

JOHN 4:10

Salim, because there of water, and people constantly coming to be baptized (this was before John was here.) ²⁸An argument between some of John's disciples and a certain Jew²⁹ over the matter of ceremonial washing. ³⁰One came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, that man who was with you on the other side of the Jordan—the one you testified about—well, he is baptizing, and everyone is going to him."

³¹To this John replied, "A man can receive only what is given him from heaven." ³²You yourselves can testify that I said, "I am not the Christ," but am sent ahead of him." ³³The bride belongs to the bridegroom. The friend who attends the bridegroom waits and listens for him, and is full of joy when he hears the bridegroom's voice. That joy is mine, and it is now complete. ³⁴He must become greater; I must become less.

³⁵The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is from the earth belongs to the earth, and speaks as one from the earth. ³⁶The one who comes from heaven is above all. ³⁷He testifies to what he has seen and heard, but no one accepts his testimony. ³⁸The man who has accepted it has certified that God is truthful. ³⁹For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the

²⁸ Some manuscripts and certain Jews read the quotation after verse 30.

²⁹ Or Messiah

³⁴ Greek he

³⁶ Some interpreters have used

Jesus Talks With a Samaritan Woman

⁴ The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining, and baptizing more disciples than John, although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. ⁵ When the Lord learned of this, he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee.

⁶ Now he had to go through Samaria. ⁷ So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. ⁸ Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. ⁹ When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

¹⁰ The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) ¹¹ Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and

THIS GOSPEL AND THE FINAL GENERATION

1888 MESSAGE STUDY
COMMITTEE

NEWSLETTER
December 2015



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The purpose of this newsletter is to share the good news of Jesus Christ as the foundation of effective personal and public evangelism to the world, to encourage the use of and share more effective methods and resources.

EDITOR

Gerald Finneman

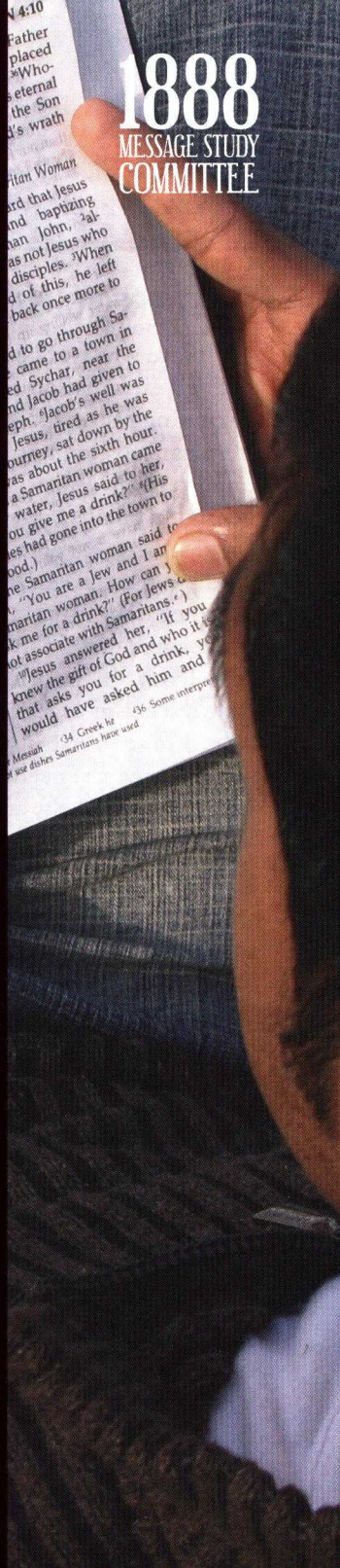
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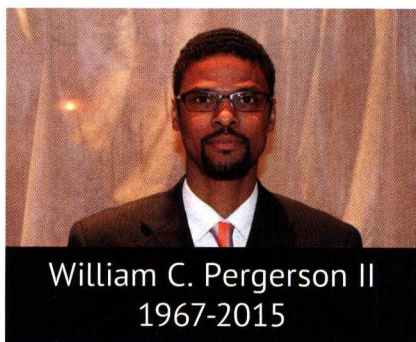
In Memoriam:

Last article written by evangelist William C. Pergerson II

MOST PRECIOUS?...REALLY?

Have you ever gotten an email with an exclamation point at the beginning of the subject line? It's meant to communicate "high importance". When I'm a day or so behind in emails, and I look at the couple dozen or more that I have to catch up on, the exclamation point definitely motivates me to open up those emails first. Or, when you get a letter via "priority mail", you have a sense of urgency to get it open and see what is so vital that someone felt the need to send it rapidly, expensively, and "priority".

In a very similar vein, if you knew you had a message from God, would that be of "high importance" to you? That should probably be an email with ten asterisks by it, or a letter hand-delivered by the postman. Any communication from God would be the most significant communication you or I would ever receive. But what if you didn't just get "any" communication from God, but it was – from God's perspective – an "important" communication. How much more significant would it be than a "regular" communication from God. And even more than that, what if you got a communication that was – from His perspective – a "most important" communica-



William C. Pergerson II
1967-2015

tion? I imagine that everything in our regular daily lives would come to an immediate stop while we investigated this "most important" communication from God.

The Being who has responsibility and awareness and charge for the whole vast universe, has sent us not only a "most important" message, but even more vital, He has sent us a "most precious" message. What is the difference between something that is important, and something that is precious? Important is important! Important means – significant, central, key, essential. But precious means – costly, prized, dear, exquisite, priceless. "Precious" trumps "important" – every time.

It's hard to imagine a communication from God that could be red-flagged as more important, be given greater emphasis, or be identified with greater urgency, than a communication branded as "most precious". If we have

any interest whatsoever in what God has to say to us, as individuals or as a Seventh-day Adventist church, then a communication distinguished by the adjectives, “most precious” should grasp our intellectual and emotional interest as nothing else could.

“The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people through Elders Waggoner and Jones. This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family. All power is given into His hands, that He may dispense rich gifts unto men, imparting the priceless gift of His own righteousness to the helpless human agent. This is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel’s message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.” {1888 1336.2}

As you read that paragraph, did you notice that in more than a dozen different ways, the inspired author was trying to call our attention to a “most precious” message

that was all about Jesus!! “Uplifted Savior”, “sacrifice for sins of whole world”, “the Surety”, “righteousness of Christ”, “lost sight of Jesus”, “His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family”, “All power is given into His Hands”, etc. Over and over again she is calling our attention to a message that was to awaken our hopes, desires, interests, thoughts, and affections towards Jesus.

And in addition, this “most precious” message is identified as, one – the third angel’s message, and, two, the latter rain. It is the message that Jesus appealed to us to go into all the world and preach to all the world in Mark 16:15. How significant is it that God, in His great mercy, sent us a most precious message, that is all about Jesus, that is the third angel’s message and that will be attended with the latter rain! Is there anything more significant or more vital on the plates of our lives right now than this “most precious” message?

I want to encourage you, and appeal to you, and urge you, and embolden you, to study and learn what this “most precious” message is. If you have studied it in the past, re-examine it again – as if for the first time. And then, as your heart is warmed by the message of the righteousness – the goodness, beauty, courtesy, love, friendship – of Christ, go out and share it in the most humble and appealing manner with your brothers and sisters in the church and in the world.

HOW TO MEET A CONTROVERTED POINT OF DOCTRINE

EG White

Morning Talk Given At Battle Creek Michigan
January 29, 1890

We want to understand the time in which we live. We do not half understand it. We do not half take it in. My heart trembles in me when I think of what a foe we have to meet, and how poorly we are prepared to meet him. The trials of the children of Israel, and their attitude just before the first coming of Christ, have been presented before me again and again to illustrate the position of the people of God in their experience before the second coming of Christ. How the enemy sought every occasion to take control of the minds of the Jews, and today he is seeking to blind the minds of God's servants, that they may not be able to discern the precious truth.

It was the work of Christ to present the truth in the frame-work of the gospel, and to reveal the precepts and principles that he had given to fallen man. Every idea he presented was his own. He needed not to borrow thoughts from any, for he was the originator of all truth. He could present the ideas of prophets and philosophers, and preserve his originality; for all wisdom was his;

he was the source, the fountain, of all truth. He was in advance of all, and by his teaching he became the spiritual leader for all ages.

The light of the glory of God must fall upon us. We need the holy unction from on high. However intelligent, however learned a man may be, he is not qualified to teach unless he has a firm hold on the God of Israel. He who is connected with Heaven will do the works of Christ. By faith in God he will have power to move upon humanity. He will seek for the lost sheep of the house of Israel. If divine power does not combine with human effort, I would not give a straw for all that the greatest man could do. The Holy Spirit is wanting in our work. Nothing frightens me more than to see the spirit of variance manifested by our brethren. We are on dangerous ground when we cannot meet together like Christians, and courteously examine controverted points. I feel like fleeing from the place lest I receive the mold of those who cannot candidly investigate the doctrines of the Bible. Those

who cannot impartially examine the evidences of a position that differs from theirs, are not fit to teach in any department of God's cause. What we need is the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Without this, we are no more fitted to go forth to the world than were the disciples after the crucifixion of their Lord. Jesus knew their destitution, and told them to tarry in Jerusalem until they should be endowed with power from on high. Every teacher must be a learner, that his eyes may be anointed to see the evidences of the advancing truth of God. The beams of the Sun of Righteousness must shine into his own heart if he would impart light to others.

