

Christian Perfection Part 2

Qinael: Holy and loving Father...

Qinael: We thank you for this opportunity to come together in worship and reflection.

Qinael: We are thankful for the many tools you have given us for our cleansing, from the Body of believers to the sacred times you have appointed for your children to come together.

Qinael: We ask your Spirit to be with us as we open your word, and keep us ever mindful of the purpose of the sacred hours.

Qinael: In the name of Yahshua we pray, amen.

Peterson: Amen.

Guerline: Amen.

Jody: Amen

Jirehiel: Amen

Barb: Amen

Happy Rock: Amen.

Zahakiel: Amen.

Pastor "Chick": Amen.

This month we continue and conclude the study that we began last New Moon, a commentated recitation of A. T. Jones' 1899 sermon entitled "Christian Perfection."

We got approximately halfway done last time, but unfortunately my laptop began to experience problems yet again. Fortunately, my warranty doesn't expire until next month, so I am working on getting it repaired soon. Until then I am on a backup, but I don't have the information from last month to post, or to reference for our conclusion. Because of that, I'll probably overlap a little with last month's material, because I want to ensure that I don't miss anything important.

Let me begin by giving a very brief summary of the message thus far:

We begin with the quote, "Be ye therefore perfect" from Matthew 5, and the explanation that the Gospel's intent is to "present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." What we, as opposed to most Christians, must do is to not only believe it is possible – and few enough do even this – but to *expect* it of ourselves. That is the goal of disciplining the mind, to expect it of ourselves, and to accept no less of ourselves than the goal that Yah has set for His people.

All that is left to enquire, after we have settled this in our minds, is "how" this is accomplished.

What struck me powerfully about this sermon is Jones' concept (although he doesn't say it exactly the same way) of "standing in the judgment" of the living. Long before 1988, he said, "Then why not put ourselves [before the judgment seat of Christ] 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."

As we enquire of the "way" to accomplish this, it becomes clear that no finite mind can even measure or assess Yah's perfection, much less attain it. Because if we are given a goal we cannot even see or comprehend, how can we be expected to accomplish it? In fact, that goal is utterly beyond us.

Jones concludes, on the basis of numerous verses, that the "way of the cross" is the only way to accomplish this otherwise impossible goal, and that Christ, by His sacrifice, has supplied the need that we as fallen humans all share. And since "He is the same yesterday, today and forever. He is as able just now as He was then or as He will ever be" to accomplish it within us.

I believe we continued a bit further last month, but I will pick it up here to ensure that nothing is missed, and I will pause here and ask if there are any questions about our chosen topic, or any of the summary that I have presented prior to this point.

Jirehiel: none.

Pastor "Chick": None here.

Qinael: None here.

Jody: no

Barb: Non here.

Happy Rock: None.

Peterson: None.

Guerline: Do you mean: 1888, not 1988?

Zahakiel: No, 1988, we teach, began the judgment of the living.

Guerline: Oh, ok.

We will begin, then, with Jones' discussion of the effects of surrendering the life to Christ. We see a change in the principles and Master whom we serve, and we pick up at this passage, the last two verses of the fifth chapter of Romans: "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."

I quote from the study:

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.

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."]

Comment: I am not sure if I pointed this out last month, but it strikes me (again) upon reading this how rare even the assent would be in modern Churches... in SDA Churches, where we have the writings of Ellen White, I am certain there would be more lip-service to the idea, but the lives reveal little true acceptance. As I mentioned a couple months ago, Giselle and I visited the local SDA Church here one Sabbath. The same people were there, saying the exact same things they were saying 10 years ago. There was NO growth, there was NO greater, heightened piety, there was NO visible progress toward the Christian character. Instead we heard doubt, unbelief, and the chronic disease of the sin-repent cycle. And I say this not to attack those individuals with whom I shared my earliest experiences in Adventism, but as a lament. These are "good" people, as ever the world could count goodness, but because they have not expected perfection of themselves, because they have not chosen the "reign of grace" in their lives, sin does, in fact, still reign, even while they would call themselves "more than conquerors."

I continue, then... and if you have comments or questions to share, please indicate this at any time, and we will pause for discussion.

From the sermon:

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: Here is that paradox explained, that those who seek to save their lives (that is, their current lives of sin and failure) will lose true life, while those who give up their current lives for Christ's sake, these are the ones who find life everlasting.

Continuing:

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.

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.

Guerline: Amen.

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."

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 brings to mind several of our recent studies, such as "True Martyrdom" and "The Worst of Tyrants."

Happy Rock: Amen.

