

OUR LATTER RAIN PSYCHIATRIST¹

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We are in search of what the Holy Spirit is teaching us regarding the good news in light of the “Latter Rain.” The word “justification” or “righteousness” means to straighten out that which is crooked. What is the heart-changing good news that can change the alienation and resistance which God’s people have toward Him? What is our at-onement with message?

When we consider the atonement we usually think it involves Jesus’ vicarious substitutionary death on the cross. It is true that Jesus died as our substitute. But in what sense is He our substitute?

Did He die as my substitute for sins so that I can go on sinning? In other words, did He keep the commandments so that I don’t have to keep the law? Did He keep the seventh day Sabbath so that I don’t have to keep it? This is the implication of an Evangelical understanding of the gospel. Did Jesus not commit adultery so that I can?

The vicarious substitutionary atonement is the idea that Jesus died as if He were us, but it pulls up just a hairs’ breath of going all the way. He came as if He were us in the “flesh” of Adam before the Fall. But there was something about His Divine nature that still made Him an extraterrestrial. He did it all as if He was me 2000 years ago. It’s a historical fact that can’t be changed. All I have to do is believe in my substitute. Then I am forgiven of my sins. My

forgiveness of sins is not a fact until I believe what He did for me 2000 years ago. Is this the heart-gripping truth of the everlasting gospel?

“The truth of the gospel” which Paul writes about in Galatians is of a Saviour who “shares” fully in our humanity. He was “made of a woman” “born under the law.” He knew what it meant to experience the tension and conflict between His Divine will and humanity’s will in temptation. His was a full identification with fallen human nature short of sinning.

God “made Him to be sin for us” (2 Cor. 5:21). As the Sin-bearer He keenly felt Himself the condemnation of guilt in His own nervous system. Peter writes: “Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree” (1 Peter 2:24). It was not a vicarious experience for Jesus—like sins being thrown into a potato gunny sack slung over His shoulders. God’s will for Him was full identification with all the sinners of the world. It was this weight of guilt and condemnation which so crushed His soul. He was tempted to believe He was forever cut off from His Father. “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me.”

We can never understand the meaning of the cross without considering what Paul wrote. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal. 3:13). To die on a tree, wrote Moses, was the curse of God. Goodbye to life forever. No hope of the resurrection. So fully did Christ identify Himself with

¹ 1 Peter 2:21-25. 474, 312.

us that He died the second death which we deserve.

It is Christ's *shared* substitution in which He died our second death which only Adventists are prepared to understand because of the Bible teaching on the mortal soul. Only Seventh-day Adventists can truly proclaim the meaning of Christ's death on the cross.

Evangelicals can never grasp it because of their immortality of the soul teaching. If the soul doesn't die, then Jesus didn't really die on the cross. If Jesus didn't truly die on the cross, then there is no forgiveness of sins. And even if one says that the human Jesus died, but the Son of God did not die, then Christ still did not make the supreme sacrifice.

Christ did not die like one who takes a holiday break from all the stresses of persecution and rejection to get away from it all. He made the choice to give up all future claims to the Godhead and a relationship with His Father. The cross was the most complete and utter demonstration of agape that had ever been revealed to mankind.

If we can begin to understand our resistance to Christ, then our history is only one heart beat away from Calvary. Once we see our true involvement in the crucifixion of Christ, we are prepared to recognize our involvement in resisting the latter rain and the loud cry. No longer can we smugly brush it off, saying, "It's no concern of mine, I wasn't even born then," any more than we can brush off our involvement with the cross. With anointed eyes, we can see spiritual and professional pride, the resistance of self-humbling truth.

His last words were, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34). His last thought on the cross was for us. As our Intercessor, He gave us forgiveness of our unknown sin. It is the murder of the Son of God. This is the Original Sin in the Garden. We have followed in the first Adam's sin. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." We all have the carnal mind, "the flesh."

We who are in the faith are no better than the world. Writes the apostle: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:23, 24). The "all" is universal. "All have sinned" is the subject of the sentence. All sinners "being justified freely," writes Paul. All sinners are justified. They are forgiven their sins. This is the gift to all. Just because some do not appreciate the gift doesn't nullify the fact that the gift is given. If a millionaire gives a check to a poor person for a thousand dollars, and it's never cashed, it doesn't negate the gift and goodwill of the benefactor. It simply means that the indigent didn't appreciate the gift and snubbed the charity.

"The redemption" price for all sinners is settled "in Christ Jesus." "The redemption" is the price paid to free those who sold themselves into slavery to sin. The price is clearly stated in the next verse: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation [sacrifice] through faith in His blood [the cross], to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past" (Rom. 3:25).

Who needs the propitiation? Which party is angry with the other party? I read the story of a Second

Adventist mail carrier in Massachusetts in the 1870s, who received a message from God that he was to sacrifice his four-year-old daughter like Abraham sacrificed his son. He placed his beautiful Edith on the kitchen table as an altar, and God did not stay his hand, so he plunged the knife into her. It took a minute for her to die as she bled out onto the table. His wife and fellow Adventists backed him up saying it was God's will.

