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Under His Wings



By Ellen G. White

“E very pulsation of the heart is a rebound from the touch of the finger of God. He watches over us by day, and under His wings we find shelter by night. His preserving care is over us, whether we wake or sleep. He is as a sentinel to guard us from Satan’s power, or we should be taken captive by him. Jesus is our constant friend. We are to look to Him moment by moment, and by looking to Him we are to live. It will not pay for any one of us to become self-centered, to study our ease, or pleasure, or selfish indulgence in any respect. It is enough for us if our life is hid with Christ in God. If the life of Jesus is in us, we shall seek the glory of God in everything. We shall daily humble our hearts before God, and at the foot of the cross we shall have distinct views of the loveliness of Christ. We shall make Christ first, and last, and best in everything. We cannot glorify God if we place man where God should be. Not a word of praise should be diverted from God to sinful men. But if we walk humbly with God, working the works of Christ, our characters will become like that of our Lord; and when we most nearly reflect the likeness of Christ, we are giving the greatest honor to God.” –*The Review and Herald*, December 2, 1890

“The angel is represented as flying through the midst of heaven with a roll in his hand, on which are written the deeds of our daily life. God bears long with the children of men, but there is a time coming when He will cease to bear with them. God wants them to get under the cover of His wings. Jesus is pleading His blood in our behalf, but Satan is standing at His right hand, resisting every effort in our behalf. May God help us to

humble our hearts, before it shall be forever too late to make wrongs right.” –*The Signs of The Times*, June 2, 1890

“Dear friends. I entreat you to be firm to truth and to duty. Trials may press closer and closer; but Jesus will lead you, if you will let Him. Pray much. Be willing to separate from everything that separates you from God. Then, in the day of trouble, He will come to your deliverance, and will hide you under the shadow of His wings. When your names are cast out as evil, and friends turn against you, remember how Jesus was treated on earth. Spies were constantly upon His track, seeking to catch Him in His words, that they might find accusation against Him. Can His followers expect better treatment than He received? Peter felt that it was too great an honor to be put to death as his Lord was, and petitioned that he might be crucified with his head down. He considered it an honor to suffer for Christ. Why should not we?” –*Historical Sketches of The Foreign Missions of The Seventh-day Adventists*, p. 234

“He [Christ] would have gathered her children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings. He would have given them protection, they would not have been left defenseless. When the hen sees that her brood is in danger, she calls them under her sheltering wings to protect them. She will resist any enemy that may approach. She will die rather than that those who have fled for protection under her sheltering wings should suffer. This will Christ do for those who fly to Him for refuge. He will gather His children together under His mediatorial wings, and there they will be safe.” –*Manuscript 71*, 1897



THE BLESSED ADVENT HOPE

Adapted from a sermon by Timo Martin

We should be the happiest people on the earth. What is there special about us, that we should be the happiest people? Is it not the blessed advent hope—Jesus comes soon!

The world is looking to the future, trembling and with fear—terrorism, COVID, natural disasters, crime. They see the possibility of World War III, energy crises, pollution, and lack of food. Statesmen and politicians are facing problems they cannot solve. They cannot find a way out. But, to us, the future is not dark, but glorious. Because we know that Jesus comes soon. We see light at the end of the tunnel.

Since the beginning, for thousands of years, the people of God have had this hope. This hope has given them comfort, and encouragement in their trials. With longing eyes they have looked to the future, to the appearing of Jesus Christ in the clouds of heaven. We must look beyond this life here and plan for eternity.

There was a young law student, who had great plans for his future. As he was explaining all his plans of his expected triumphs to the minister of the church, at every point, the minister asked, “and then? . . . And then?” Finally, when the student finished his story, the words were ringing in his ears, “and then? What then? What after that?” The young man felt the force of these words and he changed his studies to become a minister of the gospel.

We are today looking for and waiting for the fulfillment of the great Advent hope. Not in hundreds of years, or tens of years, but in our time—in our lifetime. Do you realize that we could still be living when Jesus comes and be a witness to all the events of the last days?

Can there be something better, something greater than this blessed hope?

We have heard of Enoch and Elijah, who never died. They are still living today. There are people living now who may never die. Compared to this hope, all earthly things seem as emptiness and nothingness.

In the book *Early Writings*, p. 14, Sister White tells of a vision where she saw the Advent people traveling on a straight and narrow path, high above the world. A bright light shone all along the path, and gave light to their feet, so that they would not stumble. As they travelled on they kept their eyes fixed on Jesus, who was leading them to the city.

But soon, some grew weary, and said, the city is a great way off. Some turned their eyes off Jesus and denied the light. They were left in darkness, and they fell off the pathway into the dark and wicked world below. Those who became tired and weary lost their way, lost the light. They lost the power of God.

Some time ago, I was visiting a large factory in Syracuse, N.Y., when suddenly there was a strange noise, the lights went out and all the machines stopped running. It was a power failure. Without light and without power, nothing could be done. Can there be a power failure in a Christian's life? We were faithful before, but no longer.

I met a young man in Colombia who came to the church frequently. He knew the truth, Sabbath, health reform, the Ten Commandments. But he was not keeping the Sabbath, and was not following health reform. I asked him why he had not started to follow the truth which he knew so well. He answered, "I am too weak. I have no strength to follow the truth. I cannot do it. I have no willpower." The young man was about 20 years old, and he had no strength. This is the age in which we should be the strongest.

I often feel sad when I see people turning away from the truth, from the great hope of eternal life, because they cannot follow it. They were attracted to Jesus, they wanted heaven, and they even tried to reach it, but failed.

"Then said one unto Him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And He said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Luke 13:23-24

The rich young man failed. Jesus told him what to do to inherit eternal life, but he had no strength to follow it. Sadly, he left the company of Jesus. There are millions in the world who tried but failed. Therefore, people are sad, angry, depressed, and unhappy. You can read failure in their countenances.

