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2012 Ellen White Issues Symposium: "Threads from an Old Fabric/ New Discoveries Regarding the Holy Flesh Movement in Indiana (1899-1901) and Ellen White's Response"

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April 04, 2012

2012 Ellen White Issues Symposium: "Threads from an Old Fabric: New Discoveries Regarding the Holy Flesh Movement in Indiana (1899-1901) and Ellen White's Response"



Presentation

Katrina Blue* presented her research on the topic of the [Holy Flesh movement in Indiana \(1899-1901\)](#) and [Ellen White's](#) response. The following text is a summary of the main points of her presentation.

Introduction

Around the year 1900 a revival took place in the state of Indiana that many contemporaries considered as a special outpouring of the Pentecostal power of the Holy Spirit. However, quite a number of Adventists, including Ellen White, were disturbed and shocked from what they saw or heard. In emotionally charged, out of control worship services people were yelling prayers and praises accompanied by erratic playing of musical instruments. She viewed it as a counterfeit revival and throughout the years many Adventists were afraid of new worship and music choices since she had predicted a resurgence of these elements in the Seventh-day Adventist Church near the close of probation.

Ellen White nicknamed the movement "Holy Flesh movement" whereas its advocates called it "the cleansing message." She warned not to pick up any points of that doctrine and call it truth. The presenter, Katrina Blue, pointed out that while White's response to the movement is well documented, the arguments and views of its proponents, especially of its main leaders (S. S. Davis and R. S. Donnell), have been shrouded due to a lack of primary source material. It was not until 2010, when the estate of the deceased William Grotheer (who had owned such primary sources for many decades but consistently refused to allow anyone access to these documents) forwarded these materials to the [Center for Adventist Research](#) at Andrews University, that primary sources became available. Blue stated that it was the purpose of her presentation to provide an overview and to analyze these newly-found primary sources.

Development of the Holy Flesh Movement under S. S. Davis

S. S. Davis was the principal instigator of the movement. As a worker in Indiana he participated in social and welfare ministries, conducting Bible studies and holding regular worship services. He laid much stress on the baptism of the Holy Spirit and his outpouring in large measures. Davis considered the results of his meetings as a revival of Pentecostal times and apostolic experiences. Blue suggested that the expectation of the Holy Spirit's outpouring was nothing unusual during the 1890s; it may also be found in Ellen White's writings of that time. However, as the presenter pointed out, Davis had reportedly come into contact with Pentecostal Christians and was convinced that while "we have the truth," "they have the Spirit." He attempted to combine Pentecostal worship practices with his knowledge of "truth" which provided, in Blue's words, the platform for his syncretistic approach to revival.

In 1899, Davis was appointed the conference revivalist of the Indiana Conference. In his meetings he expressed the need of a cleansing work as a prerequisite for the receiving of the Holy Spirit; he called it the "Laodicean message." He had taken this emphasis from Albion Fox Ballenger who had spoken at a conference workers meeting in 1897/1898. While the new conference president, R. S. Donnell, initially opposed Davis's message due to its results (causing division and confusion), he was eventually convinced by him and some other ministers (Joseph Crary and John Hickey) becoming the instant leader of the movement. Together they laid plans for the spreading of this message during the camp meetings in the summer of 1900. After these meetings had taken place Donnell claimed that the Holy Spirit had been clearly manifested at them.

The Holy Flesh Movement: Eyewitness Accounts

However, eyewitnesses described divisions in the church, a widespread confusion, false teachings, and people being carried off to an insane asylum. Through the use of musical instruments they worked up a high pitch of excitement. They shouted, prayed, and sang until someone in the congregation prostrated from his/her seat. That person was then dragged to the rostrum and there a group of people gathering around the individual started to sing, shout, and prayed, all at the same time. When the individual regained consciousness, he/she was reckoned among those who had experienced Gethsemane, received holy flesh and translation faith. It was claimed that they could not sin and would never die.

