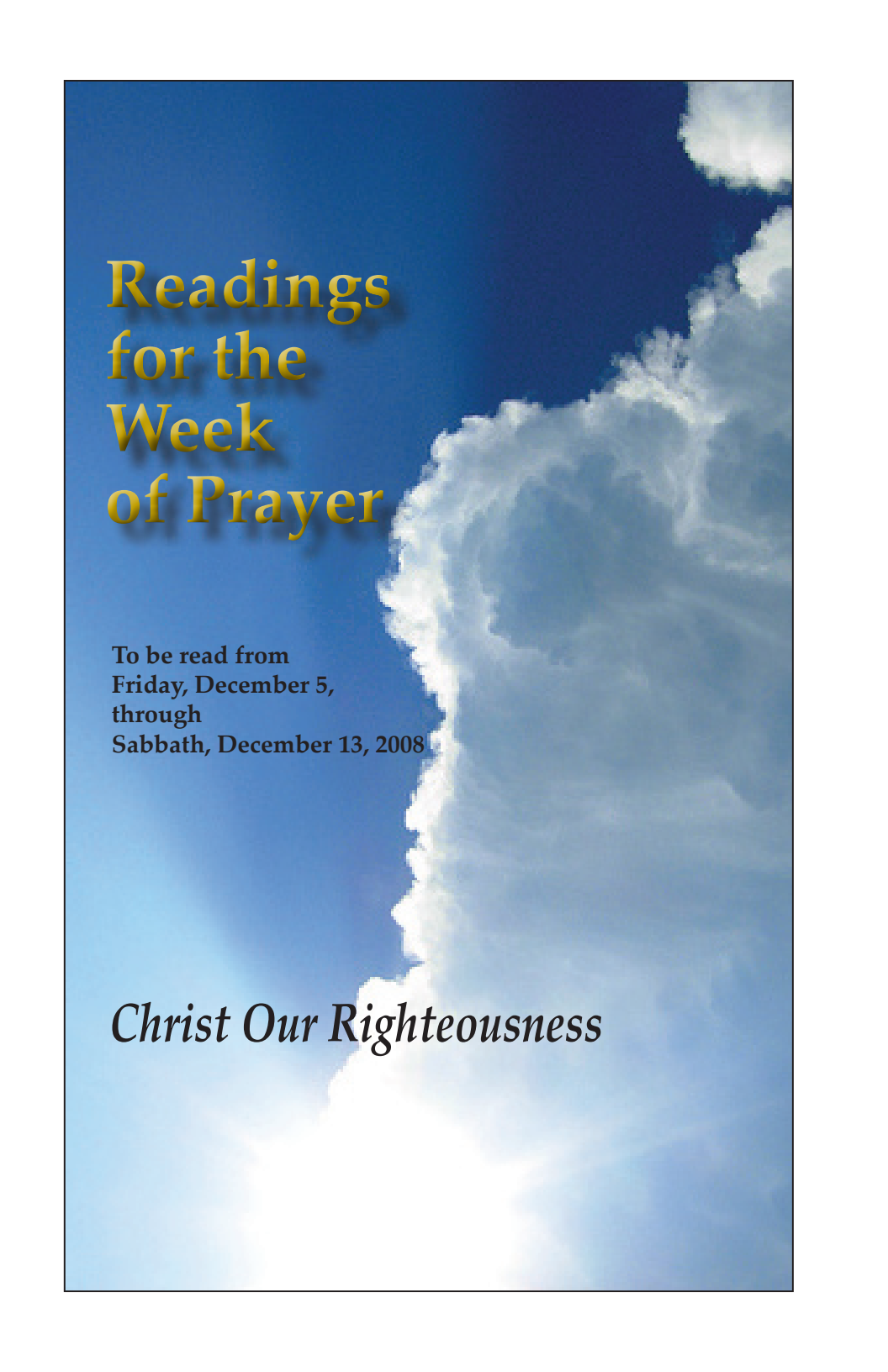




# Readings for the Week of Prayer

To be read from  
Friday, December 5,  
through  
Sabbath, December 13, 2008

*Christ Our Righteousness*

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# Introduction

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Isaiah was living in the VIII century B.C. when the words, imaginations, and actions of God's people were defiled with disobedience, rebellion, and sin. The prophet knew that he could not expect much good from men. As he had a more clear revelation of God's holiness, he ardently wished and sought God for cleansing and righteousness in his life and in the lives of his people. Answering his sincere prayer, the Lord revealed to him that righteousness is available, and he was assured that it would be clearly revealed by the Son of God, and that many would receive it. "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied: by His knowledge shall My righteous servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities" (Isaiah 53:11). It was the wonderful promise of redemption through the blood of Jesus!

Another prophet had a similar burden for the spiritual condition of the people; and to him also, more than a century later, the Lord assured the gift of righteousness by "The Righteous Branch." "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS" (Jeremiah 23:5, 6). To confirm the certainty of the promise, the prophecy was later repeated with almost the same words: "In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness" (Jeremiah 33:16).

Besides these clear promises to the prophets, the Lord revealed also the

time when this everlasting righteousness would be purchased for the human race. "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy" (Daniel 9:24). Exactly at the indicated time,

## READINGS FOR THE WEEK OF PRAYER

Friday, December 5, through  
Sabbath, December 13, 2008

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Issued by the  
General Conference of the  
International Missionary Society  
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Jesus came and offered the great sacrifice for the justification of all who believe in Him. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18 ), and so we now have the great gift to be "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24).

This is the wonderful message that God has given us: To pardon our sins, to give freedom from guilt and condemnation, to offer righteousness and acceptance by His grace and sanctification. This is the message that fills our hearts with hope and joy, the message that, if truly accepted, changes our lives completely. It is this message that gives power to the church and will enlighten the world. For this reason, we propose these readings on the righteousness of Christ at the end of this year 2008. We do so with prayer and with the hope that they may be a great blessing to all and bring among us the revival that the Lord is expecting. We wish to all who study this blessed subject a special experience with the Lord!

From the beginning of the Week of Prayer, the church elder or other local leader should announce the special offering to be collected on the last Sabbath, December 13. This offering is devoted entirely to the General Conference headquarters and the advancement of the work worldwide. Remember that "Spiritual prosperity is closely bound up with Christian liberality. The followers of Christ should rejoice in the privilege of revealing in their lives the beneficence of their Redeemer. As they give to the Lord they have the assurance that their treasure is going before them to the heavenly courts." *—The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 344, 345. It should also be announced that the last Sabbath of the Week of Prayer is a special day of fasting.

*—The Brethren and Sisters  
of the General Conference*

"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. When men see their own nothingness, they are prepared to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ....

"The righteousness of Christ, as a pure white pearl, has no defect, no stain, no guilt. This righteousness may be ours. Salvation, with its blood-bought, inestimable treasures, is the pearl of great price." *—The Faith I Live by*, p. 111.

## A Message from God

By Ellen G. White

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The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. 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. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. 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.

The efficacy of the blood of Christ was to be presented to the people with freshness and power, that their faith might lay hold upon its merits.... As the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness by Moses, and all that had been bitten by the fiery serpents were bidden to look and live, so also the Son of man must be lifted up, that "whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." –*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 91-93.

### Justification by Faith

The grace of Christ is freely to justify the sinner without merit or claim on his part. Justification is a full, complete pardon of sin. The moment a sinner accepts Christ by faith, that moment he is

pardoned. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to him, and he is no more to doubt God's forgiving grace. –*The Signs of the Times*, May 19, 1898.

Justification is the opposite of condemnation. God's boundless mercy is exercised toward those who are wholly undeserving. He forgives transgressions and sins for the sake of Jesus, who has become the propitiation for our sins. Through faith in Christ, the guilty transgressor is brought into favor with God and into the strong hope of life eternal. –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, pp. 1070, 1071.

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

The root sends its nourishment through the branch. Such is the true believer's relation to Christ....

When this intimacy of connection and communion is formed, our sins are laid upon Christ; His righteousness is imputed to us. He was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. We have access to God through Him; we are accepted in the Beloved. –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 229.

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. When men see their own nothingness, they are prepared to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ....

The righteousness of Christ, as a pure white pearl, has no defect, no stain,

no guilt. This righteousness may be ours. Salvation, with its blood-bought, inestimable treasures, is the pearl of great price. —*The Faith I Live by*, p. 111.

Righteousness is holiness, likeness to God, and “God is love” (1 John 4:16). It is conformity to the law of God, for ‘all Thy commandments are righteousness’ (Psalm 119:172), and “love is the fulfilling of the law” (Romans 13:10). Righteousness is love, and love is the light and the life of God. The righteousness of God is embodied in Christ. We receive righteousness by receiving Him. —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 18.

### The Righteousness of Christ

Ample provisions have been made for all who sincerely, earnestly, and thoughtfully set about the work of perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Strength, grace, and glory have been provided through Christ, to be brought by ministering angels to the heirs of salvation. None are so low, so corrupt and vile, that they cannot find in Jesus, who died for them, strength, purity, and righteousness, if they will put away their sins, cease their course of iniquity, and turn with full purpose of heart to the living God. He is waiting to strip them of their garments, stained and polluted by sin, and to put upon them the white, bright robes of righteousness; and He bids them live and not die. In Him they may flourish. Their branches will not wither nor be fruitless. If they abide in Him, they can draw sap and nourishment from Him, be imbued with His Spirit, walk even as He walked, overcome as He overcame, and be exalted to His own right hand. —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 453, 454.

The very conflicts and rebuffs we meet are to make us stronger and give stability to our faith. We are not to be swayed, like a reed in the wind, by every passing influence. Our souls, warmed and invigorated by the truths

of the gospel, and refreshed by divine grace, are to open and expand, and shed their fragrance upon others. Clad in the whole armor of righteousness, we can meet any influence and our purity remain untarnished. —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 556.

Fellow Christian, Satan knows your weakness; therefore cling to Jesus. Abiding in God’s love, you may stand every test. The righteousness of Christ alone can give you power to stem the tide of evil that is sweeping over the world. —*Prophets and Kings*, p. 175.

### No Relish for Sin

When we are clothed with the righteousness of Christ, we shall have no relish for sin; for Christ will be working with us. We may make mistakes, but we will hate the sin that caused the sufferings of the Son of God. —*The Review and Herald*, March 18, 1890.

