



*"Watchman,
what of the night?"*

The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come. Isaiah 21:11-12

- LET'S TALK STRAIGHT -

About the Gospel

Ever since Robert Brinsmead wrote his farewell to Adventism, Judged by the Gospel, the term - "gospel" - has become a "No No" among many of those who perceive themselves as upholding historic Adventism. For one, therefore, to talk about the Gospel is to be either dubbed a "Brinsmeadite," or a "follower of Ford," whichever label is considered to be the worst epithet in the eyes of the slanderer. But strangely - or is it so strange? - God hasn't removed either the Gospel, nor the term itself from His Word. In fact, the heart of Adventism which is the Three Angels' Messages is declared to be "the everlasting gospel." John beheld "another angel flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people." (Rev. 14:6)

Paul in attacking those defenders of the works of Judaism who in their blind zeal would rob the Galatian believers of the hope they had received through the gospel, wrote - without mincing words - "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." (Gal. 1:8) Furthermore, Paul considered the message of these false champions of orthodoxy to be a perversion of the gospel of Christ. (Gal 1:7) And - WE dare not consider nor teach the "everlasting gospel" coming from the "angel flying in the midst of heaven" to be different from the "gospel" committed to Paul,

lest we make the "everlasting gospel" committed to our trust "accursed." God forbid! The Three Angels' Messages of Revelation 14 are simply the age-long gospel placed in the framework of times final hour.

A careful consideration of the Gospel as proclaimed in the Scriptures will reveal that in all ages - and that is why it is the everlasting gospel - the central theme is Jesus Christ - what God has done, is doing, and will do through Him. Paul declares that to this end he was called. To the Romans, he wrote:

"Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, . . . concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. 1:1, 3)

Then in the same letter, he confessed his commitment to that Gospel, writing:

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith." (Rom. 1:16-17)

Textual evidence does not support the inclusion of the phrase, "of Christ," as is done in the KJV in - "the gospel of Christ." However, this force is not mitigated for Paul stated that "Christ" is "the power of God." (I Cor. 1:24) These verses in Romans deserve careful study.

The Gospel is declared to be "the power of God" - which is Christ - "unto salvation." Then to shun, or pervert this Gospel is to reject the only means that God has provided for our redemption. Further,

this salvation through the power of God, is said to come in the same way as Paul instructed the Philippian jailor - "to everyone that believeth." (See Acts 16:31) The avenue through which I receive it is the same as John taught the victory to be by which we overcome the world - "even our faith." (I John 5:4) Paul merely states, quoting the Old Testament prophet, "He who is justified, declared to be righteous, lives by faith." Lest we perceive of the Gospel as a license to continue to live sinfully, Paul asked, "Do we make void the law through faith? To this he replied - "God forbid: yea, we establish the law." (Rom. 3:31)

In the Gospel, "the righteousness of God is revealed." This is probably the clue as to why many seek a "perverted" gospel, or why the gospel is completely shunned for a message of works. The revelation of God's righteousness causes "our righteousnesses" - not our unrighteousnesses - to appear before us for just what they are - nothing but "filthy rags" stained with the blood of the life of the flesh. The righteousness of God reveals a righteousness obtained by the blood of the Lamb which gives a life eternal. The gospel message of this righteousness of God is well stated in Zechariah concerning Joshua the high priest who stood before the Angel of the Lord "clothed in filthy garments." The command was - "Take away the filthy garments from him." Then the Messenger of the covenant declared - "Behold I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with a change of raiment." (Zech. 3:1-4) Because it is the Divine "I" which accomplishes the work, and not the self-important human "i," many introduce their own gospel, so that the "i" might become "I." Let all such be accursed!

About the Cross

In the councils of eternity - long before sin intruded - the plan of salvation was formulated in the mind of the Godhead. "The counsel of peace" was "between them Both." (Zech. 6:13) The Eternal One, and He who began His condescension as Michael so as to declare and answer the question Who is like God? - conceived the only way

by which peace could be restored to the universe of God. Those who would be alienated from God by the deceptions of Lucifer were to be "made nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who hath made both one" making "in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace; that He might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross." (Eph. 2:13-16)

The symbol of this instrument by which peace would be restored to the universe was pre-empted by Satan, and utilized as a symbol of Tammuz. What inklings Lucifer may have had of God's plan for the redemption of the human race, we are not told. That he usurped and prostituted this symbol for his own ends does not justify our refusal to come face to face with the only avenue which God provided for the restoration of peace in the universe - the Cross.

"Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen, that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which 'seeketh not her own' has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifest the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto." (DA, p. 20)

Jesus told His disciples - "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." (Matt. 16:24) Was this to be literal wooden cross beams which one would seek to carry on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem? Never! This was to be a daily experience. (Luke 9:23) I am to deny myself and that daily. What did Jesus use to symbolize such an experience - the Cross!

Paul perceived the meaning of this symbolism and wrote:

"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." (Gal. 6:14)

Following the philosophical confrontation at Mars Hill, Paul came to Corinth convicted of only one message - "Jesus Christ

and Him crucified." (I Cor. 2:2) He found that "the offence of the cross" had not ceased. (See Gal. 5:11) The scandal - and this is the word which transliterates the Greek word for "offence" - is still with us. There are those who are scandalized by it to such an extent that they seek to nullify its symbolism by harping on the usurption of Satan of the symbol in the worship of Tammuz. But if I read correctly the Writings, "the destroying angel must see this mark of redemption" - "the seal of the living God" - in the foreheads of His people. "The sign of the cross of Calvary" will be seen in "the Lord's adopted sons and daughters." (Letter 126, 1898) Though they will not be wearing a symbol of the cross in an outward hypocritical display, their lives will reflect the essence of the cross which they have accepted from Jesus, their Lord. They will not seek to mitigate its importance by associating it with the worship of Tammuz, but will rather with Paul exalt it as the basis of all their glory.

It dare not be overlooked that the hatred of the symbol of the Cross which at times approaches the satanic is in reality but a subconscious expression of the enmity within the human heart toward the means provided for our peace with God. The outward manifestation of this hidden enmity is the proclamation of a gospel of works, rather than a crucifixion with Christ that the present life might be lived by the faith of the Son of God.

To all such who would rob us of the Gospel of God's free grace, and the cross of his salvation, let the words of Paul apply - "From henceforth, let no man trouble me: for I bear in my body the marks [Greek - stigma] of the Lord Jesus." (Gal. 6:17)

About Sola Gratia

When the Brinsmead publication - Present Truth - changed format from a small booklet to a monthly journal, it displayed on its cover page a three-fold criteria by which its message was to be evaluated: "Sola Gratia," "Solo Christo," and "Sola Fide." Because this emphasis seemed to be another step into the twilight zone which Brinsmead took on his odyssey which

finally led him into the total darkness of apostasy from truth, we have considered these declarations of Protestantism to be totally incompatible with the truth committed to our trust in the Three Angels' Messages. We have failed to realize that basic truth dare not be rejected, but that we should seek only to free it from any error which may have been attached to it due to human transmission. In other words, we need to be willing to "talk straight" in regard to our salvation coming solely by grace - the unmerited favor of God.

Paul in writing to the Romans stated unequivocally that justification is extended to us freely by the grace of God. His words are: - "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 3:24) To the Ephesians, Paul declared - "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." (Eph 2:8) God by His grace through "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" has provided for us, justification, sanctification, and ultimately full and complete restoration. Christ is made unto us "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." (I Cor. 1:30) Further, God has determined that those who shall represent Him in earth's final hour "to be conformed to the image of His Son." (Rom. 8:29) "Divine grace is needed at the beginning [justification], divine grace is needed at every step of advance [sanctification], and divine grace alone can complete the work." (TM, p. 508) If ever a people should believe in, and be teaching "sola gratia," it should be those of us who believe in Christian perfection revealed in humanity prior to the close of probation. It is plainly stated that "divine grace alone can complete the work." Then why are we going about trying to establish our own righteousnesses when we should be preaching the gospel, wherein "the righteousness of God is revealed."