The most extensive accounts stem from the Muncie camp meeting, which Donnell did not even consider as powerful as the other meetings. Hetty and S. N. Haskell had written to Ellen White who was in Australia at the time. They had witnessed a divisive impact of the movement although they admitted that the conference had grown through the influence of this movement. And while the Haskell's admitted that the movement was accompanied by a "great power," they attributed it to the devil. They had witnessed how people had become insane during those meetings and had to be carried off to the insane asylum. G. A. Roberts, another eyewitness, had seen how Donnell's arms became fixed and rigid when holding them out over the congregation. Roberts recollected Donnell's own report of feeling great power run through his arms and pass through his fingers to the congregation. Blue concluded that these meetings were clearly accompanied by a spiritual power and that Donnell was a channel for this power.

New Material: S. S. Davis' "The Two Adams and the Two Covenants"

In this publication Davis laid down his main thesis about the two covenants. The old covenant began before the fall, was broken by Adam, and renewed at Mt. Sinai, representing all unsuccessful attempts to keep the law in the sinful flesh. The new covenant began with Adam after his fall and centered on the indwelling of Christ's life in the human heart by faith, resulting in the ability to sin no more and thereby achieving the state necessary for translation at Christ's Second Coming. Davis believed that at the end of time everyone who wants to be saved must achieve this state of sinless perfection. Thus since the beginning there were two classes of people—those that were controlled by the flesh and Satan, and those that had control of the flesh and were under the control of Christ. Here the pre-fall and post-fall nature of humans came into play, as Blue pointed out. Initially humans were clothed with a halo of glory, their inward goodness. Yet when they fell, they lost this goodness and their outward glory. In the new covenant Christ comes to each person individually at his/her conversion (ref. to

2 Tim 1:10); even those in OT times received Christ in that way. Because of his presence in the heart humans can no longer sin, except by choice. His light expels the darkness, empowers to do good works, and restores the original cover of glory. This glory is only obtained by faith in Jesus and through the perfection of character in the life of the believer.

Blue mentioned Davis' belief that every believer may have direct and unmediated access to and dialogue with God as Moses in his time. Like Moses we may receive the same external brightness now. The presenter then turned to another aspect. Davis suggested that Adam's mind was simply an extension for God's mind. Thus Adam was the instrument through which God carried out his will and purposes on earth. The Spirit would, by the electric current, control man's thoughts and speak to him and through him. He eventually concluded that in the Garden of Eden the animals came to worship humans. Similarly, after Christ's Second Coming, God will rule and control the universe once again by indwelling humanity.

New Material: R. S. Donnell's "The Nature of Christ and Man"

Blue suggested that Donnell took this co-joint rulership of humanity a step further. His document was a letter that he sent to Davis some years after the events. Donnell stated that when Adam sinned, he lost the nature that God had given him and received the nature and mind of Satan. Sanctification was God's work of restoring the spiritual nature in humans and cleansing them from all sin. He also suggested that Christ lived his earthly life in order to demonstrate what humans could become when they receive the divine mind. Donnell made the striking statement that God wants to make Gods out of us so that we cannot be even tempted to sin. In fact, the 144,000 must attain this high state of perfection in character in this life. Blue emphasized that Donnell went even further by claiming that humans through Christ's indwelling in them would become members of the Godhead.

Evaluation of "Holy Flesh" Theology

Blue precluded her evaluation of Davis' and Donnell's views by suggesting that Grotheer had misrepresented their views for his own personal reasons when he primarily focused on the human nature of Christ. In her study of these documents she discovered a much broader spectrum of erroneous beliefs.

(a) Doctrine of God

Davis' view was based on the idea that God was a controlling force who wants to dwell in other beings in order to control them or extend his personal presence and influence through their minds. Further, God wants to extend worship of himself throughout creation, a view that rests, as Blue suggested, on a pantheistic concept of God. She emphasized that Scripture states nowhere that humans were to be worshipped by the animals or that God was literally inside of them extending worship of himself all over creation through humanity. Donnell's view is equally problematic since the Bible does not support the assumption that God wants humans to become members of the Godhead.

