

Old Paths

Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. Jeremiah 6:16

The secret of the LORD is with them that fear Him; and He will show them His covenant. Psalm 25:14

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Straight and Narrow

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The Death of the Cross

Elder James White, writing in *The Review and Herald* of Feb. 7, 1856 noted:

The “mystery of iniquity” began to work in the church in Paul’s day. It finally crowded out the simplicity of the gospel, and corrupted the doctrine of Christ, and the church went into the wilderness. Martin Luther, and other reformers, arose in the strength of God, and with the Word and Spirit, made mighty strides in the Reformation. The greatest fault we can find in the Reformation is, the Reformers stopped reforming. Had they gone on, and onward, till they had left the last vestige of Papacy behind, such as natural immortality, sprinkling, *the trinity*, and Sunday-keeping, the church would now be free from her unscriptural errors.

The Adventist pioneers rejected the doctrine of the Trinity. While several reasons were advanced for this rejection, the point most offensive was that it was subversive to the atonement. Remember that the Advent movement was based on a fuller revelation of the atonement than had ever been understood before. In *The Great Controversy*, page 409 we find the well-known statement:

The Scripture which above all others had been both the foundation and the central pillar of the advent faith was the declaration: “Unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed.”

The reason the Trinity was considered to be subversive to the atonement involved the fact that it degraded *the dignity of the sacrifice*, and thus the power of the atonement. First, an appreciation of the law of God cannot be realized without an appreciation of the greatness of the sacrifice needed to atone for the transgressor. The strength of any law is revealed by the sacrifice needed to atone for its transgression. If the law is of such a low nature that only a human sacrifice, or even the life of an angel, could atone for its transgression, then the stature of the law is far different than the stature of a law that would require a divine sacrifice. In fact, the difference would be as great as that between a creature and the Creator!

God’s law is so high, so sacred and just, and its transgression so abhorrent in His sight that only the life of His dear Son, and nothing less, could be accepted as an atonement for its violation. The realization of this truth will establish a tremendous respect for God’s law in the believer’s heart.

Digital Video Tape Project

The digital video tape project featuring the series, “The Good News About God,” is continuing to expand. The next two messages in the series about the Godhead are scheduled to be ready by the first of June. They are; “The Father and Son” detailing the truth about the nature of the Father and Son relationship and “The Death of the Christ” which is the basis for the main article in this issue of *Old Paths*. We are producing both an Adventist, and a non-Adventist version. Please specify which you need when requesting.

You may request these videos by phone, postal mail, e-mail, or fax.

These messages, like all “The Good News About God” series are available in NTSC or PAL formats. The messages contained on the videos are available in audio cassette format as well.

Editor

Also in this issue:

Youth’s Corner - E. G. White	p. 9
Letters	p. 10
Thank you - A. Stump	p. 12
Correction	p. 12

Our understanding of the law and the offering for its violation go hand in hand. We cannot have a totally correct view of one without the other. To degrade the law, we must of necessity degrade the offering needed to atone for its violation. To degrade the sacrifice, we must of necessity degrade the law which requires it. The inverse is also true. If we exalt the law, we must of necessity exalt the value of the sacrifice needed to atone for its transgression. Also, an exaltation of the sacrifice must of necessity exalt the stature of the law which requires it.

Since the Trinitarian doctrine only makes provision for a human sacrifice, the dignity of the law, the Lawgiver, and the Sacrifice are degraded. Elder J. H. Waggoner was an Adventist pioneer, former editor of *Signs of the Times*, and father of E. J. Waggoner of 1888 fame. He wrote a book entitled, *The Atonement in the Light of Nature and Revelation*. It was a standard work among the Adventists of the last part of the 19th century. In it he wrote:

It is not our purpose to present any argument on the doctrine of the trinity, further than it has a bearing on the subject under consideration, namely, on the Atonement.

Many theologians really think that the Atonement, in respect to its dignity and efficacy, rests upon the doctrine of a trinity. But we fail to see any connection between the two. To the contrary, the advocates of that doctrine really fall into the difficulty which they seem anxious to avoid. Their difficulty consists in this: They take the denial of a trinity to be equivalent to a denial of the divinity of Christ. Were that the case, we should cling to the doctrine of a trinity as tenaciously as any can; but it is not the case. They who have read our remarks on the death of the Son of God know that we firmly believe in the divinity of Christ; but we cannot accept

the idea of a trinity, as it is held by Trinitarians, without giving up our claim on *the dignity of the sacrifice* made for our redemption.