No one is able to explain the Scriptures without the aid of the Holy Spirit. But when you take up the word of God with a humble, teachable heart, the angels of God will be by your side to impress you with evidences of the truth. When the Spirit of God rests upon you, there will be no feeling of envy or jealousy in examining another's position; there will be no spirit of accusation and criticism, such as Satan inspired in the hearts of the Jewish leaders against Christ. As Christ said to Nicodemus, so I say to you, "Ye must be born again." "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." You must have the divine mold before you can discern the sacred claims of the truth....

...There are many who cannot distinguish between the work of God and that of man. I shall tell the truth as God gives it to me, and

I say now, If you continue to find fault, to have a spirit of variance, you will never know the truth. Jesus said to his disciples, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." They were not in a condition to appreciate sacred and eternal things; but Jesus promised to send the Comforter, who would teach them all things, and bring all things, to their remembrance, whatsoever he had said unto them. Brethren, we must not put our dependence in man. "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?" You must hang your helpless souls upon Jesus. It does not become us to drink from the fountain of the valley, when there is a fountain in the mountain. Let us leave the lower streams; let us come to the higher springs. If there is a point of truth that you do not understand, upon which you do not agree, investigate, compare scripture with scripture, sink the shaft of truth down deep into the mine of God's word. You must lay yourselves and your opinions on the altar of God, put away your preconceived ideas, and let the Spirit of Heaven guide you into all truth.

My brother said at one time that he would not hear anything concerning the doctrine we hold, for fear he should be convinced. He would not come to the meetings, or listen to the discourses; but he afterward declared that he saw he was as guilty as if he had heard them. God had given him an opportunity to know the truth, and he would hold him responsible

for this opportunity. There are many among us who are prejudiced against the doctrines that are now being discussed. They will not come to hear, they will not calmly investigate, but they put forth their objections in the dark. They are perfectly satisfied with their position. "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."

This scripture applies to those who live under the sound of the message, but who will not come to hear it. How do you know but that the Lord is giving fresh evidences of his truth, placing it in a new setting, that the way of the Lord may be prepared? What plans have you been laying that new light may be infused through the ranks of God's people? What evidence have you that God has not sent light to his children? All self-sufficiency, egotism, and pride of opinion must be put away. We must come to the feet of Jesus, and learn of him who is meek and lowly of heart. Jesus did not teach his disciples as the rabbis taught theirs. Many of the Jews came and listened as Christ revealed the mysteries of salvation,

but they came not to learn they came to criticize, to catch him in some inconsistency, that they might have something with which to prejudice the people. They were content with their knowledge, but the children of God must know the voice of the true Shepherd. Is not this a time when it would be highly proper to fast and pray before God? We are in danger of variance, in danger of taking sides on a controverted point; and should we not seek God in earnestness, with humiliation of soul, that we may know what is truth?

Nathanael heard John as he pointed to the Saviour, and said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" "Nathanael looked at Jesus, but he was disappointed in the appearance of the world's Redeemer. Could he who bore the marks of toil and poverty, be the Messiah? Jesus was a worker; he had toiled with humble working-men, and Nathanael went away. But he did not form his opinion decidedly as to what the character of Jesus was. He knelt down under a fig-tree, inquiring of God if indeed this man was the Messiah. While he was there, Philip came and said, "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." But the word "Nazareth" again aroused his unbelief, and he said, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" He was full of prejudice, but Philip did not seek to combat his prejudice; he simply said, "Come and see." When Nathanael came into the presence of Jesus, Jesus

said, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathanael was amazed. He said, "Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee."

Would it not be well for us to go under the fig-tree to plead with God as to what is truth? Would not the eye of God be upon us as it was upon Nathanael? Nathanael believed on the Lord, and exclaimed, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

This is what we shall see if we are connected with God. God wants us to depend upon him, and not upon man. He desires us to have a new heart; he would give us revealings of light from the throne of God. We should wrestle with every difficulty, but when some controverted point is presented, are you to go to man to find out his opinion, and then shape your conclusions from his?—No, go to God. Tell him what you want; take your Bible and search as for hidden treasures.

We do not go deep enough in our search for truth. Every soul who believes present truth will be brought where he will be required

to give a reason of the hope that is in him. The people of God will be called upon to stand before kings, princes, rulers, and great men of the earth, and they must know that they do know what is truth. They must be converted men and women. God can teach you more in one moment by his Holy Spirit than you could learn from the great men of the earth. The universe is looking upon the controversy that is going on upon the earth. At an infinite cost, God has provided for every man an opportunity to know that which will make him wise unto salvation. How eagerly do angels look to see who will avail himself of this opportunity! When a message is presented to God's people, they should not rise up in opposition to it; they should go to the Bible, comparing it with the law and the testimony, and if it does not bear this test, it is not true. God wants our minds to expand. He desires to put his grace upon us. We may have a feast of good things every day; for God can open the whole treasure of heaven to us.... We may have the same help that Christ had, we may have strength for every emergency;.. and when we are brought before rulers.... God will teach us in the day of our need. Now may God help us to come to the feet of Jesus and learn of him, before we seek to become teachers of others. — 1888 Materials 533-534



A FLASH OF LIGHTING

Sharon Pergerson

Jesus had ministered to people all day long. He was tired and decided to set out to go across the lake to a secluded place to rest. His disciples and boats of other followers left with Him. Soon He was fast asleep. Suddenly, out of nowhere, darkness arose, the winds went wild, and the sea completely lost its temper. Waves began to furiously lash against the boat, as if to swallow it up.

On the boat were professional fishermen with a lifetime of experience. They had been through many storms before. This time all their strength and skill amounted to nothing, for they could not save themselves out of the grips of this storm. Their hope began to fail them as they watched their boat filling up with water. God's prophet, Ellen White, tells us that the disciples were so, "Absorbed in their efforts to save themselves, they had forgotten that Jesus was on

board. Now, seeing their labor vain and only death before them, they remembered at whose command they had set out to cross the sea. In Jesus was their only hope." DA 334.

Jesus was their **ONLY** hope. In helplessness they cried out to Him, but the thick darkness hid Him from them and the roaring thunderstorm drowned out their voices. Thoughts of doubt began to tempt them. Had Jesus abandoned them? Was He unable to rescue them? Was He even aware of the danger they were in? They cried out again, for their boat was beginning to sink. Within minutes they would be swallowed up by the angry sea. Then we are told a flash of lighting revealed Jesus, sleeping peacefully. They cried out as loud as they could, "Lord, save us! We perish!

At the sound of their desperate cry, Jesus awoke with the peace of heaven in his face. In his eyes, his followers saw only self

forgetful, tender love. Jesus had no fear. He trusted His Father's Word, power, love, and care. Jesus then stood up and uttered those words we cannot forget, "Peace be still," and the storm ceased.

You have probably heard this story before, but you might not realize that it contains a special message for this final generation of God's people. As you read this, God's Church and His people are in a storm. A storm stirred up by Satan to cause us to let go of Jesus in order to destroy us. Even now there are strong angry winds that are pushing and pulling our Church to give in to the world and welcome its influence; to forget our God-given purpose and calling; to deny our identity; to become just another church among many; and to silence us from sharing the last message that God has given us to help prepare the world for His coming.

No amount of experience, strength, nor skill can stand up to this storm. We are trying our human best to save ourselves and to fix our church, but we are rapidly sinking. Just when it seems like our hope is about to fail and our church seems like it is about to be destroyed, we will be led to look to Jesus, our ONLY hope. The darkness of Satan's evil schemes may seem to block our view of Jesus. The voices of his agents may seem to drown out our cries for help. The pressure to doubt God's ability to save us may be mounting. Don't lose hope. It is then that we are to keep crying out to Him and He will send a flash of lighting that will reveal

that Jesus is still right here with us. Would you like to guess what I think that flash of lighting is for this final generation? I believe it is the revelation of the message of Christ our Righteousness that God sent to His church in the late 1800's. This message reveals what the disciples saw so long ago in the face of Jesus during the storm on the lake, a look of self forgetful, tender love.