### Not One in One Hundred

The present message—justification by faith—is a message from God; it bears the divine credentials, for its fruit is unto holiness. Some who greatly need the precious truth that was presented before them, we fear did not receive its benefit. They did not open the door of their hearts to welcome Jesus as a heavenly guest, and they have suffered great loss. There is indeed a narrow way in which we must walk; the cross is presented at every step. We must learn to live by faith; then the darkest hours will be brightened by the blessed beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

We are not safe if we neglect to search the Scriptures daily for light and knowledge. Earthly blessings cannot be obtained without toil, and can we expect that spiritual and heavenly blessings will come without earnest effort on our part? The mines of truth are to be worked. Says the psalmist, “The entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple”

(Ps. 119:130). The Word of God must not be kept apart from our life. It must be entertained in the mind, welcomed in the heart, and be cherished, loved, and obeyed. We need also much more knowledge; we need to be enlightened in regard to the plan of salvation. There is not one in one hundred who understands for himself the Bible truth on this subject that is so necessary to our present and eternal welfare. When light begins to shine forth to make clear the plan of redemption to the people, the enemy works with all diligence that the light may be shut away from the hearts of men. If we come to the Word of God with a teachable, humble spirit, the rubbish of error will be swept away, and gems of truth, long hidden from our eyes, will be discovered.

There is great need that Christ should be preached as the only hope and salvation. When the doctrine of justification by faith was presented at the Rome meeting, it came to many as water comes to the thirsty traveler. The thought that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, not because of any merit on our part, but as a free gift from God, seemed a precious thought. —*The Review and Herald*, Sept. 3, 1889.

### Extreme Teaching

There are grand truths, long hidden under the rubbish of error, that are to be revealed to the people. The doctrine of justification by faith has been lost sight of by many who have professed to believe the third angel's message. The Holiness people have gone to great extremes on this point. With great zeal they have taught, "Only believe in Christ, and be saved; but away with the law of God." This is not the teaching of the Word of God. There is no foundation for such a faith. This is not the precious gem of truth that God has given to His people for this time. This doctrine misleads honest souls. The light from the Word of God reveals the fact that the law must

be proclaimed. Christ must be lifted up, because He is a Saviour who forgiveth transgression, iniquity, and sin, but will by no means clear the guilty and unrepentant soul. —*The Review and Herald*, Aug. 13, 1889.

### The Message Bears Fruit

We are having most excellent meetings. The spirit that was in the meeting at Minneapolis is not here. All moves off in harmony. There is a large attendance of delegates. Our five o'clock morning meeting is well attended, and the meetings good. All the testimonies to which I have listened have been of an elevating character. They say that the past year has been the best of their life; the light shining forth from the Word of God has been clear and distinct—justification by faith, Christ our righteousness. The experiences have been very interesting.

I have attended all but two morning meetings. At eight o'clock Brother Jones speaks upon the subject of justification by faith, and great interest is manifested. There is a growth in faith and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. There are quite a number who have not had an opportunity to hear upon this subject before, but they are taking it in, and are being fed with large morsels from the Lord's table. The universal testimony from those who have spoken has been that this message of light and truth which has come to our people is just the truth for this time, and wherever they go among the churches, light, and relief, and the blessing of God is sure to come in.

We have a feast of fat things, and when we see souls grasping the light we are rejoiced, looking unto Jesus who is the author and finisher of our faith. Christ is the great pattern; His character must be our character. All excellence is in Him. Turning from man and every other model, with open face we behold Jesus in all His glory. And

their minds are filled with the grand and overpowering ideas of His excellency; every other object sinks into insignificance, and every part of moral discipline is lost which does not promote their likeness to His image. I see heights and depths that we may reach, accepting every ray of light and going forward to a greater light. The end is near, and God forbid that we shall be asleep at this time.

I am so thankful to see with our ministering brethren a disposition to search the Scriptures for themselves. There has been a very great lack of deep searching of the Scriptures, storing the mind with the gems of truth. How much we all lose because we do not put to the tax our minds to search with much prayer for divine enlightenment to understand His Holy Word.

I believe there will be a decided advance among our people, a more earnest endeavor to keep pace with the third angel's message. —Manuscript 10, 1889.

When we bring our lives to complete obedience to the law of God, regarding God as our supreme Guide, and clinging to Christ as our hope of righteousness, God will work in our behalf. This is a righteousness of faith, a righteousness hidden in a mystery of which the worldling knows nothing, and which he cannot understand. Sophistry and strife follow in the train of the serpent; but the commandments of God diligently studied and practiced, open to us communication with heaven, and distinguish for us the true from the false. This obedience works out for us the divine will, bringing into our lives the righteousness and perfection that was seen in the life of Christ." —(MS 43, 1907) *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1118.

Christ imputes to us His sinless character, and presents us to the Father in His own purity. There are many who think that it is impossible to escape from the power of sin, but the promise is that

we may be filled with all the fullness of God. We aim too low. The mark is much higher. —*The Review and Herald*, July 12, 1892.

Through divine grace, supernatural power is imparted to the man, and works in mind and heart and character. It is through the impartation of the grace of Christ that sin is discerned in its hateful nature, and finally driven from the soul temple. —*The Review and Herald*, November 4, 1890.

### *The Beginning of the Loud Cry*

Let every one who claims to believe that the Lord is soon coming, search the Scriptures as never before; for Satan is determined to try every device possible to keep souls in darkness, and blind the mind to the perils of the times in which we are living. Let every believer take up his Bible with earnest prayer, that he may be enlightened by the Holy Spirit as to what is truth, that he may know more of God and of Jesus Christ whom He has sent. Search for the truth as for hidden treasures, and disappoint the enemy. 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. For it is the work of every one to whom the message of warning has come, to lift up Jesus, to present Him to the world as revealed in types, as shadowed in symbols, as manifested in the revelations of the prophets, as unveiled in the lessons given to His disciples and in the wonderful miracles wrought for the sons of men. Search the Scriptures; for they are they that testify of Him.

If you would stand through the time of trouble, you must know Christ, and appropriate the gift of His righteousness, which He imputes to the repentant sinner. —*The Review and Herald*, Nov. 22, 1892.

## *Appropriating the Righteousness of Christ*

Through Christ, restoration as well as reconciliation is provided for man. The gulf that was made by sin has been spanned by the cross of Calvary. A full, complete ransom has been paid by Jesus, by virtue of which the sinner is pardoned, and the justice of the law is maintained. All who believe that Christ is the atoning sacrifice may come and receive pardon for their sins; for through the merit of Christ, communication has been opened between God and man. God can accept me as His child, and I can claim Him and rejoice in Him as my loving Father. We must center our hopes of heaven upon Christ alone, because He is our substitute and surety.

We have transgressed the law of God, and by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified. The best efforts that man in his own strength can make, are valueless to meet the holy and just law that he has transgressed; but through faith in Christ he may claim the righteousness of the Son of God as all-sufficient. Christ satisfied the demands of the law in His human nature. He bore the curse of the law for the sinner, made an atonement for him, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Genuine faith ap-

propriates the righteousness of Christ, and the sinner is made an overcomer with Christ; for he is made a partaker of the divine nature, and thus divinity and humanity are combined.

He who is trying to reach heaven by his own works in keeping the law, is attempting an impossibility. Man cannot be saved without obedience, but his works should not be of himself; Christ should work in him to will and to do of His good pleasure. If a man could save himself by his own works, he might have something in himself in which to rejoice. The effort that man makes in his own strength to obtain salvation, is represented by the offering of Cain. All that man can do without Christ is polluted with selfishness and sin; but that which is wrought through faith is acceptable to God. When we seek to gain heaven through the merits of Christ, the soul makes progress. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, we may go on from strength to strength, from victory to victory; for through Christ the grace of God has worked out our complete salvation.

Without faith it is impossible to please God. Living faith enables its possessor to lay hold on the merits of Christ, enables him to derive great comfort and satisfaction from the plan of salvation. —*The Review and Herald*, July 1, 1890. AMEN!

“As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, discerns Christ’s atonement in his behalf and accepts this atonement as his only hope in this life and the future life, his sins are pardoned. This is justification by faith.” —*Faith and Works*, p. 103.

## *Divine Justification Offered to Man*

*By Martin Lagunas, Mexico*

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**T**he comforting message of justification by faith is presented often in God's word.

"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30).

"Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of Him which believeth in Jesus" (Romans 3:24-26).

Justification equals forgiveness, which is given by God to every person who feels pain for his sin and confesses Jesus as his Saviour, Substitute, Surety, and Intercessor, who was made by God justification, sanctification and redemption for us. The Spirit of Prophecy expresses this very clearly: "As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, discerns Christ's atonement in his behalf and accepts this atonement as his only hope in this life and the future life, his sins are pardoned. This is justification by faith." *—Faith and Works*, p. 103. Furthermore, by the work of justification we are declared righteous because Jesus' righteousness is imputed to us.

"The great work that is wrought for the sinner who is spotted and stained by evil is the work of justification. By Him who speaketh truth he is declared righteous. The Lord imputes unto the believer the righteousness of Christ and pronounces him righteous before the universe. He transfers his sins to Jesus,

the sinner's representative, substitute, and surety. Upon Christ He lays the iniquity of every soul that believeth. 'He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him' (2 Cor. 5:21)." *—Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 392.

Thus, he who repents and confesses each transgression and by faith acknowledges Jesus as his Saviour not only appreciates Christ's righteousness more than anything else but also receives it as a gift from heaven.

A sinner cannot atone for his sins, and justification cannot be obtained through the law (Acts 13:38, 39). Justification is a gift from God obtained by grace through faith. This gift awakens a sincere desire to obey God's holy law. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:8-10).

### *The Message of Justification by Faith Presented in 1888*

The message of justification by faith was the great topic presented during the General Conference in Minneapolis in 1888. Regarding this, Sister White wrote, "There are grand truths, long hidden under the rubbish of error, that are to be revealed to the people. The doctrine of justification by faith has been lost sight of by many who have professed to believe the third angel's message. The Holiness people have gone to great extremes on this point. With great

zeal they have taught, 'Only believe in Christ, and be saved; but away with the law of God.' This is not the teaching of the Word of God. There is no foundation for such a faith. This is not the precious gem of truth that God has given to His people for this time. This doctrine misleads honest souls. The light from the Word of God reveals the fact that the law must be proclaimed. Christ must be lifted up, because He is a Saviour who forgiveth transgression, iniquity, and sin, but will by no means clear the guilty and unrepentant soul." —(*The Review and Herald*, Aug. 13, 1889) *Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 360, 361.

Referring to later meetings in other places, she wrote, "Brother Jones speaks upon the subject of justification by faith, and great interest is manifested. There is a growth in faith and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. There are quite a number who have not had an opportunity to hear upon this subject before, but they are taking it in, and are being fed with large morsels from the Lord's table. The universal testimony from those who have spoken has been that this message of light and truth which has come to our people is just the truth for this time, and wherever they go among the churches, light, and relief, and the blessing of God is sure to come in." —*Ibid.*, pp. 361, 362.