And here is shown how remarkably the widest extremes meet in theology. The highest Trinitarians and lowest Unitarians meet and are perfectly united on the death of Christ—the faith of both amounts to Socinianism. Unitarians believe that Christ was a prophet, an inspired teacher, but merely human; that his death was that of a human body only. Trinitarians hold that the term “Christ” comprehends two distinct and separate natures: one that was merely human; the other, the second person in the Trinity, who dwelt in the flesh for a brief period, but could not possibly suffer, or die; that the Christ that died was only the human nature in which the divinity had dwelt. Both classes have a human offering, and nothing more. No matter how exalted the preexistent Son was; no matter how glorious, how powerful, or even eternal; if the manhood only died, the sacrifice was only human. And so far as the vicarious death of Christ is concerned, this is Socinianism. Thus the remark is just, that the doctrine of a Trinity degrades the Atonement, resting it solely on a human offering as a basis. (*The Atonement in the Light of Nature and Revelation*, pp. 164 - 166, 1884 edition.)

A very important point must be noted from Waggoner. A correct understanding of the doctrine of the atonement (which involves a rejection of the Trinitarian teaching) does not require “a denial of the divinity of Christ.” In fact, it is based on the concept that the sacrifice upon Calvary was a divine sacrifice instead of merely a human one. The truth that the divine Son of God died upon the cross was the center of Paul’s teachings.

Writing to the Corinthians he stated: “And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with

excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. *For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified.*” (1 Corinthians 2:1, 2)

While Paul and other inspired writers mention the incarnation, the life of Christ, the resurrection, ascension, and His high priestly ministry, the emphasis was on the cross. That does not mean that any portion of the plan of salvation is more necessary than another. To illustrate this, let us examine a lesson from the human body. God has given man two lungs to provide oxygen for the body and to remove carbon dioxide. We couldn’t live without our lungs. God has also given each of us a liver. The liver secretes bile and acts in formation of blood and in the metabolism of carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins, and minerals. We couldn’t live without it either. In addition to this, God has given each of us a heart. This fist-sized organ, weighing between nine and eleven ounces, pumps the blood around the body 60 to 80 times a minute, every minute we live. In one day alone it pumps an astounding 4,000 gallons of blood. We couldn’t live without it! Now very simply, if we were to ask which of these organs is the most vital to you, what could you say? Take any away and the person dies! All are important, and the failure of any one organ leads to the failure of the whole body.

In like manner, the different aspects of the plan of salvation are all necessary. If we remove any one portion of that plan, the whole plan fails. This being true, why did Paul emphasize the death of Christ on the cross so much? It was because through the death of Christ God could break and win the hearts of sinners, and thus reconcile them to Himself.

The medium of the cross is God's way of speaking to the heart of man in a way that nothing else could. Not only does it fulfill the demands of the broken law, but it illustrates the love of God for sinful man as nothing else can. Virtually anyone who has ever claimed the title, "Christian," has heard about the cross. Have we really *studied the cross* and the events surrounding it? What really happened at Calvary? Most all Christians quote John 3:16 and freely speak of Christ dying on the cross, but something is wrong! Why do we not see the power of the preaching of the cross as the apostles did? I believe this is because most professed Christians have a faulty understanding of what Golgotha is portraying to us. The purpose of this study is to find out what really happened on Calvary. Did Jesus really die? In other words, did He die in totality? If Jesus is the divine Son of God, how could He die? And finally, if Christ really died in totality, how does He live today to make intercession for sinners?

Today we live in a troubled world. Racial differences, "ethnic cleansing," and prejudice cause many of these divisions. While we live in a very fragmented and divided world, the one common denominator that links all humanity is the fact that all are sinners! Romans 3:23 emphatically states: "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." How many? "ALL!" John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Here we are told that Christ was given for one class of people: *sinners!*

In the heart of his message on justification as found in Romans, Paul testifies in Romans 5:6-8: "For when we were yet without strength, in due

time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, **Christ died for us.**" Paul states that *Christ died and that He died for those who hated His Father.* Died for whom? Those who loved Him or the Father? No, He died for those who were in rebellion; He died for those who would pull God off his throne and kill Him if possible.

Christ Died For Sinners

Writing to the Corinthians, Paul also declared as recorded in 1 Corinthians 15:3 said: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that **Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.**" Two significant things from Paul's words should be noted. First, the gospel he taught was that which he received. Paul declares that he had received first hand instruction from Christ Himself. Earlier in this epistle, he had written: "For *I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you.*" 1 Corinthians 11:23) He also told the churches of Galatia: "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." (Galatians 1:12) Clearly, what Paul claims to have taught was the pure, direct Gospel of Christ.

The testimony of Jesus Christ Himself is equally clear. In Revelation 1:18 Christ says: "I am he that liveth, and **was dead**; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." Christ says that He was dead. Friends, did He lie? I don't believe that He ever told anything but the pure truth. We can agree with Peter when he stated that Jesus "did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." (1 Peter 2:22) No, Jesus

told the truth when He said that He was the Son of God and that He died. He describes Himself in Revelation 3:14 as "the faithful and true witness."