SO LIKEWISE,
WHOSOEVER HE
OF YOU THAT
FORSAKETH NOT
ALL THAT HE HATH,
HE CANNOT BE
MY DISCIPLE

Luke 14:33

What are some reasons for the failure?

"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." Matthew 6:24. You cannot serve two masters; many try and fail.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." 1 John 2:15. We must choose whom we want to love. No man has succeeded yet to love both. To try means to fail.

"But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. . . . But He answered and said, Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." Matthew 15:9, 13

We must follow carefully all that the Lord has spoken. "And they rose early in the morning, and went forth into the wilderness of Tekoa: and as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of

Jerusalem; Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established; believe His prophets, so shall ye prosper." 2 Chronicles 20:20. If we turn away from man's ideas, and believe in the Lord, we will not fail.

"Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." Matthew 15:14. Jesus had a message to the Pharisees, to the Jewish leaders: Leave them alone. They are blind, and they cannot see what is causing their blindness.

"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." 2 Peter 1:5-9. If we lack all these fruits, we are blind.

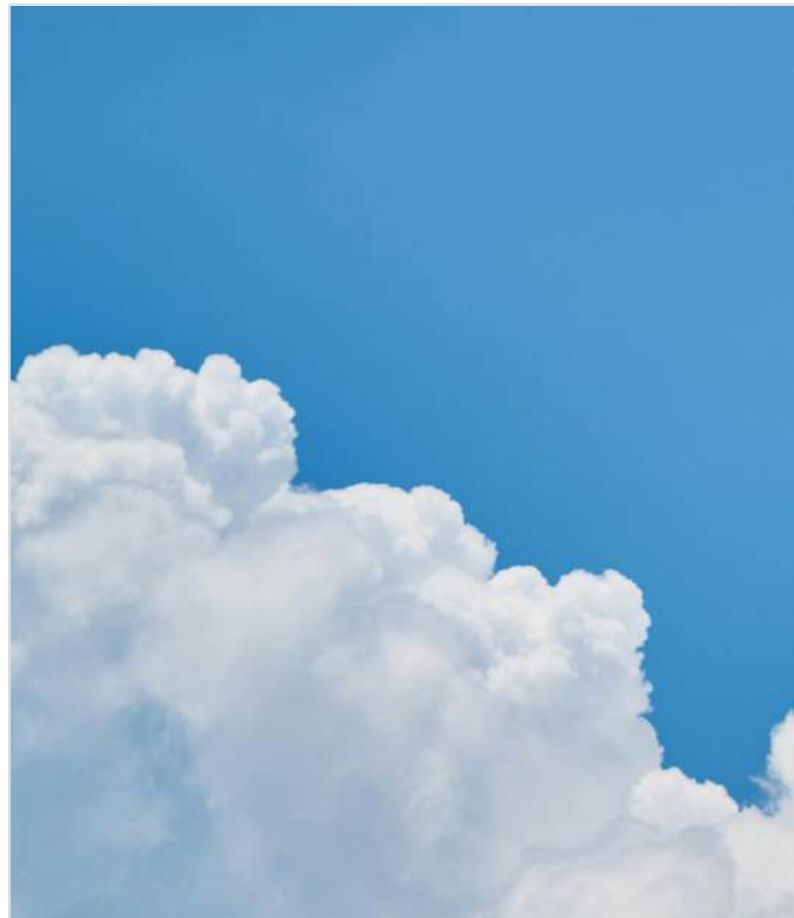
"But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth now whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes." 1 John 2:11. We are blind if we hate our brother.

"What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." Romans 11:7. Only the elect of God could see.

In Ancient Israel, of all the people who were at the border of Canaan's land, only two could see—Joshua and Caleb. "And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel, saying, The land, through which we have gone to search it, is a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof; and all the people that we saw in it are men of a great stature. And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight." Numbers 13:32-33

Ten spies brought an evil report, saying, there are giants in the land, and the cities are strong. What was the response of the children of Israel?

"And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night. And all the children of Israel murmured against Moses



and against Aaron: and the whole congregation said unto them, Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt! or would God we had died in the wilderness! And wherefore hath the LORD brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt." Number 14:1-4. The people wept, they were afraid, and they said, let us go back to Egypt.

Except... "And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." Numbers 13:30

In their blindness, the people could not see the power of God. They only saw their own weakness, and thus they failed. Of all who had reached the border of Canaan, only Joshua and Caleb were allowed to enter into the Promised Land.

In 1914, there was a similar test, and only 2% were strong and had the power to remain faithful. The Laodicean angel is blind. When the angel, the



leaders, are blind, what will happen to the flock they are leading? To a blind Christian, sin does not look so bad. He starts to think of himself as good enough, while living in sin. A blind Christian will fail. Therefore, pray to God for eyesalve, so that we may see.

Another reason our failure is found in James 1:26. "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." James 1:26. Much damage is done by ruinous words. The only remedy is to purify the fountain and the river will be pure; we purify our minds and our words will be clean.

"But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Hebrews 11:6. By faith we can do all things. Without faith we can do nothing.

By faith, Abel offered a better sacrifice unto God. By faith, Enoch was translated. By faith, Noah was saved from the flood. By faith, Abraham

offered up Isaac. By faith, Moses chose to suffer affliction with the people of God. By faith you will overcome your sins and your weaknesses.

"So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple." Luke 14:33. Many fail because forsaking all is too much for them. Here our love to God is tested, how much we will be willing to forsake for him. Can we give all, every idol, every indulgence, every wrong habit, all sin? Not only must we sacrifice our sin, but to gain heaven, we must sacrifice all, we must also give of our money, to pay our tithes faithfully.

