



d'Sozo

REVERSING THE WORST EVIL



The Works of Atonement

THE METHOD OF SUCCESS

Before the “Passing of the Time”

“Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.

“And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God.”

—Leviticus 23:27, 28

But after 1844...

“There is no intimation of a space of time between the end of the [2300] days and the cleansing of the sanctuary. Whatever it may be, the work of cleansing it immediately follows the end of the days.”

—James White, *Review and Herald*, January 1851

But after 1844...

- ◆ **Pre-Advent Judgment—1855**
- ◆ **Investigative Judgment—1857**

The Logic was Simple

“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.”

—Revelation 22:12

Filling in the Picture

- ◆ **Third Angel's Message**
- ◆ **Loud Cry**
- ◆ **Latter Rain**
- ◆ **Close of Probation**
- ◆ **Time of Jacob's Trouble**
- ◆ **Second Coming**
- ◆ **Millennium**
- ◆ **Resurrection and Destruction of the the Wicked**
- ◆ **Re-Creation of the Earth**

But What About... “Atonement”

- ◆ **At-one-ment**

So, What About... “At-one-ment”

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!”

—Deuteronomy 6:4

“Jesus answered him, ‘The first of all the commandments is: “Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.” This is the first commandment.’”

—Mark 12:29, 30

So, What About... “At-one-ment”

“I and My Father are one.”

—John 10:30

“Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.

“Jesus answered them, ‘Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?’ The Jews answered Him, saying, ‘For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a man, make Yourself God.’ Jesus answered them,... ‘If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me.’”

—John 10:31-37

So, What About... “At-one-ment”

“The works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.”

—John 5:36

So, What About... “At-one-ment”

“Jesus answered them... ‘I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father.’

“They answered and said to Him, ‘Abraham is our father.’ Jesus said to them, ‘If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham.’”

—John 8:38, 39

So, What About... “At-one-ment”

“Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

—John 14:10, 11

So, What About... “At-one-ment”

“...the priest shall make atonement....”

Leviticus 4:20, 26, 31, 35

Leviticus 5:6, 10, 13, 16, 18

Leviticus 6:7

Leviticus 12:8

Leviticus 14:18, 20, 31

Leviticus 15:15, 30

Leviticus 16:30

Leviticus 19:22

Numbers 15:25, 28

So, What About... “At-one-ment”

“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”

—John 17:20–23

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—John 14:10, 11

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.”

—John 14:12

What Kind of “Works”?

“And John, calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to Jesus, saying, ‘Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?’

“When the men had come to Him, they said, ‘John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?”’

“And that very hour He cured many of infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight.

What Kind of “Works”?

“Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.’”

—Luke 7:19-23

What Kind of “Works”?

“The evidence of [Christ’s] divinity was seen in its adaptation to the needs of suffering humanity. His glory was shown in His condescension to our low estate....

“The principle of the Baptist’s own life of self-abnegation was the principle of the Messiah’s kingdom.”

—Desire of Ages, 217

What Kind of “Works”?

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“All those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff.”

—Luke 4:28, 29

What Kind of “Works”?

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.”

—Isaiah 61:1, 2

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What About *Our* “Works”?

“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in *Me* through their word; that they all may be one, as *You, Father,* are in *Me*, and *I* in *You*; that they also may be one in *Us*, that the world may believe that *You* sent *Me*. And the glory which *You* gave *Me* I have given them, that they may be one just as *We* are one: *I* in them, and *You* in *Me*; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that *You* have sent *Me*, and have loved them as *You* have loved *Me*.”

—John 17:20–23

What About *Our* “Works”?

“Is this not the fast that I have chosen...?”

—Isaiah 58:6

What About *Our* “Works”?

“If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the LORD honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

—Isaiah 58:12-14

What About *Our* “Works”?

“I cannot too strongly urge all our church members, all who are true missionaries, all who believe the third angel’s message, all who turn away their feet from the Sabbath, to consider the message of the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah. The work of beneficence enjoined in this chapter is the work that God requires His people to do at this time. It is a work of His own appointment.”

—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, 265

What About *Our* “Works”?

“Then your light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you; The glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, ‘Here I am.’... Then your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday. The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.”

—Isaiah 58:8–11

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What About *Our* “Works”?

“Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh? Then....

“If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then....”

—Isaiah 58:6–10

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“If **you** take away the yoke from **your** midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if **you** extend **your** soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then....”

—Isaiah 58:6–9

The Connection

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.”