When Jesus and the disciples came to the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, He told His disciples that He was going to die. After giving Peter and the disciples an opportunity to acknowledge that He was the Son of the living God, the Bible says in Matthew 16:21: "From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." However, Peter didn't take this very favorably. The account goes on to say that: "Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee." (Verse 22) Peter tried to deny that Jesus must die. This brought the rebuke from Christ as recorded in verse 23: "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." You see, it was actually Satan, the father of all lies, not God, that had inspired Peter into his rashness. Jesus had declared to the Jewish leadership:

"Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." (John 8:44) Commenting on the rashness of Peter, Ellen White said:

When Jesus had opened before his disciples the fact that he must go to Jerusalem to suffer and die at the hands of the chief priests and scribes, Peter had presumptuously contradicted his Master, saying, "Be it far

from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee.” He could not conceive it possible that the Son of God should be put to death. *Satan suggested to his mind that if Jesus was the Son of God he could not die.* (*Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 3, p. 231)

The evidence is clear. God wants us to understand that the atonement is based on the real and full death of the Son of the Great Lawgiver. Satan wants us to believe “that if Jesus was the Son of God he could not die!”

“According to the Scriptures”

Paul noted in 1 Corinthians 15:3 that “Christ died for our sins *according to the scriptures.*” The Scriptures that Paul was speaking of were the Old Testament. The most graphic and detailed account of Christ’s death is found in Isaiah chapter 53. This chapter describes the totality of Christ’s death. This is an excellent chapter to be committed to memory. Its influence will subdue and humble souls defiled by sin and uplifted by self-exaltation. The last three verses of chapter 52 and the first six verses of chapter 53 begin with the sufferings of the Father’s servant. However, it must be remembered that the law required death, not torture. Romans 6:23 states that “the wages of sin is death” not torture. Let’s carefully look at verses seven through twelve of Isaiah 53, which speak explicitly of Christ’s death.

Verse 7: “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as **a lamb to the slaughter**, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” Here Christ is described as being brought as “a lamb to the slaughter.” I grew up in an area where there were cattle and various animals on farms and any farmer knows what happens during slaughtering time. The animal is

killed! The Hebrew word for slaughter (תבח—tebach) can also be translated “massacre.”

Verse 8: “He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for **he was cut off out of the land of the living**: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.” The expression “cut off” is used in Daniel 9:26 to describe the death of the Messiah. Further, the verse states that the Messiah was to be “cut off *out of the land of the living.*” If one is not living, he must be dead.

Verse 9: “And he made his **grave** with the wicked, and with the rich in **his death**; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.” This text, which describes Christ’s burial, states plainly that He was to be put in a “grave.” Friends, it is neither legal nor proper to bury people in graves unless they are dead! Further, this text speaks of “his death.”

Verse 10: “Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when **thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin**, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.” This is perhaps one of the strongest statements in all of Scripture concerning the atonement. Of all people who should be able to fathom the importance of this, it’s Seventh-day Adventists. Few understand the implications of the usage of the term “soul” as Adventists do. The Word of God does not say that the Messiah would give His human body for the offering, but, instead, His “soul.” The Hebrew word for “soul” is נפש (nephesh). This refers to the total being, all that lives and breathes!

Verses 11, 12: “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. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because **he hath poured out his soul unto death**: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.” Here is a clear allusion to the drink offering which was poured out to show total and complete sacrifice. The Word states that Jesus “*poured out his soul unto death.*” Here “soul” is again the Hebrew word *nephesh*. The word for “death” (מָוֶת- maveth) is from the root word translated “die” in Ezekiel 18:4 where we read that “the soul that sinneth, it shall die.” We have preached for years that Satan wants you to believe that you don’t *really* die when you die. Beloved, Satan is just as interested in you believing that Jesus didn’t really die on the cross.

The Divine Son of God Died

This brings us to the second question of our study: How could the Son of God die if He was divine? To answer this question we need to first understand some of the attributes of Divinity that distinguishes Him from His creation. God’s attributes have been divided by some students into two main areas: His physical attributes and His moral attributes. A careful consideration of the physical attributes of God will now be examined.

The first attribute of God is that he is *omnipotent*. This simply means that He is all powerful; His power is unlimited. This is especially noticeable concerning His creative ability. In fact, it is this ability that sets Him apart from all false gods. Notice the contrast illustrated in the following verses:

But the LORD is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king: at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation. Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion. (Jeremiah 10:10-12)

For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the heavens. (Psalm 96:5)

The second attribute of God is that He is *omnipresent*. This means that God can be anywhere or everywhere at any time. In fact, by His spirit He can be all places at all times. David said, “Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.” (Psalm 139:7, 8)

The third attribute of God is that He is *omniscient*. This means that God is all knowing. He has total knowledge of that which has occurred in the past as well as what is currently happening. He also knows the future before it happens. “Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.” (Isaiah 46:10) Not only does God have total knowledge of events, He also understands all scientific and psychological mysteries as Job chapters 38 - 41 reveals.