"Those who reach the portals of eternal bliss will not count that any sacrifice which they have made was too great." *—Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 368

"To stand in defense of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord when champions are few—this will be our test. . . . The test will surely come." *—Ibid.*, p. 136

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TO PLEASE HIM
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Hebrew 11:6

When Jesus stood on the Mount of Olives and beheld the city and the beautiful temple in the setting evening sun, there were tears in His eyes. There were tears for the impenitent people. His mercy and love had been despised. His tears were for the ingratitude of every individual to the close of time. Not only did He shed His tears, but He shed His blood.

Brothers and sisters, do not take chances with your salvation. Do not risk failure. Avoid sins that are on the borderline. They may not seem so evil, not so bad as the greater sins. We may watch a movie, read a novel, associate with worldly people, and neglect Bible study. Many young people have been lost by worldly friendships—boyfriends and girlfriends from the world will take their faith away. They will be lost.

Brothers and sisters, soon Jesus comes. Soon our journey will be over and we can go home. Have you thought about it and made sure that you are fit for heaven? Are you able to carry on a conversation with Jesus and with angels? What do you say to them? Is your behaviour and habits such

that you can live in the presence of the Holy God, to talk to Him that sitteth upon the throne? When you visit other worlds, will you fit into their company? Will you feel at home in heaven? All this we must learn here.

The world is preparing today—and for what? For the last great battle, the battle of Armageddon. The weapons and arms are being made, that once more, all nations will engage in a battle more terrible and destructive than ever before.

When this battle is going on, God's people are in the mountains, in the isolated places, eagerly watching towards the sky. And then suddenly they see a little bright spot in the east, half the size of a man's hand. Then there will be heard a mighty shout of victory. "Jesus comes!"

As this bright cloud comes nearer, suddenly there is silence. The weapons fall to the ground, every eye is directed to the little bright cloud, which is growing larger and larger. Now, all the tumult of wars, cursing, and laughter is silenced. Only a quiet mourning and silent prayer is heard. Every face is pale, filled with tears. The memory is aroused, they remember that they had been offered salvation, but they despised it. They failed. They could not enter in. The sacrifice had seemed too great. Now they realize that it is forever too late.

Then the voice of Jesus is heard, and the graves are opened. The righteous will rise from their dusty beds, clothed in immortality; and together with them, those who are alive will be caught up in the air to meet Jesus. What a wonderful reunion!

Then we leave this dark, polluted world behind, and in seven days we ascend up to heaven. We will spend one Sabbath on the way, in the company of Jesus and the angels.

Brothers and sisters, will you be there? Shall we meet again on that great day? This blessed Advent hope will soon be a reality. Only a little while and we shall occupy the homes left vacant when Satan and his angels were cast out of heaven. Satan hates you because he knows that he can never enter heaven again. However, you have the opportunity to be there, if you only want it. I pray that we all will be there.

Amen.



Christmas Tree

By Stefano La Corte (Italy)

Adapted from “L'osservatore del sabato, Vol. 41, No. 4”

Once again, we have come to the end of a calendar year. All the streets and shops are lit up with lights and decorations for what is considered one of the main holidays in the Christian world: Christmas.

Alongside the Nativity scene, a special role is played by the decoration of the Christmas tree.

What is its origin?

A legend traces the custom back to the year 724, when in the territory of the Germanic tribe of the Chatti, near what is now Fritzlar, the Anglo-Saxon missionary Winfrid—later known as Saint Boniface—felled with an axe a sacred oak dedicated to the god Thor. His intent was to stop the human sacrifices performed there and convert the people to Christianity. In its place grew a triangular fir tree, which was associated with the figure of Jesus

Christ as a symbol of immortality and of the Trinity (because of its shape).

At the root of the Christmas tree, however, lie very ancient customs, typical of various cultures, of worshipping or venerating sacred trees—such as the *Trees of Paradise* adorned with ribbons and colorful objects, torches, small bells, votive animals, and the belief that the lights illuminating them corresponded to individual souls. In the same way, various Cosmic Trees were decorated with symbols of the Sun, Moon, planets, and stars. In particular, the fir tree was sacred to Odin, the powerful god of the Germans. ...

The inhabitants of the far North of Europe, for example, where the sun would “disappear” for weeks in the depths of winter, held ceremonies during the week before and after the longest night of the year, to hope for the return of the sun. They believed the red fir tree possessed magical powers, as it did not lose its leaves even in the harshest



winter frost. Fir trees were cut and brought into homes, decorated with fruit to symbolize the fertility that spring would restore to the trees. The Romans used to decorate their homes with pine branches during the January Calends. . . .

In the Middle Ages, pagan cults were generally understood as a foreshadowing of Christian revelation. Beyond symbolizing the power granted to nature by God, the tree thus became a symbol of Christ—understood as the vital sap—and of the Church, represented as a garden willed by God on earth. In the Bible, the tree appears multiple times with different meanings, beginning with the *Tree of Life* placed in the center of the *Garden of Eden* (Genesis 2:9), and ending with the tree/wood of the *Cross*. . . .

According to a pious legend, the wood of the cross was made from a branch of the Tree of Life in the Garden of Eden, which the archangel Michael gave to Seth to bring comfort to his dying father Adam. The fir tree, since Egyptian times,

had been linked to the birth of the god of Byblos; it was consecrated by the Greeks to Artemis, protector of births, and was always seen by the Greeks as a symbol of the rebirth represented by the new year. It was later venerated by the peoples of northern Asia, especially the Celts and the Germans, who associated it with the birth of the divine child and, in turn, with the winter solstice festival. For Christianity, the fir tree became a symbol of Christ and His immortality. . . .

The origins of the custom can also be traced to a medieval religious play celebrated in Germany on December 24—the “Adam and Eve play” (*Adam und Eva Spiele*)—in which squares and churches were filled with fruit trees and symbols of abundance to recreate the image of Paradise. Later, fruit trees were replaced with fir trees, as the latter held a deep “magical” significance for the people. In particular, they were evergreen, a gift which, according to tradition, was granted to them by Jesus Himself as a thank-you for sheltering Him when He was pursued by enemies. Not by chance, again



in Germany, the fir tree was also the place where babies brought by the stork were placed. . . .

