

Study for the Month of October, 2008

Biblical Perfection

Part V

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The Relation of Faith and Works

In any serious study of how one can fulfill Christ's requirement to become "perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48), the subject of the relation of faith to and works is critical to its understanding. Unless one knows with certainty how these two dynamics of the gospel interrelate with each other, it is certain that one of the two major doctrinal errors will be arrived at, namely, lawless salvation on one hand, and fanatical self-works on the other. One is called "saved by faith alone, works is legalism"—a corrupted form of the true Biblical teaching on justification by faith; the other, "salvation by works"—the Pharisaical corruption of the true Biblical teaching on sanctification through obedience to God's law.

The following is one of the several letters E.G. White wrote to Alonzo Trevor Jones, datelined Napier, New Zealand, Apr. 9, 1893, which expresses her great concern over Jones' early drift towards what would later digress into his downfall,—pantheism,—as introduced by Dr. Kellogg. She said that the "alpha of the apostasy" was contained in the heresies contained in the book, *Living Temple*, authored by Dr. Kellogg. The "omega," she was shown, "would be of a startling nature." (1 SM 197, 200, 200). We will reprint the whole letter for clarity and context (emphasis mine):

"Brother A. T. Jones:

"I was attending a meeting, and a large congregation was present. In my dream you were presenting the subject of faith and the imputed righteousness of Christ by faith. *You repeated several times that works amounted to nothing, that there were no conditions.* The matter was presented in that light that I knew minds would be *confused*, and would not receive the correct impression in reference to faith and works, and I decided to write you.

"You state the matter too strongly. There are *conditions* to our receiving justification and sanctification, and the righteousness of Christ. I know your meaning, but you leave a wrong impression upon many minds. *While good works will not save even one soul, yet it is impossible for even one soul to be saved without good works. God saves us under a law*, that we must ask, if we would receive, seek if we would find, and knock if we would have the door opened to us.

“Christ offers Himself as willing to save unto the uttermost all who come unto Him. He invites all to come to Him. ‘Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.’ You look in reality upon these subjects as I do, yet you make these subjects, *through your expressions*, confusing to minds. And after you have expressed your mind radically in regard to works, when questions are asked you upon this very subject, it is not lying out in so very clear lines, in your own mind, and you cannot define the correct principles to other minds, and you are yourself *unable* to make your statements *harmonize* with your own principles and faith.

“The young man came to Jesus with the question, ‘Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?’. And Christ said unto him, ‘Why callest thou Me good’ there is none good but One, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.’ He [the young man] said to Him, ‘Which?’. Jesus quoted several, and the young man said unto Him, ‘All these things have I kept in my youth up: what lack I yet?’. Jesus said unto him, ‘*If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me.*’ *Here are conditions, and the Bible is full of conditions.* ‘But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.’ [Matt. 19: 16-22].

“Then when you say there are no conditions, and some expressions are made quite broad, you burden the minds, and some cannot see consistency in your expressions. They cannot see how they can harmonize these expressions with the plain statements of the Word of God. Please guard these points. *These strong assertions in regard to works, never make our position any stronger.* The expressions weaken our position, for there are many who will consider you an *extremist*, and will lose the rich lessons you have for them, upon the very subjects they need to know. . . .

“My brother, it is hard for the mind to comprehend this point, and *do not confuse any mind with ideas that will not harmonize with the Word.* Please to consider that under the teaching of Christ many of the disciples were lamentably ignorant; but when the Holy Spirit that Jesus promised, came upon them and made the vacillating Peter the champion of faith, what a transformation in his character! *But do not lay one pebble, for a soul that is weak in the faith to stumble over, in overwrought presentations or expressions.* Do not go to *any extreme* in anything, but keep your feet on solid rock. O precious, precious Savior. ‘He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him.’ [John 14:21].

“*This is the true test--the doing of the words of Christ. And it is the evidence of the human agent’s love to Jesus, and he that doeth His will giveth to the world the practical evidence of the fruit he manifests in obedience, in purity, and in holiness of character. . .*

“O my brother, walk carefully with God. But remember that there are some whose eyes are intently fixed upon you, expecting that you will *overreach* the mark, and stumble, and fall. But if you keep in humility close to Jesus, all is well. . .

“*There is no place in the school of Christ where we graduate.* We are to work on the *plan of addition*, and the Lord will work on the *plan of multiplication*. It is through constant diligence that we will, through the grace of Christ, live on the plan of addition, making our calling and election sure. . . . For if you do these things you shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.’ [2 Pet. 1: 10, 11].”—*Letter 44, 1893/ Notebook Leaflets, pp. 61, 62.*

I believe that the highlight of this specific counsel to A. T. Jones, and to all who are similarly confused over the relationship of faith and works is best summarized in the third to the last paragraph above, which says:

“This is the true test—the doing of the words of Christ. And it is the evidence of the agent’s love for Jesus, and he that doeth His will gives to the world the practical evidence of the fruit he manifests in obedience, in purity, and in holiness of character.”

Justification by Faith

What does the Bible teach regarding justification by faith?

“What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself. When men see their own nothingness, they are *prepared* to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ.”
-*The Faith I Live By*, p. 111.

“The *great work* that is wrought for the sinner who is spotted and stained by evil is the *work of justification*. By Him who speaketh truth he [the sinner] is declared righteous. The Lord *imputes* unto the *believer* the righteousness of Christ and pronounces him righteous before the universe. He transfers his sins to Jesus, the sinner’s representative, substitute, and surety. Upon Christ He lays the iniquity of every soul *that believes*. ‘He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.’ 2 Cor. 5:21.

Through repentance and faith we are rid of the sin, and look unto the Lord our righteousness. Jesus suffered, the just for the unjust. . . Having made us righteous through the *imputed* righteousness of Christ, God pronounces us as just, and treats us as just. He looks upon us as His dear children. Christ works against the great power of sin, and where sin abounds, grace much more abounds. [Rom. 5: 20]. ‘Therefore being *justified by faith*, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.’ Rom. 5:1, 2.

