

Christian Perfection  
From *Lessons On Faith* by A. T. Jones

Peter: Our loving Father,

We thank you for this hour of study and for this time of reflection within our lives. We ask that you open our eyes to the things that are need full in our lives this hour. May we all receive a blessing from this study. Direct Bro. David as he leads out in the study and help those in the African field to be able to attend. Hear our prayer we pray in the name of Yahshua your Son we pray amen.

Zahakiel : Amen.

Qinael : Amen.

Guest\_Peterson1216 : Amen.

Adrieljody : Amen.

Guest\_Elyna : Amen.

Guest\_Daphna : Amen.

Guest\_eagle : Amen.

Guest\_Jirehiel : Amen.

Zahakiel: Today I would like us to go over a study that has been given before. It hasn't been given before to the CSDA Church, at least not formally, but it has been available to us for a long time. In fact, what we are going to be studying today is a sermon written by A. T. Jones, and delivered in August of 1899. It is entitled "Christian Perfection." Upon going over its contents, I think you will agree with me that this is an excellent way to end the year, and to begin a new one, since we will be splitting it (it is rather lengthy, especially with commentary) into two parts and continuing on New Moon of January.

I actually came upon this study, for a second time, during a trip that Giselle and I were making by car. She had brought along some reading material, and I looked over and saw that it was *Lessons on Faith*. She was reading the last study of the book, and it caught my attention. Although I've had it for a long time, this book, like all inspired works, has new treasure for us with every review. I thought that it would be perfect for the New Moon: a day of self examination and remembering the promises of Yahshua, and so I present it here, with comments from passages that have struck me as particularly significant. At any time, please do include your own comments and questions. Since we are going to be doing this in two parts, and therefore not rushing to finish, I will be posting these slowly enough that I hope everyone will be able to keep pace, and I will stop if I see a C or a Q, indicating someone would like to speak.

Let us begin, then:

"Be ye therefore perfect." And the song, "Saved to the uttermost," which has just been sung, is sufficient ground for the "therefore"--"Be ye therefore perfect." Matt. 5:48. You know that such is the word of God. You know that we are exhorted to "go on unto perfection." Heb. 6:1. You know that the gospel, the very preaching of the gospel which you and I preach, is to "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." Col. 1:28. Then it is not for us to say that perfection is not expected of us. It is expected of us. You must expect it of yourself. I must expect it of myself. And I must not accept anything in myself or of myself that does not meet in perfection the standard of perfection which God has set. What could possibly prevent us from attaining perfection more than to think that it is not expected? I say again, What could

possibly prevent you and me from attaining unto perfection more than for us to say that it is not expected that we should be perfect?

COMMENT: I would say that yet a third time, because... has this not been the very experience of CSDAs in this last generation? One of the things that struck me most powerfully about this sermon is how timeless it is in its application. The enemies of the Gospel in the days of our pioneers are the enemies of the Gospel today: unbelief, selfishness, and spiritual laziness. Christians today are taught, are deceived, concerning what the "relationship with Jesus" actually is. It is not being on friendly terms with Him and speaking to Him once, or several times, a day. It is surrendering the "self" entirely, and allowing Him to dwell within us. But because this is not taught, few believe that perfection is even possible; and as the preacher here says: "What could possibly prevent you and me from attaining unto perfection more?" I continue with the sermon:

Then, as it is settled that the Word says that you and I are to be perfect, the only thing for you and me to consider is the way. That is all. Let it be settled by you and by me that perfection, nothing short of perfection as God has set it, is to be expected of you and me, and that you and I will not accept anything in ourselves, in what we have done, nor anything about us, that is a hair's breadth short of perfection as God has set it--let this be settled by each one and settled forever--then inquire only the way, and the thing will be accomplished.

What is the standard, then? What is the standard which God has set? "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." The perfection of God is the only standard. And you and I must set ourselves right there and stand face to face with ourselves, always demanding of ourselves that there shall be perfection such as God's is in us and that we will not look with a particle of allowance upon, we will not apologize for nor excuse, anything in ourselves that is in any conceivable degree short of that perfection.

It is plain enough that we cannot be perfect in greatness as God is nor in omnipotence as He is nor in omniscience as He is. God is character, and it is perfection of character as His is that He has set for you and me to which we shall attain, which alone we are to expect and which alone we are to accept in ourselves. Then when it is God's own perfection which you and I must have and which alone we will accept of ourselves and we hold ourselves to that standard always, you can see at once that that will be for you and me only to hold ourselves constantly in the presence of the judgment of God. There is where every one of us expects to stand, whether we are righteous or wicked. Why not stand there, then, and be done with it? It is settled that you and I are to stand at the judgment seat of Christ and there every one of us shall be measured by that standard. God "hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Acts 17:31.