(b) Christology

Davis had argued that Christ indwelt Adam and other people after the fall until Mt. Sinai causing them to be sinless while there was another group of sinful people. Yet Blue asked why, then, was there a need for the Decalogue, Christ's first coming, or even his Second Coming if he had already come individually by faith? She stated that the Bible does not say present a sinless group and a sinful group during the OT times. Rather the Bible claims that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Further, there is no record in Scripture of the pre-incarnate Christ living in his people and causing them to be sinless.

(c) Pneumatology

While Davis argued that the Holy Spirit is actually Jesus himself, Blue suggested that the Bible clearly shows a distinction

between the two persons of the Godhead (f.e. Matt 12:32) which is why she considered Davis' argument as a denial of the personhood of the Holy Spirit.

(d) Anthropology

Blue suggested that Davis' treatise presents a weak concept of the free will of humans, both before and after the fall, when compared with the traditional and modern Adventist advocacy of a free will. Davis presented humans either as conduits for God prior to the fall or as conduits for Satan after the fall. Yet the presenter pointed out that the Bible presents God as someone who extends freely the gift of eternal life to all who come to him in faith and accept his salvation rather than as a Greek deity that manipulates humans into carrying out his purposes.

(e) Soteriology

Both Davis and Donnell held the belief in an instantaneous, lifelong sanctification without any struggles in the Christian life, without any temptations or sinning. The great controversy has obviously ended for those who have experienced conversion. Davis did and said many things that did not have any basis in the Bible for he believed that he could not sin because Christ literally dwelled in him.

Blue admitted that her study presents only preliminary results but that it does nevertheless provide a framework for a better understanding of the dangerous beliefs that informed the practices of the people involved in the Holy Flesh movement. Although these two writers did not specify how their beliefs impacted their practices, the presenter suggested that it may be deduced from their writings. She proposed that the real purpose of the noise, shouting, etc. may have been to cast out the devil in some kind of crude exorcist rite.

Ellen White's Response

In conclusion, Blue turned to Ellen White's evaluation of the movement. She stated that, in 1901, Ellen White sent rebukes and stern warnings to those that were involved in that movement. White described it as a strange work and a dangerous delusion. Yet she did not condemn the participating ministers or declare rejected by God. Rather she stated that they were not working under the power of the Holy Spirit in their teachings and practices. She opposed the idea that humans can ever have holy flesh in this life. Instead there was a need to contemplate Christ and open our hearts to the transforming power of the Holy Spirit to keep us from being entangled in Satan's delusive snares.

Blue emphasized that the problem with this movement was not simply the loud music or the use of certain instruments but the manner in which they were used and the underlying incorrect theology. They used a non-Adventist hymnbook, which was not a problem in itself, for singing hymns according to the style of the Salvation Army band. And the musical instruments were played in an erratic manner in order to make noise without harmony or order over prostrate bodies. Ellen White was clear that the creation of a "din of noise" was not in harmony with the Holy Spirit's working. Therefore the Holy Flesh movement was, as Blue pointed out, a combination of false doctrine, unorthodox practices, and the presence of a delusive satanic, spiritual power to create a counterfeit revival.



*Katrina Blue, BA Hons, MAICS, MAT, is currently a Ph.D. student in Theology with a cognate in Church History at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary on the campus of Andrews University. Previously she was a hospital chaplain and associate pastor in southern California. She is currently a contract teacher in the Department of Religion & Biblical Languages. Her dissertation title is "The Concept of Union with Christ in the Writings of Teresa of Avila and Ellen G. White".

Posted by [Angelika Kaiser](#) on April 04, 2012 in [Adventist Studies](#), [Church and Society](#), [Church History](#), [Ellen White Symposium](#), [Historical Theology](#), [Missions and Ministry](#) | [Permalink](#)

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Much thanks to Katrina for this very important work!

It seems to me that Davis' view of God as wanting to take over and control other beings is a reflection of what the Devil does when given the opportunity.

Posted by: [David Hamstra](#) | [April 04, 2012 at 11:57 PM](#)

Since I cannot see my post here, I will repost my response with some modifications and additions I added for the sake of clarity.