At the conference held in Minneapolis, Minnesota, October 17 to November 4, 1888, Elders A.T. Jones and E.J. Waggoner spoke about justification by faith, a very important message that the Lord had sent His people. Sister Ellen G. White, who was present at that conference, invited everyone to study this subject prayerfully.

"Somehow the issues came to be identified with certain men. To many, the message of righteousness by faith struck home, and there was a response of heart and soul which led to victorious experience in personal Christian living.

There were others who identified themselves with certain cautious and conservative leaders from Battle Creek who saw what they thought were perils in some of the teachings presented. When the conference came to close, these men had failed to gain the blessing God had in store for them." —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. xxiii.

### ***Justification in the Times of the Protestant Reformation***

"Precious indeed was the message which Luther bore to the eager crowds that hung upon his words. Never before had such teachings fallen upon their ears. The glad tidings of a Saviour's love, the assurance of pardon and peace through His atoning blood, melted their hearts, and inspired within them an immortal hope." —*The Signs of the Times*, June 7, 1883.

### ***Illustration of Justification***

In God's word we find several interesting illustrations of justification. In one place we read: "And he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel" (Zechariah 3:1-3). With this illustration, the Lord revealed to the prophet and His people Satan's work and the work of our Saviour, who acts as a Mediator for the children of God.

"The high priest cannot defend himself or his people from Satan's accusations. He does not claim that Israel is free from fault. In filthy garments, symbolizing the sins of the people, which he bears as their representative, he stands before the Angel, confessing their guilt, yet pointing to their repentance and humiliation, and relying upon the mercy

of a sin-pardoning Redeemer. In faith he claims the promises of God....

"As the intercession of Joshua is accepted, the command is given, 'Take away the filthy garments from him;' and to Joshua the Angel says, 'Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment.' 'So they set a fair miter upon his head, and clothed him with garments.' (Verses 4, 5). His own sins and those of his people were pardoned. Israel was clothed with 'change of raiment'—the righteousness of Christ imputed to them. The miter placed upon Joshua's head was such as was worn by the priests, and bore the inscription, 'Holiness to the Lord' (Exodus 28:36), signifying that notwithstanding his former transgressions, he was now qualified to minister before God in His sanctuary." —*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 583, 584.

Christ is our High Priest. He assumed human nature, bearing the infirmities and degeneracy of the race brought on by four thousand years of degradation, and overcame sin; therefore, He gives us an example that in our nature, with His help, we can overcome as He did.

In his epistle to the Romans, the apostle Paul tells us, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). This verse makes it clear that the only person through whom we may be justified is our Lord Jesus Christ. We are justified by His sacrifice on the cross of Calvary and by His resurrection.

Jesus' resurrection was as essential for our justification as was His death on the cross (Romans 4:25). Everyone who acknowledges that he is a sinner and falls at Jesus' feet in repentance, confesses his sins, and by faith accepts His death is justified.

It is important to understand that there are conditions for receiving justification. Firstly, one must feel sorrow

for sin, as it is written in God's word, "And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 18:13, 14). Furthermore, it is necessary to put away sin and to have a deep longing for communion with God. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6).

May the Lord help us always to acknowledge our sins and to have faith in the beloved Son of God as our Redeemer so as to be continuously justified and sanctified. My sincere wish is that this Week of Prayer may help us to grow in our spiritual life and prepare ourselves to be with the Lord in eternity. AMEN..

"When the sinner believes that Christ is his personal Saviour, then according to His unfailing promises, God pardons his sin and justifies him freely. The repentant soul realizes that his justification comes because Christ, as his Substitute and Surety, has died for him, is his atonement and righteousness." —*Faith and Works*, p. 101.

## *Sanctification by Faith*

*By Larry Watts, U.S.A.*

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One hundred twenty years ago, the message of Christ and His righteousness became a source of controversy in the Seventh-day Adventist Church, because obedience to the law had frequently been taught with little or only a passing reference to Jesus. At that time, Sister Ellen G. White stated that “our churches are dying for the want of teaching on the subject of righteousness by faith in Christ, and for kindred truths.” –*The Review and Herald*, March 25, 1890. That statement is still true today, but the emphasis is often quite the opposite.

We hear a lot about Christ and His righteousness: He did it all! But there seems to be little consensus as to what He really did and who He really was. Few will disagree with the fact that Jesus is the last Adam. The question is, Was He like Adam before the fall, or was He in His flesh the Child of Adam after the fall? Some think that this is a question best left for the world to come, but it must be answered now! Why? Because who He was determines who and what His followers are to be in this present world just before He comes.

### *His Nature and My Sanctification*

Just what is sanctification by faith, and what does His nature have to do with it? Simply everything! Let's examine this.

“The humanity of the Son of God is everything to us.” (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 244). If Christ took the nature of Adam before the fall, then there was no internal struggle. He overcame Satan in an unfallen nature, and the contest was like a winner-take-all sparring match between two deadly foes. In such a case, His experience might have been real; but it would have been nothing

that any of us could identify with or duplicate. In other words, He could be our hero but not be our example.

Here is part of that argument and an answer: “Letters have been coming in to me, affirming that Christ could not have had the same nature as man, for if He had, He would have fallen under similar temptations. If He did not have man's nature, He could not be our example. If He was not a partaker of our nature, He could not have been tempted as man has been. If it were not possible for Him to yield to temptation, He could not be our helper.” The statement continues: “It was a solemn reality that Christ came to fight the battles as man, in man's behalf. His temptation and victory tell us that humanity must copy the Pattern; man must become a partaker of the divine nature.” –*The Review and Herald*, February 18, 1890.

Furthermore, the whole purpose in Jesus' life, mission, sacrifice, and resurrection was to redeem a fallen race. To do that, He had to take upon Himself the fallen nature of that race.

The whole issue of justification by faith and what naturally follows—sanctification by faith—hinges on whether or not we believe we can overcome as Jesus overcame! Those who say, “No,” look at Jesus as superhuman and therefore untouchable. They have to; because once one asserts that Jesus overcame in the same nature as we have, he has to say that it is possible to perfect human character as He did. And he must also believe that in our lives we can be as He was—consistently choosing not to sin, which simply means being dead to self—by having Him live within us moment by moment.

## *He Knew That He Would Be Crucified*

During the American Civil War (1861-1865), a man named George Wyatt was drafted (inducted into the army). He had a wife and six children, and so a young man named Richard Pratt offered to go in his stead. Pratt joined the army and actually carried the name and number of George Wyatt; shortly afterward, he died in action. Then, George Wyatt was again notified that he had been drafted. He protested, saying that he had already served and died in the person of Pratt. The authorities, upon checking their records, confirmed that he had died in identification with Pratt, his substitute. Wyatt was thereby exempt from any further military service and was beyond the claims of the law. He had died in the person of his representative.

Properly understood, this story gives us at least a partial answer. However, Jesus did not die merely as our substitute. The truth is: We all died in Him, and thus we have fulfilled the law's demands. (See Ezekiel 18:20; 2 Corinthians 5:14; Romans 6; Galatians 2:20; etc.) If you stop right here at the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, you have only half of what God accomplished in Christ. To stop here is to say that Jesus lived a righteous life in my place, died as my substitute, paid for my sins, and has now gone to heaven in place of me!

Although the above true story of Richard Pratt standing in for George Wyatt is a simplified allegory of our justification, we must "go on unto perfection" in Christ, which is sanctification. But how? The answer lies in a correct understanding of the incarnation of Christ.

The Bible teaches that Jesus "took on Him the seed of Abraham" (Hebrews 2:16; see also Galatians 3:16), and "was made of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Romans 1:3). Therefore, to say that He came to earth with

the nature of Adam before the fall is a denial of many plain Bible statements. The Scripture verse that God sent "His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh" should be plain enough for any honest mind (Romans 8:3). But the text continues with "and for sin..." It was "because of sin" that He took our nature and condemned "sin in the flesh" by His righteous life. He overcame real temptations, both internally and externally, and perfectly reflected the glory of God in all His doings.

The apostle Paul in Philippians 2 said that He emptied himself of His divine prerogatives and clothed His divinity with that flesh which needed redeeming. And that was His test. While we are tempted to yield to our fallen nature, He was ever tempted to use His divine nature. "If you be the Son of God,..." was the repeated taunt of the devil and his agents (Matthew 4:3, 6; 27:40). But He came into this world already crucified by promise, "the lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8); and He remained true to that promise and ratified with His own blood on Calvary the covenant He made four thousand years earlier. And just before His death, He stated His desire for us: "Holy Father,... sanctify them through Thy truth, Thy word is truth" (John 17:11, 17).

## *God's Purpose*

What, then, is God's purpose, His desire? "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification..." (1 Thessalonians 4:3).

To believe that Christ took upon Himself man's sinful nature is one thing. But how to reach to the perfection in our sphere that He reached in His is quite another thing. Is it really possible? If He could, then we can, but by what means? By a faith that works by love and purifies (same root word in Greek as sanctify) the soul (Galatians 5:6; 1 Peter 1:22). Just as He clothed His divinity

with our humanity with all its liabilities, so we must clothe our humanity with His divinity and thus receive all His enableings.

We must realize, however, that if we do not believe it is possible, it is impossible. 2 Peter 1:5-8 is our key to victory. Every step of that ladder “represents advancement in the knowledge of God.... We are saved by climbing round after round ... to the height of Christ’s ideal for us. Thus He is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” —*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 530.

“All these successive steps are not to be kept before the mind’s eye and counted as you start; but fixing the eye upon Jesus, with an eye single to the glory of God, you will make advancement....” —*The Youth’s Instructor*, January 5, 1893.

When we have a clear picture of what our human nature is, our greatest desire is to receive His divine nature so we are in perfect unity with Him—having His mind. It is His righteousness that is active in us, not a righteousness of our own making. Divinity and humanity were blended in Him, and they will be blended in us. As He trusted His Father completely, so we will depend on and trust Him now. Then we will both wait and work to meet Him with joy at His coming. Others may use or misuse us, go around us, or completely ignore us; but if we are submitted to Him, and trial or persecution comes, it will remain external to us, and there will be no human resistance against it.

### What, Then, Is This Sanctification?

Sanctification is to give yourself—soul, body, and spirit—to God; to set yourself apart without reserve to deal justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with God; to know and do His will without regard to self or self-interest; to be heavenly minded, pure, unselfish, holy, and without spot or stain. “The sign of God is sanctification through obedience to

the truth.” —*The Signs of the Times*, November 22, 1899.