Is what God did to His Son on the cross child abuse? Is God so angry with sinners that it can only be settled by a blood atonement? Since God's purpose was to save sinners for life, he decided not to slay them. Still Someone had to pay with His life to propitiate God's anger with sinners. So the Father decided to take it out on His Son. This is the popular view of the propitiatory atonement.

Upon closer examination this turns out to be no better than the Incan or Mayan system of worship. The angry gods were appeased by the offerings of children on pyramidal altars. Thus the storm gods and sun gods gave annual crops to harvest.

Who needs the propitiatory sacrifice? Who is angry and needs the appeasement? It doesn't make sense that the price was paid to God. That would be heathenish. We are the ones who need to see God's propitiation. We need to see Christ's "blood." "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Cor. 5:19). God made the sacrifice and so did Christ in order to assuage our "enmity" against Him. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only

begotten Son" (John 3:16). God made the sacrifice in order to win our hearts.

When you "see" Their atonement and appreciate what it cost Them to sacrifice all, then you can say you have authentic faith. You experience the forgiveness of sin. Forgiveness involves something more than a legal adjustment to your heavenly accounts. You appreciate the sacrifice. You identify yourselves fully with the One "who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

Wrote Ellen White, "Christ is in the heavenly sanctuary, and He is there to make an atonement for the people." In the Old Testament Day of Atonement it was always the work of the High Priest to make the atonement for the people. So today it is our High Priest who reveals the deeper meaning of the cross in order to give us the atonement.

Ellen White wrote of our resistance to our Psychiatrist "High Priest." "The people have not entered into the holy place where Jesus has gone to make an atonement for His children."² "We are in the day of atonement, and we are to work in harmony with Christ's work of cleansing the sanctuary from the sins of the people."³ "Suppose that you blot out the testimony that has been going during these last two years proclaiming the righteousness of Christ, who can you point to as

² Ellen G. White, "Need of Earnestness in the Cause of God," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* (February 25, 1890).

³ Ellen G. White, "The Need of Complete Consecration," *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* (January 21, 1890).

bringing out special light for the people?”⁴ Her warnings were unmistakable. “The mediatorial work of Christ, the grand and holy mysteries of redemption, are not studied or comprehended by the people who claim to have light in advance of every other people on the face of the earth.”⁵ The consequence is a vacuum of the good news truths; which vacuum was progressively filled by ideas from outside Christian theology.

In one of the most profound early visions of Ellen White she saw the consequence of failure to follow our High Priest into the Holies. “I saw the Father rise from the throne, and in a flaming chariot go into the holy of holies within the veil, and sit down. Then Jesus rose up from the throne, . . . I did not see one ray of light pass from Jesus to the careless multitude after He arose, and they were left in perfect darkness. Those who arose when Jesus did, kept their eyes fixed on Him. . . . He stepped into the chariot and was borne to the holiest, where the Father sat. There I beheld Jesus, a great High Priest, standing before the Father. . . . Those who rose up with Jesus would send up their faith to Him in the holiest, and pray, My Father, give us Thy Spirit. Then Jesus would breathe upon them the Holy Ghost. In that breath was light, power, and much love, joy, and peace.”

⁴ Ellen G. White, “The Present Message,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* (March 11, 1890).

⁵ Ellen G. White, “The Relation of Christ to the Law Is Not Understood,” *The Advent Review and Sabbath Herald* (February 4, 1890).

“I turned to look at the company who were still bowed before the throne; they did not know that Jesus had left it. Satan appeared to be by the throne, trying to carry on the work of God. I saw them look up to the throne, and pray, ‘Father, give us Thy Spirit.’ Satan would then breathe upon them an unholy influence; in it there was light and much power, but no sweet love, joy, and peace. Satan’s object was to keep them deceived and to draw back and deceive God’s children.”⁶

Looking to Jesus as a priest who forgives sin so that it can be repeated again and again only to be forgiven again is to remain in a first apartment ministry. Is Jesus an accomplice to such recidivism? A mere legal understanding of righteousness by faith is to completely misunderstand His second phase of ministry. This is where the Evangelicals are leading many Adventists. It’s a wonderful ministry of legal forgiveness of sins which Jesus performed for 1800 years. If you’re planning to die, make sure your sins are forgiven. You’ll come up in the resurrection at the second coming.

But Jesus isn’t there anymore. And we should be interested in what He wants. Forgiving sin over and over could go on forever without any resolution to the sin problem. It would forever leave our High Priest in embarrassment that Satan has invented something—sin—for which the gospel has no solution to save. Satan would win his case in God’s

⁶ *Early Writings*, p. 56.

hour of judgment. Satan would win the great controversy.

What does Jesus want? It should be what we want. We finally stop thinking about what we want selfishly. We finally stop thinking about the easy way to heaven,—the underground route. Jesus will prepare a willing people, a cleansed people, for translation without seeing death at His second coming. They will be a fully ripened harvest—the 144,000 (obviously a symbolic number)—sealed with God’s unselfish love, of which the seventh day Sabbath is the visible sign.