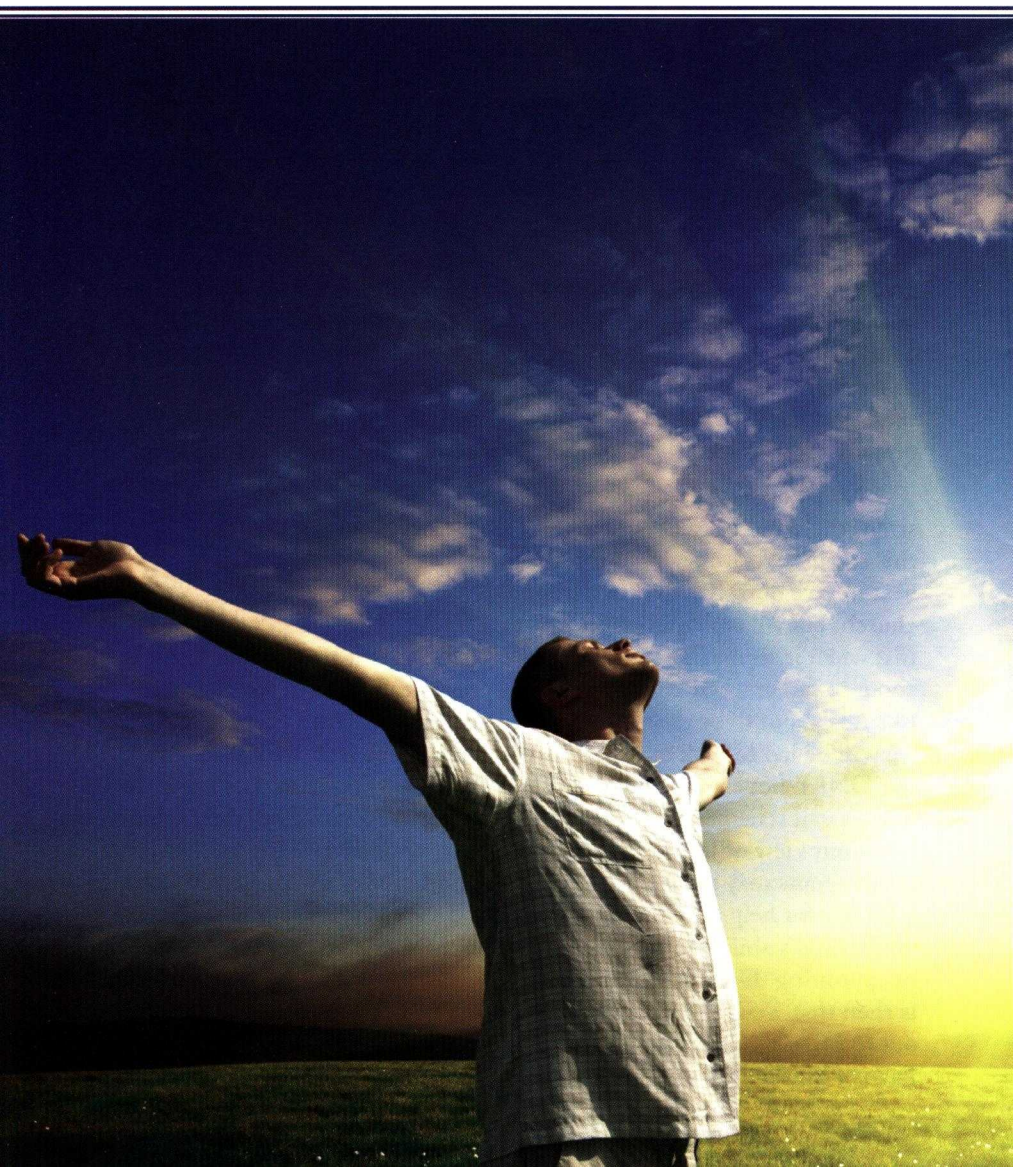
Just as Jesus had no fear, for He trusted in His Father's Word, and in His power, love, and care, we now have the opportunity to do the same. We need not fear, for we are to put our faith and trust in God's Word, and in His power, love, and care. Jesus will soon stand up again, to deliver His followers. Read it for yourself in Daniel 12:1, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of Thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time Thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.

At that time, when Jesus says peace be still again, it will be forever! Until then, let's all stay in the boat with Jesus, we are safe with Him. Let's pray, for ourselves and for our dear Church, that we will speedily look to Jesus and humbly say the words," Lord, save us. We perish." He promises to hear and answer our prayer.

THE THIRD ANGEL'S MESSAGE.

NO. 18. 1893 GENERAL CONFERENCE

A. T. Jones Sermons NO. 18.



Our study last night was in order to know for ourselves and how we may know that we have the blessing of Abraham, and thus be prepared to be sure, that with confidence we may ask for the Spirit of God. There is more of that yet. The Lord has given us yet further evidence, yet further proof, upon which to base our perfect confidence in Him, in His

righteousness; that that is our own--that we have the righteousness which is by faith, so that we can ask in perfect confidence for His Holy Spirit and thank the Lord that it is our own. For remember the verse reads: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

The blessing of Abraham is the righteousness of faith; that we are to have in order to receive and that we may have, the promise of the Spirit--and that also through faith. Well then when we have the evidence, the proof, the perfect work of God demonstrating to our complete satisfaction, that we can ask in perfect confidence for the Holy Spirit, then is it not ours to receive that by faith? Is it not ours to thank God that that is our own? And that it simply remains for Him to manifest it at His own will, whenever occasion may require and as occasion may need?

Well, let us study, then, some other evidence that He has given us--study this tonight in connection with what we had last night, so that we may have before us fresh what the Lord Himself has opened for us, upon which to base our confidence before Him, upon which we may be sure where we stand and upon which we may ask with the full assurance of faith. And when we ask according to His will and ask that we may have that which He has promised, then He heareth us. "This is the confidence that we have in Him that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: and if we know that he hear us," then "we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." 1 John 5:14, 15. And then we can thank Him that that is our own.

Let us begin with the fifth chapter of Romans, twentieth verse. The real point, or we might say, one of the main points of the study tonight is to see what place the law of God occupies in the subject of righteousness by faith; what place the law of God occupies in our obtaining righteousness alone by Jesus Christ, and this is simply another phase of the same thought we had last night, as to what proof the Lord has given us to give us confidence that we can claim by faith the promise of the Holy Spirit.

"Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound." In other words, Rom. 3:20, the last words--words with which you are all familiar---"by the law is the knowledge of sin." What was the law given for on tables of stone-

-the first purpose of its given?
[Congregation: "To show us what sin is."] To make sin abound; to give the knowledge of sin. So, "the law entered that the offense might abound"; that sin might appear; that it might appear as it is. Paul, speaking in the 7th chapter of Romans, says how it appeared to him, 12th and 13th verses:

"Wherefore the law is holy and the commandment holy and just and good. Was then that which is good made death unto me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." Then to make sin abound and make it appear as it is, exceeding sinful--that is the first object of the giving of the law, isn't it?

Now let us read right on in Rom. 5: "Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Then did the law come alone, making sin to appear alone, and that alone? [Congregation: "No."] It is simply the means to another end--the means to an end by which to attain another object beyond the knowledge of sin. Is that so? [Congregation: "Yes."] So then, where sin abounds--where is it that grace abounds? [Congregation: "In the same place."] Right there? [Congregation: "Yes."] But does it read that way, "Where sin abounded grace abounded"? [Congregation: "No. 'Much more.'"] That would be pretty good wouldn't it, if it was only where sin abounds there grace

abounds? That would be pretty good, but that is not the way the Lord does things, you know. He does things absolutely well--entirely good, just as good as God could do.

Well then, "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." [Congregation: "Amen."] Then, brethren, when the Lord, by His law, has given us the knowledge of sin, just at that very moment, at that very point, grace is much more abundant than the knowledge of sin. Is that so? [Congregation: "Yes."]

Now another word: "By the law is the knowledge of sin"; and we have found this much: that when the law gives the knowledge of sin, at that particular moment, in that very place and at that very point, in that very thing, the grace of God is much more abundant than the knowledge of sin. But when the law gives the knowledge of sin, what puts the conviction there? [Congregation: "The Spirit of God."] Before we read the passage which says so, however, let us see what we are to get so far, from what we have read--what are you and I henceforth to get from the knowledge of sin? [Congregation: "Abundance of grace."]

Then there is no possible place for discouragement at the sight of sins any more, is there? [Congregation: "No."] No possibility of that. It is impossible, you see, for you or me to get discouraged or under a cloud any more at the knowledge of sin. Because, no difference how great the knowledge is, no difference how many sins are revealed to us and brought to

our knowledge, why, right there, at that very moment, in those very things, and at that very time in our experience, the grace of God much more abounds than all the knowledge of sins. Well then, I say again, how is it possible for us ever to be discouraged? Brethren, isn't it so, that the Lord wants us to be of good cheer? [Congregation: "Amen!"] Be of good cheer.

of sin? [Congregation: "Yes."] Is He the Comforter when He does it? [Congregation: "Yes."] Now, each one wants to get hold of that. Is not He the reprover when He does it and the Comforter some other time? [Congregation: "No."] It is the Comforter that reproves, thank the Lord! The Comforter reproves, thank the Lord! Then what are we to get out of the reproof of sin?

"The Comforter reproves, thank the Lord! Then what are we to get out of the reproof of sin? [Congregation: "Comfort."]"