“Obedience to the law of God is sanctification. There are many who have erroneous ideas in regard to this work in the soul, but Jesus prayed that His disciples might be sanctified through the truth, and added, ‘Thy word is truth’ (John 17:17). Sanctification is not an instantaneous but a progressive work, as obedience is continuous.... Those who are loyal to the truth will, through the merits of Christ, overcome all weakness of character that has led them to be molded by every varying circumstance of life.” —*Faith and Works*, p. 85.

“The Father’s presence encircled Christ, and nothing befell Him but that which infinite love permitted for the blessing of the world. Here was His source of comfort, and it is for us. He who is imbued with the Spirit of Christ abides in Christ. The blow that is aimed at him falls upon the Saviour, who surrounds him with His presence. Whatever comes to him comes from Christ. He has no need to resist evil, for Christ is his defense. Nothing can touch him except by our Lord’s permission, and ‘all things’ that are permitted ‘work together for good to them that love God’ (Romans 8:28).” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 71.

In the backyard of our rented house is a lovely little orange tree not much taller than a man. Someone said the owner had picked it; but upon my return from a long trip, I was delighted to see it still decked with its jewels—beautiful, fat orange oranges. They seemed ready, but the harvest tarries. I wanted to pick them, but they belong to another—the man upstairs.

So it is with earth’s great harvest. We want it picked. We want it done. We want to see all this misery finished. But we really have only one thing to take care of: Our own personal victory and ripening for heaven. The Husbandman, the Man upstairs, and Owner will reap

the harvest in His own time. Mercy still lingers, but for what purpose? "Christ desires nothing so much as to redeem His heritage from the dominion of Satan. But before we are delivered from Satan's power without, we must be delivered from his power within...." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 174, 175.

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation; it is Jesus Christ living within by a living faith—His faith—a faith that works by love. This is God's purpose. This is sanctification by faith—a revelation of Christ before the world in the person of His saints. Let us strive to be numbered among them! AMEN!

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Reading 4 – Tuesday, December 9, 2008

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## *God's Work in Minneapolis, 1888*

*By Raquel Orce, U.S.A.*

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Every Adventist believer has heard or read about the General Conference session that took place in Minneapolis in 1888 and can appreciate the historical importance of this event. In this reading, we would like to consider in detail the doctrinal significance of that meeting and the reasons for its importance in relation to the present truth so that we may understand the work that God wanted do at that conference and that He still wants to perform for His people and the whole world in our days.

### *The Mission of the Advent Movement*

The Advent Movement was called into existence by God, because He had a well-determined purpose for it. Besides preparing a people for the Lord's coming, it was necessary to present to the world some aspects of the truth that were not so clear within the different denominations, such as the doctrine about the state of the dead, the validity of God's law, and the observance of the Sabbath day, that were like lost pearls under the heap of rubble of human theories.

Therefore, from the beginning and for many decades, the Seventh-day Adventists presented to the world the solemn message of the Lord's soon coming and showed the need for the restoration of the true worship of God, that includes faith in Jesus' redeeming work

and the obedience to His holy commandments (Revelation 14:12). Nevertheless, as time went by, they insisted so much on the subject of the law that the message became one-sided and many lost sight of the light of justification by faith. Referring to the years before 1888, the Spirit of Prophecy often laments this situation.

### *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith Lost Sight of*

"... The great Center of attraction, Jesus Christ, must not be left out of the third angel's message. By many who have been engaged in the work for this time, Christ has been made secondary, and theories and arguments have had the first place." —*The Review and Herald*, March 20, 1894.

"Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family." —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 92.

"The doctrine of justification by faith has been lost sight of by many who have professed to believe the third angel's message." —*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 360.

"The exceeding great and precious promises given us in the Holy Scriptures have been lost sight of to a great extent, just as the enemy of all righteousness

designed that they should be." *-Ibid.*, p. 372.

"As a people we have preached the law until we are as dry as the hills of Gilboa that had neither dew nor rain. We must preach Christ in the law, and there will be sap and nourishment in the preaching that will be as food to the famishing flock of God." *-The Review and Herald*, March 11, 1890.

"The message of the gospel of His grace was to be given to the church in clear and distinct lines, that the world should no longer say that Seventh-day Adventists talk the law, the law, but do not teach or believe Christ." *-Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 92.

### A Most Precious Message

Considering the situation, the need to present and accept the message of Christ our Righteousness was ever more urgent. That is the reason why the Lord inspired two brethren to bring the message to the General Conference in Minneapolis, about which we read:

"The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. 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.... 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." *-Ibid.*, pp. 91, 92.

"Messages bearing the divine credentials have been sent to God's people; the glory, the majesty, the righteousness of Christ, full of goodness and truth, have been presented; the fullness of the Godhead in Jesus Christ has been set forth among us with beauty and loveliness, to charm all whose hearts were not

closed with prejudice. We know that God has wrought among us. We have seen souls turn from sin to righteousness. We have seen faith revived in the hearts of the contrite ones." *-The Review and Herald*, May 27, 1890.

"When the sinner believes that Christ is his personal Saviour, then according to His unfailing promises, God pardons his sin and justifies him freely. The repentant soul realizes that his justification comes because Christ, as his Substitute and Surety, has died for him, is his atonement and righteousness." *-Faith and Works*, p. 101.

### It Is the Third Angel's Message

Christ our Righteousness is not only a message from God, but it is actually the heart of the third angel's message. That is what God's Word says, referring to the characteristics of the remnant: "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12). These are topics that the Spirit of Prophecy often emphasizes.

"The present message—justification by faith—is a message from God; it bears the divine credentials, for its fruit is unto holiness." *-Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 359.

"Religion means the abiding of Christ in the heart, and where He is, the soul goes on in spiritual activity, ever growing in grace, ever going on to perfection." *-The Review and Herald*, May 24, 1892.

"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.'" *-Ibid.*, April 1, 1890.

In the above quotations, the servant of the Lord presents the fundamental issues that God wanted to point out in 1888 and that had a vital importance for that time as well as for eternity. Below, we present a list of the main doctrinal subjects:

- Justification by faith.

- Christ's righteousness manifested in obedience to the commandments of God.
- The third angel's message.
- The outpouring of the Spirit.

Jesus had to be presented to the world in a clear, uplifted and saving way, since "Of all professing Christians, Seventh-day Adventists should be foremost in uplifting Christ before the world. The proclamation of the third angel's message calls for the presentation of the Sabbath truth. This truth, with others included in the message, is to be proclaimed; but the great center of attraction, Christ Jesus, must not be left out." —*Gospel Workers*, p. 156.

Once the meaning of the message of 1888 is understood, one can see the importance of presenting Christ as the center of the message in relation to the proclamation of the third angel. This simultaneously includes the truth about the Sabbath and a number of other truths related to it which are presented in Revelation 14:9-12, where reference is made to "the beast" (Roman Catholicism); "his image" (apostate Protestantism); "the mark of the beast" (the false day of rest—Sunday), and the end of God's patience. These fundamental truths in Adventism place us in the time and circumstances that will help us to understand and apply God's work in Minneapolis.

### A Rejected Message

Considering the loss of light they had experienced and the spiritual condition of the Adventist people in 1888, one would expect that this message would have been accepted with much joy and praise, both by the delegates to the conference and by the leaders of the movement. Actually, if it had been accepted, this wonderful message would have been the solution to their different problems; but, unfortunately, it was not the case. The voice of God that spoke in Minneapolis was not heeded, but criti-

cized and rejected by a great number of workers and leaders. An oppressive and wicked spirit was revealed. Some testimonies speak about this very painfully: "The spirit and influence of the ministers generally who have come to this meeting is to discard light." —*Manuscript Releases*, vol. 12, p. 364.

"In Minneapolis God gave precious gems of truth to His people in new settings. This light from heaven by some was rejected with all the stubbornness the Jews manifested in rejecting Christ." —*Ibid.*, vol. 11, p. 243.

"That men should keep alive the spirit which ran riot at Minneapolis is an offense to God. All heaven is indignant at the spirit that for years has been revealed in our publishing institution at Battle Creek. Unrighteousness is practiced that God will not tolerate. He will visit for these things. A voice has been heard pointing out the errors and, in the name of the Lord, pleading for a decided change. But who have followed the instruction given? Who have humbled their hearts to put from them every vestige of their wicked, oppressive spirit? I have been greatly burdened to set these matters before the people as they are. I know they will see them. I know that those who read this matter will be convicted." —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, p. 76.

"An unwillingness to yield up preconceived opinions, and to accept this truth, lay at the foundation of a large share of the opposition manifested at Minneapolis against the Lord's message through Brethren [E.J.] Waggoner and [A.T.] Jones. By exciting that opposition Satan succeeded in shutting away from our people, in a great measure, the special power of the Holy Spirit that God longed to impart to them. The enemy prevented them from obtaining that efficiency which might have been theirs in carrying the truth to the world, as the apostles proclaimed it after the day of Pentecost. The light that is to lighten the

whole earth with its glory was resisted, and by the action of our own brethren has been in a great degree kept away from the world." —*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 234, 235.

### An Urgent Need

In Minneapolis, some accepted the message sent by God; and others accepted it later on. Jesus' righteousness is the gift for which He sacrificed His life (Isaiah 53:10, 11); it is not an option that we may choose or not, according to our liking. Without it we remain dirty, dressed in filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6), and have no access to heaven. "The righteousness by which we are justified is imputed; the righteousness by which we are sanctified is imparted. The first is our title to heaven, the second is our fitness for heaven." —*Messages to Young People*, p. 35.

In one of His wonderful parables, as Jesus talks about the wedding gown, He tells us very clearly that without this gift we are not able to participate in the great final feast. "So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 22:10-13). May each one of us be found wearing Jesus' pure and holy wedding garment.

### The Message and the Latter Rain

"Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth." Hosea 6:3. If the message Christ our Righteousness is tru-

ly believed and lived each day, it is a great power for the faithful soul and for the church. Emphasized in Minneapolis in 1888, this wonderful message must grow and will be the test of fitness to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, just as it is described in the following quotation:

"The third angel's message is swelling into a loud cry, and you must not feel at liberty to neglect the present duty, and still entertain the idea that at some future time you will be the recipients of great blessing, when without any effort on your part a wonderful revival will take place. Today you are to give yourselves to God, that He may make of you vessels unto honor, and meet for His service. Today you are to give yourself to God, that you may be emptied of self, emptied of envy, jealousy, evil surmising, strife, everything that shall be dishonoring to God. Today you are to have your vessel purified that it may be ready for the heavenly dew, ready for the showers of the latter rain; for the latter rain will come, and the blessing of God will fill every soul that is purified from every defilement. It is our work today to yield our souls to Christ, that we may be fitted for the time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord—fitted for the baptism of the Holy Spirit." —(*The Review and Herald*, March 22, 1892) *Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 190, 191.

