

Inseparably One

By: Jim Hohnberger

In my twelve years as a Seventh Day Adventist Christian, I am coming to know and experience Christ in increasing degrees. Consequently, it's my desire to share with you, from my own experience, the insights that are bringing my life into closer fellowship with my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The call for you and I to follow Christ's example and to walk in His footsteps is so high, that there is every reason to wonder, how can sinful men and women be expected to walk like the Son of God? The answer that most people give is practical - it cannot really be expected. The Word of God sets before us an ideal. Beautiful in its thought, but is it really attainable?

The answer is to be found in the scriptures. They are the golden rule which we are to measure all truth by. "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps ...

who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness." I Peter 2:21-24. Here the apostle Peter points us to the wonderful relationship in which we are called to - **In Christ**.

And what is this relationship? It is three-fold. Peter speaks in this passage of Christ as our Surety, our Example, and our Head.

Let us look into these inseparable aspects of Christ and their place in the Christian's experience.

Christ is our **Surety**. "Christ also suffered for us." "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." I Peter 2:21,24. As Surety, Christ suffered and died in our place. He undertook to make atonement for your and my sins, and thus prepared the way to deliver us from the punishment to which we render ourselves liable. The innocent one bore the chastisement of the guilty. "For God so loved the world, that He gave

His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world **through Him** might be saved." John 3:16. He that believeth (all three aspects) not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of Jesus, which means He, "saves His people **from** their sins." Matthew 1:21.

An inspired writer puts it this way, "Christ gave himself, an atoning sacrifice, for the saving of a lost world. He was treated as we deserve, in order that we might be treated as He deserves. He was condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by **His** righteousness, in which we had **no** share. He suffered the death which was ours, that we might receive the life [all three aspects] which was His." Ellen G. White, *Testimonies to the Church Volume 8* pgs 208-9 and Mark 10:45.

So, as Surety we see that Christ suffered and died in our place. He bore our sin, and at once **broke its curse and power**. As Surety, He did what we could not do, what we now need not do. Praise the Lord for He is our Surety!

Christ is also our **Example**. In the one sense, that of Surety, His work is unique and cannot be duplicated by us. In another sense we have to follow Him in it; we must do as He did, live and suffer like Him. "Christ also suffered for us, **leaving us an example**, that ye should follow His steps." 1 Peter 2:21. Christ suffering as my Surety calls me to lay down my life, a life of self-serving, to a life of surrendering my will as He surrendered His will to the will of the Father. See Luke 22:42. This is the life of surrender which I am called to enter into, in like manner as His, as my Example.

But is this reasonable? Christ in His life of service as Surety and Example had the power of

the divine nature combined with His human nature, so how can I be expected in the weakness of the flesh to live and suffer as He did? Is there not an impossible gulf and chasm between accepting Christ not only as my Surety, but also as my Example, in which the apostle Peter unites so closely together? No there is a blessed third aspect of Christ's work which bridges that gulf and chasm for you and me, which is the connecting link between Christ as my Surety and Christ as my Example

which makes it possible for us in our daily thoughts, words and deeds to take the Surety as my Example, so that we may live, like Him. In this third aspect of Christ as our Head, is part of the answer to all our failures to walk as He walked, to abide in Him as He abided in the Father and to live as He lived.

Christ is to be our **Head**. "The head of every man is Christ." 1 Corinthians 11:3. In this aspect, His Suretyship and His Example have their root

and unity. If we can see and understand and allow this third aspect of Christ to be incorporated into our daily lives, then we will bridge that gulf that so many professed Christians have fallen so short in. It was when the first Adam ceased to let Christ be his Head that Adam had need of a Surety and Example. So it is as we allow Christ to be truly our Head that He becomes in reality, not only our Surety, but our daily example.

Christ is the second Adam. As a believer, by faith, I become spiritually one with Him. In this union, He lives in me (see Galatians 2:20) and imparts to me, as He did to the apostles at Pentecost, when they finally allowed Him to be their Head, the power of His finished work, that power of His resurrection. It is on this ground that we are taught, in Romans 6 and elsewhere, that the Christian is indeed dead to sin and alive to God. The very life that Christ lives, works in the believer. Thus we are dead to the old man, and have

Christ is our Example

risen again with Christ. It is this thought that Peter brings forth when he says, "Who His own self bore our sins upon the tree, (not only that we, through His death, might receive forgiveness, but) that we being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness." I Peter 2:24.

