



Open Face

One interest will prevail, one subject will swallow up all others. Christ our Righteousness

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The Purpose of Life

David Clayton



God's apparent silence has been very challenging for Christians and believers in all ages. I often ask myself, why is God at times so silent? It seems to me that it would solve so many problems if God were only more visible and audible. Many times, I've found myself wishing that he would sometimes show his face, or speak in an audible voice as it would strengthen my faith, and that of those around me.

A Christian brother once told me a strange story of how he became a Sabbath-keeper. He was walking to work one Saturday when from a tree above his head he heard a voice calling out, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy!" He looked up but there was no one to be seen. He concluded that God spoke to him, and this was the first step in him becoming a Sabbath keeper.

The only experience I ever had which could be considered to be something similar, goes back to the time when I first became a Christian and I made a habit of waking up at 4:00 o'clock in

the morning to pray. Every morning at 4:00 I would awaken without an alarm clock. Sometimes my eyes would just snap open, I would look at the clock and it would be 4:00. Once or twice, while sleeping, I was certain that I heard someone call my name, I even thought that it was my wife, so I sat up and looked at her, but both times she was sleeping soundly. I looked at the clock and it was exactly 4:00. I was also awakened at least three times by what sounded like somebody banging on the bedroom door so hard that everyone in the house should have been awakened by it. Each time I jumped out of my sleep to realize that everything was dead quiet. There had been no slamming doors, but it was exactly 4:00 o'clock.

In a sense I could say that in those moments I heard God speaking, but I have never heard his voice while being wide-awake and conscious. So, I still find myself thinking at times, "God, why are you so silent?"

The more experienced I become in my Christian life, the more I understand that there is a great reason why God operates on the basis of faith. Faith in the Christian life is so important that God has veiled his face and silenced his voice so that we his children don't usually see or hear him except by faith. Understanding this helps me, because when passing through the really critical periods of life, when it seems that God has abandoned me at the moment I need him most, it is a vital lesson to remember. For example, my most painful experience was when my brother died.

Losing my parents was not as bad, because they were both old when they died, and the expectation was that they would pass on. My brother's death was difficult for me to deal with because I had believed that God was going to intervene in his illness and that he wouldn't die, but he did. However, it helped me to understand the importance of faith. If a Christian never has testing situations, is there a need for faith? If there are never those experiences that put you over the barrel or cause you to walk through the fire, is faith necessary?

FAITH IN THE BIBLE

Bible stories that thrill us often tell of how people overcame trials and how their faith came shining through. Job's tests, Abraham's offering of his son, David facing a lion and a bear, and later on Goliath, Jonathan taking on the Philistines at Michmash, Daniel in the lions' den, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in the fiery furnace and of course, Jesus on the cross! Every story that impresses us is always outstanding because the characters involved pass through situations where it seems as though God is silent and turns his face away from them, allowing them to enter into the greatest danger and most terrifying predicaments, and yet very often they overcome. Even when there is no miraculous event and the individual

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Open Face is dedicated to the promotion and the restoration of apostolic Christianity. In particular to the restoration of those truths which have been cast down to the ground and trampled underfoot by the papacy, and adopted by her daughters.

Our purpose is to motivate our readers to commit themselves wholly to the task of personal preparation for the coming of the Lord, and to the taking of the final warning message to every nation, kindred, tongue and people.

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suffers or dies, the resolve of these stalwarts and their faith in God takes our breath away. Jesus did die, Paul was beheaded, James was beheaded, Peter was crucified upside-down, Isaiah was put into a hollow log and sawn in two, Jeremiah was stabbed to death – these situations show that faith doesn't always save your life.

Still, I realize that there is some fundamental reason which necessitates that our lives be based on faith. Here we will try to propose some answers to this great question relating to the Christian experience.

At this moment we are in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic. I have lost an aunt and a cousin to the virus, and yet I'm not too concerned about my own health. When I go into the town-center, to shops or banks I will wear a face-mask because I am asked to. However, I have faith that if I get the virus I will recover, but even if I don't recover it also doesn't matter because I don't live my life on the basis of chance or luck, and I don't live in fear of death. I believe that because my life is in God's

hands even if the whole world died, I could still live, I will only die when God says that it is time for me to sleep. We need to have this confidence and not live in fear like the rest of the world.

As we see the end of the world approaching, as we anticipate the changes that will take place, the Mark of the Beast being enforced on us, not being able to buy or sell, losing our employment, not having food to eat or a place to live, we need to have confidence in our Heavenly Father, and we need to ask him for that faith and confidence now.

Faith is extremely important and is the most significant element in the experience of every Christian. We can never fulfill the purpose for which we were created if we do not have faith in God. However, I would like to shift the focus a bit to examining the subject of this article, which is, "The Purpose of Life." Understanding this is the first step in helping us to have a correct relationship to the world around us.

LOVE & THE COMMANDMENTS

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. (Eccl 12:13)

This Bible verse suggests that we have no other reason for existing than to keep God's commandments. It sounds good, but let's look at the matter a little deeper. The text tells the truth, but perhaps the truth for a certain time period and not for now – there's more to the life offered by God than what is expressed here.

Some people have pets, and they love their pets. Why? What's the purpose of having a pet? Some people even train their dogs to do tricks or even to 'pray' before allowing them to eat. Ultimately, while one intention may be to impress others, the true objective is to teach the dog obedience, so that they don't wreak havoc in the house or so that they behave in a socially acceptable way. There is always a purpose behind the training. But why get a pet in the first place?

What if someone said, 'I believe that

all dogs should wait before they eat.' Would it make sense to buy two dogs just to teach them to wait before they eat? What would be the purpose of buying the dogs? Just to teach them the rule? No, certainly not! The dogs were not made for the rule, but the rule was made for the dogs. The perspective that some people have is that God created humanity to keep certain rules, as though the rules are the most important aspect of his divine will in the universe.

