

## Perfection Only In Christ Pastor Tom Hughes

### *Philippians 3:3, 8, 9\**

3 For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,...8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ<sup>9</sup> and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith

### *Ecclesiastes 7:20*

20 For there is not a just man on earth who does good And does not sin.

### *Psalms 14:1-3*

1 The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."

They are corrupt, They have done abominable works,

There is none who does good.

2 The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men,

To see if there are any who understand, who seek God.

3 They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt;

There is none who does good, No, not one.

### *Romans 3:10-12; 20-23*

10 As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one;

11 There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.

12 They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable;

There is none who does good, no, not one."

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

21 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,<sup>22</sup> even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe.

For there is no difference;<sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

### *Romans 6:23*

23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

### *Isaiah 64:6*

6 But we are all like an unclean thing, And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags;

We all fade as a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, Have taken us away

### *Isaiah 55:8, 9*

8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord.

9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.

### *Daniel 9:7, 11, 20*

7 "O Lord, righteousness belongs to You, but to us shame of face, as it is this day—to the men of Judah, to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and all Israel, those near and those far off in all the countries to which You have driven them, because of the unfaithfulness which they have committed against You.<sup>11</sup> "Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him.<sup>20</sup> Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God,

### *1 John 1:8, 9*

8 *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.* 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

***Ephesians 2:8-10***

8 For *by grace you have been saved through faith,* and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, 9 not of works, lest anyone should boast. 10 For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

***Mark 10:18; Luke 18:19***

18 So Jesus said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.”

***Psalm 143: 2***

“Do *not* enter into *judgment* with Your servant, for in Your sight no one living is righteous”

***Revelation 15:4***

4 Who shall not fear You, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy. For all nations shall come and worship before You, For Your judgments have been manifested.”

***Titus 3:5***

5 not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,

***1 Corinthians 1:30***

30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

***Hebrews 10: 14***

14 For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified.

***Ps. 4: 1***

1 Hear me when I call, O God of my Righteousness.

***Isaiah 54: 17***

17 Their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord.

***Jeremiah 23:6***

6 In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell safely;  
Now this is His name by which He will be called:  
**THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

\*(All texts quoted in the New King James Version)

**Seventh-day Adventist Believe...28 Fundamentals Quotations**  
***(28 Fundamentals-pages 133-147 or 27 Fundamentals –pages 127-131)***

***“In the Old Testament, when used of humans, the word has a relative sense.* Noah, Abraham, and Job were each described as perfect or blameless (Gen. 6:9; 17:1; 22:18; Job 1:1,18). though each had imperfections (Gen. 9:21; 20; Job 1: 1, 18) In the New Testament perfect often describes mature persons who have lived up to the best available light and attained the potential of their spiritual, mental and physical powers (cf. 1 Cor. 14:20; Phil. 3:15; Heb. 5:14'). Believers are to be perfect in their finite sphere. Christ said, as God is perfect in His infinite and absolute sphere (cf. Matt. 5:48). In God's sight, a perfect person is one whose heart and life are wholly surrendered, to the worship and service of God, who is constantly growing in divine knowledge, and who is, (through God's grace, living up to all the light he has received(?)) while rejoicing in a life of victory. (cf. Col. 4:12; James 3:2). *(Who lives up to all the light they have received?)*”**

**2. Full perfection in Christ.** How may we become perfect? The Holy Spirit brings to us the perfection of Christ. By faith Christ's perfect character becomes ours. People can never claim that perfection independently as if it were their innate possession, or theirs by right. Perfection is a gift of God. Apart from Christ human beings cannot obtain righteousness. "He who abides in Me, and I in him," He said, "bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). It is Christ "who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption" (1 Cor. 1:30). In Christ these qualities constitute our perfection. He completed, once and for all our sanctification and redemption. No one can add to what He has done. Our wedding garment, or robe of righteousness, was wrought out by Christ's life, death, and resurrection. The Holy Spirit now takes the finished product and works it out in the Christian's life. In this way we can "be filled with all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:19).