Well, now, this verse that we have before us brings the same thing to view. John 16:7,8: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth." What is He telling us? [Congregation: "Truth."] Good! And He told us also that "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." That is it then, isn't it? "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." Who will not come? [Congregation: "The Comforter."] The Comforter? Is that His name? Is that what He is--the Comforter? [Congregation: "Yes."]

"But if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come," Who has come? [Congregation: "the Comforter."] Who? [Congregation: "The Comforter."] "And when he is come, he will reprove [or convince] the world of sin." Who is it that does it? [Congregation: "The Comforter."] Is it the Comforter that convinces

[Congregation: "Comfort."] Whose comfort? [Congregation: "The Lord's comfort."] The comfort we get, comforts just at the time when it is needed. Then where is the room for our getting discouraged any more at the knowledge of sin? Isn't that the very thought that we have read in the fifth chapter of Romans?

Don't you see, then, that when we bear in mind just at the moment and at the time and at the place that where sin abounds there grace much more abounds, and just at the time when the Holy Spirit is giving conviction of sin, He is the Comforter that does it. Don't you see that in all that--remembering all that--we have an everlasting victory over Satan? Does Satan get the advantage of that man who believes God right then? No. Satan comes and says, "See what a sinner you are." Thank the Lord, "Where sin abounds, grace does much more

“Here is a perfect life; here is the life of God. Here is a pure heart; here is a good conscience. here is unfeigned faith.”

abound.” [Congregation: “Amen!”] “Well,” says another, “I have such a deep conviction of sin. It seems to me I was never convicted of sin so deeply before in all my life.” Thank the Lord, we have got more comfort than ever before in our lives. Don’t you see, brethren, that that is so? [Congregation: “It is so.”] Well, then, let us thank the Lord for that. [Congregation: “Amen!”] I should like to know why we should not praise the Lord right along.

But there is some more in that Rom. 5:20. What is this all for? First, we found that the law makes sin abound in order that grace may abound so that we may have the grace to lead us to Christ. Now what are the two things together for? The law making sin abound in order that more grace may abound. What are they both together for? “That as sin hath reigned unto death.” We know that’s so, don’t we? Now that is so. The law makes sin abound, that we may be lead to more abundance of grace, in order “that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign.”

What does “even so” mean? Just as certainly. Just so. Then, isn’t it so that God will make that abundance of grace to reign in our lives just as certainly as ever sin did in the world? [Congregation:

“Yes, sir.”] But, mark you, when the grace much more bountifully reigns, then what is the comparison between freedom from sin now and the slavery to it before? The freedom is much more abundant even than the slavery was. “That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ.”

Now let us see the whole story. “The law entered that the offense might abound,” in order that we might find the more abundant grace abounding right there in all those places, and the grace abounds “through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” Then what did the law enter for? [Voice: “To bring us to the Lord.”] What did the law enter for? [Voice: “To bring us to Christ.”] Yes. Don’t you see? Then whenever anybody in this world uses the ten commandments—when any sinner in this world uses the ten commandments for any other purpose than to reach Jesus Christ, what kind of a purpose is He putting them to? [Congregation: “A wrong purpose.”] He is perverting the intent of God in giving the law, isn’t He? [Congregation: “A wrong purpose.”] He is perverting the intent of God in giving the law, isn’t he? [Congregation: “Yes, sir.”] To use the law of God with men for any other purpose, therefore,

than that they may reach Christ Jesus, is to use the law in a way that God never intended it to be used.

Well, the law then brings us to Christ. That's certain. What for? [Congregation: "That we may be justified."] What does the law want of you and me? Does it make any demands of us before we reach Jesus Christ? When the law finds us, does it want anything from us? [Congregation: "It wants righteousness."] What kind? [Congregation: "Perfect righteousness."] Whose? [Congregation: "God's."] God's righteousness? [Congregation: "Yes."] Just such righteousness alone as God manifests in His own life, in His own way of doing things? [Congregation: "Yes."] Will that law be content with anything less than that from you and me? Will it accept anything less than that, a hair's breadth less? [Congregation: "No."] If we could come within a hair's breadth of it--that's too far short; we miss it.

Turn to Timothy, and Paul tells us what the law wants out of you and me and what it wants in us, too. 1 Tim. 1:5: "Now the end (the object, the aim, the intent, the purpose) of the commandment is charity." What is charity? [Congregation: "Love."] What kind of love? [Congregation: "The love of God."] "Out of a pure heart." What kind of a heart? [Congregation: "A pure heart."] "And of a good conscience." What kind of a conscience? [Congregation: "Good."] "And of faith unfeigned." That is what the law wants to find in you and me, isn't it? Will it accept

you and me with anything less than that which it demands--perfect love, manifested "out of a pure heart, a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned"? No, never. Well, that is simply perfection, that it demands.

Well, now, have we--has any man in the world--any of that kind of love to offer to the law of God? [Congregation: "No."] Has any man naturally that kind of a conscience? [Congregation: "No."] No, sir. Well, then, the law makes that demand of every man on the earth tonight, no difference who he is. He makes it of you and me; he makes that demand of people in Africa and of all the people on the earth, and he will not accept anything less than that from anyone of them. But, we are talking about ourselves tonight. So, the law comes to you and me tonight and says: "I want charity; I want perfect love--the love of God. I want to see it in your life all the time. And I want to see it manifested out of a pure heart and through a good conscience and unfeigned faith." That is where we are. "Well," says one, "I have not got it. I have done my best." But the law will say, "that is not what I want. I don't want your best. I want perfection. It is not your doing I want anyhow; it is God's I want. It is not your righteousness I am after; I want God's righteousness from you. It is not your doing I want. I want God's doing in your life." That is what the law says to every man. Then, when I am shut off thus at the very first question and even then when I said I did my best, then I have nothing more to say. Is that not what the scripture says:

"That every mouth may be stopped."
It does just that, does it not?

But there comes a still small voice saying, "Here is a perfect life; here is the life of God. Here is a pure heart; here is a good conscience. here is unfeigned faith." Where does that voice come from? [Congregation: "Christ."] Ah, the Lord Jesus Christ, who came and stood where I stand in the flesh in which I live. He lived there. The perfect love of God was manifested there. The perfect purity of heart manifested there. A good conscience manifested there, and the unfeigned faith of the mind that was in Jesus Christ is there.

Well, then, He simply comes and tells me, "Here, take this." That will satisfy, then, will it? [Congregation: "Yes."] The life manifested in Jesus Christ, that will satisfy the law. The purity of heart that Jesus Christ gives--that will satisfy the law. The good conscience that He can create, that will satisfy. The unfeigned faith which He gives--that will satisfy. Will it? [Congregation: "Yes."]

Well then is that not what the law wants all the time? It is Jesus Christ that the law wants, is it not? [Congregation: "Yes."] That is what the law wants: that is the same thing which it calls for in the fifth of Romans, is it not? But why does it call for it in connection with me? It calls for Christ in me, because the law wants to see that thing in me. Then is not the object of the law of God, the gospel of Christ alone? "Christ in you the hope of glory?" Ah, that is so.

Rom. 5:1, 5. "Justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." And that is charity. Supreme love. Acts 15:8, 9, "And God which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us, and put no difference between us and them purifying their hearts by faith." There is the love of God out of a pure heart.

Heb. 9:14: "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" There is a clean conscience, brethren, and there is the love of God out of a good conscience.

Then that faith which He gives, which He enables us to keep--the faith of Jesus which enables us to keep the commandments of God--there is the love of God by a faith unfeigned.

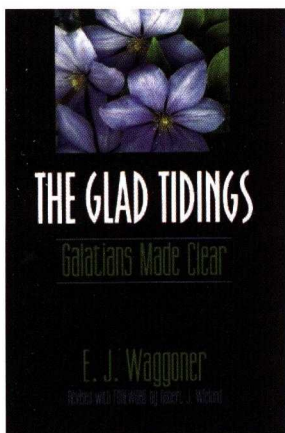
Oh then the message of the righteousness of God which is by faith in Jesus Christ, brings us to, and brings to us, the perfect fulfillment of the law of God, does it not? [Congregation: "Yes."] Then that is the object and the aim and the one single point of the third angel's message, is it not? [Congregation: "Yes."] That is Christ. Christ in His righteousness. Christ in His purity. Christ in His love. Christ in His gentleness. Christ in His entire

being. Christ and Him crucified.
That is the word, brethren. Let
us be glad of it; let us be glad of
it. [Congregation: "Amen."]

So then when we have Jesus,
when we have received Him by
faith and the law stands before us
or we stand before it and it makes
its wondrous demand of charity,
we can say, "Here it is. It is in
Christ and He is mine!" Out of a
pure heart--"Here it is in Christ,
and He has given it to me--a good
conscience." The blood of Christ has
created it in me. Here it is. "Faith
unfeigned," the faith in Jesus. He
has given it to me. Here it is.