I have not read Katrina's work but knowing Angelika Keiser, I am pretty sure that this summary faithfully represents what Katrina wrote in her paper. If that indeed is the case, I believe that her paper needs major revisions. First of all, I am glad that someone would take this work because of the new primary sources that have reappeared. However, it seems to me that the paper missed the central and fundamental point of Holy Flesh theology.

The cornerstone doctrine of holy flesh movement was the teaching that after the Gethsemane experience, Jesus Christ obtained the pre-fall flesh of Adam untainted by the law of sin in its members. Since according to the Bible, Christ is our example in all things, the holy flesh disciples concluded that the every Christian ALSO MUST ATTAIN this pre-fall flesh of Adam. That it why the entire movement was called the "HOLY FLESH".

This is the central doctrine of the movement and the main reason why they were called "holy flesh". It is strange that Katrina's article chose to completely omit this fundamental characteristic of the group from the study. Instead, the article portrayed Holy Flesh movement as preposterously claiming that Christians can obtain the perfection of CHARACTER!

In fact, every Adventist leader of the time preached and taught that Christian must obtain perfection of character before the translation. Ellen White and all of the early Pioneers repeatedly asserted that the main purpose of the gospel is the perfection of character and separation of men and women from sin through the work of the Spirit in the believer.

However, although Ellen White made character perfection the topic of her latter life, she never claimed that the flesh of men will ever be perfect before glorification. Character yes but flesh no. In spite of that, this article seems to portray the holy flesh movement as being somehow peculiar because they (can you believe it) they taught perfection of character.

In other words, everyone who is today teaching character perfection (including the president of the General Conference, the vice president of the same and a number or highly estimated scholars, pastors and theologians) is in fact teaching a variant of holy flesh.

Anyone who decides to inform himself and study the holy flesh movement outside of the scope of Katrina's article (I mean you can just go to Wikipedia) will realize that Holy Flesh movement was peculiar not because it was teaching character perfection (all Adventist back in 1900 believed that) but because the movement was teaching absence of the law of sin in the flesh, called flesh perfection or flesh sinlessness or simply "holy flesh".

So what is the reason for this peculiar omission? I mean there is NO MENTION of movement's peculiar view of Christ having the pre-

fall flesh and even more foreign to Adventism the idea that Christians ought to obtain such flesh before translation! Not even a shred! (I mean this like talking about Seventh-day Adventism and forgetting to mention Sabbath and the Second Coming as its central doctrines)

The problem I see with such presentation is that the article, as in present form, passively suggests that the Adventists teaching character perfection is indeed a dangerous heresy originating with the Indiana holy flesh movement. However, I believe that if the real Christology of the movement were brought up in the article, the suggestion of the paper would lead to a diametrically opposite direction!

The Haskell letters and other newly discovered materials concerning the Holy Flesh clearly demonstrate how peculiar and out-of-the-line the teaching of pre-fall flesh was for the Adventists back then. This "discovery" might frustrate some theology professors in our own seminary who actually do teach the pre-lapsarian view of Christ nature. To demonstrate that their Christology is in fact almost identical to the Holy Flesh movement and completely foreign to the 19th and early 20th century Adventism would indeed be a major upset for modern pre-lapsarians.

Hm, maybe that is why this wasn't brought up in the paper?

Posted by: Dojcin | [April 05, 2012 at 06:44 PM](#)

Dear Dojcin,

Please remember that what you read above is not a summary of Katrina's paper but a summary of her presentation, which means that it is necessarily a simplification that will probably not reflect every nuance and mention every detail.

Further, as you as a historian well know, in historical studies we never have all the sources and therefore can only come to tentative conclusions and then grow in our understanding. This kind of humility should be reflected in our scholarly dialogue and I didn't hear Katrina claim having the last word on the issue of the Holy Flesh movement. She simply wanted to share discoveries from her study of the two newly discovered documents that have been written by two of the leaders of that movement. (Unfortunately I have my difficulties to see that attitude and humility in your response. You make very bold statements accusing Katrina and questioning her integrity. Is that necessary for a constructive dialogue?)