God has made *ample provision* that we may stand *perfect in His grace*, wanting in nothing, waiting for the appearing of the Lord.”- *Ibid*, p. 112.

Justification is primarily the Greek *dikaïoma*, meaning, “requirement,” “enactment,” “righteous deed,” “judicial sentence,” “declaration of right.” It comes from *dikaïosis*, meaning, “vindication,” “acquittal.” The clear Bible teachings regarding justification are:

- it is an exclusive divine act of God, which is the opposite of condemnation caused by sin, and which the sinner earns by his sinful act
- it does not refer to, nor involves character, much less character transformation
- it is instantaneous; received by faith that same moment the sinner genuinely repents and *asks* for forgiveness from God whose law has been transgressed,—without doing any other act that attempts to, mentally or physically, atone for or excuse his sin.

- Christ’s righteousness attained through justification is *imputed* (to ascribe vicariously; to credit), not *imparted* (bestowed; a share of; granted; conferred; transferred; shared; given).

The *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary* has a succinct and a solid, Biblically-based definition and explanation of justification, which we will now quote in full (emphasis supplied):

“The verb ‘justify’ is much more frequent than the noun “justification.” As used theologically, the divine act by which God declares a *penitent* sinner righteous, or regards him as righteous. Justification is the opposite of condemnation (Rom. 5:16). *Neither term specifies character, but only standing before God. Justification is not a transformation of inherent character; it does not impart righteousness any more than condemnation imparts sinfulness.* A man comes under condemnation because of his transgressions, but, as a sinner, he can experience justification only through an act of God. Condemnation is earned, or deserved, but justification cannot be earned—it is a ‘free [unmerited] gift’ (V 16).

“In justifying the sinner God acquits him, declares him to be righteous, and proceeds to treat him like a righteous man. *Justification is the act of acquittal and the accompanying declaration that that the state of righteousness exists.* Charges of wrongdoing are cancelled, and the sinner, now justified, is brought into a *right relationship with God* that Paul describes as ‘peace with God’ (Rom. 5:1). *The state of righteousness which the sinner attains through justification is imputed* (ch. 4:22), that is, counted (v.3) or reckoned (v.4). When God *imputes* righteousness to a *repentant* sinner He *figuratively* places the [blood] atonement provided by Christ and the righteousness of Christ to his *credit* on the books of heaven, and the sinner stands before God as if he had never sinned.

“Justification presupposes that God has a perfect standard of right by which He expects created beings to order their lives. Theoretically, God could not legally condemn a man who *never* violated this standard (Rom. 2:13), but the fact is that *all have done so* (ch. 3:10, 23). Divine law—all of God’s revealed will concerning man—is thus an expression of His justice, a reflection of His own righteous character as well as the standard of attainment for all created beings.

“Justification is necessary because “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23; cf. v 10). Without it, sinners could never be acceptable to God, but would remain in a *perpetual* state of hostility toward Him. Justification is possible *because of God’s grace, or willingness not to hold sinners accountable for their misdeeds on condition that they accept the righteous provision* He has made for “the remission of *sins that are past*” (vs. 24, 25), and by virtue of Christ’s righteousness (ch. 5:18). The righteous provision is the gift of His Son, “who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification” (Rom. 4:25; 5:16, 18; cf. John 3:16). When *by faith* the sinner accepts the vicarious death of Jesus Christ as *the just penalty for his offenses, God in turn accepts the sinner’s faith in lieu of personal righteousness* and places the righteousness of Jesus Christ to His credit.

“Christ’s resurrection was as fully essential “for our justification” as was His death upon the cross (see Rom. 4:25). Strict justice provides *no* escape from the penalty of sin, which is death. That is why Christ paid the penalty on the cross. But even as Christ’s death on the cross to pay the penalty for sin is a demonstration of divine justice, so *the resurrection, which released Jesus from the penalty, is a*

demonstration of divine mercy and of God's willingness to transfer the merits of Christ's vicarious death to sinners who are willing to accept the gracious gift. *Had Christ remained forever in the tomb, there would be no objective evidence that God can and does justify sinners* (Rom. 4: 24, 25). Thus it is that faith in a *risen* Lord makes us eligible to, and enables us to accept, justification, by faith in Christ's death. "We are justified by His blood" and "saved by His life." (ch. 5: 9, 10).

"The counterpart, and complement, of God's act of grace in justifying the sinner is the sinner's faith, which *reaches out* to accept the proffered gift (Rom. 5: 1, 2). *Of himself, the sinner can do nothing to attain to justification. His exercise of faith is an confession of inability to attain to a state of righteousness by his own works.* God acknowledges his faith and justifies him, and "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." (ch. 8:1).

"Justification has both negative and affirmative aspects. It consists *first* in the forgiveness of sins (Rom. 4: 5-8). It consists first in the forgiveness of sins (Rom. 4: 5-8), but this is accompanied by a declaration that the pardoned sinner has been restored to divine favor. Paul describes this right relationship as being "at peace with God" (ch 5:1), or "reconciled to God" (v 10). *Remorse for sin* (Luke 18:13, 14) *and a soul-consuming desire to be right with God* (Matt. 5:6) *are prerequisites to justification.* Then faith arises to accept the divine provision of grace (Rom. 4: 4, 5, 16, 24). This right relationship with God bestows upon the repentant sinner his title to the kingdom of heaven. It was thus that Jesus could assure the thief on the cross that he would be with Him in Paradise (Luke 23:43).

"Justification accords a repentant sinner the *right* to enter the highway of the kingdom and travel there, but it does *not* provide the *power* to make progress on it. *That power is imparted by the indwelling [Holy Spirit] of Christ* (Gal. 2:20), *through the lifelong process of sanctification.*

"Although justification does *not* provide him the power to walk along the highway of a new life in Christ Jesus, *it does assume this to be his intent. In fact, justification would be futile if he declined to do so, and unless such an experience follows there is no evidence that justification has taken place. The subsequent life attests the reality of justification.* Justification and sanctification are *two steps* in salvation. A life in Christ means growth in grace (2 Pet. 3:18), a growing up into the stature of Christ (Eph. 4:15)."