As we have part in the spiritual death of the first Adam, having actually died to God in him, so we have part in the second Adam, having really died to sin in Christ. See Romans 5:18-19. **In Christ**, we are made **alive again** to God. Christ then becomes not only our Surety who lived and died for us, our Example who showed us how to live, but is also our Head, with whom we are one, in whose death we have died, and in whose life we now live. This, dear believer, gives us the power to follow our Surety as our Example. Christ being our Head is the bond that makes the believing in the Surety and the following of the Example **"inseparably one."**

Dear believer ask yourself these questions: Can Christ be divided? See I Corinthians 1:13. Can I accept Christ as my Surety, but not my Example? Can I accept Christ as my Example but not my Head? Dear believer these three truths are one. The three truths of Christ as Surety, Example and Head may not be separated from each other. Yet this happens much too often. We find some who wish to follow Christ's Example without faith in Christ's Atonement. They seek to find within themselves, the power to live like Him; their efforts are in vain. Then there are others, who firmly believe in the Surety ship, but neglect or lay aside the Example. They believe in redemption through the blood of the cross, but neglect the footsteps of Him who bore it. Faith in the atonement is indeed the foundation of the building, but it is not all. Theirs too, is a deficient Christianity, with no true view of sanctification, because they do not see how, along with faith in

Christ's atonement, the following of His Example is indispensably necessary.

There are still others who have received these two truths - Christ as Surety and Christ as Example - and yet they lack **something**. They feel compelled to follow Christ as Example, but lack the **power**. They do not have a full and proper understanding of how this is to be worked out in their lives and made their own. What they need is clear insight into what Scripture teaches of Christ as **Head**. Because the Surety is not someone outside of me, but One in whom I am and who is in me. Consider Galatians 2:20.

You see His very life lives in me. Christ said, "I have come to bring you life." John 10:10. He lives Himself in me, whom He bought with His blood. See Mark 10:45. This is done in my **cooperation** with Him as my Head. By saying **yes** to God and **no** to self. This is what the great song writer, Frances Havergal was

illustrating in the hymn, "Live Out Thy Life Within Me - In All Things Have Thy Way," in 1864.

To follow in His footsteps is a duty. Let this thought forever be resolved in our minds. Scripture is very plain in this, "For even here unto were ye called ... leaving us an Example, that ye should follow His steps. Who did no sin, neither was guile (deceit) found in his mouth." I Peter 2:21-22. God would not command it, if it was not possible. Following in His steps, is the blessed results of allowing Him to be our Head in **all** things. It is only when this is understood **correctly** that the blessed truth of Christ's Example will take its right place. Jesus Himself promises to do this in us. Just listen to His Words. "I will be sanctified in you." Ezekiel 36:23. This then confirms to us that it is possible. "Behold I am the Lord the God of all flesh; is there anything too hard for me?" Jeremiah 32:27. See also Isaiah 40:31; 41:10,13,14 - Ezekiel 36:23-28. If Jesus himself,

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with our cooperation, promises to work out His likeness in me, then **my duty** in this joint effort needs to be very plain!

Ours is a two-fold work. I have on the one side, to gaze (to fix my eyes on; a lover's eyes) on His Example, so as to know it and follow it. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29. Dear believer, it is by **beholding** that we are transformed in character. So let us always, without ceasing, behold the Lamb of God - behold Christ - behold Calvary - behold the character of Christ - meditate on His life. My dear friends, "Behold your God" and you will be transformed.

While our salvation is wholly dependent upon Jesus, yet we have a work to do in order that we shall be saved. The apostle Paul says, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Philippians 2:12. Our second area of responsibility is that of our cooperation. Here is where the conflict is the sternest, the hardest, and the most fierce. It requires **yielding our will**. Just listen to these inspired words.

"The life of the apostle Paul was a constant conflict with self. He said, "I die daily." I Corinthians 15:31. His will and his desires everyday conflicted with duty and the will of God. Instead of following inclination, he did God's will however **crucifying** to his nature." Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing* pg 452.

"The warfare **against self** is the greatest battle that was ever fought. The yielding of self, surrendering all to the will of God, requires a **struggle**, but the soul must submit to God **before** it can be renewed in holiness." Ellen G. White, *Apples of Gold* #17 October 1894. So then man must do the work of beholding and yielding. God gives us the power, but we must choose.

My dear friends, as surely as Christ conquered sin and its curse for me, Christ will with my cooperation, conquer sin and its power **in me**. What Christ began by His death for me, He can and will, with my cooperation perfect, by His life

in me. It is because Christ is my Surety, as well as my Head that His Example must and will be the rule of my life. For Jesus said, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." John 3:7. Nicodemus replied, "How can these things be?" John 3:9.

You see if the Lord; who lives in me, gives me what He requires of me, then **no** requirement can be too high.

The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. **Then** the power which no human eye can see, creates a new being in the image of God."

I have found that it is impossible for our finite minds to comprehend the work of redemption. Its mystery exceeds human knowledge; yet when you pass from death to life you realize that it is a divine reality.

My dear friends, Jesus is my Surety and my Example and my Head because He is my Life.

Power for Living



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