**Glorification and Perfection.** Some incorrectly believe the ultimate perfection that glorification will bring is already available to humans. But of himself, Paul, that dedicated man of God, wrote near the end of his life, "not that I have already attained or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:12-14 Sanctification is a lifelong process. Perfection now is ours only in Christ, but the ultimate, all-comprehensive transformation of our lives of our lives into the image of God will take place at the Second Advent. Paul cautions: "Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12).

The history of Israel and the lives of David, Solomon, and Peter are serious warnings for all. "As long as life shall last, there is need of guarding the affections and the passions with a firm purpose. There is inward corruption there are outward temptations, and wherever the work of God shall be advanced, Satan plans so to arrange circumstances that temptation shall come with overpowering force upon the soul. Not one moment can we be secure only as we are relying upon God, the life hid with Christ in God."<sup>13</sup>

Our final creative transformation is accomplished when incorruptibility and immortality become ours, when the Holy Spirit completely restores the original creation.

#### **The Ground of Our Acceptance With God**

Neither Christlike character traits nor faultless behavior is the ground of our acceptance with God. Saving righteousness comes from the one righteous Man, Jesus, and is conveyed to us by the Holy Spirit. We can contribute nothing to Christ's gift of righteousness; we can only receive it No one other than Christ is righteous (Rom. 3:10); independent human righteousness is only filthy rags (Isa. 64:6; see also Dan. 9:7,11,20; 1 Cor. 1:30).<sup>14</sup>

Even what we do in response to Christ's saving love cannot form the basis of our acceptance with God".

*(Excerpted from Seventh-day Adventist Believe...*

*28 Fundamentals-pages 133-147 or 27 Fundamentals-pages 127-131)*

#### **Spirit of Prophecy Quotations**

"God declares, "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom 3:10). All have the same sinful nature. All are liable to make mistakes. No one is perfect. The Lord Jesus died for the erring that they might be forgiven. It is not our work to condemn. Christ did not come to condemn, but to save". In Heavenly Places p. 292

[God's law] "could not justify man because in his sinful nature he could not keep the law". Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 373

"It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God's law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey the holy law. We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned." {SC 62.2}

"The truth of Jesus Christ does not tend to gloom and sadness...We must look away from the disagreeable to Jesus. We must love him more, obtain more of His attractive beauty and grace of character, and cease the contemplation of others' mistakes and errors. We should remember that our own ways are not faultless. We make mistakes again and again... No one is perfect but Jesus. Think of Him and be charmed away from yourself, and every disagreeable thing, for by beholding our defects faith is weakened... I point you to Christ, the Rock of Ages." TIMKH p. 136

The righteousness of Christ is presented as a free gift to the sinner if he will accept it. He has nothing of his own but what is tainted and corrupted, polluted with sin, utterly repulsive to a pure and holy God. Only through the righteous character of Jesus Christ can man come nigh to God. Let no one take the limited, narrow position that any of the works of man can help in the least possible way to liquidate the debt of his transgression. This is a fatal deception. If you would understand it, you must cease haggling over your pet ideas, and with humble hearts survey the atonement. This matter is so dimly comprehended that thousands upon thousands claiming to be sons of God are children of the wicked one, because they will depend on their own works. God always demanded good works, the law demands it, but because man placed himself in sin where his good works were valueless, Jesus' righteousness alone can avail. Christ is able to save to the uttermost because He ever liveth to make intercession for us. All that man can possibly do toward his own salvation is to accept the invitation, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17). No sin can be committed by man for which satisfaction has not been met on Calvary. Thus the cross, in earnest appeals, continually proffers to the sinner a thorough expiation. ISM 342-343