CALVINISM AND PREDESTINATION

Apostle Paul teaches predestination. It is definitely a Bible doctrine but of an entirely different kind as contrasted to Calvinism, sometimes called "the Reformed faith, or "Reformed theology." Calvin's theory of predestination is that that some people are predestined to be saved, some lost, and all supposedly by God's so-called "preeminent choice." From this grand theological assumption springs forth many doctrinal assertions that blatantly deny the salient aspects of the comprehensive plan of redemption of the Gospel, which are:

- (1) **That man was created a free moral agent** -- with the full freedom to make his choice to obey or disobey God with their corresponding consequences and rewards. The *will* is the governing power in the nature of man, both prelapsarian and postlapsarian (before and after the fall). The tree of knowledge of good and

evil placed at the center of the Garden of Eden by God with the express command to Adam and Eve *not* to eat of its fruit lest they die amply underscores this primordial truth. And that will, that power to weigh information and make intelligent choices has been innate in

- (2) man since then and will be with the saved throughout eternity.
- (3) **The immutability of the God's law** -- expressed in the Decalogue, as the eternal transcript of His character, the standard of righteousness, and the basis of the pre-advent or investigative judgment by which the all the books of record in heaven of the lives of every person starting with Adam are compared by, the conclusion of which eternally determines who shall receive the rewards of eternal death or eternal life at Christ's second Advent. For if some man are lost and some saved as predetermined by so-called "preeminent choice" then a law to be tested by is absolutely unnecessary.
- (4) **The sanctuary message** -- that clearly teaches through the Mosaic (or Jewish) economy of the Old Testament in the typical system of sacrifices, feasts, and the Aaronic and Levitical priesthood, as pointing to the antitypical sacrifice of Christ at Calvary, and the intercessory work He undertook as our High Priest when He ascended to heaven at His resurrection to perform in the holy places of the heavenly sanctuary.
- (5) **The two-part work of atonement**, namely, (a) the perfect atoning sacrifice Christ made as the Sinless Man at Calvary for the *whole world*, as fallen mankind's Sin-bearer and Substitute (b) the intercessory work He began as our High Priest in the *holy place* of the sanctuary in heaven when He ascended after His resurrection (c) His investigative work as our High Priest, Advocate, Mediator, and Judge during the antitypical Day of atonement that commenced at the end of the 2300-day prophecy of Daniel 8:14 when entered into the most holy in 1844.

Before we consider the salient points of Calvinism, which argues that salvation is already an accomplished act but only for those only who have been predetermined as "the elect," as grossly misinterpreted, we will summon once more the Seventh-day Adventist Dictionary's definition on what predestination is, to wit (all emphasis mine):

"Predestination. This term does not appear in the Bible, but its verb form, 'to predestinate' (Gr. *proorizo*, meaning, 'to determine beforehand'), occurs in Rom. 3:29, 30 and Eph. 1: 5, 11 (RSV 'to predestine,' 'to destine'). According to Rom. 8: 28, 29 God predestined all who He knew who would accept His salvation 'to be conformed to the image of His Son.' Such He calls, justifies, and glorifies (v 30). [But] according Eph. 1: 4, God made provision that [all] sinners 'should be holy and without blame before Him in love' through faith in Christ before the creation of this world and the entrance of sin. Such He then 'predestinated. . . unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will' (v 5).

"Predestination operates within the orbit of God's purpose to 'gather together in one *all* things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth,' 'in the dispensation of the fullness of times' (Eph. 1: 10, 11; cf. John 1:12).

"From these passages some have erroneously assumed that God arbitrarily predestined or 'marked off beforehand,' particular individuals to be saved and others to be lost, irrespective of their own choice in the matter, thus *arbitrarily imposing* the

benefits of salvation upon some while denying them to others. Context and the analogy of the Scripture demonstrate conclusively the fallacy of this line of reasoning. The Scriptures explicitly teach that God 'will have all men to be saved, and to come into the knowledge of the truth' (1 Tim. 2:4), and that He is 'not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance' (2 Pet. 3:9).

"Nowhere do the inspired writers state that God has willed that some men should be lost. The idea that God arbitrarily appointed some men to salvation and others to reprobation is a fiction of human invention. That none are excluded from the benefits of salvation is evident from Isa. 55:1 and Rev. 22: 17. All who thirst are invited to 'take the water of life freely.' God has 'no pleasure in the death of the wicked,' but wills 'that the wicked turn from his way and live' (Eze. 33:11).

"The nature of *Bible predestination* is set forth in John 3: 16-21, where it is stated that 'God so loved *the world*' and gave His Son to be its Savior---not that He loved *certain* persons and hated others. Verse 17 states specifically that "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the *world*; but that the world through Him might be saved.' According to John 1: 12; 3:16 the decisive factor in each individual case is *willingness* to receive God's only-begotten Son as one's personal Savior, and to believe in Him. "Whoever believeth" is *eligible* for eternal life (ch 3: 16).

"God does not refuse the benefits of salvation to anyone who *sincerely chooses* the way of life and is *willing to comply* with His requirements. The way condemnation, or reprobation, comes upon a person is clearly explained in vs 18-21, where the determining factor is said to be the *individual response* to 'the light,' that is to Jesus Christ as 'the light of men' (ch 1:4-9). While men remain in an *unenlightened state* there is no condemnation (see Ps. 87:4, 6; Eze. 3: 18-21; 18: 2-32; 33: 12-20; Luke 23: 34; John 15: 22; Rom. 7:7, 9; 1Tim 1:13).