Both of these demonstrate exactly how this is: that when we choose destruction, nothing that can happen to us can shake our faith, because we have decided that this life has, in a very real sense, already ended. Whatsoever takes place after this, Yahweh tells us explicitly, is by way of preparation for the next life. Have any of you formulated anything to share or ask at this point?

Qinael: Nothing here.

Jody: no

Peterson: No.

Pastor "Chick": Both of us say, "Hallelu-YAH!"

Happy Rock: I just want to praise Yah for this message that come to us at such a time as this.

Zahakiel: Amen

Jody: Amen

Guerline: I had a question about 1988.

Guerline: Did the people, those who embraced A.T. Jones message and Mrs. White's went through the judgment while living? I don't understand or need to review the setting for the judgment of the living..

Zahakiel: Ok, that is an appropriate question.

Guerline: oops:went

Zahakiel: First, you know the event that began the judgment of the living? Do you know why we identify this specific time?

Guerline: Well, the lent meeting in 1988 and the TM was into effect also.

Zahakiel: The Lent meeting?

Guerline: They had a meeting and wanted to light a torch that would not light.

Guerline: Maybe not the lent

Zahakiel: Oh... those are events that took place around that time...

Zahakiel: but the real event that began it was the teaching of the Gospel in the power of the fourth angel's message.

Zahakiel: As Jones rightly says in his sermon, only those who put themselves there willingly, expecting to be free of sin at every moment, can pass this judgment.

Zahakiel: How, then, could there be a judgment of the living if the victory over sin was not even being taught?

Guerline: Oh, I was not sure. I thought Pastor's started in the 1990.

Zahakiel: Pastor has written a number of articles about this that would be good for any to review who are not clear on this. One is called, I believe, "Due Process of Law."

Zahakiel: But to answer your question directly, although for the world the judgment of the living began very recently...

Zahakiel: individuals were always able to enter into it AS individuals.

Guerline: Ok, I will review.

Zahakiel: Jones there was offering an invitation, because they expected that they were the last generation. So of course, they would have to be judged while alive to enter into the number of those who were to be translated without seeing death.

Guerline: Right.

Zahakiel: And this is not something strange. Any individual who was translated before now underwent the judgment of the living: Enoch, Elijah, etc.

Zahakiel: So Jones' sermon was an invitation for the SDA Church to enter into the judgment of the living.

Zahakiel: And had they, as a corporate body done so (as we have)... imagine what doctrine they would have taught from that day to this.

Does everyone understand this?

Barb: Yes

Happy Rock: Yes.

Qinael: Yes.

Barb: Ye: yes

Jody: yes

Guerline: Hum..

Peterson: Yes.

Guerline: Oh it had to be accepted corporately?

Zahakiel: No, it should have been accepted individually.

Zahakiel: But HAD they all done it as a Church, and made it a part of their official position... they would have been transformed into the true messengers as a people.

Guerline: You just said as a corporate body..

Zahakiel: Correct.

Zahakiel: That is the "official position" part.

> βεαστζγ·Øÿστεя has joined the conversation.

Guerline: but in as individual do it .

Guerline: Right?

Zahakiel: If individuals accept something on a large scale (most of them, or the ones who are teachers) and it becomes the official position of the Church, then new members coming in will have it taught to them and they will accept it.

Zahakiel: Those who are already members but do not accept it would leave.

Zahakiel: Thus, individual acceptance leads to a corporate position.

Guerline: I see.

Guerline: Thanks.

Of course.

Continuing, then, with the text of the sermon:

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.

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.”

Comment: It is also preached in Chapters 7 and 8, although – because of Paul’s manner of speaking, chapter 7 in particular has led to some confusion among modern readers. Still, the matter is easily explained if the hearer is willing to examine it carefully... and, of course, if he or she *expects* that Christian perfection of which we are speaking. That is the largest factor.

Continuing:

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.

Comment: This is a wonderful passage that I have just quoted. Normally, when we speak of being “servants of righteousness,” I believe we naturally tend to think of the negatives: not sinning, not falling short, not erring. That, by itself, is merely a “blank life.” But servants are servants because they... serve. They do things, and being servants of righteousness means not that we will avoid doing evil, but that we will actively do good instead.

Continuing:

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.

Guerline: Amen.

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 [the poet] 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.

Happy Rock: Praise Yah.

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.

Comment: This quote has served us well in explaining the covenant of Church Membership. Without the benefit of the community of the saints, we simply will not have access to those gifts, given for that

purpose: Christian perfection. It is a part of the “pattern;” it is a part of the plan of salvation that so many have cast aside because of sorrow, hurt feelings, rebellion, or a lack of perseverance.

I continue:

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.

