

THE UNION OF JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION

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We hear a lot about how after initial conversion to Christ, we must seek the second phase of salvation which is sanctification. The impression is left that once Christ has launched us with the new birth, then we must do all we can throughout the rest of our life in pursuing holiness. Some evangelicals call this the second blessing theology. The initial phase of forgiveness and justification is Christ's work; the next phase is our work for Christ. We must come to believe in Jesus as Messiah (we are converted), and then later we experience Pentecost. They have proposed a post-conversion experience a second blessing. The idea is taught that, after the New Birth, there is a second work of grace which is called "Holy Spirit baptism." Our churches are filled with people that are waiting for some intense experience to awaken them. This is because the second blessing of Pentecostalism is out there teaching that the new birth was not all, so they go on to feel after the next rung in the ladder.

It is now common to hear the heart wrenching songs, high pressure sales tactics, tear jerking stories, and see long altar calls in order to move people to make decisions. Often these "decisions" do not last the drive home. Churches spend their time in entertaining because all that attend desire to experience something. For us to adopt this model of

the reception of the Holy Spirit is to accept Evangelical concepts of salvation.

One individual shares her experience: "Christians that are buying into these unholy spirit experiences are heading for trouble. The pastor was a dominating figure, though he did it with such charm that you had no idea you were being brainwashed so severely. The first thing I can remember was the push for me to 'get filled with the Holy Spirit.' I tried and tried and finally 'got it' in my bedroom by myself one night late while I was praying and 'seeking' for this experience. This experience was quite beautiful and seemed to be of God because of its sweet emotional 'energy' that I thought was from the Holy Spirit. New 'waves' of God's so-called 'spirit' bathed our church often. We could not pray in a prayer meeting without expecting the 'anointing,' or mysticism of energy, to fall on us. If we did not 'feel' God's so-called 'presence,' then we were considered dry and unspiritual."

The True Witness has sought to keep us from all this confusion about the sanctified life and Holy Spirit. What rejoiced Ellen White's heart most in hearing the more mature Gospel presented in our 1888 history was the union of justification by faith with sanctification by faith. I have had the question asked, "What do you think of this light that these men are presenting?" Why, I have been presenting it to you for the last forty-five years—the *matchless charms of Christ*. This is what I have been trying to present before your minds. When Brother Waggoner brought out these ideas in Minneapolis, it was the first clear teaching on this subject from

any human lips I had heard, excepting the conversations between myself and my husband. I have said to myself, It is because God has presented it to me in vision that I see it so clearly, and they cannot see it because they have never had it presented to them as I have. And when another presented it, every fiber of my heart said, Amen.”

What she heard was the unique understanding of SDA’s regarding the sanctuary cleansing as justification by faith. The heavenly sanctuary can only be cleansed when the hearts of God’s people are cleansed through the atonement message.

She was asked, “What is justification by faith?” “Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel’s message, and I have answered, ‘It is the third angel’s message in verity.’”¹

The third angel’s message is, “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Rev. 14:12). In other words, it is the sanctuary message.

Referring to the message of Jones and Waggoner she said: “This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all

the commandments of God.”² Again, justification by faith is “the righteousness of Christ” “manifest in obedience to all the commandments” which is the sanctuary message. There is a union of justification with sanctification.

The evangelicals do not see this union because they do not understand the sanctuary message. They want to keep justification and sanctification separate or distinct. They view justification as the work of Christ in the past when He died on the cross. Christ “atoned for our “sins”. When you believe that perfect work of Christ, you are legally set free from sin.

However, there is no experiential reconciliation of the alienated heart with God through believing this doctrine. If Christ “atoned for our sin”, then, in the strictest sense of the word, atonement means reconciliation and harmony with sin. Sin becomes a separate entity from the sinner which God is OK with now because of the cross. Justification legally takes care of all past, present, and future sinning.

The atonement in this view of salvation is God’s wrath against sinners being appeased by an offering which Christ makes to Him on behalf of sinners. In other words, God’s needs the atonement. The emphasis is not on man’s need of atonement. There is nothing in this about alienated human hearts being reconciled to God.

Now evangelicals are certainly not promiscuous. They do teach sanctification and holiness, but this is a second blessing beyond justification and it

¹ Ellen G. White, “Repentance the Gift of God,” *Review and Herald* (April 1, 1890), par. 8.

² Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 91, 92.

certainly cannot be expected that it is completed and perfect. Since one is born with a sinning nature the Christian can never be expected to entirely achieve Christian perfection. The fallen, sinning nature we're saddled with will continue to plague us until Christ miraculously removes it at His coming.

In effect they teach three phases to the plan of salvation: 1) the cross paid it all; 2) when the sinner believes he is justified; then, 3) he must go on to sanctification.

The end product of this kind of sanctification is 1) antinomianism, and 2) legalism. It is anti-God's law because it teaches that a sinning Christian can never get out of the cycle of sin. It gives excuse for sin. It is legalism because the focus of overcoming sin is self-motivated improvement. Whenever self sets the standard of Christian experience, it always become relative and will frequently multiply the rules and regulations until they become oppressive legalism such as what happened with the Pharisees of Christ's day.