"Only when men deliberately reject truth, clearly spoken to them, do they 'have no cloke for their sin' (John 15:22). According to ch 3:18, a person who *refuses* salvation in Christ *automatically* incurs condemnation, not by some *imagined* arbitrary act of God, but simply 'because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son.' This thought is further emphasized in v 19, where it is stated that 'men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.' All who *choose to cling* to their evil ways do so because of their hatred for the light, and avoid it 'lest' their 'deeds should be reproved' (v 20). Contrariwise, those who seek a better way of life benefit by the sunshine of divine love that melts hard hearts.

"The teaching that distorts Bible predestination to mean that God has arbitrarily foreordained certain persons to be saved and others to be lost results from the neglect of the cardinal truth that God has granted to every man the power to settle his own destiny. God never interferes decisively with the free exercise of man's power of choice (see Eze. 18:31, 32; 33: 11; 2 Pet. 3:9). Before the foundation of the world (1Pet. 1:20) He made *provision* for sinners to be restored to divine favor, and predetermined---foreordained or predestined (Eph. 1:4)--that those who accept of this provision should find salvation in Jesus Christ and be restored to sonship. Salvation is freely offered to all, but not all accept the invitation. Salvation is not forced upon man against his will, nor is denied him contrary to his will.

"Divine foreknowledge and predestination in no way exclude freedom of choice or render it ineffective, but grant to men *the privilege of choosing* the way of life eternal. Those who believe in Jesus Christ are justified by their faith in Him, while those who

refuse to believe *automatically exclude themselves*. God has predetermined that those who believe shall be saved and that those who do not believe shall be lost, but He has left it to every man to choose whether to believe or not to believe.

“A superficial reading of Rom. 9: 9-16 and 1 Cor. 3: 12-15 has led some to the erroneous conclusion that Paul here teaches *individual predestination irrespective of personal choice*. That such is not the case in either instance becomes evident from a careful reading of the context. In Rom. 9: 9-16 Paul deals with God’s rejection of Esau as an inheritor of the birthright and of His election of Jacob to this sacred office. The context makes evident that the apostle is *not* here dealing with the matter of personal salvation, but exclusively with the choice of human instruments to be agents of His will on earth. God’s rejection of Esau as the inheritor of the *birthright* did not deny to him *the blessings of salvation* any more than the later denial of the birthright to Reuben, Jacob’s first-born, excluded him from an inheritance in either the earthly or the heavenly Canaan (cf. Gen. 49:3, 4).” (*End of quote*).

John Calvin and Predestination

John Calvin is considered the father of theological theory of predestination. Who was John Calvin? He was a prominent French theologian during the Protestant Reformation and the father of the theological system known as Calvinism. He was the founder of the Presbyterian system of church government, and believed in the separation of church and state. He, however, did not advocate religious freedom in the same sense as the Baptists later would, for example. His ecclesiology is said to have sowed the seeds of “modern secular democracy.”

The Five Points of Calvinism (From Wikipedia)

“Calvinistic theology is sometimes identified with the Five Points of Calvinism, also called the doctrine of grace, which are a point-by-point response to the 5 points of the Arminian Remonstrance (See history of the Calvinist-Armenian debate), and which serve as a summation of the judgments rendered by the Synod of Dort in 1619. Calvin himself never used such a model and never combated Arminianism directly

The points therefore function as a summary of the differences between Calvinism and Arianism, but not as a complete summation of Calvin’s writings of the theology of the Reformed churches in general. In English, the points are sometimes referred to by the acronym TULIP (see below), though this puts the points in a different order than that of the Canon of Dort.

The central assertions of this canon is that God is able to save every person *upon whom He has mercy* and that His efforts are not frustrated by the unrighteousness or the inability of humans.”

- **Total Depravity.** – “(Also called total inability). Asserts that, as a consequence of the fall of humanity into sin, every person in the world is enslaved to the service of sin. People are not by nature inclined to love God with their whole heart, mind, or strength, but rather all are inclined to serve their own interests over those of their neighbor and to reject the rule of God. Thus, all people by their own faculties are morally unable to choose to follow God and be saved because they are unwilling to do so out of the necessity of their own natures. (The term “total” in this context refers to sin affecting every part of the person, not that

every person is as evil as possible). Jacob Arminius [of the so-called Arminian Heresy] himself and some of his later followers, such as John Wesley, also affirmed total depravity.”

- **Unconditional Election.** - “The doctrine of unconditional election asserts that God’s choice from eternity of those whom He will bring to Himself is not based on foreseen virtue, merit, or faith in those people. Rather, it is unconditionally grounded in God’s mercy alone.”
- **Limited Atonement.** – “Also called “particular redemption” or “definite atonement.” The doctrine of the limited atonement is the teaching that Jesus’ substitutionary atonement was definite and certain in its design and accomplishment. The doctrine is driven by the concept of the sovereignty of God in salvation and the Calvinistic understanding of the nature of the atonement. Namely, Calvinists view the atonement as a penal substitution (that is, Jesus was punished in the place of the sinner) and since, *Calvinists argue, it would be unjust for God to pay the penalty for some people’s sins and the still condemn them for those sins, all those sins were atoned for must necessarily be saved.* Moreover, since in this scheme, God knows precisely who are the elect are and since only the elect will be saved, there is *no requirement that Christ atone for sins in general, only for those of the elect.* Calvinists do not believe however, that the atonement is limited in its value or power (in other words, God could have elected everyone and used it to atone fro them all), but rather that the atonement is limited in the sense that it is designed for some and not all.”
- **Irresistible Grace.** – “ The doctrine of irresistible grace (also called “efficacious grace”) asserts that the saving grace of God is effectually applied to those whom He has determined to save (that is, the elect) and, in God’s timing, *overcomes their resistance* to obeying the call of the gospel, bringing them to saving faith.
- **Perseverance of the Saints.** – “Perseverance (or preservation) of the saints is also known as “eternal security.” The word saints is used in the Bible sense to refer to all who are set apart by God, not in the technical sense of one who is exceptionally holy, canonized, or in heaven (see Saint). The doctrine asserts that, since God is sovereign, and, *His will cannot be frustrated by humans or anything else,* those whom God has called into communion with Himself will continue in faith until the end. Those who *apparently* fall away either never had true faith to begin with or will return. This doctrine is *slightly* different from Free Grace or “once saved always saved” view advocated by some evangelicals in which, despite apostasy or unrepentant and habitual sin, the individual is truly saved, if they accept Christ at any point *in the past.* In traditional Calvinist teaching, apostasy by such a person may prove that they were *never* saved.”