Dear brothers and sisters in the whole world, we have wonderful promises, prophecies to be fulfilled, and great blessings that will be poured out upon all who are dressed in the royal garments of Jesus' righteousness. Through these people, a great work will be done to enlighten the world. Do you want to be one of these blessed ones? Jesus wants you to be one of them. May the Lord help us to receive this gift and be men and women of faith dressed in the garments of "fine linen, clean and white" when He shall appear in the clouds of heaven and receive us into His holy kingdom. AMEN.

## *The Third Angel's Message in Verity*

*By Raul Escobar, Mexico*

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The last message of grace that God, in His mercy, is imparting to the world is the third angel's message that is the present truth. The third angel is represented as flying in the midst of heaven in order to show that the message has to reach all the breadth and length of the earth, since it is the most solemn message ever given to mortals.

The elements of this solemn message are: the beast, its image, its mark, God's wrath, the characteristics of the redeemed, and their blessing.

### *Understanding the Context of the Message*

Scripture describes the beast of Revelation 13 as having several identifying characteristics. The first clue to the beast's identity is found in Revelation 13:2: The dragon gave the beast his power, his throne, and great authority. On May 11, 330, Emperor Constantine decided to move the seat of his empire from Rome to Byzantium, later known as Constantinople. He turned over the control of the city, a treasury, and an army to the bishop of Rome. Thus the popes inherited their power, prestige, and titles from paganism—the dragon power. Another characteristic of the beast is that it received the power to continue for forty-two months—1,260 prophetic days—or 1,260 literal years. By A.D. 538, the papal government had conquered the last of the three major powers that were in conflict with it; and the bishop of Rome had secured his throne, marking the beginning of papal supremacy. The 1260-year prophetic period ends in 1798 when, according to Revelation 13:3, one of the heads of the beast “seemed to have a mortal wound.”

In Revelation 13:11, John described another beast coming up out of the earth, which marks the beginning of the time of the end.

The image of the beast will be consolidated before the end of the time of grace and will constitute a test for the people of God through which their eternal destiny will be decided. “The first and third angels’ messages are proclaimed with a ‘loud voice’ (vs. 7, 9). The message concerning the fall of Babylon is later proclaimed with a loud voice....” —*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 828.

Babylon is a comprehensive term that John employed to describe all religious bodies and movements that have fallen away from the truth. This fact requires us to view this “fall” as progressive and cumulative.

“This prophecy of the fall of Babylon finds its fulfilment in the departure of Protestantism at large from the purity and simplicity of the gospel. Historically, the message was first preached by the advent movement, known as Millerism, in the summer of 1844, and was applied to the churches that rejected the first angel's message concerning the judgment. The message will have increasing relevance as the end draws near, and will meet its complete fulfilment with the union of the various religious elements under the leadership of Satan. The message of ch. 18:2-4 announces the complete downfall of Babylon and calls upon God's people who are scattered throughout the various religious bodies comprising Babylon, to separate from them.” —*Ibid.*, vol. 7, p. 830.

The mark carries the characteristic feature of the beast and its image,

namely the transgression of the commandments of God, as shown by this quotation: "The pope is of so great dignity, and so exalted that he is not a mere man, but as it were God, and the vicar of God.... Therefore, if it were possible for the angels to err in regard to their faith ..., they could be judged and excommunicated by the pope." –Lucius Feraris, *Ecclesiastical Dictionary*, art. "Papa."

Regarding the wrath of God, it is written: "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation." Revelation 14:9, 10.

In this regard, the Spirit of Prophecy comments: "God will not break His covenant, nor alter the thing that has gone out of His lips. His word will stand fast forever as unalterable as His throne. At the judgment this covenant will be brought forth, plainly written with the finger of God, and the world will be arraigned before the bar of Infinite Justice to receive sentence.

"Today, as in the days of Elijah, the line of demarcation between God's commandment-keeping people and the worshipers of false gods is clearly drawn. 'How long halt ye between two opinions?' Elijah cried; 'if the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him' (1 Kings 18:21). And the message for today is: 'Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen.... 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 18:2, 4, 5)." –*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 187, 188.

### The Message of God's People

Besides the warning to the worshipers of the beast, the inspired report speaks about the divine message and the characteristics of those who remain faithful

in the struggle. Here reference is made to the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, which we have been considering during this entire Week of Prayer. "Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12).

Referring to this verse, the Testimonies state: "A banner has been placed in our hands, upon which is inscribed, 'Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.' This is a distinct, separating message—a message that is to give no uncertain sound. It is to lead the people away from the broken cisterns that contain no water, to the fountain of living water." –(Letter 60, 1898) *Counsels to Writers and Editors*, pp. 102, 103.

"The third angel is flying in the midst of heaven, heralding the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This represents the work which is to be done in these last days. The message loses none of its power in its onward flight. John sees the work increasing in power till the whole earth is filled with the glory of God....

"Today we need men of thorough fidelity, men who follow the Lord fully, men who are not disposed to be silent when they ought to speak, who are as true as steel to principle, who do not seek to make a pretentious show, but who walk humbly with God, patient, kind, obliging, courteous men, who understand that the science of prayer is to exercise faith and show works that will tell to the glory of God and the good of His people." –*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 207.

"The third angel's message, embracing the messages of the first and second angels, is the message for this time. We are to raise aloft the banner on which is inscribed: 'The commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.' The world is soon to meet the great Lawgiver over

His broken law. This is not the time to put out of sight the great issues before us. God calls upon His people to magnify the law and make it honourable." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 8, p. 197.

### The Third's Angel Message in Verity

Faith in Jesus together with the message of justification that gives us His righteousness and holiness should not be considered as a doctrine like any other, but should be the center of our preaching and experience and an essential part of the third angel's message. The inspired writings emphasize this:

"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.'" —*The Review and Herald*, April 1, 1890.

"This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. 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. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. 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." —*Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 91, 92.

"Christ has not been presented in connection with the law as a faithful and merciful High Priest, who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. He has not been lifted up before the sinner as the divine sacrifice." —*The*

*Review and Herald*, November 29, 1892.

"We must preach Christ in the law, and there will be sap and nourishment in the preaching that will be as food to the famishing flock of God. We must not trust in our own merits at all, but in the merits of Jesus of Nazareth." —*Ibid.*, March 11, 1890.

### Characteristics of the Redeemed

Furthermore, according to the holy word, God's commandments and the faith of Jesus are the central points of the message and characterize the remnant people.

"In describing the remnant people of God, John says, 'Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.' (Rev. 14:12). This is the law and the gospel." —*Selected Messages*, book 2, p. 385.

"In Revelation 14, men are called upon to worship the Creator; and the prophecy brings to view a class that, as the result of the threefold message, are keeping the commandments of God." —*The Great Controversy*, p. 437.

"Not all in this world have taken sides with the enemy against God. Not all have become disloyal. There are a faithful few who are true to God; for John writes: 'Here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.' Revelation 14:12. Soon the battle will be waged fiercely between those who serve God and those who serve Him not. Soon everything that can be shaken will be shaken, that those things that cannot be shaken may remain." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, pp. 15, 16.

### The Blessing

The blessing in Revelation 14:13 says: "from henceforth." "This doubtless refers to the period of the three angels' messages, which embraces the period of persecution by the beast and its image, when the boycott is imposed and the

death penalty passed.... Those who go to their graves in this period rest, as it were, a little moment until the indignation be overpast." –*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 7, p. 833.

### ***A Call to Be Justified by Faith***

Dear brothers and sisters, it is only through the righteousness that Christ imparts and only when the divine nature is implanted in us that we may keep the commandments. Therefore, let us not waste time but approach the throne of grace to receive this great heavenly gift of Jesus' righteousness.

On the one hand, we read: "All are to hear the last message of warning. The prophecies in the book of Revelation, chapters 12 to 18, are being fulfilled. In the eighteenth chapter is recorded the very last call to the churches. This call is now to be given." –*The Upward Look*, p. 277.

"The message of Christ's righteousness is to sound from one end of the earth to the other to prepare the way of the Lord. This is the glory of God, which closes the work of the third angel." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 19.

"The question was asked, 'Do you believe the truth? do you believe the third angel's message? If you do believe, then act your faith.'... Probationary time will not permit of long-protracted years of drill. God calls; hear His voice as He says, 'Go work today in My vineyard.' Matthew 21:28. Now, just now, is the time to work...." –*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, p. 415.

On the other hand, it is written that "the class who do not feel grieved over their own spiritual declension, nor mourn over the sins of others, will be left without the seal of God." –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 211.

"The nearer we come to Jesus, and the more clearly we discern the purity of His character, the more clearly shall we see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the less shall we feel like exalting

ourselves." –*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 561.

The total crucifixion of our ego will be worthless once the destiny of souls has been decided; this work has to be done now.

"It is now that self is to be crucified—when there is work to do; when there is some use to be made of every entrusted capability. It is now that we are to empty and thoroughly cleanse the vessel of its impurity. It is now that we are to be made holy unto God. This is our work, this very moment. You are not to wait for any special period for a wonderful work to be done; it is today. I give myself to God today....

"Are you ready to make the surrender now? You are to put away your sin right now when you see it.... Do not make leeway that you are going to overcome by degrees; you are going to try little by little to give up sin. Now, while it is called today, heed the invitation and harden not your hearts.

"Oh, my soul, why not leave the cursed thing today? Sin crucified my Lord. Why not turn from it with loathing? Why not love the things that Christ loved, and hate the things that Christ hated? He has made provision ample enough for you that you can, through Him, be more, yea, more than overcomers." –(Manuscript 35, Sept. 26, 1891, "Work and Baptism of Holy Spirit Needed) *The Upward Look*, p. 283.

May the Lord help us constantly to surrender to Him and to put aside our dirty rags of self-righteousness in order to live the third angel's message and receive His grace, righteousness, and holiness so we may be heirs of His glory in eternity. AMEN.

"The humanity of the Son of God is everything to us." –*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 244.

## *Assurance of God's Salvation*

*By Pablo Hunger, Austria*

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Luther, one of the pillars of the Protestant Reformation who rediscovered the Bible as the only infallible source of religious authority, had to go through a dramatic experience before he could find light for his life and power for preaching. Let us take time to recall the early experience of this brave reformer and herald of the gospel.

"At school, where he was sent at an early age, Luther was treated with harshness and even violence. So great was the poverty of his parents, that upon going from home to school in another town he was for a time obliged to obtain his food by singing from door to door, and he often suffered from hunger. The gloomy, superstitious ideas of religion then prevailing filled him with fear. He would lie down at night with a sorrowful heart, looking forward with trembling to the dark future, and in constant terror at the thought of God as a stern, unrelenting judge, a cruel tyrant, rather than a kind heavenly Father....