[Throughout this compilation, my remarks are in brackets] [The hardest lesson for fallen humanity to learn is this: As long as we are confined to this carnal nature, even our acts of obedience are tainted with sin! This means that *all* the things we do right ascend to the heavenly sanctuary in a defiled state and require the application of Christ's atoning blood to make them pure and acceptable to God. Ellen White tells us that these good deeds are brought about by the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. Then she adds, ]

"The religious services, the prayers, the praise, the penitent confession of sin ascend from true believers as incense to the heavenly sanctuary, but passing through the corrupt channels of humanity, they are so defiled that unless purified by blood, they can never be of value with God. They ascend not in spotless purity, and unless the Intercessor, who is at God's right hand, presents and purifies all by His righteousness, it is not acceptable to God. All incense from earthly tabernacles must be moist with the cleansing drops of the blood of Christ. He holds before the Father the censer of His own merits, in which there is no taint of earthly corruption. He gathers into this censer the prayers, the praise, and the confessions of His people, and with these He puts His own spotless righteousness. Then, perfumed with the merits of Christ's propitiation, the incense comes up before God wholly and entirely acceptable. Then gracious answers are returned... Oh, that all may see that everything in obedience, in penitence, in praise and thanksgiving, must be placed upon the glowing fire of the righteousness of Christ" (Selected Messages, 1:344, 345).

"We do not understand our perverse natures; and often when we are gratifying self, following our own inclinations, we flatter ourselves that we are carrying out the mind of God." TM 503

"None of the prophets or apostles made proud boasts of holiness. The nearer they came to perfection of character, the less worthy and righteous they viewed themselves. But those who have the least sense of the perfection of Jesus, those whose eyes are least directed to Him, are the ones who make the strongest claim to perfection." {FW 54.1}

"Perfection through our own good works we can never attain. The soul who sees Jesus by faith, repudiates his own righteousness. He sees himself as incomplete, his repentance insufficient, his strongest faith but feebleness, his most costly sacrifice as meager, and he sinks in humility at the foot of

the cross. But a voice speaks to him from the oracles of God's Word. In amazement he hears the message, "*Ye are complete in Him.*" Now all is at rest in his soul. *No longer must he strive to find some worthiness in himself, some meritorious deed by which to gain the favor of God.*" {FW 107.108}

"The divine beauty of the *character of Christ, of whom the noblest and most gentle among men are but a faint reflection.*... Jesus, the express image of the Father's person, the effulgence of His glory; the self-denying Redeemer, throughout His pilgrimage of love on earth, was a living representation of the character of the law of God". {MB 49.2}

"Those who know that *they cannot possibly save themselves, or of themselves do any righteous action,* are the ones who appreciate the help that Christ can bestow. They are the poor in spirit, whom He declares to be blessed... Those whose hearts have been moved by the convicting Spirit of God *see that there is nothing good in themselves. They see that all they have ever done is mingled with self and sin.* Like the poor publican, they stand afar off, not daring to lift up so much as their eyes to heaven, and cry, "God, be merciful to me the sinner." Luke 18:13, R.V., margin. And they are blessed". {MB 7, 8}

"I ask, How can I present this matter as it is? The Lord Jesus imparts all the powers, all the grace, all the penitence, all the inclination, all the pardon of sins, *in presenting His righteousness for man to grasp by living faith--which is also the gift of God. If you would gather together everything that is good and holy and noble and lovely in man and then present the subject to the angels of God as acting a part in the salvation of the human soul or in merit, the proposition would be rejected as treason.*" {FW 24.1}

"*There is not a point that needs to be dwelt upon more earnestly, repeated more frequently, or established more firmly in the minds of all than the impossibility of fallen man meriting anything by his own best good works. Salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ alone.*... Let the subject be made distinct and plain that it is not possible to *effect anything* in our standing before God or in the gift of God to us *through creature merit.* If any man can merit salvation *by anything he may do, then he is in the same position as the Catholic* to do penance for his sins. Salvation, then, is partly of debt, that may be earned as wages. *If man cannot, by any of his good works, merit salvation, then it must be wholly of grace,* received by man as a sinner because he receives and believes in Jesus. It is wholly a free gift. *Justification by faith is placed beyond controversy.* And all this controversy is ended, as soon as *the matter is settled that the merits of fallen man in his good works can never procure eternal life for him.*" {FW 18-20}