NATURE OF THE ATONEMENT. – “An additional point of disagreement with Arminianism implicit in the 5 points is the Calvinistic understanding of the doctrine of Jesus’ substitutionary atonement as the punishment for the sins of the elect, which was developed by St. Augustine and especially St. Anselm and Calvin himself. Calvinists argue that if Christ takes the punishment in the place of a *particular* sinner, *that person must be saved* since it would be unjust for him to be condemned for the same sins. The definitive and binding nature of this Satisfaction Model has strong implications for each of the Five Points, and has

led Arminius to subscribe instead to the *Governmental Theory* of the Atonement. Under that theory, no particular sins or sinners are in view, but all mankind are included in those whose sins have been taken away. The atonement was not the penalty of the law, but as a substitute for the penalty, which allows God to remit the penalty by His *grace* when any sinner repents and believes the Gospel.” End of quote.

From the foregoing, it is not difficult to trace the source of the “New Theology” that has crept into the remnant church of prophecy and is wreaking havoc on “the faith once delivered to the saints” to those who have fallen for it. New Theology is nothing “new” but variants of Calvin’s “Reformed theology,” the Five Points of Calvinism of which openly clearly contradict some of the most basic teachings of the Bible. This is where the popular ideas of “once-saved-always-saved,” “all are already forgiven,” and “justification is all that is needed; sanctification is good not attainable, hence not obligatory,” etc.

We will analyze these Five Points in detail in subsequent issues that will unmistakably show how and why they contradict the plan of redemption of the everlasting gospel and deny the need for and necessity of character perfection in order to be eternally saved.

Perfectionism, the Counterfeit of Biblical Perfection

The Error of Perfectionism

Some of the *early* Adventists, (not the whole Seventh-day Adventist Church for it was organized only in 1863, 19 years after the Great Disappointment) shortly after the 1844 experience lost their hold on God and drifted into *fanaticism*. Ellen White met these extremists with a “Thus saith the Lord.” She rebuked those who taught *a state of perfection in the flesh and therefore could not sin*. Of such Mrs. White later wrote:

“They held that *those who are sanctified cannot sin*. And this naturally led to the belief that the affections and desires of the sanctified ones were *always* right, and never in danger of leading them into sin. In harmony with these sophistries, they were practicing the *worst sins* under the garb of sanctification, and through their deceptive, mesmeric influence were gaining a strange power over some of their associates, who did not see the evil of these apparently beautiful but seductive theories. . . .

“Clearly the *deceptions* of these false teachers were laid open before me, and I saw the *fearful account* that stood against them in the book of records, and the terrible guilt that rested upon them for professing complete holiness while their daily acts were offensive in the sight of God.” –*Life Sketches*, pp. 83, 84.

But there are entirely different definitions and concepts of perfectionism that are not connected whatsoever with this Biblical discussion, and in fact contradict if not confuse those who do not have a sound Biblical understanding of the subject. In general, however, this topic on Biblical perfection which we are discussing will, by the standards of the venerated philosophical reasoning of the world’s great men and the mainstream church’s reckoning, would be erroneously classified as perfectionism, a form of fanaticism. That this is the case can easily be seen in the Answers.com definition. We read the following entry on their website (notice # 2):

“1. A propensity for being displeased with anything that is not perfect or does not meet extremely high standards.

2. A belief in certain religions that moral or spiritual perfection can be achieved before the soul has passed into afterlife.”

Their second definition of perfectionism is, however, both correct and misleading. It is true that certain religions, such as those Seventh-day Adventists who believe the Bible teaching that spiritual and moral perfection is a precondition to receiving the invisible seal of approval of God before being assured eternal salvation as a reward. But it is patently false to connect this precondition of perfection as achievable “before the *soul* has passed into afterlife,” their definition of *soul* being the counterfeit taught in all religions, in the academe, and even increasingly now, in field of science, i.e., that the soul is immortal. Notice just two examples:

“1. The animating and vital principle in human beings, credited with faculties of thought, action, and emotion and often conceived as an immaterial body.

2. The spiritual nature of humans, regarded as immortal, separable from the body at death, and susceptible to happiness or misery in a future state.

3. The disembodied spirit of a dead human. . .” – Yahoo! *Education* Website.

“The soul is the creative impulse of the universe in motion, creating and exploring that which is created. These creative impulses, or Souls, have moved into and through various dimensions of existence to eventually being embodied in three dimensional existence. In this process worlds were created, the physical universe and eventually the individual units of energy called planets were created. Then life forms were created and the ongoing creative essence of the universe became the physical reality in which you and I now find yourself.” – *John Otis Hyland*, Eye of the Sacred Wind Foundation.

This is but expressions of the first sermon preached on the immortality of the soul by Satan in to Eve at the Garden of Eden, “Thou shalt not surely die.” Gen. 3: 4, 5. Spiritualism, which will soon take the whole world captive, avers that a soul is a separate entity when in fact the word “soul” in the Bible means “the whole person.” The Biblical account of creation states it plainly: “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living *soul* (“being”). Gen. 2: 7, KJV and NKJV.