The fourth attribute of God is that He is *inherently immortal*. That means not subject to death. This is also the exclusive property of God. (I have intentionally made a distinction here by using the term “inherently” because when Jesus

comes back, “this mortal shall ... put on immortality.”

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen. (1 Timothy 1:17)

Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen. (1 Timothy 6:16)

The Form of a Slave

The Apostle Paul, under inspiration, writes concerning Christ: “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.” (Philippians 2:6, 7) The original Greek in the first part of verse 7 is: *αλλ εαυτον εκενωσεν*, which literally translates to: “but himself emptied.” Paul says that the One who was divine - “in the form of God,” “emptied” Himself of that divine form. In other words, Christ emptied Himself of the divine attributes in the incarnation and accepted the essential attributes of a slave.

Jesus laid aside His omnipotence. “The faithful and true witness” stated very clearly: “Verily, verily (truly, truly), I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. ... *I can of mine own self do nothing*: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.” (John 5:19, 30)

Commenting upon the experience of Jesus calming the storm tossed sea, Ellen White noted:

When Jesus was awakened to meet the storm, He was in perfect peace. There was no trace of fear in word or

look, for no fear was in His heart. But He rested not in the possession of almighty power. It was not as the “Master of earth and sea and sky” that He reposed in quiet. That power He had laid down, and He says, “I can of Mine own self do nothing.” John 5:30. He trusted in the Father's might. It was in faith--faith in God's love and care--that Jesus rested, and the power of that word which stilled the storm was the power of God. (*Desire of Ages*, p. 336)

Ellen White also wrote: “All the miracles of Christ performed for the afflicted and suffering were, by the power of God, through the ministration of angels.” (*Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 2, p. 67) Christ did not retain His omnipotence in the incarnation, but rather totally depended on the Father.

Christ laid aside His omnipresence. Even a casual reading of the gospels reveals that Jesus accepted the physical restrictions of humanity. This is one reason why Jesus told His disciples that it was “expedient” for Him to go away so that the omnipresent Comforter could come.

Christ laid aside His omniscience in the incarnation. Luke 2:52 states that “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.” One cannot *increase* in wisdom if he already possesses it all. In fact, Jesus plainly told the disciples that He did not even know the exact time of His second coming. He said:

But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, *neither the Son*, but the Father. (Mark 13:32)

Incidentally, if God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit are three co-equal Beings, all being omniscient, then the Holy Spirit would also know the time of the coming of Christ, but this verse excludes him also, if he is a third being.

Finally, Christ laid aside His immortality in the incarnation. The Scriptures teach that the soul of Christ died, that He gave up the “breath of life” at Calvary. “*he hath poured out his soul unto death.*” (Isaiah 53:12) “Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.” (Matthew 27:50)

When we couple these four attributes together, we see that Christ, in the incarnation, laid aside the physical attributes of divinity while retaining His divine identity and relationship with His Father, i.e.; *He was divine because of who He was and not because of powers or abilities He had within Himself.* He was still the divine Son of God. The Scriptures confirm what the servant of the Lord wrote nearly 100 years ago:

At the time when He was most needed, Jesus, the Son of God, the world’s Redeemer, *laid aside His divinity*, and came to earth in the garb of humanity. (*Bible Echo and Signs of the Times*, Oct. 12, 1896)

It must be understood that Christ came from the Father, “not a son by creation, as were the angels, nor a son by adoption, as is the forgiven sinner, but a Son begotten in the express image of the Father’s person.” (*Signs of the Times*, May 30, 1895) Christ received by nature all the attributes of God. Because Jesus was the begotten Son of God, He received the attributes of God, including inherent immortality. This immortality, along with His omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience, Christ laid aside in the incarnation and could do so because He had received these from God. A mere creature, one created from nothing, would not measure up to the divine stature necessary to be the sacrifice for the sins of the world. If Christ had been co-equal and co-eternal with God in every respect,

then He *could not* have laid these attributes aside.

Divinity Clothed in Humanity

How do we relate to statements from Ellen White where she writes that Christ “clothed his divinity with humanity?” (*R&H*, June 1, 1905) Was His divinity “clothed” or “laid aside?” We do not believe that these statements are antithesis one to the other, but rather complement one another. We find the answer to their relationship in the following Scriptural passage and some of Sister White’s comments on it.

And the Devil, taking him up into a high mountain, showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the Devil said unto him, All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will, I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine. (Luke 4:5-7)

He presented the world to Christ as a most dazzling, enchanting spectacle. But Christ saw that which Satan tried to veil from his eyes, and that which he flattered himself he had done. Christ had not exchanged his divinity for humanity; but he had clothed his divinity in humanity, and he gave Satan the evidence for which he had asked,—showed him that he was the Son of God. Divinity flashed through humanity, and the evil one *could not resist the authority of the divine voice*, as Jesus said, “Get thee behind me, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” (*Review & Herald*, Oct. 29, 1895)

It was not His omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, or immortality that Satan could not resist. No, it was His divine authority! While Christ laid aside the physical and mental attributes of divinity at the incarnation, *He was*

still the divine Son of God invested with authority because of who He was! He was still the Son of the living God. In all of His humanity, He never gave up His divinely appointed authority which the Father had given Him. This explains why Satan’s temptation in the wilderness was not to *make* the stones turn into bread, but rather to *command* them to be made bread. (See Matthew 4:3, 4.)