COMMENT: Now, isn't this interesting! Over a century and a decade ago, SDAs were teaching the concept of "standing" in the judgment; specifically, of holding ourselves "constantly in the presence of the judgment of God." What a change has come over Christendom today! Judgment is to be feared, to be escaped in the pre-Tribulation rapture, or to be endured by hiding in caves and holes and the secluded wilderness. Now it is true that for a time the earth has hidden the Christians, (Rev 12:14-16) but in the last generation this is not so. We are to stand and give a "loud cry" of warning as probation finally closes, and to do this we must stand fast in the Judgment of the Living. We tend to think of this idea as "new

light,” but the truth is it has been going forth from the beginning of the Three Angels’ Message. Have any of you questions or comments to contribute at this point?

Qinael : No.

Adrieljody : No.

Guest\_Peterson1216 : No.

Guest\_eagle : No.

Guest\_Jirehiel : No.

Guest\_Elyna : No.

Guest\_Peter : We will have to stand as Daniel and his three companions did in the judgment that they had to face back then. They had no place to hide at that time, they faced it in the power and might of Yah.

Zahakiel: Very true.

Guest\_Daphna : standing is the presence of the judgment of God... does that mean to be ready and confident to be judged at all times?

Zahakiel : Yes, it means that we are even now inviting the judgment of Yah to reveal to us what is "righteousness" that we may follow it, and what is "sin" so that we can put it away forever.

For us, judgment is not an event, it is the process of sanctification. Or at least, the primary tool for that sanctification.

Guest\_Daphna : Ok, thank you.

Zahakiel: Continuing, then, with the sermon “Christian Perfection”:

The resurrection of Christ is God’s pledge to the world that every man shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ. That is settled. You and I expect it; we preach it; we believe it. Then why not put ourselves there and stand steadily there? Why wait? Those who wait and continue to wait will not be able to stand there. The ungodly cannot stand in this judgment, but those who put themselves before the judgment seat of God, facing the standard of judgment and hold themselves there constantly in thought, word, and deed are ready for the judgment any moment. Ready for it? They have it; they are there; they are passing it; they are inviting the judgment, and all that the judgment brings; they stand there expecting to be passed upon, and only He who does this is safe. The very blessing that comes in that thing is all the reward that any person needs for putting himself just now before the judgment seat. And standing there what has he to fear? Nothing. And when all fear is cast out, what is it that does it? Perfect love. But perfect love can come only by our meeting that perfect standard of the judgment, in the judgment, and can be kept only by standing there.

COMMENT: Take a few minutes to think about this. Perfect love casts out all fear, but the only place we have no fear is when we have submitted to Yah’s judgment. Judgment, then, and love, are tied together in the life of the Redeemed.

Continuing:

That being settled, let us inquire the way--the way, that is all. It is settled, then, that mine is not the standard. Think of it! "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." His perfection is the only standard. Then whose measurement of the standard, whose estimate of the standard, is the proper one? Not mine. I cannot measure God's perfection. You remember the verse--perhaps it occurs to you this moment: "I have seen an end of all perfection: but thy commandment is exceeding broad." Ps. 119:96.

No finite mind can measure God's perfection. Then it is settled, so far, that we are to be perfect; our perfection is to be as His perfection is and according to His own estimate of His own perfection. Then that takes entirely away from you and me the whole plan and everything about it as to the doing of it. For when I cannot measure the standard, how should I attain to it, even if it were given me to do? Then let it be settled also that as to the doing of it, it is put utterly beyond you.

This also was said long, long ago: "I know it is so of a truth, but how should man be just with God? If he will contend with him, he cannot answer Him one of a thousand. . . . If I speak of strength, lo, he is strong; and if of judgment, who shall set me a time to plead?"

And when I should come to plead, what then? "If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me." If I can measure up myself to the satisfaction of myself and pronounce the balance settled, when it is set alongside of his estimate, my own estimate is so far short that it condemns me utterly. There is in it no basis of justification. "If I say, I am perfect, it [my own mouth] shall also prove me perverse."

"Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul: I would despise my life." My own standard of perfection, when set in the presence of His and seen in the light of His, would be so far short that I myself would despise it. "If I wash myself with snow-water and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch and mine own clothes shall abhor me." Job 9:1, 2, 19-21, 30, 31.

COMMENT: You may be surprised to learn that, instead of typing this study out from the *Lessons in Faith* book that we have here, I saved time by finding an electronic copy on line. The surprising part is where I found it. The first place it came up in its entirety that I could find on a Google search was a Davidian SDA website. Now, I admit to this for a reason: we find here, in A.T. Jones' words, a clear and Biblical exposition of the Gospel. It is clearly in line with the Words of Yahweh, it is clear and simple enough to be understood by a child because, if WE cannot do something, and yet we are expected to do it, the only option is to have Someone do it for us, and through us. And yet, no other group on earth – including the group whose website hosted this copy of the sermon – teaches anything like this. If we expect to see a harvest of souls in this last generation, a people who attain Christ's moral and spiritual stature, it is the CSDA Church, its individual members working prayerfully and diligently, that will find these willing souls. The other guardians of truth have long since failed and gone about their own ways, using their own standards of "perfection" in place of Yahweh's. That, brothers and sisters, is the very essence of *idolatry*. For us, this can be nothing short of a call to action. Are there any comments or questions at this point?

