

ABSTRACT

“The Theological Necessity of the Investigative Judgment: Albion Ballenger and His Failed Quest to Subvert the Doctrine—Part II”— Throughout the history of Seventh-day Adventists, the investigative (or pre-advent) judgment has been one of the most controversial doctrines, challenged and questioned more than any other Adventist belief. This paper explores the reasons critics of Adventism, and particularly Albion Fox Ballenger, object to the doctrine of the investigative judgment. Ballenger was an ex-Adventist minister and one of the strongest critics of Adventist doctrine of the sanctuary during the first part of the 20th century. All other criticism of the doctrine, and particularly of the investigative judgment, go back to Ballenger. This paper is the second of a two-part series on the investigative judgment. The first part offered an abridged exposition of Ballenger’s soteriology and his critique of the investigative judgment doctrine. This second part concludes with a theological analysis of the critique of the doctrine advanced by Ballenger and his evangelical followers in the context a broader understanding of Protestant soteriology.

Keywords: Albion Ballenger, investigative judgment, soteriology, monergism, synergism

RESUMEN

“La necesidad teológica del juicio investigador: Albion Ballenger y su fallido intento por socavar la doctrina – Parte II”— A lo largo de la historia de los adventistas del séptimo día, el juicio investigador (o juicio pre advenimiento) ha sido una de las doctrinas más controvertidas, desafiada y cuestionada más que cualquier otra creencia adventista. Este trabajo explora las razones por las que los críticos del adventismo, y en particular Albion Fox Ballenger, objetan la doctrina del juicio investigador. Ballenger fue un ministro adventista que se convirtió en uno de los críticos más fuertes de la doctrina adventista del santuario durante la primera parte del siglo XX. Todas las demás críticas a la doctrina, y en particular al juicio investigador, se remontan a Ballenger. Este artículo es la segunda parte de una serie de dos sobre el juicio investigador. La primera parte ofreció una exposición abreviada de la soteriología de Ballenger y su crítica de la doctrina del juicio investigador. Esta segunda parte concluye con un análisis teológico de la crítica de la doctrina propuesta por Ballenger y sus seguidores evangélicos en el contexto de una comprensión más amplia de la soteriología protestante.

Palabras clave: Albion Ballenger, juicio investigador, soteriología, monergismo, sinergismo

THE THEOLOGICAL NECESSITY OF THE INVESTIGATIVE JUDGMENT: ALBION BALLENGER AND HIS FAILED QUEST TO SUBVERT THE DOCTRINE—PART II

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Introduction

This article is the second part of a two-part study focusing on Albion Fox Ballenger's critique of the Adventist doctrine of the investigative judgment. The first article began with a brief biography of Ballenger. It also explored traditional Adventist teachings of the investigative judgment in order to flesh out what Ballenger was most opposed to. This was followed by an abridged exposition of Ballenger's soteriology and his critique of the investigative judgment doctrine. This second article will conclude with a theological analysis of the critique of the doctrine advanced by Ballenger and his evangelical followers.

The Theological Necessity of the Investigative Judgment: Theological Analysis

Seventh-day Adventists have always regarded themselves as children of the sixteenth-century Reformation, and have seen the Protestant faith, enshrined in the Reformation slogans *sola gratia*, *sola fide*, and *soli Deo gloria* as an antidote to the Catholic merit-oriented soteriology. These slogans express the idea that the salvation of humanity is accomplished by God's grace and must be accepted by faith. The last phrase, *soli Deo Gloria*, expresses the conviction that God alone is responsible for the salvation of humanity, and that saved humans cannot claim credit for being saved. All biblically oriented and theologically informed Protestants, including Seventh-day Adventists, affirm these basic truths.