In the parable of the wicked husbandmen, the householder said that they would respect his Son because He was his Son! “But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.” (Matthew 21:37)

Our Hope is in His Resurrection

If Christ really died, how can He live today? The answer is that the One who bestowed life upon His Son before eternity began raised Him from the dead. Nearly thirty times the New Testament makes mention of God raising Christ from the dead. The testimony of Scripture is plain:

Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead. (Galatians 1:1)

And killed the Prince of life, whom *God hath raised from the dead*; whereof we are witnesses. (Acts 3:15)

Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, *whom God raised from the dead*, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. (Acts 4:10)

And to wait for his Son from heaven, *whom he [God] raised from the dead*, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come. (1 Thessalonians 1:10)

Who by him do believe in *God, that raised him [Jesus] up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.* (1 Peter 1:21)

Paul, writing to the Ephesians stated that God's mighty power was displayed in the raising of Christ from the dead.

And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places. (Ephesians 1:19-20)

The Word of God is very clear that our hope would die without the resurrection of Christ. Writing to the Corinthians, Paul noted:

Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. (1 Corinthians 15:12-17)

In each of these and other statements from the New Testament, when the construction of the Greek is examined, the following is to be noted: When speaking of the Father as being the One who raised Christ, the Greek syntax is always in the *active voice* which represents the subject as the doer or performer of the action. In each case, the Father is the One who performs the action.

In reviewing the facts of Scripture from this study we may restate the following points: First, Christ laid aside His immortality to die.

Second, He died in totality; His "soul" (nephesh) was poured out. Third, to be raised from the dead, He had to die! The Trinitarian doctrine states that God and Christ are co-equal and co-eternal in every respect; that Christ has always been self-existent, not depending on God for His life. It teaches that Christ had three natures: the divine spirit, the human body, and the human soul. The only one capable of dying was the human body. The Adventist version accepts the human body and divine spirit, but leaves out the human soul. Either theology only has the human body (the part considered the most inferior of the three, or two natures depending on the specific theology), as the sacrifice for the sins of the world!

While we are not instructed as to the manner in which God gave life to Jesus in the resurrection, we do know that it was the second time that God gave life to His Son. The record of the first time can be found in Proverbs 8:22-25. Speaking of Christ, under the symbol of "Wisdom," we read:

The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth.

The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary states that this "passage is allegorical and caution must be exercised not to press an allegory beyond what the original writer had in mind." (*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 972) However, in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, page 34, Ellen White writes, "And the Son of God declares concerning Himself:" and then she quotes Proverbs 8:22-30.

The Septuagint was the Greek translation of the Old Testament. The English rendering of the Septuagint version of Proverbs 8:22-25 reads as follows:

The Lord made me the beginning of his ways for his works. He established me before time was in the beginning, before he made the earth: even before he made the depths; before the fountains of water came forth: before the mountains were settled, and before all hills, he begets me." (Proverbs 8:22-25, LXX)

Not only does Christ here declare that He is begotten of the Father, but the word in verse 23 for "time" is αἰωνος (aionos). The root word for *aionos* is αἰων (aion) from which we have the English word, "eon" which is an indefinitely long period of time, or eternity. God brought forth His Son before time, before the eons of eternity, and gave Christ His spirit. At His death, Jesus committed the keeping of His spirit to His Father, therefore God could restore that spirit back to Christ in the resurrection.

Peter writes: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." (1 Peter 2:24) God's law had been broken by man. Its penalty is death. Our hope of eternal life centers in Jesus Christ who truly paid that penalty for us. Jesus said:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath *he given to the Son* to have life in himself; And hath *given him authority* to execute judgment also, because

he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. (John 5:24-29)

The Cross Demonstrates God's Love

The death of Christ proves the love of God. "We love him, because he first loved us." (1 John 4:19) That love is what motivates the Christian: 2 Corinthians 5:14 states: "For the love of Christ constraineth us."

Calvary truly revealed the character of rebellion. It showed that Satan would go to any length to cause suffering to God. Calvary showed that there is no limit to the effort Satan would put forth to have things his way. Satan was demonstrating the principle that has motivated him: he expects others to serve him at any expense necessary; and, Satan expects that service to him at our expense!