"Some seem to feel that they *must be on probation and must prove to the Lord that they are reformed,* before they can claim His blessing. But these dear souls may claim the blessing even now. They must have His grace, the Spirit of Christ, to help their infirmities, or they cannot form a Christian character. Jesus loves to have us come to Him, *just as we are--sinful, helpless, dependent. We can do nothing, absolutely nothing, to commend ourselves to divine favor.* We must not trust at all to ourselves or to our good works; but when as *erring, sinful beings* we come to Christ, we may find rest in His love. *God will accept every one that comes to Him trusting wholly in the merits of a crucified Saviour.* Love springs up in the heart. There may be no ecstasy of feeling, but there is an abiding, peaceful trust. Every burden is light; for the yoke which Christ imposes is easy. Duty becomes a delight, and sacrifice a pleasure. The path that before seemed shrouded in darkness becomes bright with beams from the Sun of Righteousness. This is walking in the light as Christ is in the light". {FW 38}

*Neither Joseph, Daniel, nor any of the apostles claimed to be without sin.* Men who have lived nearest to God, men who would sacrifice life itself rather than to *knowingly sin against Him,* men whom God has honored with divine light and power, have *acknowledged themselves to be sinners, unworthy of His great favors. They have felt their weakness and, sorrowful for their sins, have tried to copy the pattern Jesus Christ.*" {FW 43}

“Christ looks at the spirit, and when He sees us carrying our burden with faith, His perfect holiness atones for our shortcomings. When we do our best, He becomes our righteousness. It takes every ray of light that God sends to us to make us the light of the world”--Letter 22, 1889. {FW 102}

“There are those who have known the pardoning love of Christ and who really desire to be children of God, yet they realize that their character is imperfect, their life faulty, and they are ready to doubt whether their hearts have been renewed by the Holy Spirit. To such I would say, Do not draw back in despair. We shall often have to bow down and weep at the feet of Jesus because of our shortcomings and mistakes, but we are not to be discouraged. Even if we are overcome by the enemy, we are not cast off, not forsaken and rejected of God. No; Christ is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Said the beloved John, "These things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." 1 John 2:1. And do not forget the words of Christ, "The Father Himself loveth you." John 16:27. He desires to restore you to Himself, to see His own purity and holiness reflected in you. And if you will but yield yourself to Him, He that hath begun a good work in you will carry it forward to the day of Jesus Christ. Pray more fervently; believe more fully. As we come to distrust our own power, let us trust the power of our Redeemer, and we shall praise Him who is the health of our countenance. The closer you come to Jesus, the more faulty you will appear in your own eyes; for your vision will be clearer, and your imperfections will be seen in broad and distinct contrast to His perfect nature. This is evidence that Satan's delusions have lost their power; that the vivifying influence of the Spirit of God is arousing you". SC 64-65

(This is the exact opposite of what Perfectionists teach. Instead of seeing ourselves as getting holier, we see our own sinfulness, unworthiness and imperfections more clearly. The closer we come to Jesus, the more sinful we appear in our own eyes.)