Paul in his teaching of "sola gratia" - by grace alone - was merely echoing the teaching of the Old Testament prophets. Isaiah declared for God:

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour." (43:3)

"I, even I am the Lord; and beside Me there is no saviour." (43:11)

"There is no God else beside Me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside Me. Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: I am God, and there is none else." (45:21b-22)

Hosea also declared in behalf of God:

"Yet I am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but Me: for there is no saviour beside Me." (13:4)

If God is the only Saviour, and He has so declared, then if I being a man assume to contribute one iota to my salvation, I am making myself as God, and become a co-Saviour of myself. This is blasphemy! Observe also that through the prophet Hosea, God associated His sole role as Saviour with the first commandment of the Law. Thus if we fail to accept the true doctrine of "sola gratia," we are actually breaking the first commandment. Should we not, therefore, "cease from [our] own works" and accept the gracious "rest" God has provided by the "redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (See Heb. 4:10)

The "grace" of God is full and complete. As in the case of Noah, who "found grace in the eyes of the Lord," God did not merely tell him that a flood was coming, but He told him what to do about it. (Gen. 6:8, 13-14) The grace of God not only tells us about the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, but also that He is coming back again, and how we ought to live in the light of that coming event. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (Titus 2:11-13) The grace of God teaches us to conform to a life-style which reflects the Giver of such free grace - not as a means of merit, lest any man should boast, but simply as a manifestation of a heart-broken repentance because we are conscious from what that grace has delivered us.

About Solo Christo

Solely by Jesus Christ - who can contend

with such a position, and call himself a follower of Jesus? Jesus Himself declared - "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me." (John 14:6) The sole access to God is through Jesus Christ. Peter stated emphatically - "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) The angel announced to the shepherds on the hills of Bethlehem - "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:11) To Joseph, the same angel had said - "Thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins." (Matt. 1:21)

Somehow we have come to think that the relationship of Jesus Christ to our redemption is somewhat different because we do not believe that the atonement was completed on the Cross, but rather there is to be a final atonement in the Most Holy Place of the Heavenly sanctuary. Christ did not die again in 1844. The one sacrifice on Calvary provides for His ministry in both apartments of the Heavenly sanctuary.

It is our failure to really understand the sanctuary service that has caused us to question the doctrine of "solo Christo." Christ is not only the Lamb of God which takes away the sins of the world, but He is also the great High Priest forever after the Order of Melchisedec who is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him. If there is one lesson above all others which the sanctuary teaches, it is that on the Day of Atonement, the High Priest went alone into the Most Holy place, and there was to be "no man in the tabernacle of the congregation when he goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, until he come out, and have made an atonement for himself, and for his household, and for all the congregation of Israel." (Lev. 16:17) The typical high priest went in alone, and he alone accomplished the yearly atonement for Israel. In like manner, Christ alone completes the final atonement. We should be foremost in proclaiming - solo Christo!

We have a perverted concept of the final atonement, or judgment with regard to what actually is to take place. We have, too

often, envisioned the judgment consisting of a great balance before God in which the tomes of our evil deeds are placed in one scale, and the record of our righteousnesses - recall they are but filthy rags - are placed in the other scale. Then if, our filthy rags can outweigh the voluminous records of the black pages of our lives, we will come through. Tell me, who could pass the judgment on this basis?

The sanctuary teaches us something different than this. During the year the individual brought his "sin offering" and having transferred his sin - leaning his whole weight on that offering - he was forgiven. In the case of the common person, the priest ate a part of the sin offering, thus becoming a part of it. (Lev. 4:27-31; 6:25-26) This typified Jesus - who partaking of our fallen human nature, bore "our sins in His own body on the tree." (Heb. 2:14; I Peter 2:24) Thus in Him, I face the judgment. Not my "righteousnesses" are retained in the book of life - but only my name, my identity! (Rev. 3:5) Thank God for that - my filthy garments are removed, and my High Priest obtains for me a change of raiment. Who? Jesus Christ who is able to save to the uttermost. Then is it not Solo Christo? Why seek to avoid the truth as it IS in Jesus?

Someone may interject that while no man was in the tabernacle on the Day of Atonement, the children of Israel were convoked in solemn assembly around the sacred enclosure. This is true. They were to "afflict" their souls; but it does not say - "afflict" their bodies. These commands governing the worship on that day were much more meaningful than we have taken time to note. This day was "a sabbath of rest." They were to do "no manner of work." (Lev. 23:31-32) If they failed to afflict their souls, or to do "work" on that day, they would be cut off from the covenant blessings and destroyed. All the other annual sabbaths prohibited only "laborious" - servile - work, but the Day of Atonement prohibited any "manner of work."