Jesus encountered the same reasoning among the Pharisees. They seemed to think that the whole purpose of life was to keep rules, and that God had called the Jews to defend the rules, and that the Jews were just appendages to uphold and keep the rules. But Jesus put things in the right order when he said,

The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath! (Mark 2:27)

The Pharisees gave the Sabbath a higher importance than the person. It was as if somewhere in the universe there had been the concept called 'the Sabbath' and since it was most important, God wondered what he could do to exalt the Sabbath, so he got the idea to create humans so that they could worship the Sabbath. So, the Sabbath became the important thing, and the people became the means by which the Sabbath could be glorified. Even today, people seem to believe that they were born to keep rules. God forbid! Isn't there more to my existence than this?

Other people may reason differently. They believe that they were born to attain eternal life. That means that they were given life, in order to seek life. Their purpose in life is then firstly to obtain life, (and often there is the belief that that the way to do this is by keeping the commandments.

But what does God really want from us? That is the great question. Let's see what the Bible says

Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created. (Rev 4:11)

YOUR TRUE PLACE IN LIFE

Does this mean that when God created all things, his motive was his own glory and his own pleasure? Is God obsessed with self-seeking.

There is a story told by Philip Keller in a book entitled, *Lessons from a Sheepdog*. It tells the story of a city dwelling family who was given a puppy dog. The little dog was a constant nuisance for them – chasing cars, tearing up the house, completely hyperactive. They tried all they could but were not able to train the dog to behave as they wanted. One day a man came to visit, and as they told him about their struggles with the dog, the man asked if he could take the dog from them. Of course they were more than happy to get rid of it. It so happened that this man was a shepherd and he immediately recognized the dog as a Collie, a sheepdog. So off the dog went with his new owner to his new home: a farm. The dog had not been born to be a house-bound pet, but to be a working dog. When the little animal saw the sheep for the first time it was as though he suddenly came to life and ultimately, he became the best sheepdog the shepherd had ever had. The dog came alive, he was in his element, he had found the meaning and purpose of his life.

We can also never understand the purpose of our lives, experience true joy, fulfillment and peace until we find our place in life. This is why God needs to be the center of our lives. God is not seeking his own happiness when he requires us to focus on him, he is not obsessed with himself. It is for our sakes that we need to be God-obsessed, we can never be truly happy until we turn to him and find the purpose for which we were created - fellowship with God.

I listened to a pastor who gave a verse-by-verse explanation of the book of Galatians, and while I was greatly blessed by a lot of what he said, I had to disagree with one thing. He stated that the beginning of the gospel is repenting for one's sins. Then after that you believe that because of what Jesus did God will forgive you for your sins,

and then you have to accept Christ and that means that you've been born again. But I understand the gospel, the *good news*, differently.

The foundation and fundamental truth of the good news is that the God of the universe is a God of love, that he loves you more than you can understand. Once you accept this, even if you're still a sinner, even if you haven't accepted Christ, this realization will make you want to turn towards this God of love. Why would anyone choose to repent of their sins otherwise, why would a sinner respond to a God who is a tyrant? The beginning of the good news has to be the news of this love, then one starts to seek for their place in God. That is primary, the purpose of life.

Think of marriage in the purest form. Two people want to spend their lives



together because in each other's presence they find a place where they can be happy. It would be selfish to get into a relationship or marriage for financial, social or status benefits. However, this does happen and could be one of the greatest reasons for the divorce rates today. Those who marry for money could divorce and remarry for more money, the quantity may never be enough.

FINDING JOY IN GOD

The Westminster Confession, written during the reformation when the English Church broke away from Roman Catholicism, outlines the principles of the new English religion. In answer to the question, 'what is man's chief end and purpose' they provide the answer; "*man's chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever!*" Pretty amazing!

Most Christians would not include enjoying God as a reason for their faith. Many would say that they want to live forever, or escape hell or become a better person. However, this idea was locked into the Westminster Confession. The first time I read this my heart sang as I realized how it resonated with a longing deep inside me. I had been brought up in a religion where the service of the servant was the ultimate purpose, where it seemed to please God to turn his subjects into obedient dogs. As if it pleases God that when he says 'sit', his people sit, when he says 'jump', they jump. But when I read this it emphasized what was in my heart and I was overwhelmed with the truth of the statement. This surely must be number one in our purpose of life. It's a concept that is not emphasized in the Old Testament, but still the Psalmist does express it:

As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; When shall I come and appear before God? (Ps 42:1-2 NASB)

When I read this, I know why it was said that David was a man after God's own heart; it was because he knew God beyond the rules, formality and structure. He knew God as a person. That is what we need today.

The same reformed theologians who wrote the Westminster Confession continued,

"We were made for Him, and our souls are restless till they find rest in Him."

We were made for God. What this is focusing on is God, and not the goods of God, not the benefits that God gives us, not the advantages that come from Christianity, but God himself.

My conversion process happened suddenly, as opposed to the slow growth experienced by many others. My advantage was that I could see the difference in my life, it stood out before me like night and day. I remember my teenage years, while running away from God. I remember that sometimes things

would happen to me that I couldn't explain. Now and then I would see something truly beautiful. I lived close to the sea and sometimes early in the morning I would observe that the sea was perfectly still, like a pristine sheet of glass, crystal clear for hundreds of yards. Or I would observe a sunset or sunrise over the ocean, or sometimes the sky was an indescribable intense blue, and something deep inside would stir in my bosom. I had a longing for something that I couldn't explain, and I couldn't share this with anyone. It wasn't until I gave my life to Christ, years later, that I realized that I never had that feeling again. It disappeared and was gone. As soon as I met Christ my soul was satisfied, and I was at peace.

