

# 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

## Righteousness by ..... ?

By Allen Stump

Some of the main issues that launched the Protestant Reformation were the selling of indulgences, the priesthood of the believer, and the nature of the church. However, perhaps the fundamental issue, from which all other issues depended and flowed out from, was the issue of how a person becomes justified, reconciled, and restored to fellowship with God. Justification is still the key issue that drives Protestants today and the various understandings of this issue separate Christians into more different groups than perhaps any other teaching.

Interestingly, almost all professed Christians, Catholics and Protestants alike *claim* to believe that man is justified by God's grace. Let us look at the Catholic and Protestant concepts of justification, and see if, in reality, either practices what they claim to believe.

### The Catholic Understanding

The Catholic understanding of justification is brought out well in Peter Geiermann's work, *The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine*.

"Q. *What can man do when left to his natural strength?*"

"A. When left to his natural strength man can live only a natural life." (*The Convert's Catechism of Catholic Doctrine*, p. 65)

"Q. *What does man need to live the life of a child of God?*"

"A. To live the life of a child of God man needs the grace of God." (*Ibid.*, pp. 65, 66)

All will agree that we need grace to live as a child of God.

"Q. *What is grace?*"

"A. Grace is a divine help given to man, through the merits of Christ, for his salvation." (*Ibid.*, p. 66)

"Q. *What claim has man on God's help?*"

"A. Man's only claim on God's help rests on the Goodness and Promises of God and the Merits of his Saviour." (*Ibid.*)

Of course man's only claim on grace rests on the goodness of God. While not complete at this point, the catechism is within the boundaries of most professed Protestants. However, it continues:

"Q. *How may man dispose himself for the grace of God?*"

## Prayer Requests

This month I want to begin this little section by asking you to continue to pray for the work in Africa. God is moving upon the hearts of many to accept the message and there are many needs within the field.

Please continue to pray for Lynnford and me that we may be faithful to the responsibilities that God has given to us. Especially remember my wife Charmaine. Her health has been deteriorating for several years. Lately this down slide has rapidly accelerated. She is really in need of the Lord's healing hand upon her. Thank you very much for your consideration in this matter. We have seen God work very mightily in our son Hans' life and we know He can work in Charmaine's life as well.

*Editor*

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“A. Man disposes himself for the grace of God by observing the Law of God as far as he knows it, and by practicing charity towards his neighbor.” (*Ibid.*)

I have read this statement to many Adventists without telling them the source and I have been amazed at the number who were in agreement! This statement is accepted as correct to many Adventists who claim to understand the important of the law as well as charity to all. Yet, there is a problem with the last quoted statement from the catechism. Prior to this statement, it is claimed that man can do nothing of himself and that he needs the grace of God. He is told that the only claim to that grace is the goodness of God. But now it says that for man to “dispose” himself, or make himself available for God’s grace, he must do good works! So instead of working to earn man’s salvation, he is to work to earn the grace that brings the salvation! Earlier in the book Geiermann is not subtle at all. There he states:

“Q. *Will Faith alone save man?*”

“A. Faith alone will not save man, for ‘Faith, if it have not works, is dead.’” (*Ibid.*, p. 18)

Instead of believing that justification is a gift of God, Catholicism teaches that there are “works” that must be accomplished first to make us able to receive the grace of God. This is justification by works pure and simple! This teaching is why, climbing stair steps upon one’s knees while saying the rosary is important to Catholics and why other teachings such as the payment of money for the dead are important. It was this concept that brought a conflict to Martin Luther’s heart and led him to the truth that the “just shall live by faith” and by faith alone. (Romans 1:17)

### **The Protestant Understanding**

Luther championed the truth of Romans 1:17 and also used Ephesians 2:4-9 as a key text to fuel the Protestant reformation.

“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly [places] in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 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.” (Ephesians 2:4-9)

The Bible says that we are saved by grace through faith, period! It is a gift of God and not of any works done by man to prepare himself for this grace. In fact, Paul is very careful to state this in a manner that is difficult to misunderstand. In verses six and seven he says that we have been elevated to heavenly places so that in the ages to come “he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.” How could God demonstrate His “exceeding riches” and “kindness” if He was not the One responsible for us being saved by grace?

This past summer, while attending a camp meeting in Poland, I had the opportunity to tour a 13th century castle. One of the rooms in this castle was called the “Trophy Room.” It was a room set aside for the display of preserved game animals that the different lords of the castle had killed through the years. There were wolves, bears, wild pigs, birds, and several other kinds of animals there. The lord of the castle would show these trophies off to his guests to demonstrate his prowess as a hunter. In the eternal ages, God wishes us to be His trophies to showcase to the universe what His grace can do in the lives of sinful humanity.

The truth that God’s grace, through faith alone, can justify the sinner was at the heart of the teachings of Luther. However, the Reformation did not end with Luther. Many Protestants have failed to grasp the essential element in

this process and have allowed their salvation to become one of subtle works under the guise of grace through faith. The process happens something like this: After failing to have victory in our life or after failing to see our Christian experience reach the level we expect, we begin to think that since our salvation is of faith and not works, the problem is that our faith is not strong enough. Therefore we think we must believe “harder.” The believer thinks that the problem can be solved with works of the mind, though we do not think of it that way. This turns the believer away from Christ, as His source of strength, to himself, and since, of our own self we can do nothing, we are left with nothing!