"No deep-seated love for Jesus can dwell in the heart that does not realize its own sinfulness. The soul that is transformed by the grace of Christ will admire His divine character; but if we do not see our own moral deformity, it is unmistakable evidence that we have not had a view of the beauty and excellence of Christ. The less we see to esteem in ourselves, the more we shall see to esteem in the infinite purity and loveliness of our Saviour. A view of our sinfulness drives us to Him who can pardon; and when the soul, realizing its helplessness, reaches out after Christ, He will reveal Himself in power. The more our sense of need drives us to Him and to the word of God, the more exalted views we shall have of His character, and the more fully we shall reflect His image." {SC 64, 65}

While we cannot do anything to change our hearts or to bring ourselves into harmony with God; while we must not trust at all to ourselves or our good works, our lives will reveal whether the grace of God is dwelling within us. A change will be seen in the character, the habits, the pursuits. The contrast will be clear and decided between what they have been and what they are. The character is revealed, not by occasional good deeds and occasional misdeeds, but by the tendency of the habitual words and acts. {SC 57}

“It is true that there may be an outward correctness of deportment without the renewing power of Christ. The love of influence and the desire for the esteem of others may produce a well-ordered life. Self-respect may lead us to avoid the appearance of evil. A selfish heart may perform generous actions. By what means, then, shall we determine whose side we are on? Who has the heart? With whom are our thoughts? Of whom do we love to converse? Who has our warmest affections and our best energies? If we are Christ's, our thoughts are with Him, and our sweetest thoughts are of Him. All we have and are is consecrated to Him. We long to bear His image, breathe His spirit, do His will, and please Him in all things." {SC 58}

“Those who are true to God will be menaced, denounced, proscribed. They will be "betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends," even unto death. Luke 21:16. Their only hope is in the

**mercy of God; their only defense will be prayer.** As Joshua pleaded before the Angel, *so the remnant church*, with brokenness of heart and *unfaltering faith*, will plead for pardon and deliverance through Jesus, their Advocate. They are *fully conscious of the sinfulness of their lives*, they see their *weakness and unworthiness*; and they are ready to despair..." {PK 588}

"But while the followers of Christ *have sinned*, they have not given themselves up *to be controlled* by the satanic agencies. They have *repented of their sins* and have sought the Lord in humility and contrition, and the divine Advocate pleads in their behalf. He who has been most abused by their ingratitude, who knows their sin and also their penitence, declares: *"The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan. I gave My life for these souls.* They are graven upon the palms of My hands. **They may have imperfections of character; they may have failed in their endeavors; but they have repented, and I have forgiven and accepted them.**" {PK 589}

"As the people of God afflict their souls before Him, pleading for purity of heart, the command is given, *"Take away the filthy garments,"* and the encouraging words are spoken, "Behold, **I have caused** thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." Zechariah 3:4. **The spotless robe of Christ's righteousness is placed upon the tried, tempted, faithful children of God.** The despised remnant are clothed in glorious apparel, *nevermore to be defiled by the corruptions of the world.* Their names are retained in the Lamb's book of life, enrolled among the faithful of all ages. They have resisted the wiles of the deceiver; *they have not been turned from their loyalty* by the dragon's roar. **Now they are eternally secure from the tempter's devices**". {PK 591.1}

"While Satan has been urging his accusations, holy angels, unseen, have been passing to and fro, placing upon *the faithful ones the seal of the living God.* These are they that stand upon Mount Zion with the Lamb, having the Father's name written in their foreheads. They sing the new song before the throne, that song which no man can learn save **the hundred and forty and four thousand** which were redeemed from the earth. "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for **they are without fault before the throne of God.**" Revelation 14:4, 5. {PK 591}

[The 144,000 acknowledge their sinfulness and the fact that they are only in heaven because of the imputed righteousness of Christ when they declare in Rev. 15:4 **"For you alone are holy"**. We are told that our carnal nature is with us "as long as Satan reigns...so long as life shall last". Our sinful nature will be with us until the day Jesus comes. Right up until that time we will only be righteous through Christ. Our sinful nature is not removed until the very end. Even so, we live in the spirit and not in the flesh, overcoming by the blood of the Lamb through faith. Even though we would rather die than knowingly commit a wrong act, we will confess our sinfulness and never claim to be sinless.]