According to amateur historian Friedrich Amelung, the modern use of the tree in public celebrations began in Tallinn, Estonia, in 1441, when a large fir was erected in Raekoja Square—the Town Hall Square—around which young bachelors, men and women, danced together in search of a soulmate. The city of Riga, in Latvia, is also among those claiming to host the first Christmas tree in history (a plaque there, written in eight languages, declares that the "first New Year's tree" was decorated in the city in 1510). . . .

Ingeborg Weber-Kellermann, professor of ethnology at Marburg, identified among the earliest historical references to the tradition a 1570 Bremen chronicle stating that a tree was decorated with apples, nuts, dates, and paper flowers.

Legend has it that it was an idea of the Protestant Reformation's founder, Martin Luther, who, enchanted by a fir tree in the forest on Christmas

night, brought it home to his children as a symbol of Christ's birth. By the early 18th century, it had become a common practice in all the cities of the Rhineland. The use of candles to decorate the tree's branches is also attested as early as that century, and legend attributes the origin to Luther as well, who wanted them to symbolize the stars created by God. . . .

The first electrically lit Christmas tree was created by Edward H. Johnson, a partner of inventor Thomas Edison. He proudly displayed his tree, hand-wired with 80 red, white, and blue incandescent electric bulbs the size of walnuts, on December 22, 1882, in his home on Fifth Avenue in New York City. In 1895, U.S. President Grover Cleveland proudly sponsored the first electrically lit Christmas tree at the White House, using hundreds of multicolored electric bulbs.

In Italy, the first to decorate a Christmas tree was Queen Margherita in the latter half of the 19th century at the Quirinale Palace. From her, the fashion quickly spread throughout the country:



not by chance, the Christmas tree is one of the few foreign traditions to arrive in Italy before the more consumerist diffusion of the post-World War II period. . . .

Contrary to what one might think, in the United States there are associations that advocate for the use of live Christmas trees rather than artificial ones. For example, the National Christmas Tree Association (NCTA) has stated that each hectare of Christmas trees in cultivation produces enough daily oxygen for about 39 people, and that American production (about 200,000 hectares) produces daily oxygen for approximately 9 million citizens. . . .

The city of Boston has been hosting and decorating its own Christmas tree since 1941, and since 1971, it has been donated annually to the city administration by wealthy residents of Nova Scotia, Canada. Choosing the tree to be donated is a complex process that even involves forming a temporary team of specialists. In the months leading up to Christmas, they are tasked with compiling a list of candidate trees to be felled. The census and listing activity typically begins in June and July. To that end, Nova Scotia's Department of Natural Resources has prepared a guide to best select the tree to cut. . . .

Regarding this custom, now also embraced by some Christian families, of decorating a tree during the Christmas season, the Congregation for Divine Worship writes: "Regardless of its historical origins, the Christmas tree is now a strongly evocative symbol, widely used in Christian settings; it evokes both the Tree of Life planted in the center of Eden (cf. Genesis 2:9) and the tree of the Cross, and thus assumes a Christological meaning. Under the tree,

'gifts' may be placed; however, among these gifts, one for the poor must not be missing: they are part of every Christian family." (Sources taken from Wikipedia, entry: Albergo di Natale)

Ellen Gould White and the Christmas Tree

"There are many who have not books and publications upon present truth. Here is a large field where money can be safely invested. There are large numbers of little ones who should be supplied with reading. The Sunshine Series, Golden Grains Series, Poems, Sabbath Readings, etc., are all precious books, and may be introduced safely into every family. The many trifles usually spent in candies and useless toys, may be treasured up with which to buy these volumes. . . .

"Let those who wish to make valuable presents to their children, grandchildren, nephews, and nieces, procure for them the children's books mentioned above. For young people, the Life of Joseph Bates is a treasure; also the three volumes of Spirit of Prophecy. These volumes should be placed in every family in the land. God is giving light from Heaven, and not a family should be without it. Let the presents you shall make be of that order which will shed beams of light upon the pathway to Heaven." *—The Review and Herald*, December 11, 1879

"By the world the holidays are spent in frivolity and extravagance, gluttony and display.... Thousands of dollars will be worse than thrown away upon the coming Christmas and New Year's in needless indulgences. But it is our privilege to depart from the customs and practices of this degenerate age; and instead of expending means merely for the gratification of the appetite or for needless ornaments or articles of clothing, we may make the coming holidays an occasion in which to honor and glorify God." *—The Adventist Home*, p. 480

"In His wisdom, the Lord concealed the place where he buried Moses. God buried him, and God resurrected him, and took him to heaven. This secrecy was to prevent idolatry. He against whom they rebelled while he was in active service, whom they provoked almost beyond human endurance, was almost worshiped as God after his separation from them by death. For the very same purpose He has concealed the precise day of Christ's birth; that the day should not receive the

honor that should be given to Christ as the Redeemer of the world,—one to be received, to be trusted, to be relied on as He who could save to the uttermost all who come unto Him. The soul's adoration should be given to Jesus as the Son of the infinite God." *—The Review and Herald*, December 9, 1884

In the Gospel of Luke, we find a counsel from the Master: "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." Luke 14:12–14

Conclusion

From the foregoing, we can observe that the origins of the Christmas tree stem from ancient legends linked to paganism that developed in northern Europe, North America, and eventually spread throughout the world.

Christianity merely disguised its meaning, portraying in the tree the Son of God—what was once a symbol of the rebirth of life and light, that is, the victory over death and darkness.

The second commandment forbids any representation of things in heaven or on earth to be worshipped.

Especially in the last 50 years, everything surrounding the Christmas holidays and the tree has become pure economic speculation, with large sums of money spent needlessly.