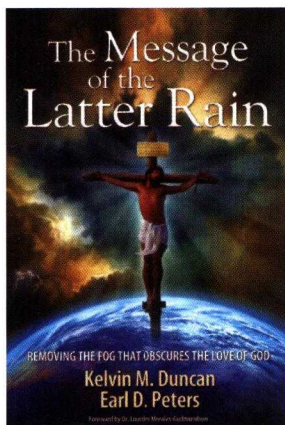
Then, just as Steps to Christ
tells us, we can come to Jesus now
and be cleansed and stand before the
law without one touch of shame or
remorse. Good. Brethren, when I
have that which makes me at perfect
agreement with the law of God,
then I am satisfied, and cannot help
but be glad that I am satisfied.

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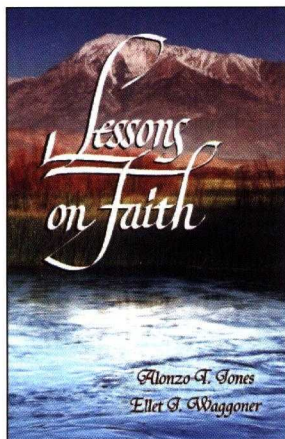
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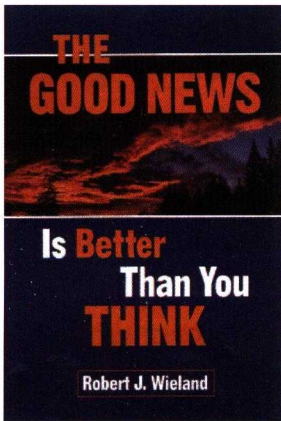
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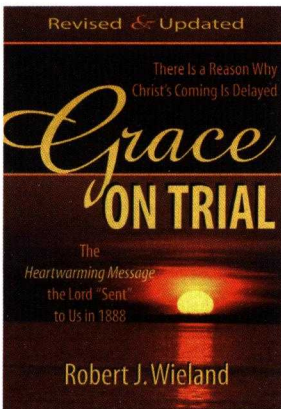
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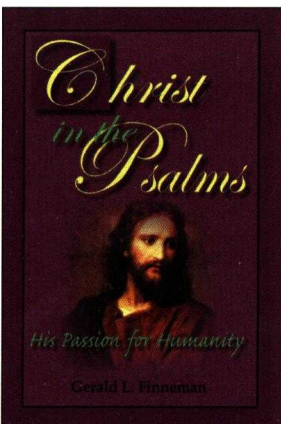
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PETER AND FORGIVENESS: PART 4

Fred Bischoff



Peter and the eleven had been struggling to understand the motive power of Jesus' life, ministry, and kingdom. Without realizing it, they were grappling with the very core of forgiveness itself. They had yet to see its importance and its cost. They had been attracted to Jesus, enough to leave their jobs and commit to His cause. The Holy Spirit had prompted them in the right direction. But the stories we've considered to this point show their idea of greatness was being tested by who Jesus was, and what He had come to do. Peter seemed to be front and center in this classroom, with its lessons and exams.

As its most vocal student, he was ready to manifest what he thought about greatness. Who could be greater than the Messiah—"the Son of the living God"? Peter was sure that was who Jesus was. But He was a poor man from Nazareth, and He had those strange traits of humility. (Story #1).

And why did He talk about being crucified? Peter couldn't see how greatness fit with that. (Story #2).

But Jesus must be who Peter thought He was. After all, Moses and Elijah showed up to talk with Him. Peter was there and saw them. Okay, he did sleep through much of what happened, and missed the main point of their visit with Jesus. (Story #3).

But Peter knew Jesus highly valued the temple and its services. He even called it "My Father's house." But why would He deny any

obligation to pay the usual money to support it, and then turn around, rather than offending the leaders, and miraculously have Peter find the money to pay it? What was His real connection to the mysterious temple ceremonies? (Story #4).

Might all of this have something to do with forgiveness? So Peter had asked Jesus a very personal question about forgiving his brother. It was not a motive question, about the right attitude in forgiveness. It was a calculating question, about the number of times it was appropriate. Peter's thoughts of generosity were blown away by Jesus' answer, and then His puzzling story about a king and his debtors--a forgiving king, and a servant who refused to be forgiving like the king, and ended up having to pay all he owed. Peter must have really been challenged with Jesus' pointed conclusion, directed to all of them, "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." (Story #5).

Peter must have thought, how can I forgive like that? So he needed some more lessons in giving and in what blocks that motive of true greatness.

Story #6: Matt. 19: Peter's Claim--Revealing the Motive Opposite of Forgiveness

The Story

And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

And he 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 saith unto him, Which? Jesus said,

Thou shalt do no murder,
Thou shalt not commit adultery,
Thou shalt not steal,
Thou shalt not bear false witness,
Honour thy father and thy mother:
and,
Thou shalt love thy
neighbour as thyself.

The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from 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.

But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?

But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?

And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first. (verses 16-30)

Reflections

This story illustrates the vital nature of giving in many respects. Let's consider the following:

1. *Do to Have*

The rich young man (Luke also called him a "ruler"; Luke 18:18) did not realize he was asking a question regarding giving. His query was a generic "do" motivated by the desire to "have." His goal was getting something--"eternal life."

2. *Love Thy Neighbor*

Jesus made it clear that the quality and dimensions of what he must "do" had been described in the law, quoting five of the ten commandments, and then the statement that summarized the other-centered principle of self-giving love,

“love thy neighbor as thyself.”

Consider the thread of this command in the gospels. It occurs only three times, this story, once before at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry, and once more to come in His last week in Jerusalem. In His sermon on the mount He had dwelt at length on this saying, showing both the common misconception that this love was limited only to non-enemies, and the true extent of how much it really encompassed—give as “your Father which is in heaven” gives. His answer to a lawyer later addressed what the greatest commandment was, to love God with all the heart, soul, and mind, and added this second similar commandment, to love one’s neighbor as self. These two commands summarize and prioritize the targets of self-giving love, the core principle of God’s character and of all He has made, in its original design.

3. Something Lacking

The young man felt he had measured up with these standards, not realizing their core of unselfishness. So he sensed something was still lacking, and asked Jesus what it was.

4. The Perfection of Unselfish Giving

Jesus unfolded to him dimensions of giving that revealed his selfishness. Jesus’ counsel appeared to focus on material goods, but that was only because those were the young man’s idols. Perhaps it is significant that Jesus did not quote any of the first four

commandments, or their summary in the greatest commandment, as this young man clearly had been holding possessions above God. He did not love God with all his heart, soul, and mind. The heavenly treasure that comes only with giving was what he lacked. Only with that dynamic could he follow Jesus. Only by embracing that which is the root of forgiveness could he be “perfect.”

This is the only other time in the gospels this adjective is used outside of the sermon on the mount. The lesson is clear--the image of God is seen in other-centered love that gives. That is the motivation. The result is being as the Father, being perfect, having eternal treasure, entering the kingdom of heaven. But we must not warp this result into sanctioning a self-focused motivation that would legitimize our inborn selfishness. For the goal is a disinterested, a selfless giving. The motivation is also the result. That is the essential spirit of heaven, the dynamic of eternal life--the place (heaven) and time (eternity) of giving as the Father gives. Without that, heaven and eternal life are simply selfish goals.

5. Sorrowing of Selfishness

The young man made a decision similar to the first servant in the parable in the last story. He would not. So he left sorrowing at the requirement. Every use of the verb “to be sorry” in the gospels demonstrates our theme. While this sorrowing is always connected with selfishness, at times it flows through an unselfish heart due to

the selfishness of others. Observe carefully these other occurrences--

(1) Herod "was sorry" he had trapped himself into taking the life of John the Baptist to give unwisely in an absurd oath. (Matt. 14:9)

(2) The disciples, as noted in Story #3, "were exceeding sorry" that Jesus said His giving would include His life. (Matt. 17:23)

(3) The fellow-servants in the parable we examined in Story #4 "were very sorry" the first servant refused to give as his lord had given him. (Matt. 18:31; also same adverb as Matt. 17:23)

(4) The disciples "were exceeding sorrowful" that one of them would give Jesus to His enemies, so they could take His life. (Matt. 26:22; also same adverb as Matt. 17:23)

(5) Jesus predicted the disciples would "be sorrowful" when they encountered Jesus' ultimate act of giving His life, but their sorrow would "be turned into joy" with His resurrection enabling Him to reorient them to understand the joy in giving. (John 16:20)

(6) Jesus Himself "began to be sorrowful" when in Gethsemane He started to enter into the ultimate reality of giving Himself as man's substitute, and the Father began giving up His Son to the consequences of the taking of sin. (Matt. 26:37)

(7) There was one more occurrence of this verb, but this was specific to Peter, and we will reserve it for our final chapter in his ongoing story.

6. *A Rich Man's Difficulty*

The path Jesus was on was an opposite path to someone who was rich through the spirit of getting and keeping. He felt constrained to comment to His disciples about how difficult it was for a rich person to change paths.

