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DURING JANUARY–FEBRUARY 1881, JAMES WHITE MET WITH THE ACCLAIMED LANDSCAPE PAINTER THOMAS MORAN (1837–1926) “WHO [WAS] SAID TO BE THE BEST ARTIST IN THE WORLD,”¹ AND HE ALSO HAD A CHANCE TO SEE THE ENGRAVER’S WORK, WHICH TURNED OUT “VERY FINE” AND “MUCH BETTER THAN ... FIRST EXPECTED.”²

Drawn by Moran and engraved by William Wellstood (1819–1900),¹ the new lithograph was printed in August 1883. It presented Christ on the cross absorbing the Tree of Life and the Ten Commandments, seen in the 1873 and 1876 lithographs, presenting Him as the law hanging on the cross as the Tree of Life. Ellen G. White renamed the lithograph fittingly “Christ the Way of Life” to leave no doubt that salvation came through Him rather than by certain religious practices.

Since the lithograph did not directly refer to the distinctive Adventist teachings, such as the seventh-day Sabbath, the state of the dead, the pre-Advent investigative judgment, and Christ’s high-priestly ministry in the heavenly sanctuary since 1844, some Adventists wondered, “What connection has ‘The Way of Life’ with present truth,” and should church members even buy a copy of it? S.N. Haskell responded to that question by stating that it helped “greatly in impressing the mind with divine things.” The Haskell family had two copies of the lithograph in their home, one on the wall at the foot of their bed and one in the sitting-room so that he and his wife may behold “the cross of Christ” right away when they open their eyes in the morning, and to engage with visitors about its relevance. He remarked that “every family of Seventh-day Adventists would have this picture hung upon the walls of their [homes]” if they were to “realize the refining and elevating

influence [that] such pictures have upon the mind.”² Methodist, Baptist and Christian pastors from Santa Rosa, California, praised the lithograph and its key as a wonderful combination of exceptional art and profound biblical truth.³

Sometimes Adventists may still perceive our distinctive doctrines as playing a more important role than those beliefs we hold in common with other Christians. Other Christians may also perceive Adventists as people who are more concerned with their unique beliefs than with the Christ of the cross. It appears that Haskell and a few other Adventists in the early 1880s noticed that the cross of Christ is central to all other doctrines, infusing our beliefs with vitality and our spiritual life with living power. Adventists, after all, yearn for the Second Advent of the crucified and risen Christ. ■



¹ James White to W. C. White, Jan. 19, 1881; James White to Ellen G. White, Feb. 4, 1881.
² James White to Ellen G. White, Feb. 7, 1881, JWCF, EGWE.
³ “Now Ready: The New Steel-Place Engraving Entitled Christ the Way of Life,” *Review and Herald*, Oct. 30, 1883, 687.
⁴ S. N. Haskell, “The Way of Life,” *Signs of the Times*, Jan. 17, 1884, 43.
⁵ “Testimonials for the ‘Way of Life,’” *Signs of the Times*, Aug. 21, 1884, 510.

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