Let us rather follow the counsel of the Spirit of Prophecy, which urges us to abound in good works for the afflicted, the poor, and the needy.

Let us adorn the tree that each of us represents—not with costumes, masks, or artificial lights, but with our good deeds and offerings, so that our love may be the greatest testimony to the world: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." John 13:34–35

Amen.

CRUMBS

for DOGS

By Makoto Matsumoto (AB)



Are you carrying a burden in your life? Have you ever felt so weighed down that all you wanted was to escape and find rest? Is there a wound or trauma in your heart that refuses to heal? Is there someone in your life who constantly frustrates or troubles you? If so, the Bible verse for you today is: "But He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." Matthew 15:26–27

A Woman Who Was Called a "Dog"

"Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." Matthew 15:21–22

Jesus once travelled to the Gentile region of Tyre and Sidon. There, He encountered a woman whose daughter was tormented by an unclean spirit. We are not told how many years the girl had suffered, but it is clear that this affliction had been a deep source of pain and burden for her mother. Through this encounter, Jesus had a greater purpose: to confront and break down the prejudice His disciples held toward the Gentiles. To teach this lesson, He initially responded in the way a typical Jew of the time might have—so that the disciples could clearly see the stark contrast between human bias and divine compassion.

"But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me. But He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." Matthew 15:23–26

He rejected her three times. First, He ignored her. He did not give her any response. Then He said, "I'm here for Israel only." Lastly, He even called her "a dog." For Jesus to teach the disciples in this way, He needed the cooperation of this woman. In other words, He trusted her not to give up. In many cultures, including Korean and English, calling someone a "dog" is among the harshest insults. And yet, Jesus used this very word to test

her. But He knew her heart—He knew that she understood His love and character deeply enough not to be discouraged. How incredible it is that a human being could be entrusted by God to play a part in revealing His plan!

"And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." Matthew 15:27–28

She laid aside all pride and humbly confessed, "I know I don't deserve it, Lord. I am nothing more than a sinner—like a dog. But I also know that You are loving and compassionate, even towards someone like me. I believe there is still a blessing for me, even if it's just a crumb from Your table. Please, Lord, bless me." Like Jacob wrestling through the night, she clung to God's love and promise with unwavering faith—and her plea was answered.

Message to the Heavy Laden

We are just like this woman. Each of us carries a burden of some kind. It might be the pressure of school and grades, disunity among the family, the strain of broken friendships, the anxiety of not yet finding a job, or the pain of betrayal. Perhaps it is a trauma so deep you do not even want to recall it, or the weight of financial stress as you try to care for your family. Whatever it may be, we all have our own "daughter... vexed with a devil"—a personal struggle that brings us to our knees in desperation before the Lord.

"Tenderly He bade the toiling people, 'Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.'

"In these words Christ is speaking to every human being. Whether they know it or not, all are weary and heavy-laden. All are weighed down with burdens that only Christ can remove. The heaviest burden that we bear is the burden of sin. If we were left to bear this burden, it would crush us. But the Sinless One has taken our place. 'The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.' Isaiah 53:6. He has borne the burden of our guilt. He will take the load from our weary shoulders. He will give us rest. The burden of care and sorrow

also He will bear. He invites us to cast all our care upon Him; for He carries us upon His heart.

“The Elder Brother of our race is by the eternal throne. He looks upon every soul who is turning his face toward Him as the Saviour. He knows by experience what are the weaknesses of humanity, what are our wants, and where lies the strength of our temptations; for He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. He is watching over you, trembling child of God. Are you tempted? He will deliver. Are you weak? He will strengthen. Are you ignorant? He will enlighten. Are you wounded? He will heal. The Lord ‘tellethe the number of the stars;’ and yet ‘He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.’ Psalm 147:4, 3. ‘Come unto Me,’ is His invitation. Whatever your anxieties and trials, spread out your case before the Lord. Your spirit will be braced for endurance. The way will be opened for you to disentangle yourself from embarrassment and difficulty. The weaker and more helpless you know yourself to be, the stronger will you become in His strength. The heavier your burdens, the more blessed the rest in casting them upon the Burden Bearer. The rest that Christ offers depends upon conditions, but these conditions are plainly specified. They are those with which all can comply. He tells us just how His rest is to be found.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 328–329

This woman could do nothing for her daughter. No human effort could bring healing. In the same way, we are often powerless in the face of our own worries, anxieties, traumas, and burdens. Only Jesus can truly set us free—just as He was the only hope for this woman.

At times, it may feel like God is silent. It feels like God ignores our prayers. It may even seem as though He is calling us “dogs”—that we are unworthy of His blessings and help. But when you feel abandoned or overlooked, remember this: it means God trusts you. He trusts you to persevere, to hold on until His purpose is fulfilled.

I remember when I was a student, facing several financial crises. As an international student, I was limited in how many hours I could work each week. At one point, I had only \$200 in my bank account. In a city like Toronto, where a student’s monthly cost of living ranges from \$1,500 to \$3,000, that amount was nowhere near enough. I was overwhelmed with stress and anxiety. But looking back, I realize—I was never once late in paying rent. I never went hungry. Somehow, God always provided. That season of hardship became a testimony—a reminder I now share with others about how faithfully God cares for His people.

We may not understand why we go through certain trials. But God has promised to take care of us. If we cling to that promise—if we, like the woman, humbly ask even for the crumbs from His table—we will one day look back and see that these burdens were allowed for a greater good.

“God would not have us remain pressed down by dumb sorrow, with sore and breaking hearts. He would have us look up and behold His dear face of love. The blessed Saviour stands by many whose eyes are so blinded by tears that they do not discern Him. He longs to clasp our hands, to have us look to Him in simple faith, permitting Him to guide us. His heart is open to our griefs, our sorrows, and our trials. He has loved us with an everlasting love and with loving-kindness compassed us about. We may keep the heart stayed upon Him and meditate upon His loving-kindness all the day. He will lift the soul above the daily sorrow and perplexity, into a realm of peace.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 12

He knows exactly what you are going through. He feels the weight of your heart—He weeps when you weep, and He rejoices when you smile. So never feel alone; you are never abandoned. He is always with you. He already holds the solution to your problem and knows what is best for your life. So let us trust Him—and wait patiently for His perfect timing.