Catholicism offers the works of obedience to the Ten Commandments and works of charity as the payment for God’s grace. Many Protestants, who claim to believe in salvation by grace through faith, actually trust in their faith or belief for their salvation and they end up, in reality, with salvation by works of the mind instead of works of the flesh. Whether it is the brain or the muscles that are doing the work, it is still works. Both are works; one is physical, the other is mental. Those whose work is primarily of a mental nature know that it can be just as hard and even more tiring than work that is primarily physical.

### **The Essential Element**

Yet, there is the most essential element of the issue that has not been factored into the equation: LOVE! The Bible says that true saving faith, faith that is genuine is “faith which worketh by love.” (Galatians 5:6) Most people equate faith with simply *belief*. The Greek words for “faith” and “believe” are the noun and verb forms of the same basic word. Yet, the Bible says that just an intellectual belief, or faith, is not enough. “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.” (James 2:19) Commenting on this, Ellen White wrote:

“When we speak of faith, there is a distinction that should be borne in mind. There is a kind of belief that is wholly distinct from faith. The existence and power of God, the truth of His word, are facts that even Satan and his hosts cannot at heart deny. The Bible says that ‘the devils also believe, and tremble;’ but this is not faith. James 2:19. Where there is not only a belief in God’s word, but a submission of the will to Him; where the *heart is yielded to Him, the affections fixed upon Him*, there is faith—faith that works by love and purifies the soul.” (*Steps to Christ*, p. 63 – emphasis supplied)

Do you see what is being said? The issue is neither the muscles nor the intellect being surrendered to God, but the “heart” is to be yielded to God. The “affections” (our love), is to be fixed upon God. Jesus said that the greatest commandment is to “love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.” (Mark 12:30) When we love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, He is able to come live within us, and that most certainly brings righteousness; it brings the very righteousness of God. This is not a sham or just a forensic claim to purity, but the real righteousness of Christ that is able to change the heart of a sinner into the heart of a saint.

## Grace

Love is the active element in faith and it is the active element in grace as well. There are many definitions for the word “grace.” One of the most often used definitions being, “unmerited favor.” Now, while this is true in one sense, there is another definition that I have found which I believe to fit best into the gospel picture. Please notice carefully the following statement:

“The grace of God is the chief theme of the Gospel. ***God’s grace is the manifestation of His love***—a love that makes it possible, thru Christ, for fallen man to be saved, makes possible the union and cooperation of humanity

with divinity.” (*Signs of the Times*, August 12, 1908 – emphasis supplied)

Most simply, grace is the manifestation of God’s love to the sinner. When the sinner receives God’s grace, instead of having something mysterious and incomprehensible infused or poured into the sinner, he receives a manifestation of God’s love and this works upon his heart to soften it from being a heart of stone to a heart of flesh, thus providing a place for God to dwell. When God and Christ come into our lives, we experience forgiveness as well as power to overcome all sin. Jesus said: “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” (John 14:23) The abiding of Christ in our lives makes us pure. It also enables us to walk the Christian life of obedience to all the commandments of God. The Bible says that the mystery of God, “is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Colossians 1:27) God and Christ want us to know them so intimately that they can actually live within us by Their spirit. This is why Jesus said that it was life eternal to “know ... the only true God, and Jesus Christ.” (John 17:3) It is not enough to *know about God, we must know God Himself!* Memorizing facts about God, even the whole Bible will not save a person. No, no, no, a thousand times no! To know God means that we have fallen in love with Him and He is living in us and we are personally, intimately in fellowship with Him.

In terms simple enough that even a child can understand, yet profound enough to amaze the eldest. Justification by faith is the result of falling in love with God and Christ due to the great demonstration of their love. Sanctification is merely the ongoing process of justification by faith; an ongoing, deepening, and enriching love affair with God. Therefore, righteousness by faith is truly having God and Christ in our lives and being in total submission, by love, to Them.

## Our Title and Our Fitness

“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.” (*Review and Herald*, June 4, 1895)

Justification is our “title to heaven.” We may have right to heaven, but without sanctification, we are not fit for heaven yet. How can this be? Let me share a short illustration. One day a mother dresses her daughter in a nice outfit in preparation for going to visit some neighbors. Before they leave the little girl is instructed to be very careful and not to get her dress dirty while playing. The girl goes outside and, while playing, falls in a mud hole. She comes to the door crying and tells her mother that she is sorry. The loving mother forgives the girl; she accepts her daughter’s sincerity. However, the daughter is not fit to come into the house or to go visiting. She must be cleansed first. When we come to Jesus, He accepts us just as we are. However, there are many things in our lives that need corrected. There may be many areas of our lives that we are, unknowingly out of harmony with God. Yet, if we allow Him to come and live within us, He will reveal to us our failures and character defects. Day by day we will grow in Him as day by day His great love is revealed to us.

Now we may be tempted to think that this is too good to be true. We might think that it is okay for God to justify us because of what Jesus did on the cross, but we must sanctify ourselves. *We must have a work to do.* Well beloved, carefully notice the following statement:

“The proud heart strives to earn salvation; but both our title to heaven and our fitness for it are found in the righteousness of Christ.” (*Desire of Ages*, p. 300) Notice that neither our title (justification) to heaven, nor our fitness (sanctification) to heaven can be earned, they are found in the righteousness of Christ,” not the righteousness of ourselves which the Bible calls



“filthy rags!” (Isaiah 64:6) No wonder the Apostle Paul wrote: “But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.” (Galatians 6:14) No wonder he wrote: “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” (Philippians 3:8, 9)

### God’s Grace Illustrated

The experience of falling in love with Christ as the Saviour is well illustrated in the life of Mary Magdalene. Here was a woman so fallen into sin and corruption that Christ had cast seven devils out of her. Her love and appreciation for Jesus can best be understood when we look at the experience of her anointing Jesus at Simon’s house. The account is in all four gospel narratives. We are told that she brought “a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly” to Simon’s house. (John 12:3) This ointment was so precious that it was normally used only for royalty or the wealthiest persons. Mary invested over one full-year’s wages for the ointment. Personally, I have never been able, at one time, to give a gift to the Lord that equaled more than a year’s wages. I don’t know how Mary did it, but her love found a way!