The *Philosophy Dictionary* of Answers.com, says further of Perfectionism:

“The ethical position that the goal of life is to pursue a perfect ideal of character and conduct. The view is held among the Stoics, but also in Christian writing since Jesus requires perfection of those who would follow Him. A ‘counsel of perfection’ is the way for attaining the ideal; however, common morality and later Christian writers acknowledged that as well as such counsels we need rules whose application is rather more practical, and obedience is more of duty than self-improvement.”

Perfectionism in Psychology, according to *Wikipedia*, is defined as:

“Perfectionism is a principle in ethics and the theory of the good (value theory).

“Thomas Hurka, a *neo-Aristotelean*, in his aptly-titled book, *Perfectionism*, provides an introductory answer to perfectionism (emphasis mine):

“This *moral theory* starts from an account of the *good life*, or the *intrinsically desirable life*. And it characterizes this life in a distinctive way. Certain properties, it says, constitute human nature or are definitive of humanity—they make human human. The good life, it says, develops

these properties to a high degree or realizes what is central to human nature. Different versions of the theory may disagree about the *content* of the good life. But they share the foundational idea that what is good, ultimately, is the development of the human nature. It is important to understand that the definition of an optimal life need not only be material, but also spiritual, mental, and physical; nor that 'perfection' can necessarily be actualized, but that it is the end to which one strives, and the action of striving may be part of the good."

Hurka draws his scholasticism from Aristoteleanism. It is important then to know a little bit more of Aristotle. He was a Greek philosopher (384-322 B.C.), a student of Plato and teacher of Alexander the Great.

"Together with Plato and Socrates (Plato's teacher), Aristotle is one of the most important founding figures on Western philosophy. He was the first to create a comprehensive system of Western philosophy, encompassing morality and aesthetics, logic and science, politics and metaphysics. . . .

"In metaphysics, Aristoteleianism had a profound influence on philosophical and theological thinking in the Islamic and Jewish traditions in the Middle Ages, and it continues to influence Christian theology, especially Eastern Orthodox Theology and the scholastic tradition of the Roman Catholic Church. All aspects of Aristotle's philosophy continue to be the object of active academic study today." - *Wikipedia*, free Encyclopedia.

Aristotle is also famous for his statement that "man by nature is a political animal." He also considered the city to be a natural community. Moreover, he considered the *city* to be prior to the family which in turn is prior to the individual, i.e., last in the order of becoming, but first in the order of being." In God's order, whether in "becoming," or "being," there was first an individual, Adam, then, a husband-and-wife relationship, then, a family, after that the first city by Cain, the first murderer, first man cursed, and the first vagabond of the earth.

God did not originally intend that man should live build and live in cities on earth. If He did He would not have created the Garden of Eden but the "City of Eden." He originally planned that Adam and Eve, through their progeny, would "replenish" the earth. Contrary to a misconception held by some, "replenish" does not mean to "refill" leading some to come up with the interpretation that before Adam and Eve there were other beings. Replenish means "to stock with persons, animals, or both; to supply fully."- *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Fifth edition, 1942*.

Thus whether a victim of the idea that when perfection of the flesh is achieved that man cannot sin, or the perfectionism based on the theory of Greek philosopher Aristotle, an atheist, any person who recovers from these powerfully mind-perverting delusions is debarred from a particular special work of God in the church. Notice:

"God will *not* entrust the care of His precious flock to men whose mind and judgment have been *weakened by former errors* that they have cherished such as, so-called *perfectionism and Spiritualism*, and who, by their course while in these errors, have disgraced themselves and brought reproach upon the cause of truth. Although they may now feel free from error and competent to go forth and to *teach* this last message [the third angel's message], *God will not accept them. He will not entrust precious souls to their care; for their judgment was perverted while in error, and is now weakened.* The great and holy One is a jealous God, and He will have holy men to carry His truth. The holy law spoken by God from Sinai is a part of Himself, and holy men who are its strict observers will alone honor Him by teaching it to others." - *Early Writings*, p. 101-2.

So we see here that those who cherished and taught the gross errors of perfectionism or Spiritualism—and *specifically disgraced themselves during the time they embraced such false doctrines, and specifically brought reproach on the cause of truth by their actions*—even after they truly repent and take study courses that *scholastically* qualify them to become theologians and ministers or pastors, cannot be entrusted, *much less ordained* to stand as spiritual guardians to any flock in God’s remnant church. God will not accept them for this sacred position even if some church leaders may think and decide otherwise. Why? Their judgments were perverted and weakened by these errors, indicating how deadly these errors are and should be avoided like the plague. But this specific disbarment does not in any way disqualify them from being eternally saved. God can use them in other capacities in His cause—but not as spiritual guardians.

Now that we know what the error of *perfectionism* is, or at least a good part of it, we turn our attention to the error of Spiritualism, which we are told “will take the whole world captive.” We will here list a partial reference list from Index to the Writings of E. G. White on this subject. One will readily see after going through it that there should be great concern whether those who have, and are currently teaching what they call the “three angels’ messages” are not themselves deceived in some ways by Spiritualism!

SPIRITUALISM

See the following: Ed 277-8 (SD 46); Ev 602-9; EW 43, 59-60, 86-91, 262-6; GC 551-62; PK 210-2; PP675-89; SR393-8’ 1T 290-302.

Ancient Spiritualism. See PP 636-9.

Books on, believers in Ephesus destroyed AA 288-9.
Canaanites practiced, PP 688-9.
Cornerstone of heathen idolatry, Pp 684
King Saul’s experience with, PP 675-83, 686, 688.
Oracles of Greece and Rome as agencies of, Ev 603.
People led away by, in Isaiah’s time, PK 373.
Pernicious results of, PP 688-9.
See also Necromancy’ Sorcery; Witchcraft.

