AWWOP Second Sabbath 17

AW WOP

FLAG: WOP/Second Sabbath

HEAD: The Assurance of Salvation

SUBHEAD: Let grace transform your will and actions

BY ELLEN G. WHITE

Word count: 1,715

“Let the subject be made distinct and plain that it is not possible to effect anything in our standing before God or in the gift of God to us through creature merit. Should faith and works purchase the gift of salvation for anyone, then the Creator is under obligation to the creature.

“Here is an opportunity for falsehood to be accepted as truth. If any man can merit salvation by anything he may do, then he is in the same position as the Catholic to do penance for his sins. Salvation, then, is partly of debt, that may be earned as wages. If man cannot, by any of his good works, merit salvation, then it must be wholly of grace, received by man as a sinner because he receives and believes in Jesus. It is wholly a free gift. Justification by faith is placed beyond controversy. And all this controversy is ended, as soon as the matter is settled that the merits of fallen man in his good works can never procure eternal life for him.

**Wholly of Grace**

“The light given me of God places this important subject above any question in my mind. Justification is wholly of grace and not procured by any works that fallen man can do. The matter has been presented before me in clear lines that if the rich man has money and possessions, and he makes an offering of the same to the Lord, false ideas come in to spoil the offering by the thought he has merited the favor of God, that the Lord is under obligation to him to regard him with special favor because of this gift.

“There has been too little educating in clear lines upon this point. The Lord has lent man His own goods in trust—means which He requires be handed back to Him when His providence signifies and the upbuilding of His cause demands it. The Lord gave the intellect. He gave the health and the ability to gather earthly gain. He created the things of earth. He manifests His divine power to develop all its riches. They are His fruits from His own husbandry. He gave the sun, the clouds, the showers of rain, to cause vegetation to flourish.

“As God’s employed servants you gathered in His harvest to use what your wants required in an economical way and hold the balance for the call of God. You can say with David, ‘For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee’ (1 Chron. 29:14, KJV). So the satisfaction of creature merit cannot be in returning to the Lord His own, for it was always His own property to be used as He in His providence should direct.

**God’s Favor Forfeited**

“By rebellion and apostasy man forfeited the favor of God; not his rights, for he could have no value except as it was invested in God’s dear Son. This point must be understood. He forfeited those privileges which God in His mercy presented him as a free gift, a treasure in trust to be used to advance His cause and His glory, to benefit the beings He had made. The moment the workmanship of God refused obedience to the laws of God’s kingdom, that moment he became disloyal to the government of God and he made himself entirely unworthy of all the blessings wherewith God had favored him.

“This was the position of the human race after man divorced himself from God by transgression. Then he was no longer entitled to a breath of air, a ray of sunshine, or a particle of food. And the reason why man was not annihilated was because God so loved him that He made the gift of His dear Son that He should suffer the penalty of his transgression. Christ proposed to become man’s surety and substitute, that man, through matchless grace, should have another trial—a second probation—having the experience of Adam and Eve as a warning not to transgress God’s law as they did. And inasmuch as man enjoys the blessings of God in the gift of the sunshine and the gift of food, there must be on the part of man a bowing before God in thankful acknowledgment that all things come of God. Whatever is rendered back to Him is only His own who has given it.

“Man broke God’s law, and through the Redeemer new and fresh promises were made on a different basis. All blessings must come through a Mediator. Now every member of the human family is given wholly into the hands of Christ, and whatever we possess—whether it is the gift of money, of houses, of lands, of reasoning powers, of physical strength, of intellectual talents—in this present life, and the blessings of the future life, are placed in our possession as God’s treasures to be faithfully expended for the benefit of man. Every gift is stamped with the cross and bears the image and superscription of Jesus Christ. All things come of God. From the smallest benefits up to the largest blessing, all flow through the one Channel—a superhuman mediation sprinkled with the blood that is of value beyond estimate because it was the life of God in His Son.

“Now not a soul can give God anything that is not already His. Bear this in mind: ‘All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee’ (1 Chron. 29:14, KJV). This must be kept before the people wherever we go—that we possess nothing, can offer nothing in value, in work, in faith, which we have not first received of God and upon which He can lay His hand any time and say, they are Mine—gifts and blessings and endowments I entrusted to you, not to enrich yourself, but for wise improvement to benefit the world.

**All Is of God**

“The creation belongs to God. The Lord could, by neglecting man, stop his breath at once. All that he is and all that he has pertains to God. The entire world is God’s. Man’s houses, his personal acquirements, whatever is valuable or brilliant, is God’s own endowment. It is all His gift to be returned back to God in helping to cultivate the heart of man. The most splendid offerings may be laid upon the altar of God, and men will praise, exalt, and laud the giver because of His liberality. In what? ‘All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee’ (1 Chron. 29:14, KJV). No work of man can merit for him the pardoning love of God, but the love of God pervading the soul will lead him to do those things which were always required of God and that he should do with pleasure. He has done only that which duty ever required of him.

“The angels of God in heaven that have never fallen do His will continually. In all that they do upon their busy errands of mercy to our world, shielding, guiding, and guarding the workmanship of God for ages—both the just and the unjust— they can truthfully say, ‘All is Thine. Of Thine own do we give Thee.’ Would that the human eye could catch glimpses of the service of the angels! Would that the imagination could grasp and dwell upon the rich, the glorious service of the angels of God and the conflicts in which they engage in behalf of men to protect, to lead, to win, and to draw them from Satan’s snares. How different would be the conduct, the religious sentiment! . . .

**Supernatural Power for Supernatural Works**

“The reason so many fail to be successful laborers is that they act as though God depended on them, and they are to suggest to God what He chooses to do with them, in the place of their depending on God. They lay aside the supernatural power and fail to do the supernatural work. They are all the time depending on their own and their brethren’s human powers. They are narrow in themselves and are always judging after their finite human comprehension. They need uplifting, for they have no power from on high. God gives us bodies, strength of brain, time and opportunity in which to work. It is required that all be put to the tax. With humanity and divinity combined you can accomplish a work as enduring as eternity. When men think the Lord has made a mistake in their individual cases, and they appoint their own work, they will meet with disappointment.

“ ‘By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God’ (Eph. 2:8). Here is truth that will unfold the subject to your mind if you do not close it to the rays of light. Eternal life is an infinite gift. This places it outside the possibility of our earning it, because it is infinite. It must necessarily be a gift. As a gift it must be received by faith, and gratitude and praise be offered to God. Solid faith will not lead anyone away into fanaticism or into acting the slothful servant. It is the bewitching power of Satan that leads men to look to themselves in the place of looking to Jesus. The righteousness of Christ must go before us if the glory of the Lord becomes our reward. If we do God’s will, we may accept large blessings as God’s free gift, but not because of any merit in us; this is of no value. Do the work of Christ, and you will honor God and come off more than conquerors through Him that has loved us and given His life for us, that we should have life and salvation in Jesus Christ.

**BIO:** This article is excepted from *Faith and Works* (Nashville: Southern Pub. Assn., 1979), pages 19-28. Seventh-day Adventists believe that Ellen G. White (1827-1915) exercised the biblical gift of prophecy during than 70 years of public ministry.

**PULLQUOTE:**

“The reason so many fail to be successful laborers is that they act as though God depended on them, and they are to suggest to God what He chooses to do with them, in the place of their depending on God.”

**QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND SHARING:**

1. How do faith and works relate to divine grace and redemption?

2. How can we experience the assurance of salvation?

3. What can we bring to God as we accept His invitation of grace? What can we do for God once we have committed ourselves to this grace?