Luke 7:38 tells us that Mary, “stood at his [Jesus’] feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.” Try to put yourself in Mary’s place. She is washing the Saviour’s feet with her tears and wiping them with her hair. She must have appeared to be mad or crazy to those who sat with Jesus. The disciples, with Judas Iscariot at the front, denounced this woman’s

stewardship policy. Simon even used Mary’s actions as an excuse to doubt the One who had just recently healed him of leprosy.

Jesus acknowledged that Mary had acquired this ointment for the day of His burial. (John 12:7) Even though Jesus had spoken very plainly to the disciples about His death, their pride would not allow it to sink into the reality of their minds. They preferred to believe that Jesus would still be a triumphant King. However, Mary’s heart was receptive to truth and she, who sat at Jesus’ feet, understood better than even the disciples what was to happen to her Lord. She had bought this ointment for His burial, but her love demands that she cannot wait for His burial. She cannot wait for it to be used upon His dead body when He cannot appreciate it. She must, she has, to use it, while He can be benefited from it, while He can appreciate it, while He is still alive!

While others despised Mary, Jesus defended her. He said, “**Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much.**” (Luke 7:47) Jesus didn’t deny that Mary had been a great sinner, yet He said that those sins were forgiven. Why? How? Because Mary “loved much.” Jesus told Mary that her faith had saved her. (verse 50) Mary truly had a faith that worked by love! Something that really thrills my heart is the appreciation that Jesus had for this work of love. In Matthew 26:10 Jesus said that Mary had “wrought a good work upon” Him. The word translated “good” in English is the Greek word, *καλος* – *kalos*, which means, “beautiful to look at, shapely, magnificent.” (*Online Bible Greek Lexicon*) Truly what Mary did was beautiful. This kind of loving, heartfelt response could never pour forth from a cold, frozen, legalist person. Mary found the one Whom her soul loveth, (Song of Solomon 3:2) and she gave the service of love.

### God’s Matchless Love

We love God, “because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19) His great love was

demonstrated in the giving of His only begotten Son to die for us. “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.” (1 John 4:9) Jesus came to reveal the love and character of the Father to men so that we might love Him.

Throughout His earthly life, Jesus walked with God and always did the things that pleased God. Jesus could say, “And he that sent me is with me: the *Father hath not left me alone*; for I do always those things that please him.” (John 8:29) Even the night before Jesus was to die, He calmly stated, “Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and *yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.*” (John 16:32) While the disciples might forsake Christ, He confidently stated that He was not alone, for the Father was with Him. Yet during the darkest hour of the cross, when the full weight of the world’s sin was placed upon Jesus, when the face of the Father was turned away from His only begotten Son, Jesus cried, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46; Psalm 22:1)

“All His life Christ had been publishing to a fallen world the good news of the Father’s mercy and pardoning love. Salvation for the chief of sinners was His theme. But now with the terrible weight of guilt He bears, He cannot see the Father’s reconciling face. The withdrawal of the divine countenance from the Saviour in this hour of supreme anguish pierced His heart with a sorrow that can never be fully understood by man. So great was this agony that His physical pain was hardly felt.

“Satan with his fierce temptations wrung the heart of Jesus. The Saviour could not see through the portals of the tomb. Hope did not present to Him His coming forth from the grave a conqueror, or tell Him of the Father’s acceptance of the sacrifice. *He feared*

*that sin was so offensive to God that Their separation was to be eternal. (Desire of Ages, p. 753)*

Jesus came to show mankind the love and character of the Father. Take away the power of God from Christ; take away the Holy Spirit from Christ, abandon Jesus to a shameful death for undeserving sinners; leave Him without hope; what will He do? What is the real love and character of God like? Jesus is dying a living hell! He who had always been with Jesus has left Him! The One whom Christ had known from eternity past has deserted Him to die eternally. Yet the divine love of Jesus for mankind is so great, that if He must die eternally, never to see the face of His father, then He will perish for the salvation of man!

But Jesus is not the only One going through a living hell. The Father must restrain Himself. He cannot save His Son from the cross and still save mankind. While veiled in a dark cloud, He sees the suffering of His Son that words cannot describe. He hears the cry that Jesus feels forsaken. The heart of the Father is rent in a manner that no human heart has ever, or can ever know, yet He allows His Son to die like this for man. Every martyr for Christ who has been called to give his or her life for the gospel cause, died with the hope of a future life. Each one died with the love of God shining upon them. Each martyr died with the knowledge of God's approval. Jesus had none of this. When my son Hans was so sick a few years ago with cancer, during his worst times, his mother and I could be by his side to hold and encourage him. We could place a cool cloth upon his fevered brow. We were there to assure him of our love and assure him of God's love. It would have been a living hell to see him suffer without hope, without us, thinking that not only had others forsaken him, but that we had also forsaken him. There is nothing in this world that could induce me to allow my son to have that kind of experience. It would be a living hell to know that we had the ability to help

him, but yet couldn't. But friends, the great wonder of the gospel is that God put His Son on one side of the gospel balance scale, and He put me on the other side, and I came out ahead! Wonder of wonders: God loves someone as sinful as me. Jesus is kind and lovely. He is easy to love. He always did those things that pleased God. But I am a rebellious sinner. Yet, Jesus said that the Father loves me, just like He loves Jesus! (John 17:23)