"An earnest desire to be free from sin and to find peace with God, led him at last to enter a cloister, and devote himself to a monastic life. Here he was required to perform the lowest drudgery, and to beg from house to house. He was at an age when respect and appreciation are most eagerly craved, and these menial offices were deeply mortifying to his natural feelings; but he patiently endured this humiliation, believing that it was necessary because of his sins....

"When it appeared to Luther that all was lost, God raised up a friend and helper for him. The pious Staupitz opened the Word of God to Luther's mind, and bade him look away from himself, cease the contemplation of in-

finite punishment for the violation of God's law, and look to Jesus, his sin-pardoning Saviour. 'Instead of torturing yourself on account of your sins, cast yourself into the arms of your Redeemer. Trust in Him—in the righteousness of His life—in the atonement of His death. Listen to the Son of God. He became man to give you the assurance of divine favor.' 'Love Him who has first loved you.' Thus spoke this messenger of mercy. His words made a deep impression upon Luther's mind....

"By a recent decretal, an indulgence had been promised by the pope to all who should ascend upon their knees 'Pilate's staircase,'... Luther was one day devoutly climbing these steps, when suddenly a voice like thunder seemed to say to him, 'The just shall live by faith' (Romans 1:17). He sprang upon his feet, and hastened from the place, in shame and horror. That text never lost its power upon his soul. From that time he saw more clearly than ever before the fallacy of trusting to human works for salvation, and the necessity of constant faith in the merits of Christ. His eyes had been opened, and were never again to be closed." – *The Great Controversy*, pp. 121-123, 125.

From that moment on, Luther's life and message had changed forever. "Precious was the message which he bore to the eager crowds that hung upon his words. Never before had such teaching fallen upon their ears. The glad tidings of a Saviour's love, the assurance of pardon and peace through His atoning blood, rejoiced their hearts, and inspired within them an immortal hope. At Wittenberg a light was kindled whose rays should extend to the utter-

most parts of the earth, and which was to increase in brightness to the close of time." —*Ibid.*, p. 126.

What is our experience, dear brother and sister? Can it be that in our life we are also deprived of real peace, being involved in a fruitless search for security and actually living a drama very similar to that of the great reformer?

The gospel prophet confirms the experience promised by God, saying, "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever" (Isaiah 32:17): Peace, quietude, and assurance forever!

### *How Can We Obtain This Assurance of Salvation?*

God's great desire is to save human beings from the sad situation in which they find themselves, so that they may find peace in their souls and the assurance of His acceptance. He knows very well that we are sunk in the miasma of sin, and that is the reason why He did not leave man to himself. He knew that it was impossible for man, in his own strength, to be reconciled with Him by fulfilling the holy requirements of a pure and perfect character. What great love He manifested by taking the first step toward reconciliation, especially since it was man who abandoned Him! God prepared a plan for man to find the answer to that frustrating and fruitless search.

"How is God reconciled to man? By the work and merit of Jesus Christ, who has removed every objection, and put aside everything that would interpose between man and God's pardoning love. The law that man has transgressed is not changed to meet the sinner in his fallen condition, but is made manifest as the transcript of Jehovah's character—the exponent of His holy will—and is exalted and magnified in the life and character of Jesus Christ. Yet a way of salvation is provided; for the spotless

Lamb of God is revealed as the One who taketh away the sin of the world. Jesus stands in the sinner's place, and takes the guilt of the transgressor upon Himself. Looking upon the sinner's substitute and surety, the Lord Jehovah can be just, and yet be the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. To him who accepts Christ as his righteousness, as his only hope, pardon is pronounced; for God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself....

"Those who do not believe in Christ are not reconciled to God; but those who have faith in Him are hid with Christ in God. 'If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.'" —*The Youth's Instructor*, November 29, 1894.

There is a perfect work through which every repentant sinner who accepts his Substitute may rest and find assurance of forgiveness.

This reminds me of my children. How precious to them is the assurance of Mommy and Daddy's presence! Even if we have had to correct them during the day, or they were angry about something they did not like, everything is quickly forgotten after asking for forgiveness and receiving a reconciling hug. There is no resentment or anxiety about whether or not they were forgiven. The most important thing of all is to feel Daddy or Mommy's presence, love, and tenderness. We need to learn to be like children and look for this sincere assurance.

David's transgressions were forgiven because he humbled his heart before God in repentance and contrition of soul and believed that the promise of God's forgiveness would be fulfilled. He confessed his sin, repented, and was reconciled. In the rapture of the assurance of forgiveness, he exclaimed, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not

iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile" (Psalm 32:1, 2).

Jacob is another practical example of how one can obtain assurance of forgiveness. Afraid and distressed because he could not appease his brother's anger, and after he had done all in his power to avert the threatened danger, he decided to retire to a solitary place to plead for divine protection. It was then that he acknowledged that although he thought he had been walking with God, he had led a life full of doubts, perplexities, and remorse because of his sin.

When, in the darkness of the night, the patriarch began to wrestle with the stranger who he thought was seeking his life, he struggled as hard as he humanly could to set himself free, until he realized that he was not wrestling with a man but with God Himself. Up until that moment, he had not understood that he should give up struggling alone. He realized that that was his only possibility of salvation. Therefore, he clung to the Angel (Christ) until he received the blessing his soul longed for and the assurance of the forgiveness of his sins.

He now understood his true condition and the remedy for his condition. Now he was sure that God was in control of his life. He had peace in his heart and trusted that everything he might undertake from that moment on would be led by God's power and will.

### *Assurance That We Have Become Children of God*

One day, a man was sitting in a pizza parlor waiting for his wife, who worked there. Suddenly, his attention was drawn to a man who had just bought a pizza and had sat down in front of him to eat it. Very carefully, the man took a napkin and placed a slice of the pizza on it so he could savor every morsel. He was a beggar who was enjoying his small meal for the day. When he finished eating, he tore off a piece of the box and used it to scrape and gather ev-

ery delicious crumb—he didn't want to waste anything! His clothes were dirty, his hair was all matted, and one could see that he had not taken a bath in a long time.

Suddenly the man who was waiting for his wife felt a chill go up his spine as he recalled scenes from his own life. As an orphan child, he had lived in an orphanage, where he was beaten and corrected without love until he fled and went to live on the street, where he suffered hunger, cold, and loneliness. He had to eat leftovers that were thrown in the garbage, to be able to survive. As he was lost in these thoughts, his wife came up; but he could not lift his eyes, because they were wet with tears. He stood up and walked away to hide his feelings.

When his wife saw the beggar, she went to her husband and asked him to buy him more pizza. Immediately he bought four big portions and a dessert and gave them to the poor man, who had been so beaten by life that he could not even look up. Then the first man went around the table and put his hand on the beggar's shoulder, just as he himself would have wished someone had done to him some thirty years before.

Isn't this what we wish from our heavenly Father? Even though we may have had a home, many times we do not understand what it really means to have had a father and mother. Have you ever imagined what it means to be a child of God, a child of the Almighty, to have His power at your disposal, to be a child of the King of the universe? This means that you are a prince, the child of Him who sees everything and knows exactly what is happening in your life; a child of Him who knows everything and can read your thoughts and wishes; a child of a Father full of love, willing to pour out His great affection; a child of Him who wants your very best and always speaks to you so you may obtain

it; a child of Him who wants you to be happy and make you successful in your development as a person; a child of Him who wants to give you a better homeland, a home where there is no suffering and everything is perfect; a child of Him who has overcome the power of evil and puts that power at your disposal; a child of Him who has all the treasures and riches of the universe and wishes to share them with you whenever you ask for them for His glory and honor; a child of the God of peace so you don't have to be concerned about anything. What great and wonderful promises are available to us!

"Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." "Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me." "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." Be simple-hearted enough to believe these promises of God. When Satan comes to you, and tells you that because you are unhappy, perplexed, and troubled, you are not a child of God, do not become discouraged for one moment, but gird up the loins of your mind. Let your heart repose in God. He has promised that if you come to Him, you shall find rest to your soul; and if you have done this, rest assured that He will fulfill His word in you." —*The Youth's Instructor*, July 8, 1897.

To be children of God is a great joy, an assurance that is manifested in our being because of the countless benefits and promises received.

### The Assurance of a Transformed Life

"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the di-

vine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:4).

How great and perfect is the work of the Lord! Not only does He want to give us the assurance of salvation, the assurance of forgiveness, and the assurance that we are children of God; He also wants to give us the assurance that we can live a new life and reflect His character. The gospel is not just a theory, but a power capable of transforming our whole being.

"He would have His servants bear testimony to the fact that through His grace men may possess Christlikeness of character, and may rejoice in the assurance of His great love. He would have us bear testimony to the fact that He cannot be satisfied until the human race are reclaimed and reinstated in their holy privileges as His sons and daughters." —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 826.

"The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means taking away our sins, and filling the vacuum with the graces of the Holy Spirit. It means divine illumination, rejoicing in God. It means a heart emptied of self, and blessed with the abiding presence of Christ. When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin. The glory, the fullness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life. The acceptance of the Saviour brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance. The beauty and fragrance of the character of Christ revealed in the life testifies that God has indeed sent His Son into the world to be its Saviour....

"The revelation of His own glory in the form of humanity will bring heaven so near to men that the beauty adorning the inner temple will be seen in every soul in whom the Saviour dwells. Men will be captivated by the glory of an abiding Christ. And in currents of praise and thanksgiving from the many souls thus won to God, glory will flow

back to the great Giver." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 419, 420.

Christ will be so precious to us that we will hold Him constantly in our thoughts, in our daily activities, and in all our decisions. We will want to address Him in prayer every moment, to tell Him everything. This constant living in the love of Christ will be the transforming power and assurance of a life that dies every day to be born again, reflecting the character of the Master.

### *I Was among the Needy*

Like many young people, I was born into a family of believers and had many advantages in my education. Since early childhood, I had the privilege of having parents who feared God and who did everything possible so I might grow in the love of the Lord. Everything they did was a great help in my development and a protection against the temptations and sinful practices of the world. They even managed to awake in me the desire to serve in the cause of God, but the most important thing was still missing—my own surrender to the Saviour, the peace, joy, and assurance of heart that I was a child of God.

My youthful ambition was to progress and develop my potential and talents, so I set high goals for myself; but instead of having joy, I fell into depression. I could not obtain what I wanted, and I was frustrated that I had to acknowledge my limitations. But God had prepared something else for me.