Guest\_Peter : When people hear the word judgment they are fearful and today the world is fearful of this word. But to Yah people it is 'love' because we know that he needs to help us reach the holy city and he is adding us in reaching there by judging us to see what is need full in order to be there.

Zahakiel : Certainly. And we find, so long ago, that the sermons were inviting people to "stand in the judgment." Not the judgment of the dead, obviously... but the living. We are *behind* the times, in teaching this.

Guest\_eagle : I'm not remembering at this time, and the question is looming in my mind. When does the "final" judgement happen? Is this an event?

Zahakiel : It depends on how you use the term "judgment." It can mean either the deciding of destinies or the pronouncing of sentence. The deciding of destinies has been happening since the Day of Atonement in 1844. That is the ongoing, final (investigative) judgment. The final sentencing takes place at the return of Yahshua.

Guest\_eagle : Are we then being investigated ongoing, every thought, every action?

Zahakiel : If we want to be :) That is what Jones is saying here... we are all going to stand before the Judgment Seat and have our thoughts and actions evaluated. We can enter that process now, and "stand" there before the process is brought to us... and in so doing, we are purified before the time of judgment closes on all mankind.

We have the opportunity, if we know Christ, of being active participants, and not just subjects, of the judgment. Does that answer your question?

Guest\_eagle : Yes.

Guest\_Peter : If you are building a house and each step of the way you stand back and look at it, you are in fact judging it to see if it is perfect or what needs to be added or taken away or strengthened so that in the end it will be acceptable.

Zahakiel : Yes, that's a good analogy. If you reserve all judgment until the end, the completed work, there is no opportunity for refining it. Does everyone see how this applies?

Guest\_Elyna : Exactly!

Adrieljody : Yes.

Guest\_Daphna : Yes.

Guest\_eagle : We most likely, will need help building our house. This is where the body of Christ here on earth comes in? Team effort?

Zahakiel : The help we receive is first from Heaven, but absolutely, there are necessary blessings in the Covenant and the congregations. This will be the subject of next Sabbath's sermon, in fact.

Guest\_eagle : OK. Thank you.

Zahakiel : Thank you for that fitting question, and Peter also, for that comment. They are very much in line with what the sermon is saying.

I continue:

That is as near as we could come to the standard, if it were given to us to do. Then let us forever abandon all idea that perfection is anything that we are to work out. Perfection is that to which we are to attain, nothing but that. God expects it, and He has made provision for it. That is what we were created for. The only object of our existence is to be just that--perfect with God's perfection. And remember that we are to be perfect with His character. His standard of character is to be ours. Yea, His character itself is to be ours. We are not to have one made like it; it itself is to be ours. And that alone is Christian perfection.

Now that we must have that, the whole story is told in three texts. The first one is in the first chapter of Ephesians, beginning with the third verse in order correctly to get the story in the fourth verse:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world [now notice what He chose us for; this is the object He had before the foundation of the world, in choosing you and me, and bringing us to this hour. Then let us face the issue], that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”

That is His only thought concerning us. That is all that he made us for; that is all we exist for. Then another word right there: When that is so, why shall we not face it? Why shall we not just now meet the object of our existence and be holy and without blame before Him in love?

The next text is Col. 1:19-22: “It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell, and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight.”

First, He made us for that purpose. By sin we were swung entirely out of that purpose, the whole purpose was frustrated, but He endured the cross. It pleased God thus to do and it pleased Christ thus to do it, that His original purpose might be fulfilled. The point is, that by His cross He reconciled us, in order that this original purpose might be met in us--the purpose that He had before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. The blood of Christ, the reconciliation of peace which is brought to the world by Jesus Christ, is in order that He might present us holy--that He might do that very thing that He had in mind before the foundation of the world--that He might present you and me “holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight.”

The way to Christian perfection is the way of the cross, and there is no other way. I mean there is no other way for you and me. The way to bring it to us, the only way, was by way of the cross. He came that way and brought it and the only way for you and me to get it is by the way of the cross. He has made provision that He Himself shall do this; we do not come into it at all, for the doing.

COMMENT: Notice, he keeps saying, “for the doing.” We come into it by the agreeing, by the submitting, and Christ does in us.

Adrieljody : Amen!

Zahakiel: Continuing...

Now notice (Eph. 4:7-13) what is really done in this, how fully He has supplied the need.

“Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” Now think. What did the gift of Christ do, so far in our study? It “made peace through the blood of his cross,” and reconciled all to God. And it did it to make us what, before the foundation of the world, He designed we should be--”holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight.” That is the measure of the gift of Christ in this thing. And it accomplished the purpose for all so far that it opened the way for all. And unto every one of us, just now, is given grace according to the same measure. Then what the cross brought to us and put within our reach, the grace of God gives us and accomplishes in us.