We need to understand why those who know God can go singing to a fiery death, they can go to the executioner's block and they're saying, "I'm fully ready to be offered!" They don't care, they are happy as if they are going to their wedding with peace in their hearts and joy on their faces. It's because they have found their true purpose in life.

If what you're expecting is health and life, then you will try to hang on to it. If you become sick, then you will lose your peace. If what you're looking for from God is wealth and prosperity, then if you lose your riches then you'll start looking for another God. But the true joy of Christianity is in the Person, and not in the Person's goods.

There's a song sung by a group called *Acapella* where one line says, "Heaven is in my heart..." In truth, when you've found God you've found the real joy of heaven. Heaven is not the golden streets, it's not the mansions or the life without cessation. No! It's the person that we get to see face to face. We can have that joy today by having Christ in our lives right now!

This is the number one purpose in life! When our eyes are fixed on Christ, the rest will fall into place. Jesus said:

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent. (John 17:3)

And through Jeremiah God highlighted the supreme importance of finding God to the point of committing ourselves totally to this purpose.

And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. (Jer 29:13)

Finding God should be number one. Admittedly, this purpose is not always in the forefront in the Bible, it becomes like a precious jewel that you have to search for. If your heart is not in the right place then you can find many alternative purposes for life in the Bible; keeping the commandments, escaping from hell, spreading the gospel... All legitimate reasons, but they are side issues. However, the fundamental and primary purpose of life is to discover the place that you were made for. As it has been thus described, 'There's a hole in God's heart and it's shaped like you!'



If we don't find this spot then God will have that gap in his heart forever. And we also have a God shaped hole in our hearts, and money, friends, possessions, wealth, even church and doctrine cannot fill it. But when we find our place in God's heart and he finds his in ours, when we are the friends that we should be, then everything is just right.

Think of these ideas: friendship, love relationship. These are the true elements of Christianity. Don't be confused into thinking that the faith is just about this doctrine or that particular form of behaviour. No, it's about friendship! If the greatest truth is that God is love, it becomes important because we can understand love on a personal level. When you're truly loved – in the true meaning of love – then even when you make a mistake that person will still be there for you, even when you let them down,

and when everyone else is condemning you or if you fail yourself - that person is still there for you. Love is like that. God is love. Love will die for the object of its affection.

The Bible identifies the great element of God's character and it simply says,

"God is love." 1 John 4:8.

I once challenged someone with the thought that if God is love then how does he roast people forever and ever. The response was that God's concept of love and my concept were different. This was a frightening thought to me because, if I could not understand what God means when he says that he loves me, then where would I be? If God's love is the kind of love that roasts his enemies forever and ever, then that type of love means nothing to me. Or maybe I should understand this type of love as what I describe as hate. Thankfully this is not the kind of God we see described in the Bible. When you consider the love of God in the face of Jesus Christ, he is eminently attractive, and it makes it easy to respond to his love and to want to become his friend.

THE GREAT CONTROVERSY

The concept of the *great controversy* takes us beyond this planet and up to heaven where Satan in his former state as Lucifer rebelled against God, and we understand that there is something happening in the universe that is greater than our salvation. God has given us a part to play in this controversy. This is why the judgement and how we represent God is so important. When I become a friend of God, then I'm ready for part two of the purpose of life. Then I become a soldier in his army. Not only to represent him, but to take on the forces of the enemy, to attack the enemy's strongholds and to take captives out of his kingdom and put them in the kingdom of our Father. Our Father is in a battle, and because we love him, we also feel under attack. You attack my Father, you attack me! I take personally any attack against my Father. My heart is fully invested God's family.

In this conflict, my faith is to be tested,

to demonstrate the faithfulness of my Father. That makes enduring the tests much easier. I remember the story of Job and how our Father's character and integrity were under attack. What Job went through was ultimately for the glory of God, his character and his purpose. So, when life doesn't work out the way we expect, as Christians we must remember that we're living in a place called the "Valley of Tears" (Psalm 84:6) where sorrow is the order of the day. We must endure and bear it when we remember that we are ambassadors for our Father's kingdom. What he does, allows his name to be glorified and advances his kingdom, depending on how we respond because we are called by his name.

Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him. (Isa 43:7)

Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. (Isa 43:10)

Don't be confused into thinking that God only created us as his witnesses. Contemplate the following texts.

The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee. (Jer 31:3)

Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. (Ps 103:13)

God wants us firstly for ourselves – for love, but secondarily we are his witnesses, just as I am a witness for my parents and my children and grandchildren are witnesses for me. Whatever my offspring do will either honour or dishonour my family. This is why God also asks us to live by a moral code. The way we live our lives enhances our Father's character and his kingdom, and it makes our Father's kingdom attractive. Our lifestyle should be one of dignity, discipline and power - mastery and control over ourselves. Compare

this to one of the greatest evils in the world – men having no control over themselves.

We can do anything with God! There is nothing we cannot do. With God as the source of our life and our strength! The only reason for our limitations is if we try to live our own lives. The greatest problem we have is ourselves. Our arrogance, our disdain of advice, our lack of self-control. When we lose ourselves in Christ we can achieve anything. We can do without food for 40 days, study anything and master it, give up any pleasure because these things only mean something when I am alive for myself. When I 'die in Christ' I give myself away to the Lord, I can do anything for him. God says: you are my witnesses. He asks us in his strength to live by a certain standard to elevate our God, the one we love and live for. It elevates us too. In contending for the kingdom of God we contend for the kingdom of which we are citizens. In witnessing for God, we witness for our ourselves, us and him, as heaven is our place, God is our father, God's kingdom is our kingdom, God's business is our business. We are not appendages to God's story, no, we are a part of him!