Interestingly, the First Angel's Message unites the "hour of God judgment" with the command - "worship Him who made" all things. (Rev. 14:7) We need to understand

the Sabbath more fully. "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." (Heb. 4:9) This "rest" is sabbatismos - a "keeping of a sabbath." However, he that is entered into His rest, he also hath ceased from his own works as God did from His." (Heb. 4:10) This "rest" is katapausin, being from the same root as word, "rest" in Matthew 11:28, where Jesus said - "Come unto Me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." To enter into the "rest" that Jesus has provided, and is providing in the judgment, means simply that we "cease from our own works." I can no longer rely on them - those filthy rags of my own righteousnesses. It must be solo Christo. I can and must do the one work which God requires of me - "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He has sent." (John 6:29) This IS Solo Christo!

About Sola Fide

This concept means simply that through faith - not faith in itself as a work - men are saved. For this concept, there is a Scriptural basis. To the Ephesians, Paul wrote: "For by grace are ye saved through faith." (Eph. 2:8) John states clearly - "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." (I John 5:4) Our problem of expressing faith in action is due to language. The Greek language has a verb form for faith, while the English does not. The best way to translate the concept of faith in action is to say - "Believe in," "Put your trust in," or "Rely wholly upon." However, this tends to compound the difficulty because of our present religious environment. "Believing" today conveys an emotional experience rather than an intelligent response to what God has done and is still doing for us because of His grace. Tragically, we are in danger of reacting to that emotional emphasis on "believing," to the extent that we will make shipwreck of our faith on the rocks of human works.

There are "exceeding great and precious promises" which God has made to us in sin. These we must accept, not because we see the results, but because we trust the goodness and love of God toward us. This is believing, the exercise of faith. For

example, God has promised that if I confess my sin, He will forgive me that sin. (I John 1:9) I cannot see that He has done so, I can only believe it to be so.

"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Heb. 11:1) This excludes all human works. Or, as Paul asks - "Where is boasting then? To this he answers - "It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith." (Rom. 3:27) Faith does not operate in the material coinage of the realm; it is rather that spiritual, non-material response to goodness and love. It is trusting, and closely akin to hope. In fact, Paul states in Romans - "We are saved by hope." Then he asks - "But hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doeth he yet hope for?" (Rom. 8:24)

Our human works we can see and evaluate them - knowing that they are good and what is required at any given time, such as a courteous behavior. This response can result from two different motivations. Because of birth and family, I could be so trained in acceptable manners, because of my status in life, I was not to be like others - course, crude, and rough - yea, barbarians. Then there is another source of motivation - my appreciation of the kindness, love, and mercy of God toward me - a sinner - that I would seek to reflect that same attitude toward others for whom God's grace has been equally extended. This is faith toward God in action - works - toward others.

There is another type of emphasis on works as necessary to salvation which nullifies the free grace of God, and reveals self "righteousnesses." Again let me illustrate. I am a vegetarian. In fact this year will mark the 50th year since I stopped eating meat; and as far as I know, I have never knowingly violated this diet code all of these years. I have somewhat to boast, but as Paul tells me - "not before God." (Rom. 4:2) First let me ask - Is this the proper diet for one living in this time of earth's history? Most, if not all, conservative, concerned Adventists would respond, "Yes," to this question. In other words, in my judgment, and the judgment of many of my peers, this is the "right" thing for me to do. But interestingly, I have accomplished this record in my own power, even as the Hindu.

It is my "righteousness"! However, it is not "the power of God unto salvation." Even as the Hindu, I need much more than this to be saved - I need JESUS!