This magnificent love is like a magnet. It draws the sinner to God through Christ. "The sinner may resist this love, may refuse to be drawn to Christ; but if he does not resist he will be drawn to Jesus; a knowledge of the plan of salvation will lead him to the foot of the cross in repentance for his sins, which have caused the sufferings of God's dear Son." (*Steps to Christ*, p. 27) This is the love of God that changes hearts and brings righteousness into our lives.

### **Justified by Works?**

How do we relate to the statements of James, which speaks of Abraham and Rahab being justified by their works? What does James mean? Is this a mistake in the Bible as some say? Is the book of James to be rejected as uninspired, as even Martin Luther did? Can the teachings of James and Paul harmonize? A careful reading of James, chapter two, reveals that Paul and James were on the same frequency.

What about James 2:14, which says: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?" The implied answer is that it cannot save him. Why not? Because he doesn't have faith! What doth it profit *if a man says that he has faith*, if by his wicked course he shows that he has no faith? We must not condemn the power of faith just because it does nothing for the man who makes a false profession of it! Paul speaks of some who claim they know God, but by their works they deny Him. (See Titus 1:16.) James refers to the same class. The fact that he has no good works, no fruit of the

Spirit, clearly demonstrates that he has no faith, despite his loud profession. Therefore faith cannot save him; for faith has no power to save a man who does not have it. (See E. J. Waggoner - *Bible Echo*, August 1, 1890.)

This is also why faith without works is dead. Physics is the branch of science that deals with the measurement of forces. Forces are measured by the amount of work they do. We know that the law of gravity is real because we can measure its force with scales. We measure faith by the work it does. We know that faith is real because we can measure its force by the fruit of God's spirit in our lives which is demonstrated by our works. This is what James is saying, "I will shew thee my faith by my works." (James 2:18) The justification that James writes about is not justification from sin, but rather justification or vindication that our faith is real.

With this understanding it is easy to recognize what James means when he speaks of Abraham and Rahab being justified by works. Paul, in Ephesians, Romans, and Galatians, is speaking of man being justified by God from sin. James is speaking about man's faith being justified or vindicated before men and the watching universe. Let us briefly look at the two illustrations that James gives.

Abraham was to be the father of the faithful. Yet, Abraham had failed God. First, he went to Egypt due to famine when he was given no instruction by God to go. Lack of faith, number one. Second, he attempted to deceive Pharaoh about Sarah because he lacked the faith to believe that God would protect him. Lack of faith, number two. Later, after God made the promise of a son and the fulfillment of the promise seemed to be delayed, Abraham, at the urging of Sarah, took Hagar the Egyptian handmaid (whom he got in Egypt during his first lack of faith) as a wife to try to fulfill the promise. Lack of faith, number three. Yet, Abraham learned by these and other experiences to trust God and, because of this faith, the

Almighty was going to let Abraham be the father of the faithful and the progenitor of the Messiah. God knew Abraham's heart had changed and matured into a heart of love and grace, but how could the watching universe know? God could tell them what was in Abraham's heart, but not all could believe without any reservation. God Himself was on trial. Lucifer had questioned God's goodness and sincerity. God's Word was not enough to clarify the matter. A demonstration of Abraham's faith must be made for the proof. Abraham must be vindicated; he must be justified to be the father of the faithful!


Therefore God told Abraham, as recorded in Genesis 22, to take Isaac to Mount Moriah and offer him as a *burnt offering*. Isaac was not to be a sin offering, but a burnt offering which typified the total giving of one's self to God. Abraham would *demonstrate* that his faith in God was so great, his love so perfect, that he would not even hold back his only begotten son of promise from God. Further, Abraham knew that God had promised that the Messiah would come through the seed of Isaac. Abraham believed that even if God would allow him to go through the horrors of slitting the throat of Isaac, that somehow, God would resurrect Isaac. No act of faith can atone for even one sin. As great as Abraham's faith was, even this could not forgive his sin. However, Abraham demonstrated that

he had, by faith, received grace into his life. He was justified from the charges that he was faithless. He was vindicated from the charge that he had no right to be the progenitor of the Messiah.

Rahab also was justified or vindicated by her works. Her actions proved that her faith was real and more than just idle words. Remember Rahab had been a harlot. God was going to save her and also make her a progenitor of the Messiah. How could God justify that? He would do it by *demonstrating* that Rahab's heart was changed. When Joshua sent the spies to Jericho, Rahab hid them, and then later, she placed the scarlet cord outside her window. The blood of Christ cleansed this woman who had been a harlot and lived a life of sin to the max, and further, she changed so much that a good man married her and she did indeed become a progenitor of the Messiah. Anyone who has the slightest conception of the sinfulness of sin will acknowledge that placing a scarlet cord in a window cannot atone for sin. The Bible says that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin. (Hebrews 9:22) Only the shed blood of Jesus can atone for sin. We cannot by placing red ropes in windows atone for sin. We cannot even by sacrificing our children atone for sin, for the blood of Jesus alone is able to do that.