You reveal quite some knowledge about this topic but have you actually read those two documents? Do you know their line of argumentation? Is her analysis of the documents wrong? A first analysis of these documents was the contribution that she wanted to make and she even stated in her presentation that it may serve as an incentive to further studies.

Obviously you wanted to see a greater emphasis on the issue of the pre-fall vs. post-fall nature of Christ since that is one of your prime topics. Looking at the summary it seems to me that it touches on these issues, and when I try to remember her presentation I think she also mentioned them. Yet Katrina found that these two documents offered far more information and that the idea of the holy flesh gained through the Pentecostal Gethsemane experience was connected to various other views. She reiterated what these two men believed, at least according to these two documents. Not every aspect was totally wrong. The indwelling of Christ was a shared belief of both groups (SDAs and Holy Flesh proponents) but the problem lies in the details. And Katrina tried to share some of those details that are manifested in the two documents.

By questioning her motives and surmising why she didn't put more emphasis on the aspect that you consider as the core issue you do her great injustice. Before we kick off a long debate on this website, we should acknowledge the fact that Katrina, like every presenter of the symposium, has the time now to revise her paper on the basis of the formal response that was given at the symposium and new insights before it will be published in the Ellen White and Current Issues Symposium journal in March next year.

Posted by: Denis Kaiser | [April 05, 2012 at 09:42 PM](#)

Dear Dennis. I cannot agree with your assessment because the flesh perfection is not a "nuance" but the fundamental core of Holy Flesh teaching which has not been mentioned in the paper (or at least the summary). This is the main issue not character perfection which was made sure to be repeatedly mentioned. By not mentioning the fundamental issue of the movement the paper disqualifies itself for being a serious evaluation. It is impossible to write an entire paper on holy flesh without even mentioning the idea of HOLY FLESH of Christ and Christians. It's like talking about Adventism without mentioning Sabbath. If the summary of the paper is correct and knowing Angelika, I assume it is, the paper seems to be giving a false impression that the heresy of holy flesh was character perfection. To me this is problematic. Knowing Katrina's personal views on last generation theology and character perfection this does not surprise me. However, it is not a serious scholarship to write about a movement and then revise history by omitting some things and emphasize other things as if that is a problem. It smells of an agenda. I wish I was wrong. I really wish so. I am not against anyone here. I think we need constructive criticism and not petting on the back continually. If I am wrong in my analysis I will admit it. But first I am going to check these two new documents first thing Monday morning.

Posted by: Dojcin | [April 06, 2012 at 10:29 AM](#)

Twice in the past I have met SDA people who either claimed to be sinless or admitted previous involvement with holy flesh groups. It is interesting to see that the ideas have not died, but continue, though not always with the other features like bedlam of noise.

I wonder, too, if in reacting to the errors of the first SDA holy flesh movement, we have possibly gone to the other extreme, embracing formalism as if it is the very essence of true worship. Worshippers in the 19th century were generally more lively than we are today, from what I've read; and Ellen White endorsed some very lively worship experiences (note 1T ch 5).

Posted by: Barry Kimbrough | [April 06, 2012 at 01:26 PM](#)

I would like to clarify a few points regarding my presentation at the Ellen G. White Symposium. I did not present a paper per se, but spoke on the findings of my research based on two documents only, which were part of the newly acquired materials received at CAR on the Holy Flesh Movement from the collection of the deceased William Grotheer.

This included a 96 page theological treatise written by S S Davis, and an extended letter from R S Donnell to Davis, leaders of the Holy Flesh Movement. I gave a brief synopsis of the development of the Holy Flesh Movement as a context for the presentation of these new materials. It was not a presentation on the Holy Flesh Movement as a whole or the entirety of the theology of its leaders in the forty minutes that I spoke, but what the new materials reveal about their theology.

While I acknowledged that the nature of Christ has been regarded as the central theological tenet of the movement, the findings of my research based on these two documents demonstrate that the theology of Davis and Donnell is far broader and more complex than what was known about them, since CAR previously did not have access to these materials. For this reason, in my brief evaluation at the presentation I pointed out that we should not limit our understanding of their theology to the nature of Christ, but need to have a broader scope for understanding the complexity of the theological issues that were at stake in this movement.