Let me illustrate this matter a bit more. There are testimonies in the Writings, which one can quote, on Dress Reform - length, type, and style of dress which women should wear. These have been dwelt upon - with human additions - by many in their zeal to get people ready to receive the "latter rain." These zealots have and are endeavoring "to clean up the outside of the cup." But God sent to His people two young men with a message in 1888 called "righteousness by faith." In the year following this memorable session, Ellen G. White wrote:

"There are many who try to correct the life of others by attacking what they consider to be wrong habits. They go to those whom they think in error, and point out their defects. They say, 'You don't dress as you should.' They try to pick off the ornaments, or whatever seems offensive, but they do not seek to fasten the mind to the truth. Those who seek to correct others should present the attractions of Jesus. They should talk of His love and compassion, present His example and sacrifice, reveal His Spirit, and they need not touch the subject of dress at all. There is no need to make the dress question the main point of your religion. There is something richer to speak of. Talk of Christ, and when the heart is converted, everything that is out of harmony with the Word of God will drop off. It is only labor in vain to pick leaves off a living tree. The leaves will reappear. The axe must be laid at the root of the tree, and then the leaves will fall off, never to return.

"In order to teach men and women the worthlessness of earthly things, you must lead them to the living Fountain, and get them to dwelling of Christ, until their hearts are filled with the love of God, and Christ is in them, a well of water springing up into everlasting life." (Signs of the Times, July 1, 1889)

We profess to be giving "The Elijah Message" for today, even as John the Baptist gave the message for his day. We know that John the Baptist ate a certain diet, and that he dressed in a very specific

way (Matt. 3:4) But search and read carefully his messages, and see if you can find where he ever preached that any man should eat and dress as he did. It cannot be found. He laid the axe to the root of the tree, and dwelt upon the issues of human relationships, instead of turning men to the worship of themselves and their bodies. He directed men to look at what God was doing in their midst - at that very time! He called - "Behold the Lamb of God the One bearing away the sin of the world." (John 1:29 Gr) Should not we be doing the same? Should we not be proclaiming? - "Behold, the great High Priest as He ministers in the Most Holy Place of the Heaven of heavens, Who is able to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him." Let us turn men's attention from the filthy garments of their own "righteousnesses" to the glorious in-cision of Jesus. Tell them to accept by faith the robe of His righteousness in which there is not a single thread of human devising. This is "sola fide"!

IN CONCLUSION

I can almost see those champions of human meritorious works frothing at the mouth over the concepts of "sola gratia" and "sola fide." They dare not take issue with "solo Christo" because it would be too revealing, so they continue to give lip service to the concept that man's hope must be placed in Christ. Now to those who wish to continue to expound works as a necessity to salvation, I will tell them there is one thing a man can do and must do to be saved. It is stated in the Writings - "Kneeling in faith at the cross, he has reached the highest place to which a man can attain." (AA, p. 210) All else for man is "by grace through faith."

"To remove the cross from the Christian would be like blotting the sun from the sky." (AA, p. 209) The Jews refusal to accept the Cross brought blindness and hardness of heart to them. This refusal to walk in the light of the Cross is the reason for the blindness of Laodicea. They have eyes to see, but see not because of the darkness - that total darkness

resulting from the removal of the Cross - the Christian's sun - "the Sun of Righteousness." (Mal. 4:2)

Paul said, "I die daily." (I Cor. 15:31) Daily he placed himself in the highest place he could obtain by works. Then because of God's grace, and his trust in what God could do for him - dead, yet living (Gal. 2:20) - he helped alter the course of human history by pointing men to the one Act which did alter the course of the whole Universe. Because of the One transcendent manifestation of God's love and grace, "affliction shall not rise up a second time." (Nahum 1:9) Then we, because of God's grace manifest in "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" should like Paul come daily to the highest place we can attain by our own effort - in faith to the foot of the Cross - and there bow.

O Lord, I bow before Thy throne,
Gracious God and King alone.
Approach on humble bended knee,
The sacred ground and hallowed tree.

And lo, I hear the anguish cries
That pierced the darkened clouded skies
From the drawn parched lips of Him,
Who came from Thee, O Elohim.

When arose the cry from Calvary -
"Father, my spirit, I give to Thee" -
I looked with upturned gaze above
Into eyes whose only crime was love.

I looked beyond the thorn-crowned head,
Into darkness, where all joy had fled.
Then I bowed in humble, solemn awe, to pray:
"O guide me, Lord, through all this day."

TWO NEW TAPES

"How Men Are Saved"

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