Now let us read right on and you will see that this is all so, right up to the very word perfection itself: “Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore He saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men. And he gave some apostles and some prophets and some evangelists and some pastors and teachers.” What for? “For the perfecting of the saints.” Brethren, when those gifts are given for that purpose, what are we doing when we do not face the fact and long for the gifts and pray for the gifts and receive the gifts which accomplish the purpose? What are we doing otherwise?

“For the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, TILL”--given for an object; brought to us for a purpose, a defined, distinct, definite purpose and UNTIL that purpose is accomplished. It is given “for the perfecting of the saints” and it is given “till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.”

COMMENT: Amazingly, and in line with Sheila’s questions earlier, this was to be one of the subjects of my sermon yesterday. I will give it next Sabbath, due to Internet issues from my home, but what I was to speak about, and what I will speak about, is the set of blessings that Yah has designed for His children: some that we receive as individuals, some we receive as congregations, and some that can only be obtained as members of the Covenanted Body as a whole. And here we see that the object, the purpose, of even the corporate blessings is to produce within use as individual members of Christ that divine standard of Christian perfection. That is the intention of our Father for our lives, and He has given us layers and layers of blessings that we may attain it. I continue:

Thus perfection is the only aim. God’s standard is the only one. “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” We cannot measure it and could not attain to it, if it were given us to do. It is the object of our creation, and when that object was frustrated by sin, He made it possible to all by the blood of His cross and makes it certain to every believer by the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

COMMENT: I very much like this: that the Savior “makes it *certain* to every believer by the gifts of the Holy Spirit.” If it is certain, if it is guaranteed to us, by these gifts, then all we must do is accept the gifts. And those gifts are what we have studied before, the “fruit of the Spirit.” But how, then, can any say that Christianity, true Christianity, is about “works?” Some may look at the things we do: Sabbath keeping, New Moons, health reform, and say that these are works – but they are our Father’s work that we simply consent to receiving. Christ Himself said exactly this: “And therefore did the Jews persecute Yahshua, and sought to slay Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath day. But Yahshua answered them, ‘My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.’” (John 5:16, 17)

Adventists have been accused, not of working on the Sabbath day, but of making the Sabbath day into a work! But the principle is exactly the same... The religion of Christ is only about works in this one way: It is about God's work in man, not man's work for God. It is only when we misunderstand this, and betray the Plan of Salvation, that we begin to see a corruption of our faith, leading to legalism, Laodiceanism, or lawsuits. Any questions or comments you'd like to add here?

Guest\_Peter : Humans are interesting. Why I say this is that they will trust a car, plane, bus, train, and a ship to take them wherever they are going.

They will follow the manual that is given to operate it, which, is written by sinful man, but the One who is perfect in all that He does – He is our Creator – is not trusted by humanity. They will not accept His offer. How interesting.

Zahakiel : Yes, thank you for sharing that.

Guest\_eagle : How is it that Billy Graham brings thousands at one place and time to receive Christ as their Saviour. Do they trust his word?

Zahakiel : They do trust his words. He is (well, was) a very good speaker, very convincing. He taught a Gospel that was incomplete... that did not require a death to the self, or a view of Yahweh that allowed Him to set His own standard for love and obedience... the Commandments, and the fullness of *Agape* love.

It certainly did not hold up "Christian perfection" as the Bible expounds it, and so people found it pleasant... and they flocked to the words he was speaking.

I continue, then:

Then again I ask, Why should we not constantly face Christian perfection and accept nothing of ourselves but that?

The 24th of Jude connects directly with what has been read and said, "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever."

He chose us before the foundation of the world, "that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." By the cross He made it possible to every soul, even when by sin we had lost all chance. And by the cross he bought the right "to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouvable in his sight." The right to do this belongs only to Him. You and I could not do it if it were given to us to do, but the right to do it does not belong to us. When we had lost it, nothing but the cross of Calvary could restore it. And no one could pay the price of Calvary but He who did pay it. Then as certainly as only He who paid the price could pay the price that must bring this to us, so certainly the right belongs only to Him by right of the cross of Calvary. And no one who has not endured the literal wooden cross of Calvary can ever have any right to take up that task to accomplish it. Only He endured the cross; to Him alone belongs the task. And there stands the word: He "is able." He "is able . . . to present you faultless before the presence of his glory." He who is able to endure the cross is able to accomplish all that the cross made possible. So He "is

able . . . to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy"--When? That is the question. When?

Adrieljody : Amen!

[Voices: "Now."]

Precisely. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. He is as able just now as He was then or as He will ever be.