**“ Truth, Lord:
yet the dogs eat of the crumbs
which fall from their masters' table. ”**

Matthew 15:27



For One Person

The reason I chose this story, above all others, to speak on this topic is because Jesus went to that region solely to meet this woman. “This was the only miracle that Jesus wrought while on this journey. It was for the performance of this act that He went to the borders of Tyre and Sidon. He wished to relieve the afflicted woman. . . .” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 402

Traveling was not easy in those days. There were no cars or airplanes. Jesus had to walk mile after mile, crossing lakes in boats powered only by human effort. So His journey to Tyre and Sidon was not a casual trip—it required real effort and intention. And yet, He made that journey for the sake of just one woman.

In human terms, we constantly strive to maximize results with minimal effort. We call it “cost-effectiveness.” We avoid pouring too many resources into something that seems small or insignificant. Some churches or leaders measure the success of missionary work by the number of baptisms or members, giving greater priority to churches in countries with larger memberships while over-

looking those with only a few. But God operates on a completely different principle. He is willing to give everything—even for the least of us.

The greatest example of this is Jesus Himself. The heavenly government “spent” the most precious being in the universe on the smallest, most broken creatures—us. What the world might see as waste, heaven sees as love.

Scripture is full of such moments. God sent Philip, one of the twelve apostles, far away to reach a single Ethiopian eunuch and baptize him. Jesus personally appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus, to transform just one man into Paul the apostle. God sent two spies into Jericho—not to gather intelligence, but to rescue Rahab and her family. God did not need military strategy; He could conquer the city without any information. But He sent those spies for one reason: to save a single soul.

And it is the same with us. God knows you as if you were the only person in the universe. He loves you and cares for you with an undivided heart—as though you were His only child. It is not about the many—it is about you. God’s love is not

spread thin. It is deep, personal, and unfailing, for every individual. Just as Jesus made that journey for one woman, He makes it for you today.

Lesson for the Disciples

Even though the miracle was performed for just one person, Jesus had a greater purpose in mind: to teach His disciples. “. . . and at the same time to leave an example in His work of mercy toward one of a despised people for the benefit of His disciples when He should no longer be with them. He wished to lead them from their Jewish exclusiveness to be interested in working for others besides their own people.” —*The Desire of Ages*, p. 402

If Jesus has laid aside your burden, then now it is your turn to place yourselves at the feet of His disciples. Jesus is telling us, “If your burden has been lifted, now it is time to care for the burdens of others.”

I believe most of us have at least “that one person” — the one who always annoys and frustrates us. No matter how hard we try, it is difficult to understand why they act or speak the way they do. It feels like their sole purpose is to make our lives unnecessarily difficult. And in those moments, it seems like they do not deserve our kindness, our words, or our care. In those times, we may find ourselves mentally labelling them as “dogs” — just as the disciples and Jews viewed the Gentiles.

However, “To the appeal of the erring, the tempted, the wretched victims of want and sin, the Christian does not ask, Are they worthy? but, How can I benefit them? In the most wretched, the most debased, he sees souls whom Christ died to save and for whom God has given to His children the ministry of reconciliation.” —*Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 22

We may have labeled some people as “dogs” — unworthy of the food at our table. But today, Jesus asks us, “What about you? Do you deserve My blessings? Have you forgotten that you, too, were once like a dog?”

How many of us can honestly say we are blessed or saved because we deserve it? If anyone harbours such a thought, they have not yet truly grasped salvation. If we truly understand the significance of Jesus’ cross, no one can claim to have earned God’s blessings or salvation. I am saved

and blessed today, not because I deserve it, but despite being like a dog.

So, what about that person we struggle with? If we understand what Paul meant when he called himself the chief of sinners, we would see that, in truth, that person could deserve more than we do — but certainly no less. If a dog like me has been privileged to receive crumbs from the table, should we not extend the same grace to that person?

“And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.” Matthew 25:40

Let us never forget that the very person who is crossing your mind right now was bought at an invaluable price. God paid an immense cost for that person — so much so that He claims them as His own. God says to us, “Who are you to say that My son or daughter is unworthy of My love?”

Our Duties Towards Dogs

“We should anticipate the sorrows, the difficulties, the troubles of others. We should enter into the joys and cares of both high and low, rich and poor. ‘Freely ye have received,’ Christ says, ‘freely give.’ Matthew 10:8. All around us are poor, tried souls that need sympathizing words and helpful deeds. There are widows who need sympathy and assistance. There are orphans whom Christ has bidden His followers receive as a trust from God. Too often these are passed by with neglect. They may be ragged, uncouth, and seemingly in every way unattractive; yet they are God’s property. They have been bought with a price, and they are as precious in His sight as we are. They are members of God’s great household, and Christians as His stewards are responsible for them. ‘Their souls,’ He says, ‘will I require at thine hand.’

“Sin is the greatest of all evils, and it is ours to pity and help the sinner. But not all can be reached in the same way. There are many who hide their soul hunger. These would be greatly helped by a tender word or a kind remembrance. There are others who are in the greatest need, yet they know it not. They do not realize the terrible destitution of the soul. Multitudes are so sunken in sin that they have lost the sense of eternal realities, lost the similitude of God, and they hardly know whether they have souls to be saved or not. They have nei-



Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **Matthew 11:28**

ther faith in God nor confidence in man. Many of these can be reached only through acts of disinterested kindness. Their physical wants must first be cared for. They must be fed, cleansed, and decently clothed. As they see the evidence of your unselfish love, it will be easier for them to believe in the love of Christ.