"Sanctification is not the work of a moment, an hour, a day, but of *a lifetime*. It is not gained by a happy flight of feeling, but is the result of constantly dying to sin, and constantly living for Christ. Wrongs cannot be righted nor reformations wrought in the character *by feeble, intermittent efforts. It is only by long, persevering effort, sore discipline, and stern conflict, that we shall overcome.* We know not one day how strong will be our conflict the next. **So long as Satan reigns, we shall have self to subdue, besetting sins to overcome; so long as life shall last,** there will be no stopping place, no point which we can reach and say, **I have fully attained. Sanctification is the result of lifelong obedience**". {AA 560}

**None of the apostles and prophets ever claimed to be without sin.** Men who have lived the nearest to God, men who would sacrifice life itself rather than *knowingly commit a wrong act*, men whom God has honored with divine light and power, have **confessed the sinfulness of their nature.** They have put no confidence in the flesh, have claimed **no righteousness of their own, but have trusted wholly in the righteousness of Christ. So will it be with all who behold Christ. The nearer we come to Jesus, and the more clearly we discern the purity of His character, the more clearly shall we see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the less shall we feel like exalting ourselves.** {AA 561}

(Once again we can see that the truth is the opposite of what Perfectionists have been teaching. The nearer we come to Christ the more clearly we see the sinfulness of self and the purity of Christ. A normal Christian experience is to feel sinful and unworthy as one comes closer to Jesus, not self exalting.)

“Ministers especially should know the character and works of Christ, that they may *imitate Him; for the character and works of a true Christian are like His*. He laid aside His glory, His dominion, His riches, and sought after those who were perishing in sin. He humbled Himself to our necessities, that He might exalt us to heaven. ***Sacrifice, self-denial, and disinterested benevolence characterized His life***. He is our pattern. Have you, Brother A, imitated the Pattern? I answer: No. ***He is a perfect and holy example, given for us to imitate. We cannot equal the pattern; but we shall not be approved of God if we do not copy it and, according to the ability which God has given, resemble it***. Love for souls for whom Christ died will lead to a denial of self and a willingness to make any sacrifice in order to be co-workers with Christ in the salvation of souls”. {2T 549}

“The religion of Christ never degrades the receiver. ***It never makes him coarse or rough, discourteous or self-important, passionate or hardhearted***. On the contrary, it refines the taste, sanctifies the judgment, and purifies and ennobles the thoughts, bringing them into captivity to Jesus Christ”. {CT 365}

“*God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach*. The living God has given in His holy law a transcript of His character. The greatest Teacher the world has ever known is Jesus Christ; and what is the standard He has given for all who believe in Him? "Be ye therefore perfect, even as you're Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matthew 5:48. ***As God is perfect in His high sphere of action, so man may be perfect in his human sphere***". {CT 365}

***The ideal of Christian character is Christlikeness***. There is opened before us a path of continual advancement. We have an object to reach, a standard to gain, which includes everything good and pure and noble and elevated. There should be ***continual striving and constant progress onward and upward toward perfection of character***. . . . {CT 365}

[Note that even though God's ideal is higher than we can reach, and we cannot equal the absolute perfection of Christ, God wants us to "according to our ability" strive with all our hearts to be the very best person we can be, living up to our maximum potential for Christ likeness. "If you love me, keep my commandments". Relative Perfection is a noble goal to strive towards. Pressing toward the mark is the Christian way.]