COMMENT: I was once speaking to a Roman Catholic friend of mine about the Mass, specifically about transubstantiation. This is the belief that the bread of the communion offered every week *literally* becomes the flesh of Yahshua. He said, "It is because God is outside of time, and so for Him, every time we celebrate the Mass, the death of Christ for us is His present reality." That is probably the best explanation of the logic behind it I've heard so far... of course, it does not explain the chemistry and physics of it, and for CSDAs we believe truth is truth... there is not a physical truth and then a spiritual one that is disconnected from it. Further, we are specifically told that the communion is to be done "in remembrance" of the Sacrifice, (Luke 22:19) not as a "recreation" of it... But at least this individual understood a certain principle, to a certain degree. For us the "present reality" of Yahweh is the eternal standard of Christian perfection that we are being offered, even now, through the Cross and by Him who was able to endure it.

Any questions or comments to add here?

Qinael : No.

Guest\_Peter : No.

Guest\_Peterson1216 : No.

Guest\_Daphna : No.

Guest\_eagle : No.

Guest\_Elyna : No.

Adrieljody : Thank you, Father and Yahshua.

Zahakiel: Continuing, then:

Yet bear in mind that it is ever true that only by the way of the cross does it come to you and to me just now or ever. Let us study the Word that you may see this. Read Rom. 5:21, and then glance through the sixth chapter, for it is occupied with this one story. The last two verses of the fifth chapter of Romans read thus: "Moreover the law entered, that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Now the comparison or rather the contrast--for it is a comparison that amounts to a contrast--"as" and "even so." "As sin hath reigned." You know how sin reigned. Everyone here knows how sin has reigned. Some may know even yet how it reigns. When sin reigned, the reign was absolute, so that it was easier to do wrong than it was to do right. We longed to do right, but "the good that I would I do not, but the evil

which I would not, that I do.” Rom. 7:19. That is the reign of sin. Then when sin reigned, it was easier to do wrong than it was to do right.

“Even so might grace reign through righteousness.” When grace reigns, it is easier to do right than it is to do wrong. That is the comparison. Notice: As sin reigned, even so grace reigns. When sin reigned, it reigned against grace; it beat back all the power of grace that God had given, but when the power of sin is broken and grace reigns, then grace reigns against sin and beats back all the power of sin. So it is as literally true that under the reign of grace it is easier to do right than to do wrong, as it is true that under the reign of sin it is easier to do wrong than to do right.

COMMENT: We are almost finished with the first half of this sermon that we are covering this month, but I would like to examine this point a little here. What does it mean that it is “easier to do right than to do wrong?” Even the worst of sinners has something, some sin, that they could not do. At least, I cannot easily imagine someone who is so far gone that they would literally stop at nothing. But consider the worst of sinners, who has one taboo, one act that he could not bring himself to perform. That person has the capability of understanding grace, because, when the Spirit enters into him and he becomes born again, the new heart within him hates ALL sin just as much as his previous, sinful, self hated that one, utterly dark sin.

Now, the reason may be different; he may have hated that one sin because of upbringing, moral principles, or some other philosophical reason; but the new heart hates all sin because sin is opposed to Yahweh’s character. In the flesh, the feelings may be the same. The result may be the same (in that, we avoid the sin) but the underlying spiritual motive becomes pure. Does everyone understand how this works?

Guest\_eagle : Yes.

Guest\_Peterson1216 : Yes.

Guest\_Elyna : Yes.

Adrieljody : Yes.

Guest\_Peter : Yes.

Guest\_Daphna : Yes.

Guest\_Elyna : That reminds me of the sermon of a couple of weeks ago that talked about Yah's hostility against self and the hostility of self against Him.

Zahakiel : Yes.

I continue, with A. T. Jones speaking about conversion, the reign of sin passing away, and the reign of grace in the Christian’s life replacing it:

So then the way is clear, isn’t it? Let us go that way. “That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?”

[Voices: “God forbid.”]

You say, "God forbid." That is right. Now God has put His forbid and you endorse it, against sinning that grace may abound. Then has not God put His forbid against sinning at all? Do you endorse that? Do you put your endorsement upon God's forbid that you shall sin at all under the reign of grace?

[Voices: "Yes."]

Guest\_Elyna : Amen.

COMMENT: Now this is true Adventism... and it is true Adventism as, today, only taught in one place. There are churches that will say, "No" to this, and there are churches that will say "Yes" to this and yet not "believe" it in practice. Only the true Gospel teaches men to endorse it, believe it, and then live it. Continuing:

Then doesn't He intend that you and I shall be kept from sinning? And when we know that He intends it then we can confidently expect it. If we do not expect it, it will never be done.

So then the first verse of the sixth chapter of Romans shows that God intends that we shall be kept from sinning, doesn't it?

What does the second verse say? "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Well, how shall we? Then what does that verse intend? That we shall not continue at all in sin. Then being dead brings in the burial. Buried with Him by baptism into death and raised to walk in newness of life. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." There is the course laid out before us, and it is the way of the cross.

Now notice three things there: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him. What for? "That the body of sin might be destroyed." And what is that for? "That henceforth we should not serve sin." Unless the body of sin is destroyed, we will serve sin. Unless the old man is crucified, the body of sin is not destroyed. Then the way to be kept from sinning is the way of crucifixion and destruction.