However, the cross shows us that God is willing to offer service to us at His own expense. Christ is the perfect revelation of the character of God. When Paul beheld Jesus lifted up on the cross, he didn't just see Jesus, but the Father Himself crucified with His Son. Not that the Father died physically, but rather His message at the cross was a revelation of the eternal, unselfish principles of His character. God, through Christ, has declared that He will serve even the rebellious creatures He has made, no matter what the personal inconvenience, pain and suffering to Himself. God is willing to serve and save man at any cost to Himself. Referring to the charges that Satan had made against God, Ellen White wrote:

Satan had accused God of requiring self-denial of the angels, when he knew nothing of what it meant himself, and when he wouldn't himself make any self-sacrifice for others. This was the accusation that Satan made against God in heaven; and after the evil one was expelled from heaven, he continually charged the Lord with exacting service which he wouldn't render himself. Christ came to the world to meet these false accusations, and to reveal the Father. (*Review & Herald*, February 18, 1890)

The story of Abraham being asked to offer Isaac gives us a view not only of the love of Christ, but of the great love of the Father. Clearly, in this story Abraham represented God the Father and Isaac represented the Son of God, Jesus Christ. In Genesis 22:1, 2 we read:

And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt [test] Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.

The account goes on to tell of the journey to Mt. Moriah; Abraham binding the submissive Isaac; the placing of the knife to Isaac's throat; then the angel staying the hand of Abraham; and finally, the ram caught in the thicket, representing the true sacrifice supplied by God.

We marvel at the willingness of Isaac to be bound and even killed if necessary. It symbolized the willingness of Jesus to die for the sins of mankind. Yet, while we marvel at the willingness of Isaac to die, we're amazed at the love of Abraham, who wouldn't hold back his only son. Notice that the type of sacrifice that Abraham was commanded to offer was a "burnt offering." The burnt

offering represented the total giving of oneself. In this case it represented the Father's willingness to give His Son to die for your sins and mine.

What would have been easier for Abraham, to take his own life, or the life of his son? Any loving parent can answer that! Of course Abraham would have died a thousand times over, rather than to have to slay his son Isaac.

God, in this beautiful story, typified the plan of salvation. Paul wrote in Romans 15:4 that, "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." This story helps us to understand the love of God and the meaning of the cross.

In Matthew 16:24 Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." What Christ is telling us is that, as our love for Him grows, we will accept the principle of the cross: a willingness to serve others at our own expense. The unconverted heart follows the principle of Satan. The converted heart follows the principle of God. Only the love of God, as revealed in the true death of Christ at Calvary can motivate men's hearts to make such a change.

Beloved, I pray that this study has been a blessing to you and that you have been able to see the depths of God's love more than ever before. I pray that sin will now be seen in all of its terrible nature. That sin, any sin against God is so horrible that it cost the death of God's dear Son. I pray that you will abhor sin and accept the principle of the cross in your life and Christian experience. When you do, you will really begin to understand and experience the joy of the Lord as you live and serve the Master.

Allen Stump

The gospel of Christ makes progress in every human agent that is consecrated to the Lord's service. The Holy Spirit takes possession of every one who has a willing mind, not that that person may work the Holy Spirit, but that the Holy Spirit may work its miracle through the grace that is poured upon the human agency. The goodness of God becomes a working power through a consistent life, through fervent love for Jesus, and through heaven-inspired zeal. Those who are in association with Jesus will partake of his melting love, and manifest his overflowing sympathy for souls who are yielding to Satan's specious temptations. They will plan and study and exercise tact, in order that they may make a success of so presenting the unselfish love of Christ that sinful and impenitent hearts may be won to loyalty to Jesus, who gave his life for them.

before my Father which is in heaven." "Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

If you do not confess Christ now, the time will come when, overwhelmed with a sense of the great things that you have lost, you will make confession.

My young friends, I call upon you now to make your decision without a moment's delay, that you will no longer stand under the banner of the power of darkness or remain in captivity to Satan.

My young friends, I call upon you now to make your decision without a moment's delay, that you will no longer stand under the banner of the power of darkness or remain in captivity to Satan. You are Christ's property; you have been bought with a price. You are privileged now in having the precious truth to appeal to your conscience and understanding. Light shines in clear rays about you. Reasons are presented to you why you should become the sons and daughters of God, why you should believe in Christ as your personal Saviour, why you should confess him while mercy's sweet voice pleads with you. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. Happy is the man that feareth always: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief." "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men [by a godless, frivolous life and conversation], him will I also deny

Lose no time; confess Christ without delay. It is the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth that testifies of Christ. Jesus said, "Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." To grieve the Holy Spirit which would make you a witness of Christ is a terrible thing. You know not when you may grieve the Spirit for the last time. The Holy Spirit does not work upon the human heart to compel you to give yourself to Christ, to force you to yield your conscience: but it shines into the chambers of the mind in a way to convict of sin, and to entice you unto righteousness. If you do not confess Christ now, the time will come when, overwhelmed with a sense of the great things that you have lost, you will make confession. But why not confess Christ now while mercy's voice invites you? "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (Mrs. E. G. White—*Youth's Instructor*, August 1, 1895)