“To man is allotted a part in this great struggle for everlasting life--he must respond to the working of the Holy Spirit. It will require a struggle to break through the powers of darkness, and the Spirit works in him to accomplish this. ***But man is no passive being, to be saved in indolence. He is called upon to strain every muscle and exercise every faculty in the struggle for immortality, yet it is God that supplies the efficiency. No human being can be saved in indolence***. The Lord bids us, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." Luke 13:24. "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Matthew 7:13, 14". {CT 366}

“While Jesus is pleading for the subjects of His grace, Satan accuses them before God *as transgressors*. The great deceiver has sought to lead them into skepticism, to cause them to lose confidence in God, to separate themselves from His love, and to break His law. Now he points to the record of their lives, to ***the defects of character, the unlikeness to Christ***, which has dishonored their Redeemer, to all the sins that he has tempted them to commit, and because of these he claims them as his subjects”. “***Jesus does not excuse their sins, but shows their penitence and faith, and, claiming for them forgiveness, He lifts His wounded hands before the Father*** and the holy angels, saying: I know them by name. I have graven them on the palms of My hands. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God,

Thou wilt not despise." Psalm 51:17. And to the accuser of His people He declares: "The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" Zechariah 3:2. **Christ will clothe His faithful ones with His own righteousness**, that He may present them to His Father "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Ephesians 5:27. Their names stand enrolled in the book of life, and concerning them it is written: "They shall walk with Me in white: for they are worthy." Revelation 3:4. GC 484

**"No man can look within himself and find anything in his character that will recommend him to God, or make his acceptance sure. It is *only through Jesus*, whom the Father gave for the life of the world, that the sinner may find access to God. *Jesus alone is our Redeemer*, our Advocate and Mediator; in Him is *our only hope for pardon, peace, and righteousness*. It is by virtue of the blood of Christ that the sin-stricken soul can be restored to soundness. ...*Apart from Christ we have no merit, no righteousness. Our sinfulness, our weakness, our human imperfection make it impossible that we should appear before God unless we are clothed in Christ's spotless righteousness.* ... When you respond to *the drawing of Christ*, and join yourself to Him, you manifest *saving faith*. ... Faith familiarizes the soul with the existence and presence of God, and, living with an eye single to the glory of God, more and more we discern *the beauty of His character, the excellence of His grace.*" God's Amazing Grace p.183**

### **HMS Richards Quotations**

**"It is all of God for "their *righteousness is of me*, saith the Lord" (Is. 54: 17) "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Rom. 4: 3). And that's how we are righteous; it's accounted to us". The Promises of God p. 234**

**"Righteousness by faith is the only righteousness a believer can have. It comes from God and is "by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe" (Rom. 3: 22) The Promises of God p. 234**

### **Conclusion**

[It is my prayer that this compilation will help to stamp out the evil heresy of perfectionism from among us. Throughout the history of the church, fanatics have taken a good thing, striving for holiness, and have taken it to extreme, resulting in pietism, sanctificationism, perfectionism, legalism, extreme monasticism, and of course Pharisaism. These extreme forms of righteousness by works have even reared their ugly heads from time to time in Adventism. Self described "Historic" Adventists tend to place more emphasis on sanctification than justification, believing that ***both are necessary for salvation***. They define the atonement in terms of God's work to cleanse our character from sin as well as payment of the penalty for sin. The work of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary is regarded as a continuation of the work of atonement begun on the cross, rather than the application of the benefits of an already completed atonement. **"Eschatological perfectionism"** is the teaching that a final generation of believers must achieve ***a state of complete sinlessness (or Christlikeness) in the final period just before the second coming of Jesus***. "Historic" Adventists appeal to all believers to consider the life and character of Christ as a perfect example that all must imitate. Accordingly, the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, or investigative judgment, is thought to also involve the ***cleansing of the lives of believers on earth***.

The seeds of heresy are being spread by many who promote M. L. Andreasen's Last Generation Theory<sup>i</sup>. This heresy teaches that a group will achieve perfection before Jesus comes to vindicate God's Character. <sup>ii</sup>This belief was fostered and promoted by Herb Douglass and others in the so called "Last Generation Harvest Theology".<sup>iii</sup> Their teaching that sinners somehow vindicate God, or validate him is blasphemous. ***Christ alone vindicates God's character!*** In almost every church, there are those who strive to dominate their brethren by their extreme, legalistic perfectionism. Perfectionism is taught by Roman Catholics ("Justification is not only the remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renewal of the interior man" You are justified by your Spirit enabled obedience. You in fact *become holy*.<sup>iv</sup>); Wesleyan Methodists and Pentecostals, who taught the 2<sup>nd</sup> Blessing of the Holy Spirit enabling sinless perfection. Wesley combined