COMMENT: This is true conversion. So many people believe that the Christian life is an improvement over the old life; that we continue to live, but merely guided by different principles, and with different goals (e.g., Heaven, instead of the financial success). But what the Bible tells us, and what we therefore tell others, is different. The body of sin is "destroyed." It is not improved, it is not repaired. It is not even "healed," and this may be hard to accept for the worldly Christian. The Gospel does not heal the sinful soul... it destroys the sinful spirit, and replaces it with the Holy Spirit of the Father and Son. Therefore, and in this way, the soul itself is "renewed" in the likeness of its Creator. To revisit Peter's parable from earlier, we can repair a house, but if the foundation itself is flawed, we must break it down completely and build a new house on a "Rock." When the new house is built, it may have the same family living there, and the same address... but it is a new house. Consider the spiritual meanings of this imagery.

Guest\_Elyna : This again reaches what was said yesterday in the discussion of the term "Charack" or something like that ... that means "express,"

Zahakiel : It is related, yes.

Guest\_Daphna : Jesus is that solid rock. We have a new foundation because we are dead to self and alive because Christ lives within us.

Zahakiel: Right.

I continue:

The only question, then, for us each to settle is, Would I rather be crucified and destroyed than to sin? If with you it is everlastingly settled that you would rather be crucified and rather meet destruction this moment than to sin, you will never sin. "Crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." Then freedom from the service of sin lies only through crucifixion and destruction. Do you choose sin or do you choose crucifixion and destruction. Will you choose destruction and escape sin? Or will you choose sin and destruction too? That is the question. It is not an alternative. He who would evade destruction, to escape destruction, meets destruction. He who chooses destruction escapes destruction.

COMMENT: This is just another way of stating Christ's paradox: "And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." (Mat 10:38, 39) Continuing:

Well, then, the way of destruction by the cross of Christ is the way of salvation. Jesus Christ went to destruction on the cross to bring salvation to you and me. It cost the destruction of the Son of God in the cross, to bring salvation to you and me. Will we give destruction for salvation? Will you? Anybody who fixes it and holds it in his hand as an everlasting bid, that he gives destruction, every moment of his life, for salvation, will never lack salvation.

But there is where the trouble comes. Destruction is not pleasant; it is not easy--that is, to the old man. To the natural choice, it is not easy to be destroyed, but to him who does it, it is easy. It is easy when it is done and it is easy to continue it forever when it is done.

When is it that we are to do this? When is it that He presents us faultless before the presence of His glory? Now. And the only way is the way of destruction. Now is the time to choose destruction. Now is the time to deliver up yourself forever to destruction. But if I hold myself back, if I shrink from destruction, then what am I shrinking from? Salvation. For "our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." [This is Rom 6:6]

Then if I meet some experience that puts me into a pressure that seems like destruction, that is all right; for destruction is what I have chosen, that I may not serve sin. Such a surrender brings Christian pleasantness into the life for the joy, the lasting peace, and the satisfaction of being kept from sinning is worth all the destruction that can ever come to you and me. It is worth it. So it is not a hard bargain that is driven; it is the grandest one that ever came to men.

COMMENT: This is a powerful promise for us in times of trouble. The worldly mind will panic and say, "God, what have I done to deserve this!" The Christian mind will say, "This is not pleasant, but I have chosen this trial, rather than submit to the reign of sin." This, then, is how to triumph when we are faced with exile, imprisonment, poverty and even death, for the Gospel of the Son of God. We know we have been given the choice. I conclude here with this last paragraph from the sermon's first half:

Crucifixion, destruction, and then henceforth not serving sin--there, then, is the way to Christian perfection. Why? "For he that is dead is freed from sin." Rom. 6:7. Thank the Lord, he that is dead is

freed from sin. Then the only question that can ever come in my life or yours is, Am I dead? And if I am not and something occurs that accomplishes it, freedom from sin is the only consequence; and that is worth all that it costs.

Are there any questions on this first half of the sermon, "Christian Perfection?" Any final comments or thoughts before we close?

Qinael : No.

Guest\_Peter : No.

Guest\_Peterson1216 : No.

Guest\_Jirehiel : No.

Guest\_Daphna : No.

Guest\_eagle : No.

Guest\_Elyna : No.

Adrieljody : No.

Zahakiel : All right, then I will ask Bro. Luke to close our meeting with a prayer, and may these principles be before us for the remainder of the New Moon hours.

Qinael : Dear heavenly Father,

We thank you for the opportunity to come together and learn from your Word. Even as we go over topics we have studied before, we ever find new depth and beauty in the principles you have revealed to us.

We thank you for the life you have given us - freely, and perfectly, that we might be perfect in you. We thank you for the work you have done and are doing in us, and the death of the old man, altogether worth the price of the gift in exchange.

We ask for your presence to continue with us through the remainder of the sacred hours and into eternity. In the name of Yahshua we pray, amen.

Guest\_Peterson1216 : Amen.

Guest\_Elyna : Amen.

Guest\_Jirehiel : Amen.

