

Sabbath School Today
With the 1888 Message Dynamic

The Holy Spirit and Spirituality
Lesson 7. The Holy Spirit and the Fruit of the Spirit

When God finished His work of creation, He pronounced it “good.” God doesn’t create “bad,” so we can therefore conclude that fruit that comes from Him is good. When Eve decided to ignore God’s instructions against eating of the forbidden tree, she rebelled against Him, and substituted her own plan to improve on what God had called “good.” Ever since Eden, humans have been trying to create substitutes for God’s genuine creation.

Our lesson this week uses the example of how disappointing it is to discover that what looks like a genuine lemon, is in fact a fake. It would be silly to think that if one worked harder, longer, and with great skill to make the fake lemon look more real than it is, it eventually would turn into a real lemon. Yet, Eve was doing a version of that kind of thinking. God had pronounced His creation “good” which included her. She thought that God had withheld something good from her so she tried to improve on His good creation. When sin entered the world, the “good” that God had created was ruined. Out of great *agape*-love for His creatures, the Godhead already had a plan to heal and recreate, but ever since they told Adam and Eve about the plan, humans have been trying to improve it.

One of the more common misconceptions about the 1888 message is that it teaches that since righteousness is by faith, our efforts to obey contribute nothing to our salvation, so we don’t need to obey. Ironically, some believe the message teaches the exact opposite, that perfect obedience is required before Christ can return to earth. This confusion becomes so frustrating that the message is deemed wrong and useless, and further study is abandoned.

The good news of the 1888 message rests on a proper understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit. Like the sacrifices in the ancient Jewish temple services, human actions in performing these rites cannot make us perfect. They were only types, pointing forward to the Great High Priest who provided the sacrifice and the blood with which to administer the forgiveness and restoration the human race so desperately needs.

A. T. Jones, one of the 1888 “messengers” wrote: “This sanctuary, priesthood, sacrifice, and ministry of Christ’s does *make perfect* in *eternal redemption* every one who by faith enters into the service, and so receives that which that service is established to give.” [1] Notice that it is important that we “enter into the service,” rather than just go through the motions.

Jones is using Hebrews 6:1-4 to describe that the ancient typical services were an “elementary teaching about the Christ” (vs. 1), but the writer of Hebrews urges us to

“press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God. ... For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit” (Heb. 6:1-4).

Jones continues: “What are dead works? Death itself is the consequence of sin. Dead works therefore are works that have sin in them. Then the purging of the conscience from dead works is the so entirely cleansing of the soul from sin, by the blood of Christ, through the eternal Spirit, that in the life and works of the believer in Jesus sin shall have no place; the works shall be only works of faith, and the life shall be only the life of faith ...” [2]

The point he is making is that since it was not possible that the literal blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins, something else is being considered. If there is to be “no more conscience of sins” the sacrificial services were mere types of the real power that takes away sin. Perfection was the aim in the entire ministry that was performed under the Levitical laws, yet perfection was not attained by any of those actions. All the good works in the world cannot recreate a sin-damaged heart into a perfect one.

The sacrifices performed by the earthly high priest could no more have recreated a human heart than I could transform a plastic lemon into a real one, no matter how exquisite my workmanship. Why? Because I have no creative power. But, Someone who does have that creative power was willing to give up His rightful position in heaven, assume the likeness of sinful flesh in order to qualify to be our High Priest, and with His own blood worked out our salvation in the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched.

The Holy Spirit bears witness to us (Heb. 10:15) that we have accepted this new and living covenant which Christ consecrated for us. “This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put My laws upon their heart, and upon their mind I will write them ... and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more” (Heb. 10:16, 17). Why do we need a witness?

“For we through the Spirit, by faith, are waiting for the hope of righteousness” (Gal. 5:5). E. J. Waggoner, the other 1888 “messenger,” explains the verse this way: “Don’t imagine that this verse teaches that having the Spirit we must *wait* for righteousness. Not by any means. The Spirit *brings* righteousness. ... Notice that it does not say that we through the Spirit hope *for* righteousness. Rather, we wait for the hope of righteousness by faith, that is, the hope which the possession of righteousness brings.” [3]

Waggoner then develops a detailed explanation of this point:

“(1) The Spirit of God is ‘the Holy Spirit of promise.’ The possession of the Spirit ensures to us the promise of God.

“(2) That which God has promised to us as children of Abraham is an inheritance. The Holy Spirit is the pledge of this inheritance until the purchased possession is redeemed and bestowed upon us. Ephesians 1:13, 14.

“(3) This inheritance that is promised is the new heavens and the new earth, in which righteousness dwells. 2 Peter 3:13. [This inheritance is, we have the hope of righteousness.]

“(4) The Spirit brings righteousness. He is Christ’s representative, the means by which Christ Himself, who is our righteousness, comes to dwell in our hearts. John 14:16-18.

“(5) Therefore the hope which the Spirit brings is the hope of an inheritance in the kingdom of God, the earth made new.

“(6) The righteousness which the Spirit brings to us is the righteousness of the law of God. Romans 8:4; 7:14. By the Spirit it is written in our hearts instead of on tables of stone. 2 Corinthians 3:3.

“(7) The sum of the whole matter is this: If, instead of thinking ourselves so powerful that we can do the law, we will allow the Holy Spirit to come in that we may be filled with the righteousness of the law, we will have living hope dwelling in us. The hope of the Spirit—the hope of righteousness by faith—has no element of uncertainty in it. It is positive assurance. In nothing else is there any hope. He who does not have ‘the righteousness which is of God by faith’ has no hope whatever. Only Christ in us is ‘the hope of glory.’” [4]

No matter how we try to fix the exterior of our characters, we will never transform them into living the law of God in Spirit and truth. The good news is that we don’t have to. God through the Gift worked out by His Son, and gifted to us through the working of the Holy Spirit has made that a “positive assurance” for us. May God give us belief in that blessed assurance.

—Arlene Hill

Endnotes:

[1] A. T. Jones, *The Consecrated Way to Christian Perfection*, p. 83 (Glad Tidings ed.).

[2] Ibid.

[3] E. J. Waggoner, *The Glad Tidings*, p. 111 (Glad Tidings ed.).

[4] Ibid., p 112.

Notes:

1. Bible texts are from the *New American Standard Bible*.

2. Pastor Paul Penno’s video of this lesson is on the Internet at:

<https://youtu.be/VpiLg9PyuT4>

3. You may subscribe to the e-mail version of *Sabbath School Today* by sending a request to sabbathschooltoday@1888message.org