Our High Priest has revealed much better news for us from His Most Holy Place ministry in the heavenly sanctuary! All that a person needs is Jesus' gift of justification by faith. Sanctification is ongoing justification.³ One is sanctified the same way he or she is justified by faith.

³ "Sanctification is extended justification by faith—a settling into the truth so one cannot be moved. . . . " Robert J. Wieland, "The 1888 Message of Justification by Faith in Relation to the Seventh-day Adventist Idea of the Cleansing of the Heavenly Sanctuary" [n.d.], p. 3.

Here it is: Christ has given all of Himself to every soul who comes into the world. This includes His gift of pardon for sin and its consequent eternal death which He paid for with tremendous cost to Himself on the cross. When this gift of Christ's love is appreciated and the cost that is true faith which justifies. Christ's love gives the faith. The experience involves the crucifixion of self with Christ so that self-focused love is replaced by His *agape*. Justification is by faith activated by *agape*.

Sanctification is by faith which works by *agape*. Gal. 5:6. In other words, the same faith that justifies sanctifies.

There are two phases in the plan of salvation and not three. The first phase was the legal work which was Christ's building the bridge of atonement by faith between the feeling of God-forsakenness and "He heard" (Psalm 22:24). This was His sacrifice of Himself on the cross for the whole world. By this sacrifice He legally justified the whole race of sinners.

The second phase in the plan of salvation is when you hear this good news of Christ's gift of love and appreciate what it cost the dear Saviour, then you experience the heart-melting atonement of a reconciled heart. Justification by faith is the experience of the atonement with God. Sanctification is but the continued deepening appreciation for the cross. Moment by moment, day by day, self is crucified with Christ. One is justified by faith as Christ continues to impart His righteousness to the receptive sinner. There is no

room at all for once-save-always-saved in the marriage of justification and sanctification.

Furthermore, this marriage of justification and sanctification removes it from the realm of legalism. It is not motivated from self-centered hope of reward and avoidance of hell interests. This is what it means to be “under the law” (Rom. 8:6). Sanctification by faith is motivated by *agape*. It is the “under grace” motivation.

And, the marriage of justification and sanctification understanding of salvation is not anti-God’s law. This is why Ellen White could write “It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God.”⁴

A concerted appeal needs to be made to our people to beware of their use of materials that confuse the mind of this point. We want to follow Christ in His Most Holy ministry by faith. We do not want to have wrong principles operating in our experience. God has revealed a unique understanding of righteousness by faith to us as a people. We must be careful about following after the teachings of Babylon or its Protestant daughters. The bottom line is their understanding of salvation is *legalistic* and *antinomian*. They do not understand what true faith is. For them it is merely head knowledge and not heart-reconciliation. Self remains fully entrenched within converted Christians.

⁴ Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, p. 190.

The original opposition to the 1888 message maintained that justification by faith is merely pardon for “past sins,” as is the current understanding of many Seventh-day Adventists today. When justification by faith is understood as exclusively pardon for past sins so that the real change of heart takes place only in sanctification, there is an inevitable relapse into legalism. When Waggoner saw that “there is but one thing in this world that a man needs, and that is justification”⁵ (1891 Bulletin, #4), he was not echoing the “new theology” doctrine that justification by faith is merely a legal declaration and that obedience is not necessary. He saw the glorious power of justification by faith, a truth which has taken us a century to understand.

The real issue is: When does faith begin to go to work—in justification by faith, or not until a second phase of sanctification takes place? Jones and Waggoner maintain that faith begins to work when the sinner’s heart is reconciled to God by the blood of the cross. He has not yet done any “work” of any kind, but his heart is at-one-with God. This is justification by faith.

What is the message of justification by faith which “the Lord in His great mercy sent” to Seventh-day Adventists? The sinner’s faith is not what initiates his justification. God initiated it in the sacrifice of His Son. He “restored the whole race of men to favor with God,” “in Christ.” He has made all men

⁵ E. J. Waggoner, “How Righteousness is Obtained,” *Bible Echo and Australian Signs of the Times* (September 1, 1891), 265, par. 5; *General Conference Bulletin 1891*, #4.

“accepted in the Beloved.” As surely as a verdict of condemnation came upon all men “in Adam,” so a verdict of acquittal came on all men “in Christ.” Since the legal justification took place by the sacrifice of Christ as our second Adam, justification by faith therefore has to be far more than a legal declaration: it actually reconciles the believer’s heart to God; and he cannot be reconciled to God and not at the same time be reconciled to His holy law. Therefore genuine justification by faith in this antitypical Day of Atonement makes the believer obedient to all the commandments of God and prepares him for translation. We are saved by Christ, by grace, through faith, not of works (Eph 2:8, 9). Thus instead of being motivated by either fear of hell or hope of reward, the believer is motivated by the love of Christ to live not unto self, but unto Him.