Adrieljody : Amen.

Guest\_Daphna : Amen.

Guest\_Jacinto : Amen.

Guest\_Peter : Amen.

Guest\_eagle : Amen.

Zahakiel : Amen.

January 2011:

Review and then:

See also the next verse: "Now, if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him." The first verse intends that we shall be free from sin. The second verse intends that we shall be free from sin. The sixth verse says that we are not henceforth to serve sin; the seventh verse says he that is dead is freed from sin; the eighth verse says if we be dead with Christ, we shall also live with Him. Where does He live--in righteousness or in sin?

[Voices: "In righteousness."]

Very good. Then it is plain that the first, the second, the sixth, the seventh, and the eighth verses of the sixth chapter of Romans all intend that we shall be kept from sinning.

How about the ninth verse? "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him." How was it that death ever had dominion over him at all? Because of sin--not his own, but ours, for He was made "to be sin for us, who knew no sin." Then death hath no more dominion over Him. He has victory over sin and all its consequences forever. Then what does that verse tell you and me? We are risen with Him. "For in that He died, He died unto sin once, but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God." Then both the ninth and tenth verses also intend that we shall be kept from sinning.

The eleventh verse: "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof." And thus again He intends that we shall not sin.

"Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace." The reign of grace lifts the soul above sin, holds it there, reigns against the power of sin, and delivers the soul from sinning.

"What then? shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? God forbid." Thus from the first verse to the fourteenth of the sixth chapter of Romans, there is preached, over and over, deliverance from sin and from sinning. That is great, but there is something still in advance of that. "Let us go on unto perfection."

Listen: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Delivered from the power of sin,

to whom did ye yield yourselves? To God. Then you are His servants, set free to the service of righteousness. God does not intend there shall be a blank life in His keeping us from sinning. He intends that there shall be active, intelligent service and that only righteousness shall be the result. It is a wonderfully great thing to be made free from sin and to be kept from sinning; it is another wonderfully great thing upon that to be made the servants of righteousness so that our service is unto righteousness.

Therefore let every soul echo, "God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which has delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness. Thank the Lord for that! He says you are, and when He says you are, it is so. Thank Him for it. Thank Him that you are delivered from sin, and thank the Lord that you are the servant of righteousness. He has made you so, for He says so.

But that is not all yet. "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh, for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity, even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness." The Lord in this appeals to your experience and mine. "When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness." You know that that is so. Take now the complement of it: "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life."

We are not the servants of sin, free from righteousness, but we are the servants of righteousness, free from sin. As I have dwelt upon this and the Lord has fed my soul upon the whole of it, I am reminded every once in a while of an expression of Milton's where he speaks of the songs of the angels as notes of "measured sweetness long drawn out." This sixth chapter of Romans is one of those notes of measured sweetness long drawn out.

It begins with freedom from sin; that is a great thing. Next upon that, freedom from sinning, and that is a great thing. Next upon that, servants to righteousness, and that is a great thing. Next upon that, unto holiness, and that is a great thing. And upon all, the end, everlasting life, and that is a great thing. Isn't that a note, then of the Lord's, of measured sweetness long drawn out? Oh, receive it, dwell upon it, catch the sweet tones, and let them linger in the soul day and night. It does the soul good.

And there is the way to Christian perfection. It is the way of crucifixion, unto destruction of the body of sin, unto freedom from sinning, unto the service of righteousness, unto holiness, unto perfection in Jesus Christ by the Holy Ghost, unto everlasting life.

Let us look again at the statement that the gifts are for the perfecting of the saints, “till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” There is the pattern. The way that Christ went in this world of sin and in sinful flesh--your flesh and mine, burdened with the sins of the world, the way He went in perfection and to perfection, is the way set before us.

He was born of the Holy Ghost. In other words, Jesus Christ was born again. He came from heaven, God’s first-born, to the earth, and was born again. But all in Christ’s work goes by opposites for us: He, the sinless one, was made to be sin in order that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. He, the living One, the Prince and Author of life, died that we might live. He whose goings forth have been from the days of eternity, the first-born of God, was born again in order that we might be born again.

If Jesus Christ had never been born again, could you and I have ever been born again? No. But He was born again, from the world of righteousness into the world of sin; that we might be born again, from the world of sin into the world of righteousness. He was born again and was made partaker of the human nature that we might be born again and so made partakers of the divine nature. He was born again, unto earth, unto sin, and unto man, that we might be born again unto heaven, unto righteousness and unto God.

Brother Covert says that makes us as brethren. It does certainly make us as brethren. And He is not ashamed to call us His brethren, either.

Then He was born again, by the Holy Ghost, for it is written and was spoken to Mary, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”

Jesus, born of the Holy Ghost, born again, grew “in wisdom and stature,” unto the fullness of life and character in the world, to where He could say to God, “I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work thou gavest me to do.” God’s plan and mind in Him had attained to perfection.