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—Isaiah 61:1-3

The Connection

“And they shall rebuild the old ruins, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations.”

—Isaiah 61:4

“Those from among you shall build the old waste places; You shall raise up the foundations of many generations; And you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Streets to Dwell In.”

—Isaiah 58:12

A Required Work

“I cannot too strongly urge all our church members, all who are true missionaries, all who believe the third angel’s message, all who turn away their feet from the Sabbath, to consider the message of the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah. The work of beneficence enjoined in this chapter is the work that God requires His people to do at this time. It is a work of His own appointment.”

—Testimonies, vol. 6, 265

A Last-Days Work

“We are not left in doubt as to where the message applies, and the time of its marked fulfillment, for we read: ‘They that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in.’ God’s memorial, the seventh-day Sabbath, the sign of His work in creating the world, has been displaced by the man of sin. God’s people have a special work to do in repairing the breach that has been made in His law; and the nearer we approach the end, the more urgent this work becomes.

A Last-Days Work

“All who love God will show that they bear His sign by keeping His commandments. They are the restorers of paths to dwell in. The Lord says: ‘If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight... then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth.’

A Last-Days Work

“Thus genuine medical missionary work is bound up inseparably with the keeping of God’s commandments, of which the Sabbath is especially mentioned, since it is the great memorial of God’s creative work. Its observance is bound up with the work of restoring the moral image of God in man. This is the ministry which God’s people are to carry forward at this time. This ministry, rightly performed, will bring rich blessings to the church.”

—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, 265, 266

A United Work

“The fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah contains present truth for the people of God. Here we see how medical missionary work and the gospel ministry are to be bound together as the message is given to the world. Upon those who keep the Sabbath of the Lord is laid the responsibility of doing a work of mercy and benevolence. Medical missionary work is to be bound up with the message, and sealed with the seal of God.”

—Evangelism, 516, 517

A Benevolent Work

“I have been instructed to refer our people to the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah. Read this chapter carefully and understand the kind of ministry that will bring life into the churches. The work of the gospel is to be carried by means of our liberality as well as by our labors. When you meet suffering souls who need help, give it them. When you find those who are hungry, feed them. In doing this you will be working in lines of Christ’s ministry. The Master’s holy work was a benevolent work. Let our people everywhere be encouraged to have a part in it.”

—Medical Ministry, 263

A Compassionate Work

“[Isaiah 58] is the work God requires His people to do. ... With the work of advocating the commandments of God and repairing the breach that has been made in the law of God, we are to mingle compassion for suffering humanity. We are to show supreme love to God; we are to exalt His memorial, which has been trodden down by unholy feet; and with this we are to manifest mercy, benevolence, and the tenderest pity for the fallen race. ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.’ As a people we must take hold of this work. Love revealed for suffering humanity gives significance and power to the truth.”

—Welfare Ministry, 32

A Sanctifying Work

“We cannot keep [the Sabbath] holy unless we serve the Lord in the manner brought to view in the scripture:...

A Sanctifying Work

“We cannot keep [the Sabbath] holy unless we serve the Lord in the manner brought to view in the scripture: ‘Is not this the fast that I have chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?’ This is the work that rests upon every soul who accepts the service of Christ.”

—Manuscript Releases, vol. 5, 33

Christ's Manner of Work

“Let the instruction given in the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah be studied.... Wonderful would be the results if ministers and church members would be converted, and adopt Christ's manner of witnessing to the power of the Lord.

—Paulson Collection, 297

A Successful Work

“Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’”