Living the Christian life is not merely a duty, but a instead a privilege and a pleasure of finding our place in God.

In summary, our purpose in life, in this order is to:

1. Find and live in God – friendship, love relationship, marriage.
2. Reveal the character of God by loving as he loves, and keeping the commandments, but still bigger than just the commandments – representing him aright.
3. Induce others to change sides – winning Satan's subjects out of his kingdom of death so that they move over to the kingdom of God and to life.

And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling

the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. (2Cor 5:18-20)

We are first reconciled to God, and once that has happened then we are to be his ambassadors. Indeed, this is the purpose for which we live. When we have found that purpose, we have finally found our place in life, the reason for happiness and the way to happiness.



Some random things I believe

There is only one true God, God the Father, who is above all.

Jesus Christ is the true Son of God, begotten from God before the ages.

The Holy Spirit is the life, power and presence of God the Father Himself, coming to us combined with the life of Jesus Christ. Not a separate third person.

The kingdom of God began at Pentecost.

The system of "The Law" ended when Jesus died.

The New Covenant church are those whose names are written in heaven..

We are saved by faith in Christ alone and that there is no other way to be saved.

God and Jesus live, in a born-again person.

Spiritual gifts remain till the end of time.

Man cannot be happy until he finds his place in God.

Christ will soon return, literally.

No denomination on earth is the church of God.

There is a pre-advent Judgment.

There is an end-time day of atonement.

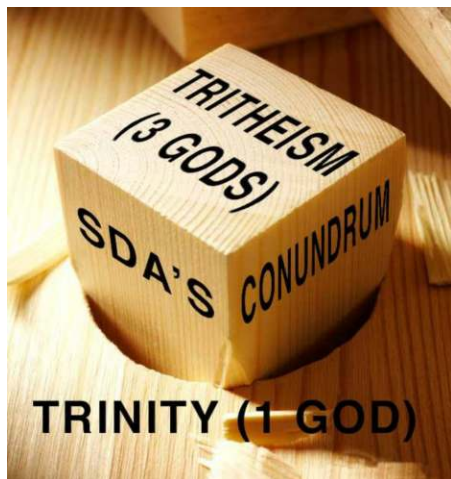
The 7th day Sabbath remains holy.

The earth was created in 7 literal days.

The earth is about 6,000 years old.

Escaping the Chains (part 3)

Howard Williams



LIFE CHANGING DISCOVERIES

After about ten years studying the subject of the Godhead and all the intricacies of it, God gave us yet another surprise. It was much bigger than the truth about God to me, yet by its very nature it had to come afterward. Through Brother C, God led us to see the biblical foundation of salvation in Jesus as we had never seen nor understood before.

THE SCIENCE OF LIFE

To show what I saw, I want to ask a couple questions. Whose life do you have? You may be thinking, "What a silly question – I have my life!" But stop for a moment and consider: where did you get your life? "Well, from my parents of course!" Where did your parents get their life? Now if you follow the question all the way through, it takes you back to the very first parents, Adam and Eve. In fact, when you check the Bible account, you will find that life was given to only ONE man, Adam, and all humanity has gotten their life from him – even Eve came out of him! (*Gen 2:21-23*) So God only ever created one human life. (*Acts 17:26*) Every person born on this earth has received this same original life, for it has been passed on through the process of procreation and birth down through the generations.

Here is the next question: what kind of life is this? Well, if you answer "human life," you are correct. We are humans because we have human life. What is the condition of our human life? Since all life came from Adam, the condition of our life depends on the condition of Adam's life, which is sinful. By the simple act of being born, we become sinners – not by our actions, but by the life we are given. (*Rom 3:23*) We are destined to be what the life given to us dictated we would be: sinners. The Bible puts it this way, "... by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (*Rom 5:12*) This verse tells us that Adam, by passing on his life to others, passed sin to others, so death passed to all. No human being will ever be anything other than a sinner, because that's the kind of life we got.

ANOTHER ADAM

But there is another person that the Bible also calls "Adam". Why? Because he, also, has an original life that he could pass on. His is not a sinful life – it is perfectly pure and good because this other "Adam" is Christ. The life he inherited was passed on to him from God, his Father, and is the exact same life that God has. He is called the Second Adam or, sometimes, the Last Adam, because since he became a man he is able pass his life on to others just as the first Adam passed on his life. But more about that soon.

The Bible makes a big contrast between these two men, Adam and Christ, or, the first Adam and the last Adam. "*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*" (*1Cor 15:22*) "*And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.*" (*1Co 15:45*) "*Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all*

men unto justification of life." (*Rom 5:18*) According to these verses, the first Adam's life condemned ALL humanity to death while the last Adam's life redeemed us back to eternal life by the resurrection of the dead.

MAN'S REAL PROBLEM

As an SDA I had grown up with the Law. The 10 commandments were our guide. Its principles were practiced and by them we were judged sinners or saints. We were taught obedience to the law. Verses like, "*Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city*" (*Rev 22:14*) and "*For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous*" (*1 Jn 5:3*) would be used to prove this point. SDAs live by this rule. If someone sinned, we believed his problem was that he did not choose to obey the law of God. Righteous living was a constant struggle and effort, trying to control one's behavior to match God's expectations and overcome the tendency to wrong.

But now I realized that man's problem was very, very simple: the problem was the life that he possessed. The big question was, "Which life do I have? Do I have the life of the first Adam, or the last Adam?" Life is manifested in a certain way; in fact, the principle outlined in Genesis is that each will produce "after his kind." Why does humanity behave a certain way? It's the life it has which determines its behavior. Man's problem is not his actions. Man's problem is only manifested or demonstrated by his actions. What causes man to behave that way is his real problem. This great discovery was made possible to me because of what I had learned before about the Trinity error, and what I understood now about how life works. In the context of the Trinity we could only ever see Jesus as

a God, nothing else. We could not know the true way of righteousness, the beauty of the plan of salvation had been hidden from our view. But now the amazing perfection of God's miraculous plan was opening to me everywhere I looked!