I suggested that further research is needed to shed light on the relationship between the broader spectrum of theological ideas of its leaders and their unorthodox practices. My full paper discussing these issues will be published later this year as part of the symposium.

One final note, comments have been made on this site by Dojcin Zivadinovic that he knows me and what I think. I just want to say that I don't recall having ever had a conversation with him on this, any theological or other issue, for that matter. While we are both in the PhD program at the seminary, I have never had a discussion with him and want to set the record straight.

Posted by: Katrina | [April 10, 2012 at 07:09 PM](#)

Dear Barry. You have stated: "Twice in the past I have met SDA people who either claimed to be sinless or admitted previous involvement with holy flesh groups. It is interesting to see that the ideas have not died, but continue, though not always with the other features like bedlam of noise."

If this is a response to my post than please allow me to deconstruct the straw man you have created.

1. Historical Adventists who believe in Christian perfection today reject the idea that we can CLAIM sinlessness. The Bible is clear on this subject. After the close of probation, saints will stand before the Holy God without mediator and no more sins can enter the sanctuary to be mediated and expunged. At that time the saints will not be able to claim to be without sin, but God will declare them "without spot or wrinkle" following the Lam whatsoever it goeth, being blameless. This is the main point of Adventism as it prepares the world to stand before God without the mediator. Any attack upon this doctrine is an assault on the main essence of God's three angel messages and the sanctuary message.

It is a common and often deliberate error to portray the believers in character perfection as being "perfectionists", presumptuously claiming sinlessness or "formalistic". However, no effort is made between "perfectionism" [perfection through one's own effort alone or claiming perfection] and true Christian perfection which is the major theme of Ellen White's writings.

Posted by: Dojcin | [April 10, 2012 at 09:41 PM](#)

Dear Katrina,

I will repeat my disclaimer again and say that I have not read your paper per se but only Angelika's summary of it. More than a week ago, I did ask you if you could send me a copy of the paper but you have not responded yet. Knowing Angelika, I fully believe that she has faithfully summarized your article.

if the summary of the paper is correct, it seems that you have described the Holy Flesh movement without mentioning main theological tenant of the movement - THE HOLY FLESH or the flesh perfection. This is not a matter of being "thorough" or "detailed". You don't need to go to detail in order to mention why is Holy Flesh movement called "Holy Flesh movement".

I will do it for you in one sentence. The movement was named "holy flesh" due to its belief that, after Gethsemane, Christ obtained the holy flesh of Adam before the fall, thus enabling end-time Christians to obtain the same perfected flesh which Adam possessed before his transgression.

.It took me one entire sentence to explain this so it can't be because of lack of space that you failed to make this clear. I could not find one sentence that mentioned this concept in the entire summary. I cannot believe that two main holy flesh leaders did not mention this in their statements on "christology" or "anthropology".

Instead, you have chosen to mention repeatedly how holy flesh leaders strived to obtain perfect character. Impression was left that this was their error. I had to react to a.) omission of major tenant of their christology and soteriology b.) portrayal of christian perfection as belonging uniquely to the holy flesh movement.

When it comes to knowing your views on this subject, I think I have heard you speak once in the Sabbath school in PMC against overcoming sin and I heard from some people in the seminary that you hold a modern Post-QOD view on nature of Christ and christian perfection. Thus, when I saw your comments ascribing christian perfection as something uniquely characteristic to the holy flesh movement, I felt that there are some misconstructions being made in the paper conjugated with some odd omissions in which in my opinion need to be corrected.

I sincerely apologize if none of this is true. Again, I am only judging from the summary of your paper and not your paper itself.

However I would have a question for you - Do you or do you not believe that God is calling us to be without sin, perfecting our characters before his coming? I would like to hear your unambiguous response to my question.

Blessings

Posted by: Dojcin | [April 10, 2012 at 10:13 PM](#)

ERRATA - The last paragraph in my comment to Barry needs to be corrected.