Thus we see that the Bible is in harmony concerning righteousness. Jesus

said that we are to seek after God's kingdom and His righteousness. (Matthew 6:33) The solution is not as hard as many are taught to believe. When we really gain a true picture of the plan of salvation, the love of God will change us if we do not fight it. Jesus said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." (John 12:32) When we really find God and His love, not a false god or false Christ, as we behold His glory, we will be changed into the same glory. (2 Corinthians 3:18)

Friend, I want to challenge you to seek God. He says, "ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." (Jeremiah 29:13) None that have ever sincerely come to the Saviour have ever been turned away. Jesus says, "him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John 6:37) Beloved, it is time to lay aside the works of flesh, the works of intellect, even the works of "belief." Do not trust in your faith, trust in God! It is time to find God Himself. It is time to find the Saviour and make Him your best friend. It is time to fall in love with God and allow Him to live in you. Then you will have righteousness. With God in your life, you will have that for which, before, you worked so hard to obtain. Now you have it by grace, by the revealing of God's love to you, through faith that works by love. 

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## *Youth's Corner - Keeping the Heart*

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." Diligent heart-keeping is essential to a healthy growth in grace. The heart in its natural state is a habitation for unholy thoughts and sinful passions. When brought into subjection to Christ, it must be cleansed by the Spirit from all defilement. This can not be done without the consent of the individual.

When the soul has been cleansed, it is the duty of the Christian to keep it undefiled. Many seem to think that the religion of Christ does not call for the abandonment of daily sins, the breaking loose from

habits which have held the soul in bondage. They renounce some things condemned by the conscience, but they fail to represent Christ in the daily life. They do not bring Christlikeness into the home. They do not show a thoughtful care in their choice of words. Too often, fretful, impatient words are spoken, words which stir the worst passions of the human heart. Such ones need the abiding presence of Christ in the soul. Only in his strength can they keep guard over the words and actions. (E. G. White, *Youth's Instructor*, March 5, 1903)



# The Grace of God

By Ellen G. White

The grace of God is the chief theme of the Gospel. **God's grace is the manifestation of His love** – a love that makes it possible, thru Christ, for fallen man to be saved, makes possible the union and cooperation of humanity with divinity.

Not because we first loved Him did Christ love us; but “while we were yet sinners,” He died for us. He does not treat us according to our desert. Altho our sins have merited condemnation, He does not condemn us. Year after year He has borne with our weakness and ignorance, with our ingratitude and waywardness; notwithstanding our wanderings, our hardness of heart, our neglect of His Holy word, His hand is stretched out still.

At what infinite cost to the Father and to the Son was the merciful, wondrous provision made for our redemption! Christ stepped down from His high estate as Commander in the heavenly courts; and laying aside His royal robe and kingly crown, clothed his divinity with humanity, and came to this earth, that He might dwell with us and give to men and women grace to overcome as He overcame. The disobedience of Adam in believing the falsehood of Satan cost the life of the Son of God; but notwithstanding the great and immeasurable cost, the love and goodness of God shine forth brighter than even at the first creation. “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.”

The Lord God thru Jesus Christ holds out His hand all the day long in invitation to the sinful and the fallen. He will receive all. He welcomes all. It is His glory to pardon the chief of sinners. He will take the prey from the mighty; He will deliver the captive; He will pluck the brand from the burning; He will lower the golden chain of His mercy to the lowest depths of human

wretchedness and woe, and lift up the debased soul defiled with sin.

Every human being is the object of loving interest to Him who gave His life that He might bring men back to God. Souls guilty and helpless, liable to be destroyed by the arts and snares of Satan, are cared for as a shepherd cares for the sheep of his flock

The Saviour's example is to be the standard of our service for the tempted and the erring. The same interest and tenderness and long-suffering that He has manifested toward us, we are to manifest toward others. “As I have loved you,” He says, “that ye also love one another.” If Christ dwells in us, we shall reveal His unselfish love toward all with whom we have to do. As we see men and women in need of sympathy and help, we shall not ask, “Are they worthy?” but “How can I benefit them?”

The wonderful example of the life of Christ, the matchless tenderness with which He entered into the feelings of the oppressed, His joy over those who rejoiced in His love, can not fail to have a deep influence upon the character of all who follow Him in sincerity. Learning of Him, they will give their sympathy, not grudgingly, but liberally; by kindly words and acts they will try to make the path easy for weary feet. By the grace of God revealed in human kindness and love, many things that appear formidable will be overcome. Self-renunciation will be the law of the life.

It is Christ's desire that His children shall reach this place. He longs to reveal thru them the treasure of His grace. He says to them, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” And He says this because He knows that it is possible for them to reach perfection. The life that He lived in this world, they can

live. He met the foe single-handed, as they must meet him. He asked for and received power to enable Him to overcome in conflict. And those who walk in God's way have the same power. The same angels that ministered to Christ minister to those also who shall be heirs of salvation.

It is our own character and experience that determine our influence upon others. In order to convince others of the power of Christ's grace, we must know its power in our own hearts and lives. The Gospel we present for the saving of souls must be the Gospel by which our own souls are saved. Only thru a living faith in Christ as a personal Saviour is it possible to make our influence felt in a skeptical world. If we would draw sinners out of the swift-running current, our own feet must be firmly set on the Rock, Christ Jesus.