NEW LIFE – AFTER HIS KIND

The sinner's greatest need is that of a new life. Since his old life is corrupt and sinful, he needs a new life that is pure and righteous. For him to receive that life he has to be born again. Seeing the degradation to which Adam brought himself and all his descendants by his own choice, God, because he loves, made a way so that man would have the opportunity to choose again and be saved from death. This second chance is not forced upon us but is freely available for anyone to choose another life where the consequences of the first no longer exist.

"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." (1Cor 15:22) There are two men, who provide two lives, and these two lives have two distinct qualities: the first has death working in it; the second possesses the power to destroy death. We understand that when we are born we receive the life of our parents. In the same way when we are born of God we receive the life of God. Human life produces human behavior. Sinful, evil thoughts fill our mind. The body is naturally the servant of our nature and produces sinful and evil actions. God's life produces God-like behavior. Pure and perfect thoughts fill our minds, and our actions naturally show the proof of God's life. Here is a verse that tells of the fruit of those whose lives are born of God: *"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."* (1Jn 3:9) They live according to his life because the seed, which is the Spirit of God through Christ, dwells in them and directs their lives. (Jn 16:13) They do not live their lives apart from Him because that is sin. Their perfect behavior is not produced by an effort to do good or right,

but is the natural means of new birth which is the miracle of the Spirit living in them, producing God's goodness in their lives. *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."* (2Cor 5:17) To be born is to receive life, so to be in Christ is to have the life of Christ in us fully and perfectly. Our bodies then begin to produce new attitudes and behavior, not because we are trying to be Christians, but because Christ is living in us.

This life is a gift! Not a reward for our good works, or even our efforts to try to obey, but an inheritance – an inheritance! – freely given from God. *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."* (Eph 2:8) *"... by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."* (Rom 5:18) *"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."* (Rom 6:23) This is the truth. It is not something we work towards, or strive to achieve, we are born into it. The life of Christ produces "after His kind". *"And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ..."* (Rom 8:17) Just as we received the hopeless condition of sin in Adam's life with its natural consequence of death, so we can receive Christ's righteous life with death eternally abolished.

ONE MASTER ONLY!

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." (Matt 6:24) There are only two masters that exist in the universe: Self and God. If Self rules, sin and death are the result. If God rules, righteousness and everlasting life are the result: these are simply the natural consequences of a life in which God lives. *"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?"* (Rom 6:16) We

are servants of the master we choose, and our bodies flow in accordance with our nature.

How do we receive this second life? A man had a conversation with Jesus, who told him he had to be born again. He misunderstood what Jesus was saying so Jesus explained what it means: *"... Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."* (Jn 3:5) Notice that to be born of water only (the same thing we call baptism) is not enough unless we are also born of the Spirit. To be born of the Spirit is a supernatural experience: it is a work of God performed on, and in, the heart of the individual. There is a clear distinction between those born of the flesh and those born of the Spirit. *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."* (Jn 3:6) Flesh people can't be Spirit, and Spirit people can't be flesh. You are either one or the other.

Do you recognize that our lifetime is really a probation period to choose God? *"Probation is the suspension of a sentence of a convicted person for a period."* God has suspended the sentence of eternal death and placed us on probation. We have been given a period of life either to choose another master than ourselves or remain king of our own lives. If we use our probation to choose God, allowing him to perform the miracle of the new birth in us, he will live his life in us and make us a show-piece to the world – real, true Christians in nature and character. May your hearts be drawn by Him to this reality!

THE LAW VERSUS JESUS

Once, I asked my pastor about Jesus and why when I read the Bible I saw so much in the apostolic church about Him, yet it in our church we preached the Sabbath more than we preached Jesus. He sat me down and explained that, in the apostolic age, Jesus was the "new kid on the block". Not many people knew Him or knew about him so the apostles had to introduce him to the world; but today, since everybody

knows about Jesus, they don't need to be told anymore. Instead, as the commandment says "Remember the Sabbath day", it means many have forgotten it, and that is why we preach the Sabbath more today. That was his explanation.

THE REAL PURPOSE OF THE LAW

When we are born into this world, we do not know who we are, the kind of people we are, we simply live our lives each day fulfilling our natures. We are merely becoming what we are. God designed a system to reveal to us the kind of beings we are. This system is called the Ten Commandments, or The Law. The Law is a perfect description of righteousness, "*Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.*" (Rom 7:12) When sinful man beholds this perfect law, it reveals to him his state because it is contrary to the kind of being he is, "...for by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Rom 3:20) "*For to be carnally minded is death.... Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.*" (Rom 8:6-8) The purpose of the law is to let us know that we are sinners and have a huge problem. This problem is revealed by giving us rules to obey that are impossible for us with our carnal nature, causing us to see that we need a Savior.

But instead of seeking for a Savior, we stop with the law. We start trying to keep the law as if the law becomes our savior. That is why the SDA church speaks so much about the law and so little about Jesus. They fail to see that the law leads us to Christ. "*Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ...*" (Gal 3:24) With my pastor's approach we never, ever meet the person Jesus; we stay with the description of him and never find him.

I am amazed at how we miss this most important point but I realize Jesus had the same problem when he was here. I am sure you have heard, read, and even quoted this verse, "*Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eter-*

nal life: and they are they which testify of me." (John 5:39) This was Jesus speaking of how the people loved the scriptures and searched them daily, but they failed miserably to reach the goal of the scriptures: Jesus. In fact, what might be more surprising is the verse that follows, "*And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.*" (John 5:40) If we are honest, most of us have never seen or heard that verse, yet it is the main point of what he said in verse 39 – eternal life is not in the scriptures, it is in the person Jesus! Salvation is not in the law, it is in Jesus.