—Ministry of Healing, 143

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REVERSING THE WORST EVIL

1

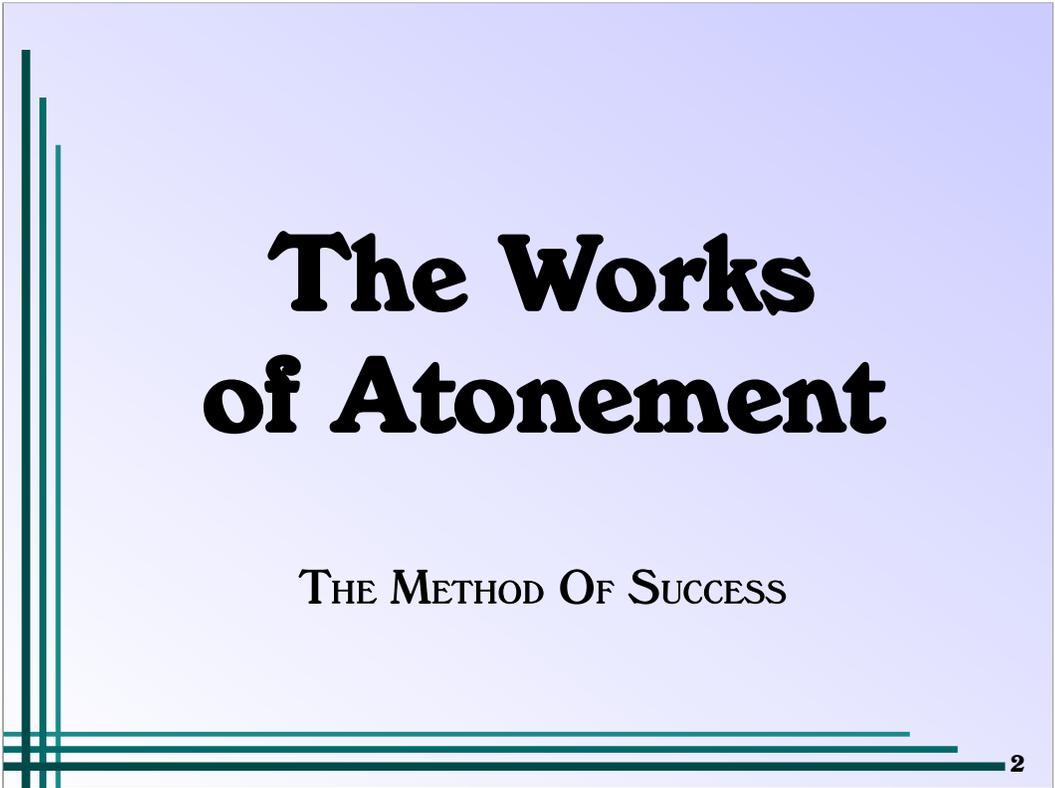
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The Works of Atonement

THE METHOD OF SUCCESS

2

As Seventh-day Adventists, we often think of Atonement in connection with one of our distinctive doctrines—the 2300-day prophecy and the anti-typical day of atonement which began in 1844.

That's where we'll start today, but our main focus will be more basic—the idea and process of atonement itself.

Saying it like that sounds kind of abstract and theoretical. Don't worry. It's not. If anything, it's uncomfortably tangible and practical.

Before the “Passing of the Time”

“Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD.

“And you shall do no work on that same day, for it is the Day of Atonement, to make atonement for you before the LORD your God.”

—Leviticus 23:27, 28

Long before anyone saw prophetic significance in 1844, we had been given instruction on the day of atonement.

We were told when it was...

what it was...

and what we were and weren't supposed to do.

But the purpose of it all was to “make atonement.”

But after 1844...

“There is no intimation of a space of time between the end of the [2300] days and the cleansing of the sanctuary. Whatever it may be, the work of cleansing it immediately follows the end of the days.”

—James White, *Review and Herald*, January 1851

4

Well, the whole issue of the “passing of the time” in 1844—what we eventually began calling the “Great Disappointment”—muddied the waters considerably.

It wasn't a simple matter to figure out what had happened and why. The recognition of the heavenly sanctuary and the antitypical day of atonement came fairly quickly, but the question of what it all meant took years to resolve.

As late as 1851, James White would write—

CLICK

But after 1844...

- ◆ Pre-Advent Judgment—1855
- ◆ Investigative Judgment—1857

Eventually, the pieces started coming together, and the not-yet-formally-organized Sabbath-keeping Adventists began to understand the “cleansing of the sanctuary.”

First came the recognition of... **CLICK** ...a work of judgment prior to the second coming, and then finally... **CLICK** ...the coining of the phrase “Investigative Judgment.”

The Logic was Simple

“And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.”

—Revelation 22:12

Since Jesus was to treat the sheep and goats differently at the second coming, it seemed obvious that some process of judgment had to take place before that time to determine who was who.

Filling in the Picture

- ◆ **Third Angel's Message**
- ◆ **Loud Cry**
- ◆ **Latter Rain**
- ◆ **Close of Probation**
- ◆ **Time of Jacob's Trouble**
- ◆ **Second Coming**
- ◆ **Millennium**
- ◆ **Resurrection and Destruction of the the Wicked**
- ◆ **Re-Creation of the Earth**

But this understanding didn't just pop up out of nowhere all by itself. It was a part of a much larger picture of the end times that included all this:

CLICK

In the midst of this whole panorama of end time events, it's easy to lose sight of the basic idea of atonement. But that's what we want to look at—

But What About... “Atonement”

- ◆ *At-one-ment*

8

It was William Tyndale, back in the 1530s, who went looking for an English noun to translate the Hebrew yom ha-kippurim. Not satisfied with the idea of “expiate” as used in the Latin Vulgate, he turned to the phrase “at one.”