Modern Spiritualism

Ancient system of magic is same as, AA 289.
Apostles of nearly all forms of, claim to have power to heal, Ev 606; PK 211.
Army officers used during Civil War in U.S.A, 1 T 363-4, 366.
Assuming Christian guise now, GC 557-8.
Attractions of, to self-indulgent and pleasure loving, GC 555, 559.
Began with mysterious rappings in New York state, EW 43, 59-60, 86-92, GC 553, SR 394.
Believers in, Satan laughs in triumph, PK 210.
Bewitching and satanic wiles of, woman who was entangled with, 3T 40.
Bewitching influence of, charms and mesmerizes, 1T 429.
Bible interpreted by, to suit unrenewed heart, GC 558.
Binding men in bundles ready to burn, EW 88.
Breaks down: barriers guarding truth, purity, and reverence, PP 688.
safeguarding of purity, Ev 608.
Changing its form now, GC 557.
Christian Science (Scientology) is a form of, Ev 606; PK 210.

Churches will accept, GC 603-4.
 Charms of, set off in last days, DA 631
Colossians 2:8 applies especially to, 1T 297.
 Comes direct from his satanic majesty, 1T 343.
 Consultation of spirits in, warning against, GC 552; PP 687-8; 1T 298.
 Converts of, numbered by millions, GC 556; SR 395.
 Corrupting influence of, world now knows little of, 1T 343.
Counterfeit of truth, TM 365.
Criticism and speculation re: Scriptures have opened the way for, DA 258 (Ev 591-2).
 Curious persons communicate with devils through, AA 290.
 Dabbler in, ventures on dangerous ground, AA 290.
 Danger in rejecting, as being result of human skill or cunning, GC 533; PP 685; SR 394-5.
 Danger of coming under influence of, few people aware of, GC 558.
 Deceptions practiced by Satan through, 2T 172.
 Deceptive power of, warning against, EW 77-8.
 Delusion of: be prepared to meet, EW 262.
 Editor of *Day Star* ran into, EW 77.
 Entangling, 3T 417.
 God's promise to protect His people from, EW 88, 262.
 Is a Satanic delusion, 3T 418.
 Is soul-destroying delusion, GC 553; SR 394; 1T 298.
One of the most successful delusions, GC 553; SR 394.
 Satan is able to perpetrate, EW 87.
 Delusive pretensions of, is refuge of lies offered by Satan, GC 561.
 Delusive teachings of, one of Satan's most successful agencies, GC 524.
 Demon worship and, relationship between them, PP 688.
Development of, will become more startling, Ev 604.
 Devils in, impersonate the dead, AA 290; Ev 603-4; EW 90, 262, 264; GC 552, 557, 560; PP 676-89; 4SG-a 118-9; SR393-4, 396, 398; 1T 296-300 (Ev 604-6);
Diseases will be healed by Satan through, GC589 (CH460).
Doctrine of man's consciousness in death prepared way for, GC 551.
Emboldens man in sin, PP 688.
Emmanuel Movement [Swedenborg's] is a form of, Ev 606. (See *Wikipedia*).
 Erroneous belief that, is mere imposture, GC 553; PP 685; SR 394-5.
 Erroneous teachings of, AA 474; Ed 227-8 (SD 46); Ev 603-9; EW 87, 89, 263-5; GC 555.

This list is much longer. We will address Spiritualism as a separate subject in one of our subsequent series of our monthly studies. But I challenge you to read up on all the references provided here for yourself as part in this study. I can guarantee you that you will never regret the time and effort you will put into it. For now, it is more than enough to drive home the point and show how and why spiritualism, in its various deceptive forms, "will take the whole world captive."

Though Seventh-day Adventists obviously cannot be singled out by the mere fact that one of the denomination's fundamental doctrines teaches the correct Biblical teaching on the nature of death, they will, nevertheless, also be similarly tested. Notice the following:

“Many are ensnared through the belief that spiritualism is a merely human imposture; when brought face to face with manifestations which they cannot but regard as supernatural, they will be deceived, and will be led to accept them as the great power of God.

“As the teachings of spiritualism are accepted by the [apostate] churches, the restraint imposed on the carnal heart is removed, and the profession of religion will become a cloak to conceal the basest iniquity. A belief in spiritual manifestations opens the door to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, and thus *the influence of evil angels will be felt in the churches.*

“The popular ministry [of the apostate churches] cannot successfully resist spiritualism. They have *nothing* wherewith to shield their flocks from its baleful influence. *Much of the sad result of spiritualism will rest upon ministers of this age; for they have trampled the truth under their feet, and in its stead have preferred [proffered?] fables.*

“Satan has long been preparing for his final effort to deceive the world. The foundation of his work was laid by the assurance given to Eve in Eden: ‘You shall not surely die.’ ‘In the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.’ Gen. 3: 4, 5.

“Little by little he has prepared the way for his masterpiece of deception in the development of spiritualism. He has not yet reached the full accomplishment of his designs; but it will be reached in the last remnant of time. Says the prophet [John]: ‘I saw three unclean spirits like frogs. . . . They are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth [the great men of the world], to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty’ Rev. 16: 13, 14. Except those who are kept by the power of God, through faith in His word, *the whole world will be swept into the ranks of this delusion.* The people are fast being lulled to a fatal security, to be awakened only by the outpouring of the wrath of God [in the seven last plagues the close of probation].”-*Maranatha*, p. 166.

“The miracle-working power manifested through spiritualism will exert its influence against those who choose to obey God rather than men [faithful Sabbath-keepers]. Communications from the spirits will declare that God has sent them to convince the rejecters of Sunday of their error, affirming that the laws of the land should be obeyed as the law of God. They will lament the great wickedness in the world and second the testimony of religious teachers that the degraded state of morals is caused by the desecration of Sunday. Great will be the indignation excited against all who refuse to accept their testimony

“Those who oppose the teachings of spiritualism are assailing, not men alone, but Satan and his angels. They have entered upon a contest against principalities and powers and wicked spirits in high places. Satan will not yield one inch of ground except as he is driven back by the power of the heavenly messengers [angels]. The people of God should be able to meet him, as did our Savior, with the words: ‘It is written.’ Satan can quote Scripture now as in the day of Christ, and he will pervert its teaching to sustain his delusions. Those who stand in this time of peril must understand for themselves the testimony of the Scriptures.