THE STRENGTH OF SIN

Wouldn't it be delightful to be able to destroy the reason we sin? What would our lives be without sin? Here is a short, simple verse, so powerful, yet many miss the great value of its words. "*The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.*" (1Cor 15:56) What is this verse saying? When sin stings you, death is the result. "*The wages of sin is death...*" What then of the second part of the verse, "The strength of sin is the law"? The scriptures teach that where there is no law there is no sin (Rom 5:13) for by the law is the knowledge of sin. (Rom 3:21) To live a life based on obedience to the law is to live in condemnation and sin all the days of our lives.

A DEADLY MISTAKE UNCOVERED

"But," you say, "isn't the law righteous?" Yes. "So keeping the law will make me righteous too!" No! Obedience to the law will never bring salvation: if this were so we would never have needed Jesus. Of course we all say we need Jesus, but that is because we want him to help us keep the commandments so that we can be good. Let me ask a question: Did Jesus keep the commandments to be saved or was it the life that was in him that made him live a righteous life? How do we harmonize what the scripture says, "*Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man...*" ? (1Tim 1:9) If you are righteous then the law is not for you, and the rest of the verse we just quoted tells us that the law was made for sinners of

all sorts. Notice that before you are righteous you need the law to show you your state, but after you realize your state the law cannot then make you righteous. That is not its purpose. You need a new life, a righteous life. Then, and only then, can you be righteous.

FREED FROM SIN

The great freedom that exists, exists only in Jesus. Listen to the sweet sounding words of this passage. "*There is therefore now **no condemnation** to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.*" (Rom 8:1) All who are in Christ are freed from ALL condemnation because there is an experience now that results in a different life. "*For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.*" (v.2) There are two great principles at work in every person alive in this world which this verse calls a LAW. There is law of sin and death which is the natural life of every individual that is born once, and there is the law of the Spirit of life that is in Christ Jesus. This law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus cancels and nullifies the other law that produces death by sin. The law could not produce life, but "...what **the law could not do**, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, **condemned sin in the flesh**. That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom 8:3-4) **This is a finished work!** Sin is condemned (*Declared unfit for use*) in the body of every Christian. A Christian is no longer a carnal being but a Spiritual being with a new Spiritual nature in Christ Jesus. The righteousness of God is the righteousness of every Christian. Sin is ended and only righteousness exists. "*Whosoever is born of God **doth not commit sin**; for his seed remaineth in him: and **he cannot sin**, because he is born of God.*" (1Jn 3:9)



Foot-washing and the New Covenant



In the year 2005, the Lord brought me to a clear understanding of the reality that Christ is our righteousness. Though I had vaguely understood this truth before, my new perspective could be compared to a person stepping out of darkness into the light of day. With this new understanding of the ways and the purposes of God, many of my old ideas had to be revised and I came to a clearer and more beautiful understanding of truth in many areas. One of these areas in which I came to a better understanding was in the doctrine of the New Covenant.

It was this understanding of the new covenant which made me first began to question the place of the foot washing in the communion service. One of the major differences between both covenants is that the old covenant is full of ceremonies and rituals, types and illustrations, while the new covenant is the exact opposite. The New Testament consists of real things, not symbols and representations and it is essentially a non-ceremonial religion. Baptism and the communion service appear to be exceptions to this rule, but note I said, “appears to be,” because in fact, neither baptism nor the communion service are intended to be types, illustrations, or simply ceremonials.

Let us note that all the Old Testament rituals and ceremonies pointed towards some *future* reality. As far as I can see, there was not a single ceremony practiced under the law which focused on some present blessing available to the

Israelites. Everything pointed to something in the future. As Paul expressed it in Hebrews 10:1,

....the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things (Heb 10:1)

But is this true of the communion service and baptism? No, there is a significant difference. Both baptism and the communion service focus on something which is *presently* available, not to future events. Baptism focuses on the experience of receiving the life of Christ now, while the communion service focuses on the experience of feeding on the life of Christ right now, at the present time. In other words these two services, are doorways by which we can enter right now, into the experience of receiving the life of Christ. They are not simply symbols, representations or types of future things, they are intended to be points of contact during which our faith may take hold of the reality.

So it is important to consider that the two ceremonies established in the Christian faith have entirely to do with the one single element which is necessary in Christianity, that is, the life of Christ in the believer. In addition to this they are not merely symbolic or typical ceremonies, but actually doorways into the experience itself!

So then, with this background we ask ourselves the question, where does foot washing fit into this picture? Immediately it seems out of place. The great center, in fact the entirety of the Christian faith is the life of Christ in the believer, but the foot washing ceremony is not focused on either Christ or his life and this makes it stand out as being out of place. In fact, in the Adventist church it is referred to as, “*The ordinance of humility*,” and is understood to focus on the virtue of humility. Incidentally, this foot-washing ceremony is also very strongly emphasized in the Catholic Church where it seems very much at home, in the midst of all the

other rituals which typify that system of worship. The question comes to mind, why is humility considered so important as to merit a place in this most important service? Why not love? Why not joy? Why not gentleness? This would suggest that humility is on an equal footing with the life of Christ in the believer, and yet, as we know, humility is only one of the blessings which come as a part of the package of the life of Christ. It does not make sense to single it out as being more important than the other virtues.

The main reason why foot washing has found a place in the communion service, is because Jesus washed his disciples’ feet at the last supper and stated that they ought to wash one another’s feet. The question is, was this intended to be a command, establishing a ritual to be practiced by believers in all ages? The washing of the disciples’ feet is mentioned only in the book of John, yet the communion service is recorded by all four gospel writers. None of the other three mention foot washing. Similarly when Paul speaks about the communion in 1 Corinthians 11, there is no mention of foot washing. It seems a bit odd that if the foot washing were intended to be such a significant part of the service, neither Matthew, Mark nor Luke even mention it.