The badge of Christianity is not an outward sign, not the wearing of a cross or a crown, but it is that which reveals the union of man with God. By the power of His grace manifested in the transformation of character the world is to be convinced that God has sent His Son as its Redeemer. No other influence that can surround the human soul has such power as the influence of an unselfish life. **The strongest argument in favor of the Gospel is a loving and lovable Christian.**

To every one who becomes a partaker of His grace, the Lord appoints a work for others; and the grace of God in all its fulness and efficiency is promised to those who engage in His service. The love that is bestowed by the Holy One is to be manifested by them to others. As we study the life of Christ, talk of Him, become more and more able to behold Him; as we avail ourselves of His grace, and receive the blessings He proffers us, we shall have something with which to help others. That which is good in the world will be stronger for our words and our presence, while evil will be made to appear as it is. (This article was first published in *The Signs of the Times*, August 12, 1908)

# The Work in Africa

Email reports from David Clayton

*(As we noted in our last issue, Brothers David Clayton and Howard Williams were recently in Africa sharing the message of the good news about God. We hope to have a special issue detailing their report next month. Till then, I want to share a few portions of some email reports that David sent while he was in Africa. . . . . Editor)*

## South Africa:

I am encouraged by the brethren here in South Africa. They are really genuine people. We have been discussing ways in which they can become more effective in reaching out to others. They have already been visiting other parts of the country and have plans to visit other places. I believe the message will spread here. Their main drawback which is very obvious to us is that even though there are fifteen of them, their resources are very limited. We felt so sorry for them when they told us proudly that they had purchased a second-hand inkjet printer for 50 Rand (\$US 7.00) and that now they would be able to do a little printing!! The real problem is that most of them are from Zimbabwe and either do not have proper papers for working, or are having difficulty because of the Sabbath, so, they have very little money. There are good people among them who are intelligent. One brother is a trained teacher and most of them have a very good understanding of the message.

Today I went to visit the SDA church in the area with the brethren, who are still members there. There were about 300 people there. They meet in the auditorium of a school which they rent on Sabbaths. There was a lot of singing during the service and it was heavenly. You know how African singing is. Well, it was just like that except that there were 300 voices. I really enjoyed it and I regret that my recording equipment could not do justice to it. During the lunch break one of the elders invited me to have lunch with them and I agreed. However, I was not happy with the arrangement when I realized what it was. The elders ate by themselves in a corner, the ordinary people sat in another area, and the ladies stayed and ate in the kitchen area. At first nobody spoke to me and I wondered, "why did they ask me to eat with them?" After about five minutes of sitting in silence, one of them broke the ice and asked me about Jamaica. However, they only made small talk and I was happy when I finished eating to excuse myself and to join my friends in the "ordinary people" section.

The elder who invited me to eat had spoken to me during the break and told me that he believed in what we were teaching, but he was not happy with our method. He said that he would never ever leave the SDA church. When I asked,

"what if the SDA church leaves the truth?" He said that could not happen, because the holy spirit would lead it back. I wanted to talk to him some more, but unfortunately, when I sat beside him at lunch, he never spoke a word and seemed to be afraid of what the other elders would say.

Tonight will be an all night meeting. I stayed at home this afternoon and tried to get some sleep to prepare for it. The brethren here are looking forward to it with great anticipation and I really admire their spirit. Some mothers are even coming with their infant children.

The people here are a mixture of many African nations. Johannesburg is a mixing pot and people come here from all over Africa. We have met many Zimbabweans, South Africans and people from Malawi and Nigeria.

Well, I will have to rush off because it is now 7:45 and the meeting starts in 15 minutes. I miss you all and look forward to seeing you again. The work here is exciting and I am happy to be involved in it. Please keep us in your prayers. We know that Satan hates this work.

Last night we had an all night meeting and it was very very good. About 50 people were there when we started at 9:00 o'clock, but by the time we ended at 5:00 this morning, there were only about 30 of us. Nevertheless, the people held up like champions. A few were fighting sleep, yes, but the majority were very alert right through. They were thrilled with the messages as we spoke about the holy spirit, God on trial, and also told of our experiences with the church and how we were disfellowshipped and discussed the problems with the church. I have never seen people so eager and receptive to the truth, and so anxious to learn more. In between presentations we had real African singing. The congregational singing was wonderful. The people harmonize just like we do in Jamaica, but there is more. They are naturally gifted singers and they sing the parts in a special way – you know what African singing is like. But there were also some special song selections by a group which came. These were especially delightful.

One of the ladies, who belongs to this group, had come to the meetings on the previous two nights. She was so thrilled that she wanted the rest of her friends to hear, so in order to get them to come she decided to ask them to sing some selections. After the singing, some of them went home, but others stayed until morning. One girl was being pestered by her sister who also sang in the group. The sister kept telling her to come on so they could go home, but she refused and eventually her sister had to leave her. She stayed until morning and never once closed her eyes.

I am really enjoying the time here in South Africa. The brethren are so humble and sincere. It is much different than I expected. Everyday Brothers Onward and Mdu, and sometimes Brother Charles or Sister Shilette will come and prepare meals for us, then they stay for hours asking us



questions and seeking to learn more. They are seeking only for the truth and have never asked us for anything. They are more anxious to give us whatever little they have. However, they badly need a copy machine and I understand that they can get one for less than US \$100.00 so we are planning to help them to get one maybe tomorrow. They are very poor. None of them have a vehicle, and none of them owns a home. Most of them, who have accepted the message, are living with friends or family. They are mostly people who came from Zimbabwe, but who have a hard time getting jobs because their papers are not yet finalized. There are some native South Africans, but they are in the minority.