Jody: Amen

Gerald: Amen

Comment: Isn’t that an interesting take on it? The meaning is well-taken. But we must be very careful with our language here, because suggesting that Christ was “born” in Heaven may lead to some problems, especially for a modern audience. We do believe that, as He Himself claims, He “proceeded forth” from the Father, (John 8:42) but to suggest there was any “time” before the existence of the Son, or that He had some kind of spiritual maturation process that parallels our own denies His divinity, and we must be aware of those implications. Do you see what I mean by that?

Qinael: <nods.>

Happy Rock: Yes

Jody: yes

Peterson: Yes

Guerline: yes.

Barb: Barb: yes

Daphna: yes

I continue:

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.

Comment: I’d like to place special emphasis on this next couple of paragraphs:

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.”

Comment: These two paragraphs above describe another way of looking at the “seedling” parable, where at every stage of the plant, the plant is “perfect” even if it is not fully mature. This is the spiritual and proper way of understanding Christian growth, and one that I hear taught nowhere else except in our studies and the writings of these SDA pioneers. Here, actually, is Jones’ recounting of that symbolism. Continuing:

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!

Daphna: yes

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 unprovable, 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.

Comment: Are there any comments or questions you’d like to share at this point?

Jody: no

Peterson: No.

Jirehiel: no

Guerline: No

Happy Rock: No

Daphna: no

Let us continue, then, as we are right at the end:

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.

Comment: This parallels what I have said in a study some time ago, and it bears repeating here. I quote this verse, “For [Yah] hath made [Christ] to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” (2Cor 5:21) And then I ask, “What are we made in Christ?” We are made the “righteousness of God,” right here upon the earth. It does not say we become this when we are glorified. It does not say that this happens after the resurrection, or when we enter the gates of Pearl.

Jody: Amen!

Guerline: Amen.

No, it says that we “are made” this Godly righteousness, the righteousness of Yahweh Himself – and this happens now.

I conclude the text of the sermon:

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.

That is the end of Jones' study. Do you, at this point, have a comment, a question, a response, to share? I encourage you all to give your thoughts on this as we conclude this first New Moon study of 2011.

Peterson: Who is Bro. Covert?

Zahakiel: Most likely just someone in the congregation at the time. I don't have any other information about him.

Ye: I see that the growth from when the seed is planted until it has grown to maturity is the power of Yah all the way.

Zahakiel: Yes. Absolutely; and that is the only power that allows it to grow correctly.

Guerline: comment: It is good to remember that destruction is preservation and salvation, and that we have nothing to do but to allow Christ to do the work of destruction in us. Amen.

Pastor "Chick": Do NOT leave out the FACT that the seed MUST DIE before it can LIVE and GROW.

Daphna: we just abide in him and he in us for he is the light and the living water

Guerline: Sorry . did not mean to send that now.

Barb: Amen to pastor's comment.

Zahakiel: Right.

Jacinto says: This study clarified many things, and it was a good study.

Zahakiel: Glad to hear that, Jacinto.

Gerald: This was a very good study about the seed.

Zahakiel: Yes, we have used that analogy in several of our past studies. It is very effective to demonstrate what we mean by "perfection" in the Christian context.

Pastor "Chick": I have been shown that appetite is the issue among God's people today, just as it was in the Garden. If YAH's people do not take the health message given to the Remnant seriously, they will be left behind with "wailing and gnashing of teeth."

Zahakiel: Thank you for adding, that, yes.

Go ahead, Gerald.

Gerald: I like Pastor's comment that the seed has to die before it sprouts.

Zahakiel: Ok.

Pastor "Chick": Well, the "sprout" is the VISIBLE sign of the life that was there before. Self dies, life begins, and then others SEE the fruit of the new creature.

Gerald: Ok, that is more clear.

Barb: This has been a great study - a good review and encouragement for all.

Guerline: Yes.

Pastor "Chick": Why is health reform/health message SO important?

Guerline: It is a testimony that the world as a whole is so in need of today. And by precepts and example , we can teach them.

Barb: One reason is because if we do not take care of our health, our mental and spiritual life will suffer, as well.

Guerline: world as...

Jody: I agree

Barb: Gerald: Another reason is that God will judge us as sinners and we will perish if we don't take care of our health.

Pastor "Chick": How will the "mental and spiritual life...suffer?"

Ye: When the body suffers, the brain function cannot go right and well. The mental and spiritual senses will not be sharp.

Pastor "Chick": What will be the result of these deficiencies?

Guerline: That would open doors for the ennemy to vanquish.

Pastor "Chick": ABE: When one member of the body suffers, the whole Body suffers.

Barb: Ye: That person will not be able to discern spiritual things

Daphna: we can not grow if we do not have the right food and if we do not have the right we can not hear the word of Yah

Barb: Ye: That person will be easily led into deception.