Letters

(The following is a small sample of the letters we receive. Due to space, most letters we receive cannot be considered for publication. Any who do not wish their letters to be considered for publication will have their request honored. We publish these for the encouragement and enlightenment of the readers of Old Paths. Editor)

Literature in Africa:

We thank you so much for the spiritual work you are doing through literature you are distributing worldwide. May God bless you abundantly and help you prosper. Let me share with all the saints world over that unfortunately your ministry has led to some members in our country to be censured and some even to be disfellowshipped for preaching these truths. It is too strange to note that those who are acting as judges are not even interested in reading for themselves but use the church manual as their guide and strength. Please pray for the brethren. On the brighter side, more people are coming forward to share the truths, at all costs. May you kindly send some materials (tracts and booklets) to the following brothers. May I also have any books that will help me understand the prophecy or last day events as written by Daniel and Revelation. Thank you so much. **Zimbabwe**

Thank you so much for the books you sent to me. I do not doubt thousands of souls will be rescued from the gross darkness that is enshrouding this planet through these, your efforts. I am one of those who has been blessed so much. May the Lord God of mercy abundantly bless and prosper you. **Africa**

Video:

Thank you so much for the three videos. Very good!! Well put together. We appreciated the music and nature pictures at the end. Seems like a nice way to close the videos. Will look forward to the rest of the series [The Good News About God] **Florida**

Thank you for sending the two videos. I love them both. I would like to order three videos of David Clayton on the Holy Spirit. Enclosed is payment for three videos and payment on the two sent to me. I was wondering about the Ten Commandments plaque behind the pulpit. I would like to know where can I get one.

So please let me know as to where it was bought. Thank you again. **Puerto Rico**

(That Ten Commandment plaque was custom framed for the video series and is a one of a kind. Sorry. Editor)

Thanks for the tapes. They are very good! . . **Ohio**

Please send me the new videos “The Love of God,” “Who is the God of the Bible?” and “The Holy Spirit.” I would like the version for Adventists. . . **Tennessee**

God is Good! All the time! Please send the next two videos, “The Love of God” and “The Holy Spirit” The first video by David Clayton was wonderful. Enclosed is a donation. May the Lord continue to bless your work. **Ohio**

Hello Brethren, I would like to order the video tape for non-Adventists, “The Love of God.” I want to show them in the order that they were made, to some friends, so I should be writing again soon along with a donation for the tapes. **Florida**

Literature:

I recently received a response to an inquiry I made to Concerned Publications and was informed that your ministry has videotapes for sale, including those of Mr. Stringfellow. If a catalog or listing of those tapes is available I would like to receive a copy, along with any other literature you offer about your ministry. **Ohio**

(We just published an updated list of publications. If you did not get one last month, they are free upon request. Editor)

Please do send to me the absolutely free booklet you encourage *A Time to Choose*. I wonder what is God’s plan for those people who are suffering the loss of their church. I offer prayer for your ministry. I want it to stay strong and even get stronger. I also offer prayer for those poor people of that church. What about the SDA, Inc.? What a sad day. **Missouri**

Your books and paper have been the joy of my life. And I thank everyone (Ben Vela, David Clayton, Allen Stump, Lynnford Beachy & Howard Williams) for such insight into the Scriptures. **Utah**

Please send booklet entitled, *A Time to Choose*. Thank you. **Missouri**

Please send me the booklet, *A Time to Choose*. Use this gift offering where needed. I have really enjoyed all the material I have received. God bless each one.
..... **California**

Thank you so much for continuing to send me your *Old Paths* newsletter. I always admire your humble Christ-like spirit and honesty when you offer your literature, tapes and videos. Please find enclosed a MO for \$50.00. I would like to receive "The Love of God" and "The Holy Spirit" (for non-Adventists) and two copies of a booklet, *A Time to Choose*. I realize how timely it is. **New Jersey**

Thanks for the informative books and I pray the Lord will continue to bless your ministry. Certainly we all need to be guided into the truth. I understand you will be doing camp meeting videos. I was hoping you would make mention where it would be held.
..... **Georgia**

(We do plan to make tapes of the camp meeting to be held in West Virginia this year. Editor)

To my brethren, Greetings to you all in the name of our heavenly Father, the only true God and Jesus, our Saviour. From the very first moment I learned about you all, and read your material you have no idea what joy and blessing came to my soul. Allen, Lynnford, and the staff, I pray for you all each day. Very few men are standing up for God and his truth in this time. I love you very much and because you love, and God is using you all to lead people the right way. Tell all my brothers and sisters at Smyrna, A__ loves them. I will see you at camp meeting by God's grace, if not before. P.S. Please send some tracts. "The Love of God," "Truth About God," "Importance of Knowing the Truth About God," and "The Holy Spirit."
..... **Florida**