In my despair, all sorts of thoughts overpowered me, like the one of looking for a solution in sin with the hope that by experiencing strong feelings I would be able to overcome. My pride hindered me from sharing my feelings with others, since I had placed all trust in myself; it was terrible to have to acknowledge the sad situation in which I found myself. Then I decided to give God a chance. Tearfully, I asked Him to help me find peace and to reveal

Himself to me. I decided to read *Steps to Christ* so I could find the way to freedom. It was a terrible struggle; on one hand I felt bored and found little sense in what I read, while on the other I desperately pleaded for help. Those were terrible days.

As the weeks went by, little by little I started to listen to the soft voice of the Spirit of God, until my thoughts were guided to the inspired words that say: "But if we come to God, feeling helpless and dependent, as we really are, and in humble, trusting faith make known our wants to Him whose knowledge is infinite, who sees everything in creation, and who governs everything by His will and word, He can and will attend to our cry, and will let light shine into our hearts." —*Steps to Christ*, p. 97.

Suddenly the images we daily experience came to my mind, in which children go from door to door to beg for a piece of bread. Why do they do that? They are really in need. I was also really in need. Does it mean that I am also a beggar? I could not have ever imagined it! I had only thought of my strength, of what I could achieve with my works, but I realized that this had only led me to exhaustion and depression. I imagined myself going from house to house begging, not for bread, but for what I was yearning for so fervently: peace and assurance. I came to the conclusion that no one could help me, but that I had to give my broken heart to the Lord and accept His love. All of a sudden, I felt great peace in my heart and an overflowing joy that was expressed in tears of liberation. God had spoken to me and had given me what I longed for. I had found the assurance that I was a child of God and the joy of being a Christian. A seal had been placed on my heart; I had found my Saviour.

"For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us" (2 Corinthians 1:20). May Your name be praised for this ex-

perience that changed and gave a new goal to my life! Today I am a servant of God, and I can give testimony that there is an assurance of forgiveness and an eternal hope for whoever sincerely looks for salvation. God's sure purpose is to adopt us as His children if by faith we cling to the perfect work of our Redeemer and accept His offer of love. Let us not abide in solitude. There is a new life in Him, a different character for those who live united and in communion with Christ as their Lord.

Dear brother and sister: Cling firmly to the promises of God; and if you are not sure about your salvation, persist, as did Jacob, until you receive the blessing of the Almighty.

May our prayer be the one of the inspired servant of the Lord: "We thank Thee for all the precious promises and assurances of Thy word; for all its faithful warnings; for all its holy precepts; for the blessed hope of our Lord's coming which lies just before us, when He shall take this earth and change it by His own power for an everlasting home for all His children."

"We thank Thee that Thy power is so great that Thou canst subdue and conquer all in us that is unlovely; that Thou canst take the poor, base alloys of our human nature, and make them the genuine gold of God." —*Life Sketches of Ellen G. White*, pp. 466, 465. AMEN.

"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. For it is the work of every one to whom the message of warning has come, to lift up Jesus, to present Him to the world as revealed in types, as shadowed in symbols, as manifested in the revelations of the prophets, as unveiled in the lessons given to His disciples and in the wonderful miracles wrought for the sons of men. Search the Scriptures; for they are they that testify of Him.

"If you would stand through the time of trouble, you must know Christ, and appropriate the gift of His righteousness, which He imputes to the repentant sinner." —*The Review and Herald*, November 22, 1892.

## *The Color Red—God’s Righteousness and the Latter Rain*

By Idel Suarez, Jr., U.S.A.

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*“But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness...” (Matthew 6:33).*

### *Red Is a Primary Color*

More than a hundred years ago, Dr. Osmar Klopsch, a German immigrant to the United States, was reading the gospel story of the Lord’s Supper. Suddenly, he got an idea. It was an idea that would forever revolutionize the New Testament. As he read about the wine symbolizing the blood Jesus shed to cleanse us from our sins, he thought: “Why not print all the words of Jesus in red? Isn’t wine red? Isn’t blood red? I’ll print His words in red so that they stand out in the Gospel narrative.”<sup>1</sup> Dr. Klopsch owned publishing presses. His son was the publisher. As they shared this idea with others, it spread like wildfire in the publishing industry; and before long, millions of copies were being printed in English with the words of Jesus in red.

The color red serves as an allegory to illustrate the relationship between the gospel truths of Jesus and the righteousness of God. As one of the key colors of the rainbow above God’s throne, it serves as a reminder of the process the Christian must experience as God transforms the believer from a sinner into a righteous son or daughter of God, ready to receive the latter rain and meet Jesus at His second coming.

### *Red Is the Color of Sin*

Nathanael Hawthorne, the famous American Puritan writer, wrote a story titled *The Scarlet Letter*. It was about a young lady guilty of transgressing the seventh commandment. Her village

forced her to carry a scarlet letter on her clothing so all could recognize her as a sinner.

The color red is a symbol of sin. Even if our sins were red like crimson or scarlet, through Jesus they can be made as white as snow, as white as wool, as white as righteousness. “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool” (Isaiah 1:18).

The first step to salvation is to recognize that we are sinners, painted in red, but desire to be dressed in the white linen of righteousness. “And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints” (Revelation 19:8).

God wishes to free us from the great red dragon (Revelation 12:3), from sin, from death, and to bring us into His wonderful kingdom of grace. But for that to happen, we must barter with God.

Do you have sins? Do you have guilt? Behold, Jesus has righteousness and pardon. Why not exchange your sin and guilt for His righteousness and pardon? Through the price paid on Calvary by the blood of Jesus, this sacred barter and exchange can occur.

### *Red Is the Color of Blood*

Although throughout the breadth and length of scripture, righteousness is compared to the white garments of Jesus, the color red plays a decisive part in obtaining justification by faith. Figuratively, we cannot obtain those white

garments without dipping them in the crimson blood of Christ. The heavenly messenger told John, "These ... have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb" (Revelation 7:14). Red is the symbol of blood.

We learn from the combination of colors that if all known colors of light are combined in specific proportions, white appears. Hence, as the believers exercise their faith in the atoning blood of Jesus shed to save them, they are accounted righteous. Faith in the blood of Christ is central to being justified.

According to Paul, God declares us righteous or unrighteous depending on our faith in the crimson blood of Jesus Christ to forgive our past sins. "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Romans 3:25, 26).

"As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, discerns Christ's atonement in his behalf and accepts this atonement as his only hope in this life and the future life, his sins are pardoned. This is justification by faith.... Pardon and justification are one and the same thing." —*Faith and Works*, p. 103. Yet righteousness must be linked to faith in order to be profitable.

Faith is the key which unlocks the treasures of Jesus Christ's righteousness. We claim His promises by faith. We take hold of Christ's merits by the arm of faith. We are pardoned believing in the atoning merits of Christ's blood. By faith, we are accounted as righteous. By faith, we are made just before the law, before the throne of God, and before the entire universe. In Christ, the repentant, forgiven, and believing Christian stands faultless.

The highest level of faith is implicitly trusting God at His word in each mo-

ment of our lives. The apostle Paul says those who believe in God must "trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all" (1 Timothy 4:9-11). Paul means that we need not only to exemplify this ourselves but also teach others to trust Jesus. Jesus is not now on a cross. He is not in a tomb. He is alive in the heavenly sanctuary pardoning, interceding, and atoning for His trusting people.

### *Red Was the Color of a Sacrificial Heifer*

In the Old Testament, there was a sacrifice made for the entire congregation of Israel to cleanse them from ceremonial defilement. It typified Jesus' sacrifice to cleanse us who are dead in trespasses and sins. Ephesians 2:1. "This sacrifice was a red heifer and represented the more perfect offering that should redeem from the pollution of sin.... This heifer was to be red, which was a symbol of blood.... Here, again, Christ was typified." —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 120.

The red heifer (Numbers 19:2) had to be spotless, because Jesus never sinned. It was slaughtered outside the sanctuary, without the camp, foreshadowing Jesus' crucifixion beyond Jerusalem's walls. The ashes of the heifer were added to pure water with a scarlet cloth and a hyssop branch to repeatedly sprinkle the sanctuary and the congregation of Israel. It symbolized purification from the defilement of sin. "Thus Christ, in His own spotless righteousness, after shedding His precious blood, enters into the holy place to cleanse the sanctuary. And there the crimson current is brought into the service of reconciling God to man.

"The repeated sprinklings illustrate the thoroughness of the work that must be accomplished for the repenting sinner. All that he has must be consecrated. Not only should his own soul be washed clean and pure, but he should strive to have his family, his domestic

arrangements, his property, and his entire belongings consecrated to God.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 122.

Do you see how God’s righteousness must be continually and thoroughly applied to the believer for it to be efficacious unto salvation? Justification cannot be just one moment in time. The believer must be continually and thoroughly consecrated through Jesus. This work requires sanctification.

### Red Reminds Us of the Red Sea

The children of Israel, after painting the upper doorpost and the two sideposts of their homes with the blood of the Passover lamb, were to prepare to flee from Egypt. This typified how the blood of Calvary cleanses and renews our own upper doorpost—our minds—and our sideposts—our hearts—according to the New Covenant. We, too, are to flee from Egypt and Babylon and from the current of worldliness. Israel then had to cross the Red Sea by faith (Hebrews 11:29). Their enemies were drowned there forever. Our own Red Sea is a symbol of baptism, where our past sins and tendencies to sin are buried. Paul says, “And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (1 Corinthians 10:2). Hence, we, too, need to prepare for baptism in order to be dressed in the white linen of righteousness.

Jesus Himself said that He needed to be baptized to fulfill all righteousness (Matthew 3:15). Hence, baptism is a prerequisite for righteousness.

“In fulfilling ‘all righteousness,’ Christ did not bring all righteousness to an end. He fulfilled all the requirements of God in repentance, faith, and baptism, the steps in grace in genuine conversion.... Human beings, by uniting their weakness to the divine nature of Christ, may become partakers of His character.” –*To Be Like Jesus*, p. 362.

Have you been baptized in the name of Jesus and believing the third angel’s message?

### Red Was One of the Colors of the Sanctuary

Moses was instructed to dye the rams’ skins red. “And thou shalt make a covering for the tent of rams’ skins dyed red...” (Exodus 26:14). These served as a covering for the tabernacle, where God would reconcile His believing people unto Himself.

A spectator could only see the white linen curtains, but under the badger skins lay the red skins of rams as a symbol of God’s sacrifice for our salvation. Red pomegranates adorned the high priest’s garments. Red stripes adorned the priest’s ephod. Red stones on the breastplate symbolized some of the tribes of Israel. Hence, these tints of red symbolized not only our sins, or Christ’s blood, but His sacrifice which must be continually and thoroughly applied for it to be efficacious. All this symbolizes the moment by moment mediation, intercession, atonement, and forgiveness which Jesus offers us from the heavenly sanctuary.