some aspects of the Catholic emphasis on perfection with the Protestant emphasis on grace <sup>v</sup> and perfectionism is also taught by some self described “Historic” Adventists.<sup>vi</sup> The belief that you must achieve holiness and *become* holy is rampant. Luther’s concept that we are simultaneously sinful, yet accounted holy<sup>vii</sup>, is often missed.

***The similarities are startling. All four groups, Roman Catholics, Wesleyan Methodists, Pentecostals, and “Historic” Adventists are all teaching the same salvation by works theology.*** In all four groups, you are justified by faith, but must do a second work of Christian perfection through the sanctification of the Holy Spirit for justification to be valid. All four groups insist it is not your works, but the Holy Spirit’s works that save you, not your own. But the end result is exactly the same. You are forgiven for your past sins, but now must “overcome” your present ones by living a “perfect” “sinless” “sanctified” life in order to REALLY be justified. They give you justification with the right hand and take it away with left if you don’t perform by achieving sinlessness now.

Only Jesus is perfect. Perfection in this life is only found in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. It is to help the people of God resist this scourge, and defend themselves against this heresy that this work is dedicated. Let no man enslave you in the bondage of salvation by works! Live free in Jesus, BY FAITH! Saved by grace, through faith, to work! Faith that works by love! Walk in the Spirit! Let all men see, that the gospel of grace results in holier, more sanctified lives than perfectionism ever could! By beholding, we become changed! As we spend time with Jesus through bible study and prayer, we will be changed into his image. We will be inspired by his example to live godly lives. ***He will accomplish the work he has begun in us, by faith! Our emphasis must be on what God has done for us and not on what we have to do for God.*** If we overemphasize the latter, we become legalistic and miss the mark. “Go home to your friends, and tell them how much ***the Lord has done for you***” Mark 5: 19

This compilation is dedicated to the people of the world who resist the tyrannical spirit of the Pharisees, and walk by faith in the Spirit of the Living God. Many a Pharisee has received this message, and now walks in the grace of God, this compiler being among those who have been set free by the King of Calvary. Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and the apostle Paul to name a few have become mighty warriors of righteousness by faith once they understood the gospel and renounced their legalism. It is my hope that all who hear this message will do the same, and embrace the doctrine of righteousness by faith in Christ alone.

*All emphases in this work are mine.* This work is not intended to be a comprehensive glossary of scripture, SDA thought or the Spirit of Prophecy quotations on these subjects. It is simply a collection of some of the quotations I have found most helpful in counteracting the negative influences of those who would deny the gospel of Jesus Christ. “For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes.” Rom. 1:16. Amen and Amen!]

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<sup>i</sup> The Sanctuary Service, Chapter Twenty One pp. 299-321

<sup>ii</sup> The Sanctuary Service, Chapter Twenty One pp. 299-303, 315-318, 321

<sup>iii</sup> Last Generation Theology in 14 Points, 5 and 14. By Larry Kirkpatrick

<sup>iv</sup> Catholic Catechism of the Catholic Church Article 2 Grace and Justification; The Council of Trent (1547) DS 1528 Cannons IX and XXVI

<sup>v</sup> R. Larry Shelton (Th.D., Fuller Theological Seminary), “Perfection, Perfectionism,” Evangelical Dictionary of Theology, 2nd Ed., Paternoster Press, 2001, p. 906.

<sup>vi</sup> Victory in Jesus By William Liversidge pp. 56-64; The Sanctuary Service, Chapter Twenty One pp. 303

<sup>vii</sup> “Luther: Lectures on Romans” Wilhelm Pauck pp. 64, 65