to fear for the future, except as we shall forget the way the Lord has led us, and His teaching in our past history.**" —*General Conference Bulletin*, 1893, p. 24.

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8784 Valley View Dr. Berrien Springs, MI. 49103

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