Tyndale took the adjective and turned it into a noun by tacking on the suffix “ment,” which means “a state of.”

And that’s where this word... **CLICK** ...came from.

As it turns out, the idea of “oneness” is pretty important in the Bible’s scheme of things.

So, What About... “At-one-ment”

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!”

—Deuteronomy 6:4

“Jesus answered him, ‘The first of all the commandments is: “Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.” This is the first commandment.’”

—Mark 12:29, 30

Deuteronomy 6:4 is pretty much the foundation of the whole idea of monotheism. Judaism just wouldn't be the same without it.

You may remember that Jesus quoted this passage once, and it seems He saw more than ordinary importance in it.

CLICK and READ

But Jesus had a lot more to say on “oneness”—

So, What About... “At-one-ment”

“I and My Father are one.”

—John 10:30

“Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him.

“Jesus answered them, ‘Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?’ The Jews answered Him, saying, ‘For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a man, make Yourself God.’ Jesus answered them,... ‘If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me.’”

—John 10:31-37

10

READ first verse.

When Jesus made this comment, He wasn't speaking in some offhand manner. The circumstances were tense enough that He was very much aware of what He was saying. The account continues...

CLICK and READ

Now then, notice this: Jesus was defending His claim to oneness with the Father, and what did He say?

“Look at My works! If they don't match the Father's works, then don't believe Me!”

And this isn't the only time He made that point...

So, What About... “At-one-ment”

**“The works which the Father has given Me to finish—
the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that
the Father has sent Me.”**

—John 5:36

Notice what is cited as the evidence for Christ’s Messiahship—“the very works that I do.”

Don’t miss the concept: the similarity of a person’s works to the works of his or her “Father” is evidence of that relationship.

And that seems to be true in both a positive and a negative way:

So, What About... “At-one-ment”

“Jesus answered them... ‘I speak what I have seen with My Father, and you do what you have seen with your father.’

“They answered and said to Him, ‘Abraham is our father.’ Jesus said to them, ‘If you were Abraham’s children, you would do the works of Abraham.’”

—John 8:38, 39

In this situation, what the Scribes and Pharisees were doing was just as much evidence of their “father” as Jesus’ own works were evidence of His Father.

To dispel any remaining doubt, in verse 44 Jesus told them point blank, “You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do.”

But the link between “oneness” and “works” is most emphatically expressed in chapter 14:

So, What About... “At-one-ment”

“Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

—John 14:10, 11

There may have been many reasons to believe that Jesus was “in the Father,” and that “the Father” was “in” Jesus. But the last, best argument, the most convincing evidence, is always the “works” that come from that relationship.

Just hold that thought for a moment, because we need to look at another idea.

When we read about “atonement,” perhaps the single most consistent detail is this:

So, What About... “At-one-ment”

“...the priest shall make atonement....”

Leviticus 4:20, 26, 31, 35

Leviticus 5:6, 10, 13, 16, 18

Leviticus 6:7

Leviticus 12:8

Leviticus 14:18, 20, 31

Leviticus 15:15, 30

Leviticus 16:30

Leviticus 19:22

Numbers 15:25, 28

In fact, this exact phrase shows up twenty times.

CLICK

The most obvious implication of this is that we should expect Jesus' role as our Priest to be connected with the idea of being one with God.

So it's no surprise to find these ideas showing up prominently in John chapter 17, Jesus' "High Priestly Prayer."

So, What About... "At-one-ment"

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me."

—John 17:20-23

15

This is one of those Bible passages which is obviously a step or two beyond normal human thinking. It's hard to imagine how "Item A" can be "in" "Item B" at the same time as "Item B" is "in" "Item A."

So for the sake of time and sanity, let's just get over it. God is smarter than we are. That's good; now let's move on.

Notice that "oneness" is again cited as the evidence to the world of Jesus' Messiahship.

CLICK for highlighting.

So, What About... "At-one-ment"

"I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me."

—John 17:20–23

16

But this time it's not just His "at-one-ment" with the Father, it's our "at-one-ment" with both of them that is the evidence He was sent to earth by God.