Happy Rock: Our minds is the only channel of commutating with Humanity and if it is corrupted then we will not be able to do or function effectively as God required, and we will be lost.

Qinael: I think there is a character component as well...

Pastor "Chick": So, is salvation by WORKS?

Qinael: A lot of what we talk about is the result of poor diet. The cause is just as, if not much more, important.

Barb: If our mental and spiritual senses are not sharp, we can miss discerning the voice of Yah, which is essential in these last days.

Qinael: Yes, not eating properly causes some mental functions to be lost, and other practical effects...

Qinael: The question is, WHY are you not eating properly? It is because of appetite. And if you will give into appetite and not be disciplined in diet, how will you act differently spiritually, or in anything else?

Pastor "Chick": But, is the Kingdom of YAH "eating and drinking?"

Qinael: Mrs. White spoke about people who, if they would overcome appetite, would overcome every other deficiency.

Qinael: And it's largely because of this principle of being faithful in the small and the large things.

Qinael: If you do not take care of your body, you will be unlikely to take care of your spirit. If you are giving into impulses on what to eat and drink, you will be undisciplined elsewhere as well.

Qinael: And so in your character, you open the doors to Satan's influence because of the tendencies cultivated.

Barb: Salvation is NOT by works - and the Kingdom of Yah is NOT eating and drinking.

Guerline: It is not what we do that saves us but our works is the results of Yah's work in us.

Qinael: Eat and drink is important... but it's the character that's revealed in those choices that is really at stake.

Guerline: So we eat and drink to His glory.

Pastor "Chick": AND, there is more than eating and drinking in the chain of character-building.

Barb: Gerald: We are saved by God's grace, but we should not live in sin.

Barb: Gerald: Romans 6:1-3

Pastor "Chick": The Christian DOES NOT live in sin.

Zahakiel: This study is about Christian perfection. Let us not forget this, nor let it be thought that this topic is far from it. The health message is called the right hand of the Gospel in SDA writings for a reason.

Zahakiel: And it does indeed have much to do with character.

uest_Pastor "Chick": Let us remember the acronym, NEW START.

Daphna: we do not live by bread alone, but every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God

Pastor "Chick": Nutrition, Exercise, Water...

Pastor "Chick": Sunshine, Temperance (self-control), Air, Rest, and Trust in YAH.

Happy Rock: We must have the appetite for the truth of the last days it is not just a physical it is also spiritually what we consume... so we have to chose what we consume in order to be an instrument of Yah's right hand.

Mollie: may I ask a question

Mollie: sorry to interupt

Zahakiel: Of course. This is the Q and A stage after a formal study.

Zahakiel: So please, go ahead.

Mollie: what or who ..is Yah

Zahakiel: Oh, that is the name of the Father

Zahakiel: Names do not usually translate, and that is the name we are given by which to praise Him.

Mollie: just never heard Yah

Jody: Our Heavenly Father

Mollie: thank you for answering

Pastor "Chick": Hallelu-YAH

Zahakiel: You are welcome.

Zahakiel: But yes, as pastor says there, if you have heard "HalleluYah," then you have heard of His name

Mollie: ohh cool Abe

Qinael: <nods.> It's usually not translated, but some verses, like Psalms 68:4, have it mostly intact.

Qinael: Or rather.. it usually IS translated.

Mollie: ok resume.. I will be quiet now lol

Zahakiel: Well, are there any other questions or comments at this point?

Pastor "Chick": I am a bit reluctant to see the end...

Guerline: No, but you were to discuss something for Sister Ye after.

Pastor "Chick": since we have so little opportunity to meet together and discuss.

Zahakiel: I would like for us to close the formal study with a prayer, if we are going to have a general discussion

Zahakiel: Pastor, will you offer this?

Pastor "Chick": Let us close the "formal segment" with a prayer.

Pastor "Chick": Dear Heavenly Father...

Pastor "Chick": We are so thankful for the plan of salvation that you have freely and lovingly arranged for every person in the world.

Pastor "Chick": Thank you for the VICTORY that is ours in Christ our Savior.

Pastor "Chick": Thank you that you have given us your Word, and given us of your Spirit...

Pastor "Chick": We pray for our families, friends, visitors, and even our enemies...

Pastor "Chick": May we continue being the example you would have us to be, so that many may find the wonderful rest and peace that can be had in Christ...

Pastor "Chick": In the blessed and holy name of YAHSHUA (known as Jesus), AMEN!

Qinael: Amen.

Happy Rock: Amen.

Guerline: Amen.

Mollie: Amen

Jody: Amen

Jirehiel: Amen

Jacinto: Amen }

Zahakiel: Amen.

Barb: Amen.

Gerald: Amen

Ye: Amen

Daphna: Amen