7. *Amazed Selfishness*

Did the disciples realize how much they needed this change? No, for they were "exceedingly amazed"--still out of touch with the core issue of giving, leading to the superlative adverb we have already seen three times in our tracing the heart of forgiveness--all three occurrences showing negative states indicating a self-focus of fear or sorrow (Matt. 17:6, 23; 18:31).

Again we must emphasize, what is the motivation, and what is the result? Can we see how these are integrally the same? Luke's account of the sermon on the mount shows Jesus stating it succinctly, "Give, and it shall be given unto you." (Luke 6:38). To a selfish heart this command and promise appears to be saying, "The way to get is to give a little." The legalist sees the doing as something possible for him, to enter the nirvana of getting. But if we have perceived correctly this principle that Jesus was both speaking and living, the giving is a way of life, that moves with God's circuit of beneficence. When one truly gives unselfishly, what is given to him in response only enables him to give more. Is that not what eternal life is all about--the ceaseless joy of infinite

resources and ways of giving as God Himself does? And how important is this realization? Could it be as fundamental as understanding the difference between the two principles contending for supremacy in the conflict between good and evil, between finding your life and losing your life?

8. Impossibility of Unselfishness

The disciples' self-focused amazement was revealed immediately in the hopelessness that comes with all such contaminated motivation. "Who then can be saved?" Jesus' response was not a simple though profound retort. He apparently turned and looked intently at these struggling men in the throes of the great controversy, and spoke the key faith statement for sinners. Salvation seen in the light of giving is indeed an impossibility for sinful men. That is why God had to give for sin. That is the very reason Jesus was there with them, headed to Jerusalem and the cross. With Him alone is it possible to be saved from selfishness and its consequences.

9. Peter's Claim and Motive

Apparently missing the human impossibility of what Jesus had just stated as the motivation and result, Peter then made a bold claim, "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed Thee." In the quickness of self to compare itself with others, Peter seemed to feel confident they had done what the young ruler failed to do. But he added a question about outcome, literally, "what therefore shall be to us?" If one does not truly grasp the **motivation of unselfish**

giving, and also mistakenly sees the motivation as something different from the result, such a simple question will inevitably be selfish. Peter's question was but an echo of Satan's question about Job, "Does Job fear God for nought?" (Job 1:9). Peter's focus on the past was not an acknowledgement, "You have given us so much, which we are learning to give to others." No, he highlighted what they had done. Nor was Peter's future focus a forward-looking request, "Please give us more so we can give more." The lesson on forgiving must continue.

10. Following and Forsaking

Jesus' response focused on following Him. He did not address whether the disciples had indeed forsaken all. Their failure to give all would be seen shortly in their inability to continue to follow Him. Where He was steadfastly headed, they would refuse to follow. The words in Peter's claim would be rearranged into the sad order of self-interest. They would all forsake Him, and flee. It all turns on the object of forsaking, an action word that is translated "forgive" about one third of its occurrences. If one indeed forsakes all, and follows Jesus, he forgives all, because he leaves behind, and lets go of all those things that others owe him. But if he holds onto what he must receive, he inevitably lets Jesus go. He cannot follow both. Either Jesus has given all I need, or I must try to get it myself, working to get others to pay me what they owe, or like Eve, grasping for what I

am deceived into thinking Jesus Himself is withholding from me. With such self interest I must at least protect myself from further loss, withdrawing my faith in others in the fear of what they can take.

11. Rewards of Unselfishness

So Jesus' future-looking statements, what we think of as promises, are all contingent on truly following Him. We cannot follow without denying self. And that denial is not simply a door to the journey. It is the journey itself. Somewhere down that road we can sit on thrones judging with no self-interest. We can receive an hundredfold and not use the assets for self, for we have learned to receive only to give. We can inherit everlasting life and not perpetuate the heart of sin--a failure to continue giving throughout eternity. The first in taking will be last then, and the last, first in that land of giving.

Illustration

The self-interest of the disciples in following Jesus is also illustrated in the experience of the nobleman seeking Jesus in John 4:46-48. In the battle between faith and unbelief, making faith (either beginning or continuing) conditional on getting, especially on that which comes from supernatural phenomena, strengthens unbelief and makes it very likely that what faith we do have will fail when we do not receive what we are expecting. The disciples had believed in Jesus as the Messiah, while the nobleman was withholding that faith until he received a desired miracle. But the self-focus of the

disciples was leading them down a path also riddled with unbelief. Both the disciples and the nobleman were, in their own ways, conditioning their faith on self receiving instead of on Christ giving. The simplicity of faith actually rests upon the evidences of God's giving revealed in His word. In contrast to the major struggle of these Jews was the response of the Samaritans earlier in John 4, when "many more believed because of His own word" (John 4:41). There was no need for "signs and wonders" (John 4:48), for asking what they would get out of their relationship with Jesus.

Commentary

The Saviour contrasted this questioning unbelief [of the nobleman] with the simple faith of the Samaritans, who asked for no miracle or sign. His word, the ever-present evidence of His divinity, had a convincing power that reached their hearts. Christ was pained that His own people, to whom the Sacred Oracles had been committed, should fail to hear the voice of God speaking to them in His Son. {DA 198.2} He who blessed the nobleman at Capernaum is just as desirous of blessing us. But like the afflicted father, we are often led to seek Jesus by the desire for some earthly good; and upon the granting of our request we rest our confidence in His love. The Saviour longs to give us a greater blessing than we ask; and He delays the answer to our request that He may show us the evil of our own hearts, and our deep need of His grace. He desires us to renounce the selfishness that leads us to seek Him. Confessing our helplessness and

bitter need, we are to trust ourselves wholly to His love. {DA 200.3}

Transition

Peter's self-interest would peak in a series of rapid-fire events within days of their arrival in Jerusalem. Peter would defend self in a path that parted sharply from the road Jesus took. Our next three stories will detail the crisis. And Jesus' consistent unselfishness, even in confronting Peter's selfishness, will illustrate on the one-to-one level in a brilliantly clear way that Jesus had forsaken all to follow His Father. This alone enabled Him to forgive sinners--to let their sins go in forsaking the need for any to pay that price, as He Himself paid it in full. Again, Jesus would illustrate this most clearly with Peter.

THE EMERGING CHURCH MOVEMENT

Jerry Finneman

The purpose of this article is to consider some of the foundation principles, applications and results of what is written and spoken of today from within and about the Emerging Church Movement.

Terms used by Emergents today, such as “contemplative prayer,” “contemplative spirituality,” “the silence,” “the inner light,” are not new. These terms go back to Catholic monastic mystic practices. Most of these terms were used by the Dark Age Catholic mystics, such as Benedict, Francis of Assisi, Dominic, Loyola and others. Dark Age mysticism was the outgrowth and continuation of second and third century mystics, namely Origen and the “Desert Fathers.” And leaders of the Emerging Church Movement speak favorably of classical Dark Age mysticism.

Writers define the Emerging Church Movement as one “that crosses a number of theological boundaries: participants are described as Protestant, post-Protestant, evangelical, post-evangelical, liberal, post-liberal, conservative, post-conservative, anabaptist, adventist, reformed, charismatic, neo-charismatic, and post-charismatic.”¹

The term “Missional” as used by devotees of the Emerging Church Movement is in contrast

to the meaning of mission within historic Protestantism. To Emergents missional means “to a focus on temporal and social issues, in contrast with a perceived evangelical overemphasis on salvation.”²

Tony Campolo

Well known popular speaker and writer Tony Campolo has influenced many minds, both young and old, within Christianity. He has been a very popular speaker at Adventist venues, such as colleges, churches and television. We need to seriously consider what Campolo writes regarding his conversion experience. Then we need to ask if this is what our young people need to participate in. The following excerpts are from Campolo’s book entitled *Letters to a Young Evangelical*. In the chapter entitled, “The Gospel According to Us” Campolo writes of his personal experiences. He wondered if he could ever be “saved.” He found what he was looking for, not in a Protestant Evan-

1 http://www.guidinglight.com/encyclopedia/E/Emerging_church/. Retrieved 3/13/15.

2. Alan Hirsch, *Leadership Journal*, “FALL 2008: MISSIONS BAGGAGE CHECK” <http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2008/fall/17.20.html>, retrieved 5/23/15.

gelical church, but in a monastic mystic ritual known as “centering prayer.” Campolo learned how to do this prayer from a Catholic monastic mystical method. He writes:

In my case intimacy with Christ had developed gradually over the years, primarily through what Catholics call “centering prayer.” Each morning, as soon as I wake up, I take time—sometimes as much as a half hour—to center myself on Jesus. I say his name over and over again to drive back the 101 things that begin to clutter my mind the minute I open my eyes. Jesus is my mantra, as some would say.³

He uses the name “Jesus” as a “mantra” to clear his mind in order to get himself into what appears to be an altered state of consciousness. Campolo writes about his personal mystical experiences, one such he called his “born-again experience.” However, this experience came Ignatius Loyola’s rituals called Spiritual Exercises.⁴

I learned about this way of having a born-again experience from reading Catholic mystics, especially The Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius Loyola. Ignatius, a founder of the Jesuit order, was once a soldier and it was only when he spent a long time in a hospital bed recovering from a battle wound that his heart and mind

focused on God. Like most Catholic mystics he developed an intense desire to experience a “oneness” with God. Gradually, he came to feel an intense yearning for the kind of spiritual purity that he believed would enable him to experience the fullness of God’s presence within.⁵

This is very serious because Loyola’s experience was not then, is not now, and never will be a Christian experience. Loyola was converted through a Marian apparition. Raphael Brown wrote that he “was converted in only one year by the Blessed Virgin herself, from a very worldly life to one of heroic sanctity.”⁶

Campolo stopped protesting the apostasy of Rome. This is apparent also among leaders in the Emerging Church Movement who use Loyola’s “Exercises.” Although dead, Loyola and other Dark Age mystics continue to influence today’s Emerging Church Movement with their “ancient” monastic rituals.