This is not something to be taken lightly!

And another detail: notice the provision Jesus says He made to accomplish all this...

CLICK for highlighting.

So, What About... “At-one-ment”

“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. **And the glory which You gave Me I have given them**, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.”

—John 17:20–23

17

What is the “glory” of the Lord? What did Moses see when he prayed “show me Your glory”?

God’s character, right?

“...merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...”

That’s what Jesus gives us, so we can be one with the Godhead and provide the evidence of Jesus’ Messiahship.

And this is no small thing “done in a corner”! Let’s go back to a verse we looked at a while ago:

So, What About... “At-one-ment”

“Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.”

—John 14:10, 11

This is John 14 again. We’ve already looked at this, but I want you to see the context as we look at the next verse.

So, What About... “At-one-ment”

“Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

—John 14:10, 11

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.”

—John 14:12

Jesus says that those who believe in Him will do even greater works than He did.

How?

Oneness with Christ enables believers to carry on far more extensive “works” than Jesus did while He was here—at least geographically. That may sound like a cop-out of sorts, but we’re talking about world-wide, 100% population exposure, and that’s no small task.

OK... hold that thought—along with the other one—while we look at something else.

What Kind of “Works”?

“And John, calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to Jesus, saying, ‘Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?’

“When the men had come to Him, they said, ‘John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, “Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?”’

“And that very hour He cured many of infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight.

It seems fair—if works are a sign of both Jesus’ role as God’s Messiah and our oneness with God—to ask what kind of works we are talking about.

The things I always used to think of here were the dramatic, obviously supernatural miracles: walking on water, multiplying bread, raising the dead... that sort of thing.

But is there anywhere in the Bible that Jesus actually specifies what kind of “works” it is that provides this evidence?

Well, “Yes,” and “No.”

This time the story is in Luke chapter 7: **CLICK**

What Kind of “Works”?

“Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.’”

—Luke 7:19-23

Jesus doesn't explicitly say, “OK everyone! Please notice that these six categories of good works are the specific evidence of My Messiahship.”

But providing the evidence of His Messiahship was exactly what He was doing for John. And when the report of what Jesus was doing came back to him, John the Baptist caught sight of a truth he had never quite understood before.

What Kind of “Works”?

“The evidence of [Christ’s] divinity was seen in its adaptation to the needs of suffering humanity. His glory was shown in His condescension to our low estate....

“The principle of the Baptist’s own life of self-abnegation was the principle of the Messiah’s kingdom.”

—Desire of Ages, 217

So here we have the “greatest of all the prophets” who had been quite seriously confused about the work of God. He had not understood the work of the very Messiah he had heralded! And yet God accepted his work and honored him with success in reaching the multitudes of Judea!

That’s amazing, really. What a comfort for all of us who struggle trying to understand what God would have us to do. Perhaps there’s hope for me yet!

But notice: John’s mistake was in thinking that the Messiah would take a less self-sacrificing role than he himself had been called to. I fear that I am more commonly at fault in exactly the opposite way. How about you? Does anyone else have that tendency?

What Kind of “Works”?

23

What Jesus said to the messengers—“the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear”—reminded the Baptist of Isaiah 61:1. This is the same passage Jesus chose when He “stood up to read” in the synagogue at Nazareth.

The issue in both cases was the same: Is Jesus the Messiah?

And Jesus’ answer was the same: “Look at the works I’m doing.” But unlike John the Baptist, the people of Nazareth weren’t impressed with that sort of thing—and especially not when Jesus brought up the widow of Zaraphath and Naaman the Syrian. The idea that God had been generous to Gentiles was so offensive to them, that...

What Kind of “Works”?

“All those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff.”

—Luke 4:28, 29

So Jesus’ fulfillment of Isaiah 61 was the evidence that He was the Messiah. John recognized it when Jesus pointed it out; the people of Nazareth did not. As a result, John was strengthened prior to his martyrdom and the people of Nazareth tried to kill Jesus.

Once you have the idea in your head, it’s pretty obvious, really.

What Kind of “Works”?

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.”

—Isaiah 61:1, 2

See anything about the Messiah here?

Here's a clue:

What does “Messiah” mean?

What Kind of “Works”?

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.”

—Isaiah 61:1, 2

It means “the anointed One.”

Jesus wasn’t making some strained application of an obscure Bible passage. He read a verse about the Messiah and then told them “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

They knew what He meant, so they wanted to kill Him. But that’s not my point right now.