Peter felt himself incapable of denying his Lord. After all, he was born again. He was converted. He had spent 3½ years in seminary training with the Master Teacher. But he was overthrown in a moment by a teenage lass, when she identified Him with Christ. Peter was afraid of the crowd who were all against Christ. In order to save himself he denied being one of His.

“Perfect love casts out all fear.” But love had not been perfected in Peter. There were hidden recesses of his psyche unknown to himself, that the Lord mercifully permitted to come to his attention. He failed the test in a crisis. He was forgiven and restored. But we dare not come up to our final examination in the mark of the beast issue, to discover some hidden selfishness that would cause us to be overthrown in order to save ourselves.

And that is why the Lord has not permitted that crisis to come upon His people because He knows that they have not allowed Him to cleanse their psyche of all unknown sin. In mercy the Lord

commands His angels to hold back the winds of strife until His servants are sealed in their foreheads.

As our High Priest, Jesus is interceding for us. We think He is trying to persuade a reluctant Father to forgive and heal us. The reality of the matter is He is working 24/7 in order to get our attention by His Holy Vicar, the Spirit, who transacts His business on this earth in His absence.

Christ is giving us the atonement. The sanctuary in heaven cannot be cleansed until the hearts of His people on earth are cleansed. This cleansing is the judgment hour message. It’s not another legalism program. It must be much more abounding grace.

Our “Latter Rain” Psychiatrist gives us healing from all known and unknown sin. He helps us to see why we do the bad things that we do. He helps us to see that it is really the “enmity” that inspired the crucifixion of Jesus. If we had been there 2000 years ago, we would have done the same thing they did. It was a rejection and resounding vote against Christ to be their King. They sent Him home. So far we have done no better as His end-time people. We have not voted His return to this earth. In our worldliness and selfishness we keep Him distant from our lives.

The judgment-hour message of the Holy Spirit is threefold: “When He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged” (John 16:8-11).

The Comforter convicts the world of the sin of unbelief in Jesus. The Holy Spirit is a gift God has given to the world, not just to His church. The evidence that you have received the true Holy Spirit is not to dance and shout and fall on the floor, but to realize what your sin is. The Holy Spirit shows you who you are, and the picture is not a pretty one to look at. You see your selfishness in contrast with the purity of Christ's character. That's impossible for any of us to experience except through the work of the Holy Spirit.

His second work is to convict the world of righteousness, that is, to make the character of Christ apparent to our once-blinded eyes.

His third work is to convict "the world of judgment." This is not a duplicate of the first work, convicting of sin (John 16:8-11). Jesus assumes that we have responded to the first and second works of the Holy Spirit so that He gives us the still Good News of the third work of the Holy Spirit: to convince the world that Satan has suffered "judgment" and is therefore "cast out" of our hearts and lives, He is a conquered foe.

This imparts to every believer an immense sense of relief and self-respect. "What is Jesus doing now?" Working night and day, 7 days a week, no holidays, on human hearts in "every nation, kindred, tongue, and people" to prepare them for the final crisis of the "great controversy between Christ and Satan."

If you have sensed a conviction of sin, of your great need, you have received the first work of the Holy Spirit. It's a miracle that our sinful hearts

cannot experience except through His work! Respond to that conviction, and don't stop Him from doing His second and third works also.

The Lord "has a desire" to free you from the painful burden of past memories. But to make you a mental zombie with no memory and no susceptibility to pain would not enhance your personality. Happiness is not a mindless, vacuous euphoria. A grand piano makes beautiful music because its strings are under constant tension. The Lord does not propose to remove your memory tensions, but to give you strength from Christ to bear them in such a way that your life makes music by triumphing over the pain.

He may permit you to carry painful memories for the purpose of enabling you to comfort others.

Think of the painful memories Christ must carry of the sufferings of His cross—the cruel rejection, the heartless scourgings, the mockery, the abuse, the pain, the horror of that great darkness, the guilt He felt as He was "made to be sin for us, who knew no sin." Does He forget all that? No, He remembers it but also triumphs over it. Thus He can "succor" others (Hebrews 2:18).

Hold your head high, for you are a partaker of Christ in His sufferings. Accept the comfort for you in Colossians 1:24. "Of all the gifts that Heaven can bestow upon men [and women], fellowship with Christ in His sufferings is the most weighty trust and the highest honor."⁷

⁷ *The Desire of Ages*, p. 225.

How can you “give something so deeply ingrained in your psyche to Him”? As your High Priest, Christ is your divine Psychiatrist. You could go to an ordinary psychiatrist and pay \$80-\$100 an hour. He would listen as you verbally articulate all your fears, horrors and resentments. Such therapy would run into weeks and months. But Christ charges you nothing, and He does a better job.

On your knees, verbalize and articulate these memories and fears. Learn from Job, David and Jeremiah, how to pray. Out with everything before Him alone! Guard against the tendency to lay the burdens on other people—they can’t endure them. Unload all the evil onto the divine Sin-bearer. I guarantee that He will listen and He will respond. He will give you peace of heart, but with it He will give something vastly more precious—compassion and understanding of how to comfort other people.