There is a blend of various Catholic ancient mystic rituals within the Emergent Movement including liturgy, prayer beads, icons, spiritual direction, the labyrinth and Lectio divina, to name a few.

Pope Benedict XVI

Benedict XVI was particularly fond of the monastic practice known as Lectio divina (Latin for “Divine Reading”) – a medieval method of scripture reading,

3. Nyanglish, under link entitled “missional living,” <http://nyanglish.com/missional-living>. Retrieved 3/13/15.

4. Mark Galli, Christianity Today, February 2008, Vol. 52, No. 2, p. 7.

5. Tony Campolo, Letters to a Young Evangelical, page 20.

6. Ibid., 26.

meditation and contemplative prayer based solely on the tradition of the so-called “Church Fathers.” It does not treat Scripture as texts to be studied, but as a method to feel God’s presence. (Richard Foster Emerging Church leader affirms that in the repetition of *Lectio divina* exercises the practitioner “enters” and shares the peace of Christ rather than “dissecting” it).⁷

The roots of this kind of reflection and interpretation go back to Origen in the third century. It has continued through the centuries in medieval monastic mystic practices.

In a letter to Gregory of Neocaesarea Origen wrote: “[W]hen you devote yourself to the divine reading ... seek the meaning of divine words which is hidden from most people.”⁸ This appears to be Gnosticism with its esoteric knowledge, supposedly withheld from the majority of Christians. Gnosticism and the allegorical approach to Scriptural interpretation go hand in hand. “Christian writers after Philo employed the allegorical method, but Origen receives credit for the full development of the approach.”⁹

Not only did Origen allegorize – express by means of symbolic fiction the truths of Scripture – he was a fanatic who longed to die the death of a martyr.¹⁰ He adopted “a

life of rigorous self-mortification (almost certainly including voluntary castration).”¹⁰ “Bishop Demetrius of Alexandria, who summoned provincial councils in 230 and 231 that pronounced (Origen’s) ordination invalid, condemned him for false doctrine and self-mutilation.”¹¹

Knowing the history of Origen, Pope Benedict spoke highly of this mystic in his speech to a general audience in St Peter’s Square in 2007. The pope again mentions *Lectio divina*:

I would like in particular to recall and recommend the ancient tradition of “Lectio divina”: “the diligent reading of Sacred Scripture accompanied by prayer brings about that intimate dialogue in which the person reading hears God who is speaking, and in praying, responds to him with trusting openness of heart” (cf. “Dei Verbum,” n. 25). If it is effectively promoted, this practice will bring to the Church -- I am convinced of it -- a new spiritual springtime.

Through the use of the practice of *Lectio divina* “a new spiritual springtime” to Rome, but the cold death of winter to Protestantism.

Leonard Sweet

A prominent leader in the Emerging Church Movement is

7. Ibid.,

8. Ignatius Loyola wrote *The Spiritual Exercises*, a 200 page set of meditations, prayers, and various other mental exercises, from 1522 to 1524. The exercises of the book were designed to be carried out over a period of 28–30 days. This was and is the method used to convert, whoever practices them, to Medieval mysticism.

9 Gohl, J. M. (2012, 2013, 2014). Origen. In J. D. Barry, L. Wentz, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair-Wolcott, R. Klippenstein, D. Bomar, ... D. R. Brown (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*.

10 Trigg, J. W. (1992). Origen (Person), *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (Vol. 5, p. 43).

11 LeRoy Froom, *The Conditionalist Faith of Our Fathers*, vol. 1 (1966) p. 998.

Leonard Sweet. He is controversial in the Evangelical world because of his involvement in the Emerging Church and possibly the New Age movement. Sweet is an excellent writer and an engaging speaker and one who regularly influences thousands of people. He is also a Visiting Distinguished Professor at George Fox University in Portland, Oregon.

In his Postmodern apologetic book, *Quantum Spirituality*, he amalgamates world religious light with that of the Bible. He writes about the centrality of light in the religions of the world and in the Bible, making no difference between the sources of light:

A surprisingly central feature of all the world's religions is the language of light in communicating the divine and symbolizing the union of the human with the divine: Muhammed's light-filled cave, Moses' burning bush, Paul's blinding light, Fox's "inner light," Krishna's Lord of Light, Bohme's light-filled cobbler shop, Plotinus' fire experiences, Bodhisattvas with the flow of Kundalini's fire erupting from their fontanelles, and so on.¹²

Sweet often quotes Catholic mystics to support his beliefs:

Mysticism, once cast to the sidelines of the Christian tradition, is now situated in postmodernist culture near the center.... In the words of one of the greatest theologians of the twentieth century,

12 Leonard Sweet, *Quantum Spirituality: A Postmodern Apologetic* (1991), p. 235.

13 Ibid., p. 11).

Jesuit philosopher of religion/dogmatist Karl Rahner, "The Christian of tomorrow will be a mystic, one who has experienced something, or he will be nothing."¹³

Karl Rahner

The Second Vatican Council was greatly influenced by Rahner's theology which was ground-breaking for a modern understanding of Catholic faith. And his theology, likewise, has to a large degree influenced the Emergent Church Movement.

Rahner is not the only Catholic to influence the Emergents. Consider the names of other Jesuits and leading priests who either have influenced, or are presently influencing, the Emergent Movement. A few are listed here: Karl Rahner, Henri Nouwen, Brennan Manning, Matthew Fox (former Dominican; now Church of England), Thomas Merton (popular Catholic author who popularized mysticism and died in Asia searching the depths of Buddhism), Teilhard de Chardin and Thomas Keating. With the exception of Chardin, these men's labors are the direct result of Vatican II with its new evangelism outreach designed to snare all Protestants.

Richard Foster (1942-)

Richard Foster, a leader in the Emergent Church Movement, is known for "spiritual formation" and its disciplines. Foster, a Quaker, taught at Friends University and pastored evangelical Quaker churches. He obtained his undergraduate degree at Fox University (a

Quaker institution) in Oregon and his doctorate in Pastoral Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary.¹⁴

Mark Galli, in 2008, then senior managing editor for “Christianity Today,” interviewed Foster regarding his work in spiritual formation and its disciplines.¹⁵ Galli wrote that Foster’s influence in the changes that occurred within Evangelicalism was because of his introduction of mystical medieval practices into some of the Evangelical churches:

With the publication of *Celebration of Discipline* by Richard Foster a change began to take place in Evangelical churches. This book, arguably more than any other, introduced evangelicals not only to the disciplines, but also to the wealth of spiritual formation writing from the medieval and ancient church.¹⁶

Galli, wrote that evangelicals are very much interested in the hermits and mystics of Catholicism. Referring to “monastic evangelicals” and the “new monasticism,” an insert in its cover article observes how “growing numbers of evangelicals” are “taking their newfound love affair with Christian tradition” beyond “books and talk” and are “now experimenting with advent candles [even] sampling [Catholic] practices associated with Lent....” “Christianity Today” credits Foster’s *Devotional Classics* as perhaps fueling this latest trend. Galli noted that Brian McLaren, Tony

Jones, and a number of emerging church writers have “been calling evangelicals to monastic models as a guide for the future.”¹⁷

Earlier (in 1978) Foster wrote *Celebration of Discipline*. It was this book in which he introduced Catholic and occult meditative techniques to evangelicals. His book sold more than a million copies. Editors of “Christianity Today” selected it as one of the top ten books of the 20th century.

George Fox (1624–1691)

George Fox, founder of Quakerism, searched for a direct experience with God and found it, but outside biblical parameters. He was of a “contemplative temperament” who at times was driven by an “inner voice.” He wandered about seeking a direct spiritual experience with God. He looked for this in the Bible but concluded that the answer was not there.

What Fox did not find as an ultimate authority outside of himself, he found within his heart. “He realized that what he was seeking outside himself could be found within, in a direct experience with what he called ‘the Christ within, what Quakers sometimes also call ‘the Inner Light.’”¹⁸

Baptist John Bunyan (1628–1688) strongly opposed Quakers. He called them “deceivers”¹⁹ The Quakers emphasized the “inner light”

14 Mark Galli (09/17/08). “A Life Formed in the Spirit.” *Christianity Today*. Archived from the original on 10-24/12. Retrieved 2/15/15.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Mark Galli, “Lost Secrets of the Ancient Church,” *Christianity*

Today, February 2008, 28.