“There are many who err, and who feel their shame and their folly. They look upon their mistakes and errors until they are driven almost to desperation. These souls we are not to neglect. When one has to swim against the stream, there is all the force of the current driving him back. Let a helping hand then be held out to him as was the Elder Brother's hand to the sinking Peter. Speak to him hopeful words, words that will establish confidence and awaken love.

“Thy brother, sick in spirit, needs thee, as thou thyself hast needed a brother's love. He needs the experience of one who has been as weak as he, one who can sympathize with him and help him. The knowledge of our own weakness should help us to help another in his bitter need. Never should we pass by one suffering soul without seeking to impart to him the comfort wherewith we are comforted of God.

“It is fellowship with Christ, personal contact with a living Saviour, that enables the mind and heart and soul to triumph over the lower nature. Tell the wanderer of an almighty hand that will hold him up, of an infinite humanity in Christ that pities him. It is not enough for him to believe in law and force, things that have no pity, and never hear the cry for help. He needs to clasp a hand that is warm, to trust in a heart full of tenderness. Keep his mind stayed upon the thought of a divine presence ever beside him, ever looking upon him with pitying love. Bid him think of a Father's heart that ever grieves over sin, of a Father's hand stretched out still, of a Father's voice saying, ‘Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me, and he shall make peace.’ Isaiah 27:5” —*Christ's Object Lessons*, p.386–388

Earlier, we read Sister White's powerful quote: “Whether they know it or not, all are weary and heavy-laden. All are weighed down with burdens that only Christ can remove.” Sometimes, people may not even realize what they are doing, and we might never fully understand why they have become the way they are. But one thing is certain—there is always a reason. Perhaps that person does not even know what is wrong with themselves. It could be because of their own mistakes, the mistakes of their parents, or the wrongs done to them by others. Sometimes, it is the result of their own choices, and at other times, it is not even their fault. Each person carries their own unique story and burden.

If God has delivered you from your own burdens, pain, trauma, and hurt, should you not extend the same freedom to others? Even if they seem like “dogs” to you, remember that God has allowed them to claim their right to the crumbs falling from your table. Do not forget that you, too, were once like them. Just as you were saved by Jesus' undeserved love, He expects you to show that same love to them. It does not matter whether they “deserve” it or not. They are bought by His blood, and that alone should be enough reason for you to love and care for them.

As you reflect on the burdens that weigh you down, I ask you: Who in your life can you share the crumbs of God's love with today? Who might need to experience His grace through you? It is my wish and prayer for every reader that your burdens and heavy loads may be lifted by divine hands, and that you may experience true rest and peace. I also pray that you may become God's instrument, helping to deliver others from their burdens and guiding them to the source of true rest.

“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28

Amen.



AJVAR - Eggplant/ Red Pepper Spread

(Pronounced: "I"var)

Ingredients:

- 1 medium Eggplant (about 2 cups when mashed)
- 4 medium Red Bell Peppers
- 2 to 3 Tbsp. Lemon Juice – to taste
- 2 to 3 Cloves Garlic, minced (according to taste)
- 3 Tbsp. cold pressed extra virgin Olive Oil
- Salt to taste

Instructions:

Wash vegetables. Cut eggplant into half lengthwise. Place eggplant and the peppers on a parchment-lined sheet pan. Bake in a preheated 350 degree oven for 15 -20 minutes and when roasted, turn them over. Keep turning them every 15 to 20 minutes, until they are roasted on all sides. Remove from oven and place into a bowl. Cover with a lid. Let rest for about 30 minutes to allow the steam to soften them.

Remove the stem, the core and the skin of the peppers and discard. Scrape out the flesh from the eggplant which you will use in the spread. Dis-

card the skin. Now put the Peppers and Eggplant into your food processor and add the lemon juice, the minced garlic, the olive oil and salt; then pulse until smooth. Taste and add salt and/or lemon juice, if necessary, according to your taste.

Place in container with lid. This spread keeps well in the refrigerator for a couple of weeks. It is delicious on homemade whole wheat bread. If necessary, you can also freeze the Ajvar.

Nutritional values of the Eggplant and Red Peppers:

The eggplant is high in Fiber which aids digestion. Potassium helps to regulate our blood pressure.

Manganese is important for our metabolism. Antioxidants may protect against cell damage.

The low calorie is a nutritious addition to our diet.

The Red Peppers are low in Calories and rich in Antioxidants, rich in Vitamin C and A and provide a substantial source of various nutrients and health benefits.

Canadian Field Newsletter

Canadian Field Music Day

The Canadian Field Music Department hosted a Fall Music Day at Bloor Church under the inspiring theme, "Steps to Christ." Throughout the program, musicians presented songs thoughtfully connected to each chapter of Sister White's book *Steps to Christ*. In addition, speakers shared uplifting messages that corresponded with each topic, creating a rich spiritual experience for all who attended.

The full program will soon be available on the IMS Canada Official YouTube channel.



Nursing Home Visit In Toronto

On September 27th, a group of singers from the Bloor Street, Hamilton and Woodbridge churches, went out to bring some joy to the residents of the Wesburn Manor long term care facility.





Canadian Field Western Conference

The Canadian Field Western Conference took place in Calgary, AB, from October 10–12, 2025, with the uplifting theme, “That They May Be One.” Throughout the weekend, various speakers shared messages that emphasized unity and spiritual growth, bringing encouragement to all who attended.

We praise God that during this blessed gathering, one precious individual publicly dedicated their life to Christ through baptism. May the Lord abundantly bless this new member of His family and guide them faithfully in their walk with Him.

Conference highlights—including sermons and special music—will soon be available on the official IMS Canada YouTube channel.



Sing the Light 2

Busking Day - Calgary

With the continued passion sparked by the first busking event last spring, our youth musicians sought another opportunity to share the light of the gospel through heavenly music, bringing glory to our Father in Heaven.