Jesus, born again, born of the Holy Ghost, born of flesh and blood, as we were, the Captain of our salvation, was made “perfect through sufferings.” For “though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.” Heb. 2:10; 5:8,9. Jesus thus went to perfection in human flesh, through suffering; because it is in a world of suffering that we in human flesh must attain perfection.

And while growing all the time, He was perfect all the time. Do you see that? There is where many people misconceive the whole thought of Christian perfection--they think the ultimate is the only measure. It is in God's plan, but the ultimate is not reached at the beginning. Look again at the fourth of Ephesians. This is a suggestion, thrown out to you and me, how we may attain to this perfection, "the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." I read the thirteenth verse; now couple with that verses 14-16: "Till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."

This is to be accomplished in you and me by growth; but there can be no growth where there is no life. This is growth in the knowledge of God, growth in the wisdom of God, growth in the character of God, growth in God; therefore it can be only by the life of God. But that life is planted in the man at the new birth. He is born again, born of the Holy Ghost; and the life of God is planted there, that he "may grow up in to him"--in how much? "In all things."

You remember that "the kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field." And "the seed is the word of God." The seed is planted. He realizes that night and day it grows, he knows not how. But that seed is what? It is perfect, for God made it. It sprouts presently. What of the sprout?

[Congregation: "Perfect, too."]

Is it?

[Voices: "Yes."]

But it is not a head of grain. It is not a stalk standing full and strong. It is a mere sprout peeping through the ground. But what of it? Is it not perfect?

[Congregation: "Yes."]

According to the rate of its progress it is as perfect at that point as it will be when its course is finished, at the point of maturity. Do you not see? Let not that misconception abide anymore. Away with it!

When that sprout peeps through the ground, you stoop to look at it. It is a thing to be admired. It is charming, because it is perfect. That is as perfect a blade as ever appeared on earth, but it is a mere spindling thing, barely peeping through the ground. That is all there is of it, but it is perfect. It is perfect, because it is as God made it. God is the only one that had anything to do with it. Do you not see? It is all right. So you and I, born again of that good seed of the word of God---born by the word of God and the Holy Ghost, born of the perfect seed--when that seed sprouts and grows and begins to appear among men, people see the characteristics of Christ. And what is He? Perfect. Then what is the Christian right there?

[Congregation: "Perfect."]

If we be born again through the power of Jesus Christ, and God Himself directs the work, what will that be which appears? It will be perfect. And that is Christian perfection at that point. Jesus Christ presents you holy, unblameable, and unreprouvable, before the throne at that point.

That sprout grows and stands above the ground, presently another blade shoots off. There are two of them, and each is just as handsome as the other. The third one appears. It is now a stalk, and still grows. It now presents another picture altogether from that which it presented at first. Another picture indeed, but no more perfect than before. It is nearer to ultimate perfection, nearer to God's accomplished purpose, but though nearer to ultimate perfection, it is no more perfect, as it stands now, than it was the moment that it peeped through the ground.

In time it grows to its full height. The head is full-formed. The bloom appears upon it. It is more beautiful on account of it. And at last appears the full head of grain, perfect; and the grains of wheat, each one perfect. The work, God's work, is finished upon it. It is perfected. It has attained unto perfection according to God's mind when He started it.

That is Christian perfection. It comes by growth. But the growth can be only by the life of God. And the life of God being the spring, it can grow only according to God's order. Only He can shape the growth. Only He knows, in perfection, the pattern. Christ is the pattern. God knows perfectly the pattern, and He can cause us to grow in perfection according to that pattern, because the same power, the same life, is in this growth that was in the growth of the original pattern, Jesus Christ.

And as Jesus began, at His birth, as a little child in human flesh and grew up and finished the work that God had given Him to do, so you and I, born again, growing up in Him in all things, come presently to the day when we, as did He, shall say and say in righteousness, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work thou gavest me to do." For it is written, "In the days of the voice of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished." We are in that day. We have that mystery given to us to give to the world. It is to be finished for the world, and it is to be finished in those who have it.

But what is the mystery of God? "Christ in you, the hope of glory." "God . . . manifest in the flesh." Then in these days that mystery is to be finished in one hundred and forty-four thousand people. God's work in human flesh, God being manifested in human flesh, in you and me, is to be finished. His work upon you and me is to be finished. We are to be perfected in Jesus Christ. By the Spirit we are to come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Is not that worth having? Is not the Lord's way a good way unto perfection? Oh, then, "leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands and of resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment." He has freed us from the unstable foundation that we had when in sin. Let the only foundation be that of the service of righteousness unto holiness and the end, everlasting life.

And to every soul who will face the judgment and hold himself in the presence of the Judgment, surrendering himself to crucifixion and destruction, that thing will be accomplished in God's own way and in the short time in which He has promised to bring us unto righteousness. Then it is only God, God's estimate, His standard, and Christ the pattern, and His the work, always, in all things, everywhere and forever! Then be of good cheer. Let it be Christ first, last, and all the time.

July 18, July 25, August 1, 1899