“The blood of Christ is efficacious, but it needs to be applied continually.... You need the blood of the sprinkling thoroughly applied, consecrating you and all your possessions to God.” –*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 122, 123.

The sanctuary and all its services typified the work of Jesus, our High Priest, in redeeming, justifying, sanctifying, and glorifying His people. The sanctuary was not only a place to exercise faith but a place of continual action and work. Righteousness is doing.

### Red Is the Color of the New Wine

Jesus made several references in the gospel to new wine. He said, “No man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled,... but new wine must be put into new bottles” (Mark 2:22). The new bottles are a symbol of

the new man in Jesus Christ. And what is this new wine?

When Jesus instituted the Lord's supper, He stated that the new wine, that is red grape juice, symbolized the New Testament or Covenant He would make with all His trusting followers (Matthew 26:27, 28). In the New Covenant, God writes His law upon our hearts and minds, so that we will be moved to do His commandments. The New Covenant implies a law. Law is absolutely necessary to define righteousness and justice.

E.J. Waggoner wrote: "Righteousness equals obedience to the law.... The law of the ten commandments, then, is the measure of the righteousness of God.... Since the law is the righteousness of God—a transcript of His character—it is easy to see that to fear God and keep His commandments is the whole duty of man (Ecclesiastes 12:13)."<sup>2</sup>

"Hearken unto Me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is My law... (Isaiah 51:6, 7). "What do we learn from this? That they who know the righteousness of God are those in whose heart is His law, and therefore that the law of God is the righteousness of God."<sup>3</sup>

Those who have His law in their hearts will naturally do His commandments. Why not underline the following verses in your Bible so that in the future you can define righteousness as doing His commandments?

"And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He hath commanded us" (Deuteronomy 6:25).

"My tongue shall speak of Thy word: for all Thy commandments are righteousness" (Psalm 119:172).

"O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea" (Isaiah 48:18).

"Then what is it? It is to hear and to see that with the righteousness of Christ

which you hold by faith, righteousness supplied by His efforts and His divine power, you can keep the commandments of God." —*Faith and Works*, p. 71.

### Red Is the Color of Love

Do you remember being an elementary school child drawing red hearts and roses for your mother? Psychologists tell us that the first person an infant or a child learns to love is his or her mother. A mother's love is supreme. When God wanted to compare His love to us, He compared it to a mother's love. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee" (Isaiah 49:15).

To many, the color red is symbolic of love. Righteousness also relates to love. Love is the standard of righteousness. Love and righteousness are actions. It is simply not enough to have a profession of faith or superficially to keep His commandments. Something else is needed on the path of righteousness. We need to do acts of love.

Luther preached, "We must also have love, and through love we must do to one another as God has done to us through faith. For without love, faith is nothing, as St. Paul says, If I had the tongues of angels and could speak of the highest things in faith, and have not love, I am nothing."<sup>4</sup>

To Luther, justification, or righteousness by faith, was not merely words spoken in heaven on behalf of the repentant and believing sinner. Heaven's actions were paralleled here on earth. As God lovingly blots out sins, we can do nothing greater than manifest that same love to others. Luther taught that righteousness was "faith through love." He continued, saying, "Dear friends, the kingdom of God—and we are that kingdom—does not consist in talk or words, but in activity, in deeds, in works and exercises. God does not want hearers and repeaters of words (James 1:22), but

followers and doers, and this occurs in faith through love. For a faith without love is not enough—rather it is not faith at all, but a counterfeit faith.”<sup>5</sup>

The Testimonies give us a similar picture of the need of faith to work by love. “And it is that faith which works that you want. How does it work? It works by love. What love? Why, the love flashing from the cross of Calvary.” —*Faith and Works*, p. 72.

The Hebrew word for “righteousness” is *tzedek*. The rabbis define *tzedek* as works of mercy and love. Every honest son of Abraham needs to do works of righteousness to assure his sealing on the day of atonement. There is no greater mandate in Judaism for *tzedek* than during the 10 days between the day of trumpets (Rosh Hashana) and the day of atonement (Yom Kippur). On this day, the rabbis teach that God seals Israel.

Do we not also believe in the sealing message? Are we not modern spiritual Israel? Are we not living in the prophetic period of the day of atonement? It is in this time that Jesus, as our High Priest according to the order of Melchisedec (king of righteousness), puts us at one with God, at one with one another, and at one with ourselves with the responsibility of loving.

It is not enough to believe or to talk or to preach about righteousness. We must do righteousness. Or as Luther put it, we must be doers. Jesus said we must do good works, which to the Jewish frame of mind means doing works of love and mercy. Are you doing works of love? Or are you a living fulfillment of Jesus’ prediction of the last days—one whose love has waxed cold? “And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold” (Matthew 24:12).

Love is not passive; it is active. Love is a doer, a giver, a sufferer; and it endures forever. Love is the highest level of righteousness. Faith is the alpha of righteousness, and love is the omega of

God’s righteousness. God’s righteousness is love, because God is love (1 John 4:8). God loves you.

As another year comes to its close, perhaps your love has waxed cold from all the iniquity and maliciousness witnessed on this old planet. Or maybe you are not just so in love with the Lord, with the Bible, and with your spiritual family as you used to be. Will you right now ask Jesus to forgive you, increase your faith, and give you that true *tzedek* which works the first works of love for the glory of God and the well being of your neighbors?

### Red Is the Color of Revolution

When contemporary revolutionaries take power, they fly red flags, hang red posters, and dress in red for public parades. When a revolution comes to a country, it seems to be dyed in red. Red is the color of revolution. But not all revolutions are the same. Not all are dyed in red. There has been an agricultural revolution, an industrial revolution, and a technological revolution in our planet’s history.

God has another revolution in mind. He is today preparing His people and setting the stage for the great last spiritual revolution related to righteousness. “There must be a spiritual revolution throughout the churches that the fruits unto righteousness may be seen in our daily life.” —*The E.G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 241. That revolution necessitates a master change in the thoughts, words, and actions of every revolutionary now. It is the coming latter rain. We are not to wait until it comes to experience the internal spiritual revolution which God has masterminded through His Spirit. We need change, and that change must start with me and with my family, with you and your home, with us and our church. The prerequisite for the latter rain is to have and own the righteousness of Christ. The last spiritual revolution this planet will ever witness will be

like a shower of righteousness poured down from the heavenly sanctuary.

God intends to rain righteousness on those who seek the Lord. The King James Version of the Bible in English says: "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till He come and rain righteousness upon you" (Hosea 10:12).

"Now, some will tell you, and they will begin to reckon, and reckon, and reckon when the latter rain is coming. I would rather that you would reckon right now whether you have brought eternity into your reckoning concerning your individual self. Consider whether you have brought eternity daily to view. If you are right with God today, you are ready if Christ should come today. What we need is Christ formed within, the hope of glory. We want that you should have a deep and earnest longing for the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Your old, tattered garments of self-righteousness will not give you an entrance into the kingdom of God, but that garment that is woven in the loom of heaven—the righteousness of Jesus Christ—will." —*Sermons and Talks*, vol. 1, p. 202.

"Those who have been long in the work have been far too content to wait for the showers of the latter rain to revive them.... The truth of God must be brought into the soul temple, to cleanse and purify it from all defilement.... We want the ministers and the young men to be converted. We want to lift up the standard. Let all the people come up to the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us pray that we may hunger and thirst after righteousness; for Jesus says, 'Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.'" —*The E. G. White 1888 Materials*, p. 118.

"If we keep our minds stayed upon Christ, He will come unto us 'as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth.' Hosea 6:3. As the Sun of

Righteousness, He will arise upon us 'with healing in His wings' (Malachi 4:2)." —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 66.

### ***Red Heralds Jesus' Return***

Both Isaiah and John wrote that Jesus will return dressed in garments of red. Why? Because red stands for redemption. He will come to redeem those who have become like Him, those who have His faith, keep His commandments, lovingly do His good works, possess His spirit, and wear His spiritual garments of righteousness. He will come to bring in everlasting righteousness.

"Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in His apparel, traveling in the greatness of His strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save. Wherefore art Thou red in thine apparel, and Thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone,... and their blood shall be sprinkled upon My garments, and I will stain all My raiment. For the day of vengeance is in Mine heart, and the year of My redeemed is come" (Isaiah 63:1-4).

"And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and He that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire.... And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God" (Revelation 19:11-13).

"What we want is Jesus. What we want is His love. What we want is the elevation and ennobling of character. What we want is to die to self right here—not wait until some future period. We want to make the consecration here. Oh, I am so thankful that it is not too late for us to be righteous.... 'Come now, and let us reason together...; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool' (Isaiah 1:18)." —*Sermons and Talks*, vol. 1, pp. 192-193. AMEN.

<sup>1</sup> (1975) *The History of the Red Letter Edition, The King James Version, The Open Bible Edition*, Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Publishers, p. 212.

<sup>2</sup> E.J. Waggoner (1892), *The Righteousness of God, Christ Our Righteousness*, London: Pacific Press Publishing, p. 52.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>4</sup> Martin Luther, "The First Sermon," March 9, 1522, "Invocavit Sunday," in Theodore G. Tappert, editor (2007), *Selected Writings of Martin Luther*, vol. 2, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, pp. 234, 235.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

"As the penitent sinner, contrite before God, discerns Christ's atonement in his behalf and accepts this atonement as his only hope in this life and the future life, his sins are pardoned. This is justification by faith. Every believing soul is to conform his will entirely to God's will and keep in a state of repentance and contrition, exercising faith in the atoning merits of the Redeemer and advancing from strength to strength, from glory to glory.

"Pardon and justification are one and the same thing. Through faith, the believer passes from the position of a rebel, a child of sin and Satan, to the position of a loyal subject of Christ Jesus, not because of an inherent goodness, but because Christ receives him as His child by adoption. The sinner receives the forgiveness of his sins, because these sins are borne by his Substitute and Surety. The Lord speaks to His heavenly Father, saying: 'This is My child, I reprieve him from the condemnation of death, giving him My life insurance policy--eternal life--because I have taken his place and have suffered for his sins. He is even My beloved son.' Thus man, pardoned, and clothed with the beautiful garments of Christ's righteousness, stands faultless before God." *-Faith and Works*, p. 103.

“In those days, and at that time, will  
I cause the Branch of righteousness  
to grow up unto David; and  
He shall execute judgment and  
righteousness in the land. In  
those days shall Judah be saved,  
and Jerusalem shall dwell safely:  
and this is the name wherewith  
she shall be called, The Lord our  
righteousness.” Jeremiah 33:15, 16.