Last fall, youth from across the Western region dedicated their time and talents, gathering to practice faithfully for this special event. On November 8th, at Stephen Avenue Walk, they presented a total of 18 songs in the midst of the bustling street.

Despite the cold weather, many pedestrians stopped to listen as our youth musicians sang and played, sharing the light and love of our Heavenly Father through music.

We prayed that each person who paused—even for a moment—felt their hearts warmed and blessed, despite the chilly air.

With the Lord's leading, our youth musicians and the Canadian Field Music Department hope to continue to “let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16, NKJV).

by Mami Matsumoto



Retirement Home Visit in Alberta



The Calgary church youth group has been regularly visiting two retirement homes—one located in downtown Calgary with a monthly Sabbath program, and another in Chestermere with biweekly Sunday visits. During each visit, the youth joyfully share their musical talents through singing and instrumental pieces, bringing comfort, encouragement, and companionship to the residents.

May these songs be a source of joy and peace to all who hear them, softening hearts and opening a path for the present truth. And may God richly bless our dedicated young people for their willingness to serve and for shining Christ's love through their ministry.



Music Program in Hamilton

The Hamilton Church hosted a special local music program on October 18th under the uplifting theme, "Songs of Thanksgiving." The sanctuary was filled with a warm and joyful spirit as members gathered to reflect on the countless blessings God has bestowed throughout the year. The congregation was blessed with heartfelt musical offerings from members of all ages—children, youth, and adults—each one expressing gratitude and praise to the Lord through song, instruments, and testimonies.

May the Lord richly bless everyone who contributed their time and talents, as well as all who attended. And may these songs continue to inspire thankful hearts, drawing us closer to Him in praise and devotion.



A Prayer's Cry Part 2

Based on 1 Samuel 1-2

By Edda Tedford (BC)

Hannah called the baby Samuel, because she asked him from The LORD, giving thanks to Him from the depth of her heart, She will perform her vow according to her spoken word.

To the soon yearly sacrifice, she will not go,
Telling to her husband so,
But will wait till Samuel is weaned, then bring him to be lent To the LORD forever, because He had heard her fervent Prayer.
Hannah deeply loved her son, nursing him with joy,
Yet at times could not prevent to cry,
As for only a few years would have him,
Then, shedding tears her eyes made dim.
She uttered to Samuel all the words of God she knew,
Letting to hear his ear to impress his mind
With what is holy and divine,

Pleading with God to make this precious child a kind,
Faithful servant in His Service, pious, dedicated, consecrated.

.....
As soon the boy was old to understand what it meant
That he will be given to the LORD, Hannah gently
And tenderly made plain to him his destiny.
Then when Samuel was weaned, the time was near to come,
Where he forever is to leave his happy home....
Then soon the journey to the yearly sacrifice begun.
Hannah with Elkanah with their son in a new coat,
Took a bottle of wine, a hint of flour and three bullocks,



Making their way to the house of the LORD in
Shiloh,
Hannah performing there her vow.
After slaying one bullock, Hannah brought
Samuel to Eli,
Saying she was that woman standing near him
Intensely praying.
“I asked the LORD for this child, and God
graciously answered My petition. It is my sincere
desire to lend Samuel to God all the days of his
life.”
Such were the words of Elkanah’s wife.
Samuel tightly clinging to his mother,
shyly looking into Eli’s face,
Hannah gently loosing now her boy’s embrace,
And with a last, loving kiss with tears
Dedicated this beloved child to God to be forever
His!
Eli warmly embraced the trembling little boy,

Who to this aging priest would bring much joy.

.....
Then by the spirit of the LORD Hannah
Did give utterance to pray a song of praise
Standing beside her husband Elkanah:

Rejoicing in the LORD the Rock,
The God of her salvation, the mighty One
Above all nations.
He is a God of knowledge, by Whom are the
actions of all
Weighted, the weak with strength are girded,
The proud and mighty men abated.
The wicked the defenseless have oppressed,
God will judge at His behest.
The LORD will judge the ends of the earth,
All men according to their works.
He keeps safe the feet of His beloved saints
But cuts all down who give offense.
Upon the vile and haughty He will thunder,
To be trodden under,
But lifts up on high the humble and despised,
Yet in Heaven highly recognized... Amen.

.....
Samuel, being a child, ministered unto God
Before Eli the priest, clothed with a linen Ephod.
And Hannah made him a coat every year,
When for the yearly feast they did appear.
For lending Samuel to God, the LORD blessed
Hannah
With three precious sons, two daughters,
To her a joy above all others.... Amen.

End Note:

Were it not for that urgent, intense prayer from
this humbly pleading Hannah, there would have
never been this faithful and beloved prophet
Samuel, who became such a blessing to Old
Israel.

There is a mighty power in prayer, and everyone
is encouraged, when in sincerity of the heart
comes boldly with any intricate, seemingly
unsolvable problem with a submissive trusting
spirit—to the throne of grace to obtain help in
time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

Thanksgiving must not be forgotten and a vow
paid as promised, otherwise there will be no
great blessing.

God rewards the petitioner in that same measure
as to how highly he esteems and values His
blessing.
Amen.



Australia



Italy



Madagascar



Puerto Rico



The Philippines



USA



Chile



Argentina



Greece



Martha



South Africa



Mexico



“When there was no eye to pity, no arm to save, His eye pitied and His arm wrought salvation. Then he laid help upon One that was mighty, saying, Save them from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom. . . . Jesus became man’s substitute and surety. He became responsible for the race. Their sins were imputed to Him. He assumed all their debts. He pledged His word to atone for their transgression, and He would form in them a character like His in the grand plan of salvation, imputing to man His own righteous character. Through faith in Christ they would be gathered together under His banner, His sheltering care, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings.”

–*Manuscript 43b*, 1891



**International
Missionary Society**

Seventh-day Adventist Church
Reform Movement