For us as Seventh-day Adventists—the people who preach that the Anti-typical Day of At-one-ment is in process right now in the heavenly sanctuary—the important thing is to understand what kind of works provide evidence of our oneness with Christ.

What About *Our* “Works”?

“I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in *Me* through their word; that they all may be one, as *You, Father*, are in *Me*, and *I* in *You*; that they also may be one in *Us*, that the world may believe that *You* sent *Me*. And the glory which *You* gave *Me* I have given them, that they may be one just as *We* are one: *I* in them, and *You* in *Me*; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that *You* have sent *Me*, and have loved them as *You* have loved *Me*.”

—John 17:20–23

27

We’ve seen the works which gave evidence of Christ’s oneness with the Father, but what about us? Surely there must be some guidelines for us.

And, in fact, there are. But before we move on to that, let’s look again at Jesus’ prayer in John 17.

CLICK

Twice Jesus says that the oneness of His people with Himself and His Father is the evidence given to the world as proof of His work as the Messiah. But other than that, the main point of the passage is the idea of believers becoming “one” with each other, with Jesus, and with God the Father.

Continue notes on next page:

What About *Our* “Works”?

“Is this not the fast that I have chosen...?”

—Isaiah 58:6

29

Yes, of course you know the passage. Isaiah 58 has the name “Seventh-day Adventist” all over it. This chapter is for us just as much as Isaiah 61 was for Jesus! Why? Because God chose it for us!

CLICK

And, yes, this chapter is definitely for God’s people at the end of time. Notice the closing verses:

What About *Our* “Works”?

“If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy day of the LORD honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the LORD; And I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth, and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the LORD has spoken.”

—Isaiah 58:12-14

Even more direct is this comment—and many others—from the Spirit of Prophecy:

What About *Our* “Works”?

“I cannot too strongly urge all our church members, all who are true missionaries, all who believe the third angel’s message, all who turn away their feet from the Sabbath, to consider the message of the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah. The work of beneficence enjoined in this chapter is the work that God requires His people to do at this time. It is a work of His own appointment.”

—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, 265

Why did Ellen White say that she “cannot too strongly urge” the church to “consider the message of” Isaiah 58? That makes it sound like it’s a big deal of some sort.

Is it really?

Well, take a look at the promises God has given in this chapter:

What About *Our* “Works”?

“Then your light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you; The glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the LORD will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, ‘Here I am.’... Then your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday. The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.”

—Isaiah 58:8–11

If those promises aren't enough to make you think this is important, then I guess I'm not sure what God could have said to persuade you.

When are these promises going to be fulfilled?

The way I see it, these verses paint a picture of the Latter Rain and the Loud Cry going forward; so I hope they are fulfilled as soon as possible.

But there is another way to answer the question, and it's far more important than my hopeful thinking.

Notice these words...

What About *Our* “Works”?

“**Then** your light shall break forth like the morning, your healing shall spring forth speedily, and your righteousness shall go before you; The glory of the LORD shall be your rear guard. **Then** you shall call, and the LORD will answer; You shall cry, and He will say, ‘Here I am.’... **Then** your light shall dawn in the darkness, and your darkness shall be as the noonday. The LORD will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, and strengthen your bones; you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.”

—Isaiah 58:8–11

The word “then” tell us that there is some specific context to these promises. “Then” is not just whenever; “then” is a specific time.

It could mean “Next Thursday at 4:00 P.M.” Maybe it means “A.D. 538” or “1844” or maybe even “1888.”

It doesn’t, of course, as I’m sure most everyone here already knows. It just means “after the stuff that happened before,” but the way to tell is to examine the context, so let’s do that. Since this quotation starts at verse 8, we’ll look at verses 6 and 7. And if you notice that ellipsis—those “dots” right in the middle—that’s the last half of verse 9 and the first half of verse 10 that were dropped out. We’ll want to look at them too.

What About *Our* “Works”?

“Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh? Then....

“If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then....”

—Isaiah 58:6–10

So that's what comes first...

And here are our “thens”....

What About *Our* “Works”?

“Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh? **Then....**

“If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, **then....**”

—Isaiah 58:6–10

The third “then” got lost in the ellipsis.

But now we can see some other words which are probably just as important. Notice these two “ifs”

What About *Our* “Works”?

“Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh? Then....

“**If** you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, **if** you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then....”