Well, I have to run now. This evening I will be eating at Brother Charles' house, then later we will have a Bible study there. The meetings at the rented hall came to an end last night.

## **Tanzania:**

The camp meeting in Arusha went very well. The brethren are really wonderful and sincere people, very poor and limited in resources. However, there are undeniable evidences that they are working very hard and that their work is bearing fruit.

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Yesterday we went to Tarangire National Park. It was a good experience. We saw lions, elephants, giraffes, etc., all up very close, in the wild. We also got to see a good bit of the Tanzanian countryside, and to see the Masai in their natural environment. I can't say too much now, but will call when I get home.

The brethren here have translated several of our books and tracts into various languages and dialects. I gave them some money to help with typesetting and promised to do layout for them if they emailed the files to me.

The number of believers in Tanzania has grown from 11 to 60 in two years. In Uganda, there are about 11, but the brethren there have been visiting other countries. In fact, it was because of their visit to Kenya that Maurice accepted the message. There is now a church in another area with about eight members, plus the few who remained with Ephraim. They have a couple of full time Bible workers.

Maurice and Moses are the workers in Kenya. Moses loves the message and has a church of 67 persons. Maurice is a solid person who knows and has a good understanding of the message.

## **Kenya:**

So far things have been good. On Sabbath we had a good meeting in Nairobi with around people there who have accepted the message. There were some there who were refugees from the Congo and their condition was heartrending. Their clothes were ill fitting. One woman looked like she was

wearing her night clothes and the children were ragged and dirty. They have been living on charity for 18 months now because the government of Kenya has not accepted them. They sang a song about their condition in Swahili and somebody translated for us. The song said, "O God, why have you forgotten us? Our children are dying, what mistake did we make? Why we must suffer so?" It was touching. They sang beautifully. They were pentecostals, but when they heard the message about God, they accepted it. They still have some pentecostal ways, but by and large they seem to have adapted to Adventism. The work among these people is real. All the work in Kenya has been pioneered by brothers Alfred Mukhooli and Fred Musangu from Uganda, so they have really been busy. Others such as Maurice and Moses learned the message from him and have advanced the truth there.

We are presently at the orphanage where again. I have to say the work is real. You would never believe the welcome we had yesterday. As soon as we arrived at the gate an explosion of laughing, shouting children took place. We were swarmed by children of all sizes and ages, hugged, kissed. It was a bit overwhelming. Later in the evening they burst into a song which almost took off the rafters. They seem very happy, and I must say that here, also, I am recognizing that God is doing a real work. When they pray, it is real prayer. In the mornings at 5:00a.m. a different child takes worship each day.

## **Ghana:**

I am finally able to get to an internet café. This one is about 20 miles away from where we are staying, so you know that we had to make a special effort to get here.

Ghana turned out to be a special place in terms of the work. There is a group here of about 2,000 people in 17 churches who have rebelled against the conference. It is a long story, but the long and short of it is that the high-handed methods of the church were just too much. They underestimated the people and treated them with contempt, but they were surprised. The person at the center of all this is Brother Paul Osei Agyerman. He is a good brother who has welcomed us with open arms. We have been holding meetings in the building which he is constructing to house a training school to train workers for the churches which have been separated from the conference.

The brethren here already have an AB Dick printing press. They have a very good paper cutter. God has blessed them with a small radio station and they are building an antenna which will increase their coverage by December. They have a piece of land, 80 acres in size, where they have a farm, including a poultry project where they have a coop full of hundreds of black hens which they keep for the eggs. It is here that they are building the training school. It is just a wooden building which is open to the elements, but that is how the schools are here. The people here have already been

introduced to the truth about God by Brother Thomas in Germany. However, they had many questions and, of course, everyone had different ideas. They drank in our studies like starving people and rejoiced in the things which they learned. There were maybe 90 persons at the studies on any one day, which lasted for five days. It was exhausting for Howard and me, because we had to do all the sessions, but we have survived so far. Tomorrow is the last day. These meetings were attended mostly by the young lay preachers who will take what they have learned to the churches.



**Paul Osei Agyerman**

Ghana is a lot like Jamaica in terms of the climate and the attitude of the people. They are always playing some monotonous songs which have a beat like Jamaican Reggae music. However, they are very friendly people and so far, very honest. They do not want our money. In fact, when we are about to buy things at times they insist on buying them for us. They feel that we are to do no work at all. Every time I pick up my bag to walk to the chapel, somebody takes it from me. If I wipe the bathroom after bathing they object. It really is something which is hard to get adjusted to.

I was completely hoarse yesterday. I could not speak and they had to get a P.A. system set up so that my voice could be heard. Today, my voice is much better, but there is still some bug in my system. Anyway, it seems to be on the way out.

Take care. We will tell you more when we get home. ✍️



**Meeting in Ghana**

## Report from Spain

During the third week of October, Dr. Stephen Burks from Ohio and myself had the opportunity to travel to Castellón, Spain to meet with some Seventh-day Adventist Reform brethren from Romanian, who are currently living there.

We were warmly greeted at the airport by the brethren and were able to visit with the church on four different occasions. God had paved the way

for our coming by allowing Brother Dragos to share several copies of the Romanian version of the book, *The Foundation of Our Faith* with most of the church members.



**Meeting in Spain**

Also, Brother Dragos had been conducting weekly Bible studies covering the basics on the truth about God.