However, Luke mentions something which seems to be very significant in connection with the footwashing; he tells us:

And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. (Luke 22:24)

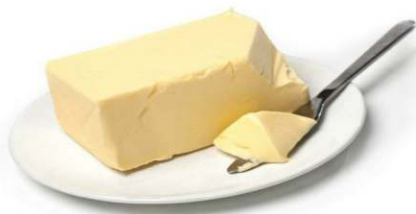
In light of this, the washing of the disciples’ feet by Jesus now makes perfect sense and in fact, this is how Jesus explained his actions to the disciples:

Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed

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Is Butter Better?

Lenworth Frankson



Some years ago a large portion of the world's population became more interested in diet and nutrition creating a movement that had the potential of ultimately putting an end to the profits and monopoly of some of the biggest industries in the world. These industries have strong control over what foods are sold and extensively advertised to the public. Unfortunately, these industries found a way to infiltrate the movement and to subvert it by a campaign of misinformation designed to distort the facts.

One of the lies that was propagated was the assertion that naturally saturated fats from animal sources are the root cause of the current heart disease and cancer plague. Butter bore the brunt of the attack, and was accused of terrible things. We were told that it was better to switch to polyunsaturated margarine and millions did. As a result butter disappeared from our tables, shunned as a villain.

But does butter cause disease? This is an important question that needs an answer. Some say that it does while others argue that it doesn't. It is true that butter is not the most healthy food, but it is not as bad as it was made out to be, and in many cases it has been replaced by alternatives which are no better and in some cases, significantly worse.

Butter has been valued by millions for hundreds if not thousands of years. Many Bible characters ate butter due to their culture and customs, and they lived for a very long time. Arab groups put a high value on butter, especially

deep yellow-orange butter from live-stock feeding on green grass in the spring and fall. In the Caribbean, Europe and the Americas children raised on butter were robust, sturdy and appeared healthy; but children given skim milk during their growing years were pale and thin.

Today, there is no end to the many varieties of spreads available to us on the market; Butter still continues to feature, but in many homes it has been replaced by margarine, with multitudes believing that in margarine they are using a healthier alternative. It is true that butter contains a significant amount of saturated fat which in excess can lead to elevated blood cholesterol. Margarine on the other hand, made from plant-based fats and oils, is supposedly heart-healthier, however, not all margarine is created equal. Most margarines contain unhealthy plant oils in order to keep them solid.

Here is a comparison of the caloric and saturated fat content of some of the many spreads available to us today.

CALORIES AND SATURATED FAT

1. **Butter** – 100 calories and 7 grams of saturated fat in one tablespoon. Butter is high in saturated fat and cholesterol, which can push you past daily limits for saturated fat (10 to 15 grams) and cholesterol (200 mg), increasing the risk of heart disease.
2. **Light butter** – 50 calories and 3.5 grams of saturated fat in one tablespoon. Light butter has half the calories, saturated fat and cholesterol of butter.
3. **Light butter blended with oil** – 50 calories and 2 grams of saturated fat in one tablespoon. This blend of light butter and oil has heart-healthy monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats (MUFAs and PUFAs).
4. **Yogurt butter** – 45 calories and 1.5 grams of saturated fat in one tablespoon.

Yogurt butter is a blend of nonfat yogurt, vegetable oils (soybean, palm, palm kernel and canola) and water. Low-fat and lowest in calories, it can help you with weight loss.

5. **Margarine**- 60 to 100 calories with 0.5 to 2 grams of saturated fat in one tablespoon.

Margarine may contain trans fat, which raises LDL (bad) cholesterol, lowers HDL (good) cholesterol and makes blood platelets stickier, increasing heart disease risk. Margarine containing hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils contain trans fats and should be avoided.

6. **Light margarine** – 40 to 45 calories with 4.5 to 5 grams of saturated fat in one tablespoon. Light margarine contains less saturated and trans fat than regular margarine.

7. **Margarine with phytosterols** – 70 calories with 1 gram of saturated fat in one tablespoon. A spread with heart-healthy plant sterols or stanols; 2 grams per day can help lower LDL cholesterol if your diet is low in saturated fat and cholesterol.

8. **Light margarine with phytosterols** – 45 to 50 calories with 1 gram of saturated fat in one tablespoon. This light margarine has fewer calories and fat than regular margarine.

(Phytosterols are the plant equivalents of cholesterol in animals)

9. **Vegan olive oil spread** – 80 calories and 2 to 3 grams of saturated fat in one tablespoon. A vegan olive oil spread is a blend of canola, palm-fruit and olive oils with MUFAs that can increase HDL, lower LDL and reduce inflammation if you follow a heart-healthy diet.

BUTTER AND HEART DISEASE

Heart disease was rare in America at the turn of the century. Between 1920

and 1960, the incidence of heart disease rose steeply to become America's number one killer. During the same period butter consumption plummeted from eighteen pounds per person per year to four. Obviously butter was not the cause. Butter contains many nutrients that protect us from heart disease. First among these is vitamin A which is needed for the health of the thyroid and adrenal glands, both of which play a role in maintaining the proper functioning of the heart and cardiovascular system. Abnormalities of the heart and larger blood vessels occur in babies born to vitamin A deficient mothers. Butter is the most easily absorbed source of vitamin A.

Butter contains **lecithin**, a substance that assists in the proper assimilation and metabolism of cholesterol and other fat components. Butter also contains a number of antioxidants that protect against the kind of free radical damage that weakens the arteries. Vitamin A and vitamin E found in butter both play a strong antioxidant role. Butter is a rich source of **selenium**, a vital antioxidant that contains more per gram than herring or wheat germ.