Thank you for being so helpful each time I call, and thank you for sending books, Bible study materials, tracts, etc., even when I do not have an immediate donation to send you. And after learning that my two children and I live only on Social Security Disability Income, thank you for offering your Christian materials to us without expecting any donation at all from us. But we know God promises to provide all of our NEEDS; and God keeps every promise. God has provided \$25.00 for me to send to you, that you may continue in His service of providing much needed Christian material to other precious souls who may not be able to donate. May God continue to bless you,

lead, guide and direct you, watch over and protect you in all ways. **Missouri**

We would like 10 more copies of Pastor Bob's Confession, one copy of the *Ultimate Ripoff* by Bill Stringfellow, if you handle his books, and two copies of *Foundation of Our Faith* by Allen Stump. I am enclosing a \$50 donation. For my own curiosity, can you tell me what was on the medallion that B. B. Beach took to the Pope? I remember the big fuss about it. I even remember seeing a picture of it, but could not make any sense of it back then. Thank you and God bless you. **Oregon**

(The front of the medallion says, "THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH" around the edge with a pictorial representation of the second coming of Christ. The back side says, "CHRIST OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS CREATOR AND REDEEMER" around the edge with a picture representing the ten commandments behind a cross and an open Bible. While we do not publish pictures of Christ, we will make a photocopy of a picture of the medallion available for those who request it. Editor)*

You sent me, "One Hundred Bible Facts on the Sabbath Question." Thank you! Those pamphlets helped me spread the truth about the TRUE Sabbath day. Please send more. Thank you so much. **Ohio**

Newsletters:

Please remove from list. **North Carolina**

I was happy to have the opportunity to meet you and your children. I hope I can meet your wife someday too. Your ministry has been a real blessing to me. I look forward each month to receiving *Old Paths* and *Present Truth*. Thank you for the tape, "God's Administration." It, along with the other tapes in the Good News About God series, has been wonderful.
..... **North Carolina**

Greeting to you in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. 2 Cor. 15:7. I would like to request to be added to your mailing list for *Old Paths*. I would appreciate it if you could send me the issues starting from January 2001 onwards by "snail mail" if possible. **Australia**

I want to thank you for the paper *Old Paths* that you have been sending us. I agree with your stand pertaining to the Trinity. Will have to say that most people in

our church would not agree, Your last paper, Vol 10, dated April 2001, was especially good. I am glad that we should take the Berean approach and prove all things by the Holy Bible and Spirit of Prophecy. I am a historic Adventist having taken my stand of over 50 years. Believe that I will never change, but be true to Jesus Christ until the end. Keep up the good work. We are sending you a portion of our tithe. . . . **Maine**

Old Paths, April issue, was a special blessing. Read it in one sitting and am still reading from it. God keep us faithful and true. . . . **North Carolina**

I would like to have my name taken off the mailing list. . . . **Arkansas**

I have received *Old Paths* and must say I like it very much. Keep up the good work. Thank you and may God bless and keep you in your work. Wish there were more of the Robert Habenicht confessions. . . . **Washington**

May the Lord bless you and guide you in your service for Him. I am a self-supported worker here in Yugoslavia, Europe. Your newsletters *Present Truth* and *Old Paths*, please, send them to me. I am, unfortunately, not able to contribute anything right now, but if possible, send these newsletters to me. . . **Yugoslavia**

Prayer:

I remember Smyrna Gospel Ministries in my prayers. I appreciate the work you are each doing to spread the Gospel message. May God bless you each one is my prayer. . . . **Montana**

May God continue to bless you and make you a blessing! May this help. . . . **Florida**

Keeping Hans and all the family in prayer. God bless. . . . **Ohio**

Miscellaneous:

I continue to be thankful for your ministry. It is a blessing to me every month. I look forward to every issue. Please accept this gift. In the love of our Father & His Son. . . . **North Carolina**

Enclosed is a donation for your work. I have some friends who may find studying your information and booklets of much interest. I have several and have passed them around. . . . **New York**



On behalf of Hans and the rest of our family, I would like to thank all those who have been praying for his health. We sincerely request that you continue to petition our heavenly Father in his behalf. Hans has been very appreciative of the nice cards that so many have sent. Thank you for your love and support at this time, and praise the Father for giving us wonderful brothers and sisters who care for us.

A. Stump

Corrections: While we try really hard to properly proofread and edit the materials we publish, sometimes a real “bad one” slips through. The title of the April 2001 *Old Paths* lead article should have begun “Pastor,” not “Paster.”

Also, the tract we sent out last month entitled “Which God” has an error in it. On page three, column one, near the bottom, the sentence that reads, “He was of the very nature of God, because He was born from God, though He was the Father Himself.” Should read, “He was of the very nature of God, because He was born from God, though He was *not* the Father Himself.” We have reprinted the tract and have enclosed an updated copy for you.

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