—Isaiah 58:6–10

So, just to be clear on this, let me say that I believe the promised blessings of Isaiah 58—which I equate with the Latter Rain and the Loud Cry—will come after God’s people carry out the work assigned them in that same chapter. And I mean carry out that work literally and practically, not in some sanitized, abstract, metaphorical way.

You may or may not agree with my assessment, but bear with me for a moment, and let’s look at what these verses actually say.

What About *Our* “Works”?

“Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, and not hide yourself from your own flesh? Then....

“If you take away the yoke from your midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if you extend your soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then....”

—Isaiah 58:6–10

Maybe the first thing that comes to mind is the thought that this feels a lot like Isaiah 61.

The specific wording isn't the same, but the general thrust is quite similar. One interesting difference is that Isaiah 61 starts out in the first-person-singular: “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me....”

This is different. Here in the 58th chapter we have God's plan for His church as a group. Notice these words:

What About *Our* “Works”?

“Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and that **you** break every yoke? Is it not to share **your** bread with the hungry, and that **you** bring to **your** house the poor who are cast out; When **you** see the naked, that **you** cover him, and not hide **yourself** from **your** own flesh?...

“If **you** take away the yoke from **your** midst, the pointing of the finger, and speaking wickedness, if **you** extend **your** soul to the hungry and satisfy the afflicted soul, then....”

—Isaiah 58:6-9

This is God’s plan for us, but it is inseparably tied to God’s plan for Jesus. Let’s look at the 61st chapter again...

The Connection

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.”

—Isaiah 61:1, 2

When Jesus was reading in the synagogue, He only went this far. It was enough for His purposes just then, and He didn't want to include the next phrase because He knew it would immediately send the Jews off track. You can see why...

The Connection

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God;”

—Isaiah 61:1, 2

Those eight words were more than enough to get His audience dreaming of dead Roman soldiers and Jewish triumph over their hated enemies. “All by the grace of God when the Messiah appears with the rod of iron, of course.”

But that wasn't the way Jesus was going to do His work, even if everyone from John the Baptist on down had been taught that it was.

That's why Jesus stopped before He read that part. But there's more to the passage, so let's go on.

The Connection

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.”

—Isaiah 61:1-3

You can see that the same sort of thought continues on after that one little blip about “vengeance.”

OK, so follow the thread here:

The Connection

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.”

—Isaiah 61:1-3

Jesus is anointed...

The Connection

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.”

—Isaiah 61:1-3

...to carry out what we could call Medical Missionary work...

The Connection

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; **That they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified.**”

—Isaiah 61:1-3

...so that His church can be recognized as *His* church...

The Connection

“The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn, to console those who mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; That they may be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, **that He may be glorified.**”

—Isaiah 61:1-3

...and bring glory to God.

Everybody with me here? Yeah?

OK, good. Let's move on.

Because the next verses tell us *how* God's church is supposed to bring glory to God.

The Connection

“And they shall rebuild the old ruins, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the ruined cities, the desolations of many generations.”

—Isaiah 61:4

“Those from among you shall build the old waste places; You shall raise up the foundations of many generations; And you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of Streets to Dwell In.”

—Isaiah 58:12

46

And, of course, this just happens to be talking about the same thing as

CLICK... Isaiah 58:12

Brothers and sisters, our work is simply the logical outgrowth and continuation of Christ's work. Remember what He said in John 14:12? “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also.”

This is how the third angel's message is to be spread. This is honoring the law of God, and especially the Sabbath of the fourth commandment.

Do you remember this statement?

A Required Work

“I cannot too strongly urge all our church members, all who are true missionaries, all who believe the third angel’s message, all who turn away their feet from the Sabbath, to consider the message of the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah. The work of beneficence enjoined in this chapter is the work that God requires His people to do at this time. It is a work of His own appointment.”

—Testimonies, vol. 6, 265

Remember? We read this a while back.

But look at what she says next:

A Last-Days Work

“We are not left in doubt as to where the message applies, and the time of its marked fulfillment, for we read: ‘They that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places: thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, the repairer of the breach, the restorer of paths to dwell in.’ God’s memorial, the seventh-day Sabbath, the sign of His work in creating the world, has been displaced by the man of sin. God’s people have a special work to do in repairing the breach that has been made in His law; and the nearer we approach the end, the more urgent this work becomes.

Quotation continues...

A Last-Days Work

“All who love God will show that they bear His sign by keeping His commandments. They are the restorers of paths to dwell in. The Lord says: ‘If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on My holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight... then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth.’