Butter is also a good dietary source of cholesterol. Yes! Cholesterol! Cholesterol is a potent antioxidant that is flooded into the blood when we take in too many harmful free-radicals, usually from damaged and rancid fats in margarine and highly processed vegetable oils. A Medical Research Council survey showed that men eating butter ran half the risk of developing heart disease as those using margarine.

BETTER FOR YOUR HEART?

When it comes to choosing between margarine and butter, the real answer is that neither is a good choice. Avoiding solid fats and choosing mainly liquid oils like extra virgin coconut and olive oil is a much better choice. If you are choosing not to give up the solid fat but willing to use it in moderation, you can limit yourself to 1 teaspoon of real unsalted butter because it provides 2.3 grams of saturated fat, which is the least processed choice. Another alter-

native is to choose a butter olive oil blend which provides 2.3 grams of saturated fat for 1 tablespoon, if you would like more volume. Keep in mind all other butter blends or margarines contain **unhealthy plant oils** and **additives** such as food coloring, fillers and gums.

What keeps butter and margarine solid at room temperature? In butter, it's saturated fat. In margarine, it's trans fat that's created when hydrogen is used to harden vegetable oil.

HEALTHIER FATS

If we replace all saturated fat in your diet with MUFAs (monounsaturated fatty acids) and PUFAs (Polyunsaturated fatty acids) we can lower bad cholesterol.

Monounsaturated fatty acids. This type of fat is found in a variety of foods and oils. Studies show that eating foods rich in monounsaturated fatty acids instead of saturated fats improves blood cholesterol levels, which can decrease your risk of heart disease and may also help decrease the risk of type 2 diabetes.

Polyunsaturated fatty acids. This type of fat is found mostly in plant-based foods and oils. Evidence shows that eating foods rich in polyunsaturated fatty acids instead of saturated fats improves blood cholesterol levels, which can decrease your risk of heart disease and may also help decrease the risk of type 2 diabetes.

Omega-3 fatty acids. This type of polyunsaturated fat may be especially beneficial for heart health. Omega-3, found in some types of fatty fish, appears to decrease the risk of coronary artery disease as well. There are also plant sources of omega-3 fatty acids.

Foods made up mostly of monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats are liquid at room temperature, such as canola oil, olive oil, safflower oil, peanut oil, sunflower oil and corn oil.

Fish high in omega-3 fatty acids include salmon, tuna, trout, mackerel, sardines and herring. Plant sources of omega-3 fatty acids include flaxseed (ground), oils (canola, flaxseed, soybean), and

nuts and other seeds like walnuts, butternuts and chia seeds. Try brushing your bread or toast with olive oil for a change. You might enjoy the taste along with the satisfaction that you are making the better choice. Read carefully the labels of items you intend to buy at the grocery store and always check ingredients on the label. Be aware that even margarine that's advertised with zero trans fat may contain up to 0.5 grams.

What we are seeing from all this is that it's much better to use extra virgin olive oil. Always read labels and check ingredients for any solid spreads to minimize saturated fat and unhealthy oils. If most of the fat is heart-healthy monounsaturated or polyunsaturated fat, that's a good thing. But if there is even a small amount of **trans fat**, that's a problem.

The truth is, there never was any good evidence that using margarine instead of butter cut the chances of having a heart attack or developing heart disease. Margarine has less saturated fat than butter, but let's not overlook the dangers of trans fats. From the standpoint of heart disease, butter remains on the list of foods to use sparingly mostly because it is high in saturated fat. Margarines, on the other hand, are not so easy to classify. The older stick margarines are clearly worse for you than butter. However, some of the newer margarines that are low in saturated fat, high in unsaturated fat, and free of trans fats are okay as long as you don't use too much. It is best to limit your intake of saturated fats and avoid trans fats altogether. Healthier alternatives to butter or margarine include olive oil and other vegetable oil-based spreads, which contain beneficial mono and polyunsaturated fats.

I enjoy eating a few slices of a good multigrain bread with a spread made from light butter blend with olive oil, but having learnt the truth about spreads I am now seriously considering the alternative of lightly dipping my slices in olive oil rather than coating it with butter or margarine.



Foot-washing and the New Covenant

Continued from page 9

your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them. (John 13:13-17)

It seems evident then, that the foot washing was not a part of the service which Jesus intended to be practiced through the ages, but was something focused on a particular problem which existed among the disciples. Jesus was focusing on the strife which existed among them as to who should be greatest. He gave them a graphic lesson which they would never forget and which would help them to see true greatness from a different perspective. This is a valuable lesson and one which all Christians should

take to heart, but it is not qualified to be immortalized on the same level as something which is a doorway to the receiving of the life of Christ, and it is clear to me that Christ did not intend it to be so immortalized.

Foot washing as a ceremony does not promote humility, it is nothing more than a ritual, even though some people find that it encourages good feelings among brethren. Sometimes it does the opposite. I remember once feeling acute embarrassment for a man in the USA who was apparently too scornful or proud to wash my feet and who simply sprinkled the water over my feet and dabbed at them with the towel, refusing to let his hands touch my feet. It was especially odd since I had thoroughly washed his feet. My point is, ritualism and ceremonialism do not produce changes in the hearts of people, they

can only induce outward form, something which belongs to a former age, not to the age of the new covenant which focuses on worshiping in spirit and in truth.

Ritualism should be avoided like the plague under the New Covenant. It encourages a bond with the Old Covenant and obscures the great principle that the New Covenant is a religion of real things and not symbols. This is ultimately the greatest reason why the communion and baptism should be divorced from the idea that they are mere rituals, and why foot washing should be eliminated from the communion service.



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