However, no effort is made TO DISTINGUISH between "perfectionism" [perfection through one's own effort alone or claiming perfection] and true Christian perfection which is the major theme of Ellen White's writings.

Posted by: Dojcin | [April 10, 2012 at 10:15 PM](#)

Dear Dojcin,

I think your posts are crossing over from fair discussion and inquiry into a sort of badgering and cross examination that I anticipate in the courtroom, but find distasteful on a blog discussing Christian theology and church history.

I think we are all struggling to understand character perfection, but I don't think it is advanced by accusations of disingenuous scholarship to advance hidden theological agendas and posing confrontative questions that we insist must be answered in an "unambiguous" manner.

Given your posts on this website, and on another facebook page I have seen, I think you owe Katrina an apology for the manner and tone in which you have reacted to her paper. I'm not suggesting that your substantive position is entirely unreasonable, I have not read Katrina's paper either, and a discussion along the lines of the substance you are undertaking may be appropriate. But it needs to be carried out in a more positive and charitable way.

For the record, I do happen to believe in character perfection before Christ comes. Christian perfection is not just an idea of Ellen White, but was prominent in the Arminian strain of theology running from Jacob Arminius, to John Wesley, to Charles Finney. It is unsurprising that Ellen White also supports it. But as I have studied these authors, they understood and promoted it as a perfection of love, that focused on motive and intent of love, rather than outward act or behavior that met some abstract standard of perfection. It also did not have to do with salvation, but rather with a greater experience of God, for God, and for our neighbor.

Unfortunately, a certain fundamentalist strain of Adventism has taken this doctrine and perverted into a new standard for salvation at the end of time with a focus on external conduct and act. And yes, I know they all say that it is by God's grace, and thus it is not legalistic. But I find the emphasis of the message one that robs people of their peace and security, because if you must attain it to be saved at the end of time, and we live in the time of the end, then we are really not saved till we have it. And that, my friend, produces a

legalistic spirit which I'm afraid is all too common in our circles.

Let them know that we are Christians by our love, especially when we are discussing what it means to be a perfect Christian.

Posted by: Nicholas Miller | [April 14, 2012 at 09:47 PM](#)

Nick, I appreciate your desire for fair treatment and good dialogue and I apologize for the manner in which I might have responded to this post. Many have felt that I have come too hard on Katrina. I am sorry if that is the case. I want to make sure for everyone to know that I am not against anyone and I am only interested in truth and love on this forum.

That is the reason I felt it was my duty as a theologian to react to what I sensed to be untruth. I am sorry if I have hurt anyone but I do not apologize for pointing to what I believe to be a serious mistake. I also do not apologize for attacking an anti-"christian perfection" agenda that has been lately emphasized in many theology classes here in the seminary and which I thought was (unintentionally?) portrayed in the paper.

If you know me you will realize that I am not hurt by people disagreeing with me and I will attack error, as subtle as it wants to be, without apology. I believe that we need to stop being shy cats when it comes to the truth of Righteousness by Faith which many of our theologians are stamping upon so boldly.

I also wanted to touch upon some important theological issues Nick raised in his last post. I am glad we are on (almost) the same page when it comes to various soteriological issues, Nick. Most LGT teachers I know teach that we can have assurance of salvation EVERY STEP OF THE WAY, as long as we abide in Christ (Praise the Lord!). Those who do not teach this kind of assurance do not teach Righteousness by Faith well. The Bible is clear that if you abide in your Savior today you are saved today. Sure, we are living in hope of what Christ will do for us (and in us) in the future but hoping for full victory over sin and hoping to be reflecting Christ character one day doesn't make one more legalist than waiting for the Sunday Law of the Second Coming.

Thus, I must plead for a fair treatment of all issues. I apologize once again for my direct approach. I assure you I wasn't lacking love in writing. I realize that Christian perfection is all about love. However, love is honest and hides no things. I love each one of you on this forum and for that reason I could not keep silent.

Posted by: Dojcin Zivadinovic | [April 17, 2012 at 01:40 PM](#)

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