In this light, justification by faith is the only cure for our world-wide spiritual disease of lukewarmness, the only means to prepare a people for the coming of Christ.

This is the beginning of the Christian life. It is receiving the life of God by faith. How is it continued?—Just as it is begun. “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.” Col. 2:6. For “the just shall live by faith.” The secret of living the Christian life is simply that of holding fast the life which, received at the beginning, forgives the sin. God forgives sin by taking it away. He justifies the ungodly by making him godly. He reconciles the rebel sinner to himself

by taking away his rebellion, and making him a loyal and law-abiding subject.

It was by faith that the poor palsied man received new life and strength; but was his strength any the less real? Was it not an actual fact that he received strength? Can’t understand it? Of course not, for it is a manifestation of “the love of God that passeth knowledge.” But we may believe it, and realize the fact, and then we shall have an eternal life in which to study the wonder of it. “And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed; and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house. But when the multitudes saw it, they marveled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.” Matthew 9:3-8.

One of the most common expressions to be heard among professed Christians when speaking of religious things, is this, “I can understand and believe that God will forgive sin, but it is hard for me to believe that he can keep me from sin.” Such a person has yet to learn very much of what is meant by God’s forgiving sins. It is true that persons who talk that way do often have a measure of peace in

believing that God has forgiven or does forgive their sins, but through failure to grasp the power of forgiveness, they deprive themselves of much blessing that they might enjoy.

The scribes did not believe that Jesus could forgive sin. In order to show that he had power to forgive sins, he healed the palsied man. This miracle was wrought for the express purpose of illustrating the work of forgiving sin, and demonstrating its power. Jesus said to the palsied man, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house," that they and we might know his power to forgive sin. Therefore the power exhibited in the healing of that man is the power bestowed in the forgiveness of sin.

The effect of the words of Jesus continued after they were spoken. They made a change in the man, and that change was permanent. Even so it must be in the forgiveness of sin. The common idea is that when God forgives sin the change is in Himself, and not in the man. It is thought that God finally ceases to hold anything against the one who has sinned. But this is to imply that God had a hardness against the man, which is not the case. God is not a man; he does not cherish enmity, nor harbor a feeling of revenge. It is not because he has a hard feeling in his heart against a sinner that he forgives him, but because the sinner has something in his heart. God is alright,—the man is all wrong, therefore God forgives the man, that he also may be alright.

When Jesus, illustrating the forgiveness of sin, said to the man, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go

unto thine house," the man arose obedient to his voice. The power that was in the words of Jesus raised him up and made him well. That power remained in him, and it was in the strength that was given him on removing the palsy that he walked in all the time to come, provided, of course, that he kept the faith.

There is life in the words of God. Jesus said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." John 6:63. The word received in faith brings the Spirit and the life of God to the soul. So when the penitent soul hears the words, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee," and receives those words as for living words of the living God, he is a different man, because a new life has begun in him. It is the power of God's forgiveness, and that alone, that keeps him from sin. If he continues in sin after receiving pardon, it is because he has not grasped the fullness of the blessing that was given him in the forgiveness of his sins.

The man received new life. His palsied condition was simply the wasting away of the natural life. He was partially dead. The words of Christ gave him fresh life. But this new life that was given to his body, and which enabled him to walk was but an illustration, both to him and to the scribes, of the unseen life of God which he had received in the words, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," and which had made him a new creature in Christ.

We learn that there is real power accompanying the forgiveness of sins. That power is "the power of an endless life," by which Jesus is High Priest. He puts His own life of righteousness into and upon all

them that believe, and that sends away the old life of sin, which was death. When we forgive a man who has done wrong, it makes no difference in him; we are to forgive him, not for his benefit, but for our own. If we refuse to forgive an offender, he is not injured by it, but we are. We forgive a man, not to clear him from guilt, but to clear ourselves; for if we refuse to forgive him, we take upon ourselves his sin, and become responsible for it. But God forgives a man, for the purpose of cleansing him of the guilt. God's forgiveness does not consist in empty words, but it makes the man perfectly free from sin. It does not consist in simply taking no account of the outward acts that the man has done, but it removes the sinful nature. It makes the sinner a partaker of the Divine nature. This Divine nature is the life of God in Christ, so that with it comes healing of body to every one who can discern the life as it is manifested. Those who disparage a justified life, and say that while it is very well to live such a life, there is something far higher, cast discredit upon the righteousness of God, by which forgiveness comes. They simply do not know the power that there is in "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," by which we are justified. True, many people live a sort of Christian life for years, without knowing the real joy of freedom from sin, but that is not the fault of the justification which God imparts, but the fault of their own blindness. They have not known the gift of God. In the forgiveness of sins, we have every gift that a gracious God can impart to a fallen race. We are justified by the faith of Jesus Christ (Gal.

2:26), even by Christ Himself; and in giving us Christ, God must of necessity give us all things.