“Many will be confronted by the spirits of devils personating beloved relatives or friends and declaring the most dangerous heresies. These visitants will appeal to our tenderest sympathies and will work miracles to sustain their pretensions. We must be prepared to withstand them with the Bible truth that the dead know not anything and that they who thus appear are the spirits of devils.

“Satanic agencies in human form will take part in this last great conflict to oppose the building up of the kingdom of God. And *heavenly angels in human guise* will be on the field of action. The two opposing parties will continue to exist till the closing up of the last great chapter in this world’s history.” – *Maranatha*, p. 167.

See 1 Pet. 5: 8. “The fallacies of Satan are now being multiplied, and those who *swerve* from the path of truth, will lose their bearings. Having nothing to which to anchor, they will drift from one delusion to another, blown about by the winds of strange doctrines. Satan has come down with great power. Many will be deceived by his miracles.

“I am instructed to say that in the future great watchfulness will be needed. *There is to be among God’s people no spiritual stupidity.* Evil spirits are actively engaged in seeking to control the minds of human beings. Men are binding up in *bundles*, ready to be consumed by the fires of the last days.

“Those who discard Christ and His righteousness will accept the sophistry that is flooding the world. Christians are to be sober and vigilant, steadfastly resisting their adversary the devil, who is going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Men under the influence of evil spirits will work miracles. . .

“We need not be deceived. Wonderful scenes, with which Satan will be closely connected, will soon take place. God’s word declares that Satan will work miracles. He will make people sick, and then will suddenly remove from them his satanic power. They will then be regarded as healed. **These works of apparent healing will bring Seventh-day Adventists to the test.** . . .

“If those through whom cures are performed, are disposed, on account of these manifestations, *to excuse their neglect of the law of God*, and continue in disobedience, though they have power to any and every extent, it does not follow that they have the great power of God. *On the contrary, it is the miracle-working power of the great deceiver.* He is a transgressor of moral law, and employs every device that he can master to blind men to its true character. We are warned that in the last days he will work with signs and lying wonders. And he will continue these wonders until the close of probation, that he may point to them as evidence that he is an angel of light and not of darkness.” - *Maranatha*, p. 148.

It is quite clear that those who are striving for character-perfection by prayerfully and diligently studying the word and striving to obey its teachings and principles in their daily lives cannot be classed among those who are guilty of “spiritual stupidity.” They cannot be classed among those who “discard Christ and his righteousness” or “excuse their neglect of the law of God.”

But since they consider the true health reform as the “right arm of the third angel’s message” and practice its principles and share them with others, they experience and witness recovery from disease and illnesses that those unacquainted with this special aspect of the third angel’s message call “miraculous.” And indeed they are but with the direct participation of the afflicted ones in faithfully following the Eight Laws of Health, including the administration of the natural remedies as guided or provided by knowledgeable and trained persons. This is one important aspect of the purifying and sealing work of *sanctification* that those who have fallen for the false gospel of once-saved-always-saved will never experience.

Therefore the Spirit of Prophecy warns these faithful ones that “the miracle-working power manifested through spiritualism will exert its influence” upon them! *Healing can also be from the devil*—that is why it is also going to a test to Seventh-day Adventists. It

will reveal who have really studied the present, sealing truths for these last days, which includes this very topic we are currently covering!

Furthermore, to such “communications from spirits will declare that God has sent them to convince the rejecters of Sunday their error, affirming that the law of the land must be obeyed as the law of God.” Many will be confronted with spirits of devils personating beloved relatives or friends and declaring the most dangerous heresies.”

Moreover, from these specific passages it is clear that these terrible final delusions will take place only after Sunday law has already been enacted as a law of the land. And since this final act of *national apostasy that results in national ruin* is still future to this date, God is extending time for all His professed followers on earth to examine themselves more closely and ask the Holy Spirit to reveal what areas of their lives and understanding of the testing truths need to be refined, purified, and clearly understood, respectively.

I would like to close out this month’s study with quotations from the guided pen clearly tells us that no one can expect divine protection from the Satan’s powerful delusions through perfectionism and Spiritualism and other deceptions for these last days, much less receive the seal of the living God, who does not seek character perfection through the diligent study of God’s word. Notice:

“No man, woman, or youth can attain to Christian perfection and *neglect* the study of the Word of God. By carefully and closely searching His Word we shall obey the injunction of Christ, ‘Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me.’ John 5:39, KJV. This search enables the student to observe closely the divine Model. . . . The Pattern must be inspected often and closely in order to imitate it. As one becomes acquainted with the history of the Redeemer, he discovers in himself defects of character; *his unlikeness to Christ is so great that he sees he cannot be a follower without a very great change in his life.* Still he studies, with a desire to be like his great Exemplar; he catches the looks, the spirit, of his beloved Master; by beholding he becomes changed.”

“All the *philosophies of human nature* have led to confusion and shame when God has not been recognized as all in all. But the precious faith inspired of God imparts strength and nobility of character. As His goodness, His mercy, and His love are dwelt upon, clearer and still clearer will be the perception of truth; higher, holier, the desire for purity of heart and clearness of thought. *The soul dwelling in the atmosphere of holy thought is transformed by intercourse with God through the study of His Word. Truth [“as it is in Jesus”] is so large, so far-reaching, so deep, and so broad, that self is lost sight of.* The heart is softened and subdued into humility, kindness, and love.”

“The Bible. . . trains the mind to grapple with the deepest problems and to pursue the broadest explorations. It exalts the intellect. It saves the soul. . . . Take it as your mirror. It will be a faithful monitor, detecting the faults and errors of your character. It will strengthen every good trait.”

“The Word which reveals the guilt of sin, has [also] a power upon the human heart to make man right and keep him so.” – *The Faith I Live By*, p. 223.

To be continued next month.

Nathaniel Fajardo