The expectations are clear and the path of ministry is marked out in advance.

within them as the means of salvation. Bunyan charged the Quakers as “against the truth of our Lord Jesus Christ, and do in very deed deny, that salvation was then obtained by him, when he did hang on the cross without Jerusalem’s gate.”²⁰

It is clear that Bunyan did not believe Quakers were “fellow believers with whom he had some differences of opinion, however serious, but as dangerous enemies to the gospel of Christ.”²¹

There is an amusing incident recorded concerning a Quaker who visited Bunyan while he was in jail. He told Bunyan that “he had been through half of the prisons of England, and that he had a message for him from the Lord. ‘If the Lord had sent you,’ retorted Bunyan, ‘you would not have needed to take such trouble to find me out, for He knows that I have been in Bedford jail these seven years past.’”²²

Theologically, Quakerism is contrary to the objective truths of Protestantism and has most certainly influenced leaders and followers in the Emergent Church Movement.

Has Dark Age Mysticism Penetrated Adventism?

As mentioned earlier, Leonard Sweet is a Visiting Distinguished Professor at George Fox University in Portland. With Sweet’s involvement in the Emerging Church Movement and his dependence on Catholic mystics to support his beliefs, it should give Adventists pause (as to reconsider) his influence. Some of our pastors have received their professional – Doctor of Ministry – degrees from George Fox University, sitting at Sweet’s feet. Some of these men became the initial leaders of the popular “One Project” organization within Adventism.

Spectrum writers speculated that perhaps this Project is a continuation of the message of 1888. A question posed by Charles Scriven in his article, “Jesus...Full Stop... All...Full Stop,” follows: “Is it [the One Project] the second coming of 1888?”²³ Later that year, on a Spectrum blog the following was posted: “It is from this [1888] crisis that the One Project appears to build some of its philosophy.”²⁴ Neither statements are factual. The “One Project” is per-

18 From a transcript from a video I watched entitled “How Quakerism Began” on QuakerSpeak.com <http://quakerspeak.com/quakerism-began/>.

19 The Quakers. (1986). Christian History Magazine-Issue 11: John Bunyan and Pilgrim’s Progress.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

22 The Quakers. (1986). Christian History Magazine-Issue 11: John Bunyan and Pilgrim’s Progress.

meated with the philosophy of the Emerging Church, which in essence is monastic mysticism that looks within the hearts of its devotees. The message of 1888 is the doctrine and the experience of justification by faith in Christ alone which is “the Third Angel’s Message in verity.”²⁵

Most certainly we are in the “shaking time” right now just before He comes.

Former Adventist pastor, Ryan Bell, got into trouble within his Conference over some of his teachings and was put out of Church employment. Before his dismissal he wrote an article published in Fuller University’s “Theology News & Notes.” The article was entitled “From the Margins: Engaging Missional Life in the Seventh-day Adventist Church”²⁶ His article was about his struggles as an Adventist pastor. He felt marginalized. Bell wrote, “After ten years of ministry I was discovering that being a pastor in my denominational system is a very prescribed undertaking. The expectations are clear and the path of ministry is marked out in advance. I am called there to implement “company policy.” He was more interested in “emerging theol-

ogy” and the “missional life” of the Emergents than in the Seventh-day Adventist Church and its mission.

Bell left Christianity. He decided to become an atheist for one year. At the end of the year he decided that he was an agnostic humanist.

When Ryan interviewed Brian McLaren, McLaren supported him and was pleased that he broke with conservative Adventism and its literal interpretation of Scripture. McLaren’s interest is not in this direction at all. He is not interested in the doctrine of the soon return of Jesus as taught by Seventh-day Adventists. His interest is “missional” which is a social gospel concerned with cleaning up planet earth in order to save it for future generations.

But the Lord is coming soon. Most certainly we are in the “shaking time” right now just before He comes. And this shaking will continue, even more intensely, with the passing of time. One day we shall observe millions²⁷ of Seventh-day Adventists leaving this church. This will occur during the time of one of the most severe shakings in the history of Christianity.

Realizing our infirmities and the manifold enticements of the enemy of God and man, we must become firmly grounded in a subjective experience with Christ and also with His clear objective doctrinal teachings as outlined in the three angel’s messages of Revelation

23 Charles Scriven, “Jesus...Full Stop...All... Full Stop,” *Spectrum*, Feb. 2014; <http://spectrummagazine.org/node/5818>.

24 Marcos Torres and Nathaniel Tan, “The One Project: Danger or Blessings?” *Spectrum Blog*, Aug 25, 2014; <http://spectrummagazine.org/blog/2014/08/25/one-project-danger-or-blessing>.

25 Ellen White, Review and Herald, April 1, 1890.

26 Theology News & Notes, Fall 2008 — Vol. 55, No. 3

14:6-12. These messages are, and will continue to be, the special target of attack by apostate men and fallen angels as they continue to unite in their attempt to destroy the messages along with those who proclaim them. The doctrines under attack now will continue to be so in the future. These teachings are the everlasting gospel, the pre-advent judgment, creation, the worship of the true God, the law of God and the faith of Jesus. This involves justification by faith which is the third angel's message "in verity."²⁸

The Emergent Movement During the Early Days of the Protestant Reformation

It was especially the doctrine of justification by faith that sixteenth century Catholic mystics viciously attacked. Luther clearly and concisely defined the issues in his day. There were men, some preceding him, who attempted to reform the Catholic Church – such men as Hus, Savonarola and in Luther's day, Erasmus and others. Luther wrote of the futility of this method. He went to the underlying issue. He realized that which was required was a stronger emphasis on sound doctrine, while reformers before him concentrated more on conduct. He wrote: "Others before me have contested practice. But to contest doctrine, that is to grab the goose by

the neck!"²⁹ Finnish scholar Heiko Augustinus quoted Luther: "Life is as evil among us [the Protestants] as among the papists, thus we do not argue about life but about doctrine. Whereas Wyclif and Hus attacked the immoral lifestyle of the papacy, I challenge primarily its doctrine."³⁰

Luther's central doctrine was justification by faith in Christ alone. Inseparable to this teaching is liberty of conscience, against which the Church of Rome fought with all the fury of demons. D'Aubigne quoted Luther: "I have been laboring for liberty of conscience. Liberty is the very essence of faith."³¹

It was primarily the Catholic mystics who generated the Counter-Reformation. This Catholic Counterfeit Reformation was an emergent movement totally involved in the attempt to destroy the Protestant Reformation, justification by faith in Christ alone, liberty of conscience and Scripture as the rule of practice as well as belief.

After founding the Jesuit Order, Loyola became instrumental in making war against Protestants. Loyola's supreme purpose was to bring back Protestants to Romanism. One of the methods used in his

27 Ellen White, *Testimonies to the Church*, vol. 5 p. 136 (1882): "To stand in defense of truth and righteousness when the majority forsake us, to fight the battles of the Lord when champions are few--this will be our test. At this time we must gather warmth from the coldness of others, courage from their cowardice, and loyalty from their treason."

28 White, "Review and Herald," April 1, 1890: "Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel's message, and I have answered, 'It is the third angel's message in verity.'"

29 Martin Luther, *The Early Years: "Christian History,"* Issue 34, 1997.

30 Heiko Augustinus, *Luther: Man Between God and the Devil*, p. 55.

31 Merle D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation*, b. 9, ch. 8.

day to “re-convert” Protestants was his Spiritual Exercises ritual. After the year 1600 the Exercises were combined with entertainment. It was stated that there were more conversions from one theatrical performance than from a hundred sermons preached.³² There are at least a couple of questions that need to be asked, especially by Seventh-day Adventists: Does today’s Emergent Movement have a common belief with that sixteenth century Jesuit emergence? Is it more like the emergent Catholic Counterfeit Reformation or more like the Protestant Reformation? The evidence from their own statements is decisive. Like the Counter-Reformation, today’s Emerging Church Movement exalts experience over doctrine. If this movement stays its course it will become a most bitter and antagonistic adversary of the third angel’s message of Revelation 14.

The last Protestants to be left standing are outlined for all to see in Revelation 14:6-12. They will be known especially for the doctrines of justification by faith, loving obedience to all of God’s holy law, creation, the pre-advent judgment the everlasting gospel along with the severe warning to “come out of” Babylon (Revelation 18:1-4).

So, in conclusion, what do we take away from this study? The Emerging Church Movement is

mostly in tune with Dark Age monastic mysticism, especially Loyola’s spirituality. To purposely go through his Spiritual Exercises is to depart from Scripture teachings and a true experience.

³² Jan Bloemendal, *Receptions and Impact: Early Modern Latin Drama, its Effect on the Audience and its Role in Forming Public Opinion*. Downloaded from UvA-DARE, the institutional repository of the University of Amsterdam (UvA). Retrieved 3/10/15.

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