On Sabbath there were approximately 100 brethren at the church to hear the message. Later I learned that about 80 had fully accepted the message before we arrived. Since these brethren had learned the basic issues about the nature of God, we concentrated on dealing with the heart issues of the faith, and how knowing God, and the truth about Him makes a vital impact upon our life. One of the sisters gave a beautiful testimony where she shared how learning the truth about God had changed her ability to know God personally, and how it, had revolutionized her life.

Dr. Burks gave an excellent talk on health. He was able to give practical counsel to several believers concerning their health issues. He also was a great asset in sharing the Bible message of God's goodness in sending His Son to die for our sins.

When we were not meeting with the church, we had home studies and were greatly blessed by the wonderful hospitality of our guests and those who hosted us.

It is clear that God is working in a marvelous manner among these humble people, and that their lives are being changed. It is remarkable, that in less than a years time since Dragos traveled from Romania to Spain, that he has raised up about 80 believers. Please continue to pray for these brethren that each of them may find 80 more souls, and then they will find others till all of Catholic Spain is filled with the truth!

*Allen Stump*

# Letters

## Literature:

Thank you so much for the books and the newsletters. May God richly bless all the work you are doing. **TX**

My husband and I are truly thankful for the study we received from a friend about *What Did the Pioneers Believe* We also received the booklet, *The Truth About God*, which has blessed us tremendously with vital knowledge that we were ignorant of being in the church some thirteen years! We just want to say thank you.

Also, please put us on your mailing list for your newsletters and any other study about the vital truths of our faith that you are willing to send us. We will be glad to send some kind of donation to help out. **AL**

Thanks so much for the tracts. We have been passing out National Sunday Law books in the Cleveland area at God's Word, God's Way Church. You can trust we will be inserting the tracts you mailed to me in our next outreach to the community. I very much appreciate your ministry. I have learned a lot from your ministry. Your Bible studies on the Godhead really have opened up my eyes and convicted me deeply of the importance of the message about God and His Son. I have been memorizing the texts to prove this message from the Bible much like I memorized texts for the Sabbath and state of the dead, etc. I have been agitating the Godhead message over local talk radio Bible broadcasts in the Cleveland area. Thanks again for the tracts and your ministry. **OH**

It is always such a blessing to talk to you! We are enjoying the tapes and becoming convicted this message must go out. We have a carpet cleaning/house cleaning business and a greenhouse business. We started them when the children were little to teach them how to work and to establish employment for them when they got older so they wouldn't have to go to the world. On every job we establish a friendship and leave something health related and something spiritual. That's where your little brochures will come in. If anyone is interested in more info then we will run off the tapes. We are excited. **WI**

I was given a copy of *Old Paths*, March 2001, newsletter recently. I would like to request a copy of the free booklet, *A Time to Choose*. I enjoyed the newsletter. Thank you. **CO**

## Miscellaneous:

We appreciate your ministry and rejoice to see and hear of the progress of the gospel reaching out to so many. **TN**

I enjoy your website. My wife and I have gladly embraced the truth about God and His Son. Our current SDA church rejects this foundation teaching of Scripture. We sure would like to find a church family that believes in all of the true Biblical doctrines which marked the SDA movement. **NJ**

Pray all is well there in Smyrna. You are in our prayers. We are so glad to hear the message is spreading around the world. **FL**

## Newsletters:

I send greetings in the name of Jesus Christ to Smyrna Gospel Ministries. Thank you for your monthly newsletter. They are very informative and I am learning so much about the Word of God that is rarely taught in our church. **CT**

We enjoyed your newsletter. Please put us on the list to receive all the camp meeting videos. We are looking forward to going to camp meeting by video. Your message remains a blessed truth. **WA**

I appreciated the last issue, especially the article by Peter Marshall. Thank you. **PA**

I wish to write a few words of encouragement to you. Your ministry has touched my soul! As I read *Old Paths* and *Present Truth* there is a beauty of simplicity. There is a revealing of the love of God for me that touches my heart. Spiritual truth softens the heart towards God. Through your ministry I have been lead to the central core truth of Christianity—the love that the Father and His Son have for us.

The “orthodox Christianity” of our day (both Catholic and Protestant) – has at its core a lie for its central belief—the trinity. The world is in the darkness of spiritual apostasy. Smyrna ministries is a light in God's hands to help enlighten a darkened world.

I'm thankful for the devotion of ... the ... dedicated workers at Smyrna and Restoration Ministries. I hope others around the world will catch the spirit of this message and do their part in spreading it. **UT**

Please remove my name from your mailing list. With appreciation. **CA**



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Thank you for *Old Paths* which I receive each month. The articles are so refreshing and enlightening. Enclosed is a donation for use in printing and mailing *Old Paths*. I am sorry that I have not been able for various reasons to attend camp meetings, but I read every report you send out and my heart is made glad by them. Please keep up with the good work and God bless you all. **FL**

I have just received the “Report from India” edition and am really looking forward to reading it. Thanks be to God for your great ministry. **Australia**

### *Videos & Cassettes:*

Thank you for all the work you do in teaching the truth and for your help to me. . . We are going to copy and distribute these [ Good News About God] cassette tapes each month to our list of people (requesting them) as a result of the Ebay and Website ministry. **CO**

Appreciate your paper so much. Please send me your audio cassette GNAG-C-06 in both AV & NAV version. **TN**

### **2004 WV Camp Meeting**

We wish to announce the date for the 2004 WV camp meeting. The camp meeting will be at Smyrna in West Virginia from Tuesday evening, June 15, to June 19. Plan early to be able to attend. *Editor*

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