This is familiar stuff. We know about keeping the commandments and honoring the Sabbath.

But notice what all this means!

This quotation continues on, and Ellen White’s next word is “thus.”

What does “thus” mean?

“As a result or consequence of.”

So... what is the natural result or consequence of all this?

A Last-Days Work

“Thus genuine medical missionary work is bound up inseparably with the keeping of God’s commandments, of which the Sabbath is especially mentioned, since it is the great memorial of God’s creative work. Its observance is bound up with the work of restoring the moral image of God in man. This is the ministry which God’s people are to carry forward at this time. This ministry, rightly performed, will bring rich blessings to the church.”

—Testimonies, vol. 6, 265, 266

And this is not an isolated statement, a one-off sort of thing that she happened to write when she got distracted one day.

A United Work

“The fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah contains present truth for the people of God. Here we see how medical missionary work and the gospel ministry are to be bound together as the message is given to the world. Upon those who keep the Sabbath of the Lord is laid the responsibility of doing a work of mercy and benevolence. Medical missionary work is to be bound up with the message, and sealed with the seal of God.”

—Evangelism, 516, 517

What does “responsibility” mean?

A Benevolent Work

“I have been instructed to refer our people to the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah. Read this chapter carefully and understand the kind of ministry that will bring life into the churches. The work of the gospel is to be carried by means of our liberality as well as by our labors. When you meet suffering souls who need help, give it them. When you find those who are hungry, feed them. In doing this you will be working in lines of Christ’s ministry. The Master’s holy work was a benevolent work. Let our people everywhere be encouraged to have a part in it.”

—Medical Ministry, 263

A Compassionate Work

“[Isaiah 58] is the work God requires His people to do. ... With the work of advocating the commandments of God and repairing the breach that has been made in the law of God, we are to mingle compassion for suffering humanity. We are to show supreme love to God; we are to exalt His memorial, which has been trodden down by unholy feet; and with this we are to manifest mercy, benevolence, and the tenderest pity for the fallen race. ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.’ As a people we must take hold of this work. Love revealed for suffering humanity gives significance and power to the truth.”

—Welfare Ministry, 32

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“Significance and power”

Have you ever done something “evangelistic” and wondered how it was that people could so easily just ignore you?

“I mean, come on, people! I mailed you a flier with the coolest looking multi-headed red dragon that has ever been painted! What more does it take to get you to a meeting!”

I’m guessing that “love revealed for suffering humanity” might be something worth trying.

“Seriously? That’s a lot of work... and what these people really need is to understand the Sabbath!”

And maybe we need to understand it better, too...

A Sanctifying Work

“We cannot keep [the Sabbath] holy unless we serve the Lord in the manner brought to view in the scripture:...

Anyone care to guess which scripture she’s going to quote here?

Before we do away with the suspense, stop and consider the significance of this assertion. “We cannot keep the Sabbath holy unless...”

Seems to me that this issue strikes pretty directly at the heart of the fourth commandment.

Remembering to keep something holy when you cannot keep it holy is a fruitless exercise. This is a big issue, is it not? So, what’s the scripture?

A Sanctifying Work

“We cannot keep [the Sabbath] holy unless we serve the Lord in the manner brought to view in the scripture: ‘Is not this the fast that I have chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?’ This is the work that rests upon every soul who accepts the service of Christ.”

—Manuscript Releases, vol. 5, 33

If I read this correctly, that last sentence includes you and me.

To me, that means I have good reason to try to understand how to carry out this counsel from the Lord.

Christ's Manner of Work

“Let the instruction given in the fifty-eighth chapter of Isaiah be studied.... Wonderful would be the results if ministers and church members would be converted, and adopt Christ's manner of witnessing to the power of the Lord.

—Paulson Collection, 297

“...be converted, and adopt Christ's manner of witnessing to the power of the Lord.”

Why do it His way? Because it's the only way that works. We all know that... or at least we've all heard the quotation that says so—

A Successful Work

“Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’”

—Ministry of Healing, 143

I submit that “Christ’s method alone” is the sign of our at-one-ness with Him.

Our use of “Christ’s method alone” is the sign of His Messiahship, the revelation of His character, the proof that we are “the planting of the Lord,” the source of “significance and power” for our preaching, and a prerequisite for acceptable Sabbath observance.

It’s also “the work that God requires His people to do at this time”—a hundred years ago, that is.

And that’s just the beginning! But nonetheless it’s the end of this talk, so come back for the next one!



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