What is not often known and acknowledged, however, is that the Protestant faith, which embraces these slogans, is expressed according to two diametrically opposed theological meta-paradigms known as monergism and synergism. This is in contrast to Roman Catholic soteriology, which has always been synergistic.¹

1. Individual Catholic thinkers, such as Augustine, have at times embraced

For all believers, a synergistic paradigm is easier to embrace, as it more closely correlates with human experience, including upbringing, education, and various cultural experiences. These experiences, in turn, exert a powerful leverage on a believer's soteriology.² Thus, a synergistic paradigm of salvation is highly intuitive. This is not so with a monergistic paradigm. Monergism has its roots in a narrow interpretation of certain biblical passages, leading to a paradigm according to which all reality, including salvation, is explained. Thus, in contrast to synergism, monergism is highly counterintuitive. While believers tend to naturally operate within a synergistic paradigm, a monergistic paradigm requires believers to be much more intentional.

Understanding these two meta-paradigms and how they function within Protestantism is crucial, as it impacts the meaning of *sola gratia*, *sola fide*, and *solī Deo gloria*. In other words, when synergists and monergists utter these slogans, they do not mean the same thing. It is thus insufficient to affirm the Protestant faith expressed in these slogans; it is also important to understand the soteriological meta-paradigm within which this faith is expressed. Understanding this will make sense of the dilemma faced by Ballenger, as well as many other Adventist critics of the investigative judgment doctrine. We will begin with Protestant monergism.

Monergism³

Within the Protestant context, monergism (Gk. μόν[ος], “one”, and ἔργ[ον], “work”) is a soteriological paradigm where God *alone* is responsible for the salvation of humanity. Any form of human input,

monergism; however, monergism has never gained acceptance on the official level. This is mainly because Catholicism embraced a synergistic soteriology and enmeshed it with ecclesiology, prior to the rise of monergism during the fifth century. For details, see Darius Jankiewicz, “Vestiges of Roman Catholicism in Sixteenth Century Protestant Reformational Ecclesiology: A Study of Early Lutheran, Reformed, and Radical Ecclesiology,” *AUSS* 54 (2016): 103–108.

2. Much of human experience is based on a punishment-reward system.

3. It is impossible to provide an exhaustive explanation of the history and theology of monergism and synergism in this short study. Instead, the reader is referred to the following: Michael Horton and Roger E. Olson, *For and Against Calvinism Pack* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011); Daniel Kirkpatrick's recent work published in defense of monergism, *Monergism or Synergism: Is Salvation Cooperative or the Work of God Alone?* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2018); and Roger Olson's classic work in defense of synergism, *Arminian Theology: Myths and Realities* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006).

including free will, is precluded. Protestant monergism almost always manifests itself in either universalism or double predestinarianism.⁴ Protestant universalism, a less-known outgrowth of monergism, is a theory that has periodically appeared in theology since the sixteenth century.⁵ Although it has several variations, the basic thrust of the theory is that God's plan is to restore all humans, regardless of their choices, into relationship with Him. This was the original purpose for which humanity was created.⁶ Because universalism raises critical questions about God's character, particularly His justice, and about human morality and responsibility, few Protestant thinkers have embraced this view.⁷

A far more well-known and widely embraced version of monergism is Protestant double predestinarianism (from this point on, this study will use the term "monergism" only in reference to double predestinarianism). This version of monergism affirms that in eternity past God decreed who would be saved and who would be lost. This decision is irrevocable and unconditional. Humanity plays no role

4. Dale Moody, "Romans," in *The Broadman Bible Commentary*, vol. 10, *Acts–1 Corinthians*, ed. Clifton J. Allen (Nashville: Broadman, 1970), 221; cf. Roger Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1999), 586. Double predestination represents the view that God actively elected some to salvation and some to damnation. This is in supposed contrast to a single predestination view, which asserts that God actively elected some for salvation and left the reprobate to suffer their natural fate. These views are also called supralapsarianism and infralapsarianism, respectively. See Peter J. Thuesen, *Predestination: The American Career of a Contentious Doctrine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 237. As demonstrated by Darius W. Jankiewicz, however, there are no significant differences between these two views. Darius W. Jankiewicz, "Predestination and Justification by Faith: Was Luther Calvinist?" in *Here We Stand: Luther, the Reformation, and Seventh-day Adventism*, ed. Michael W. Campbell and Nikolaus Satelmajer (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2017), 42–56.

5. While it claims a venerable pedigree—finding its earliest Christian expression in the work of Clement of Alexandria and Origen (*ἀποκατάστασις*)—and while it provides its proponents with indubitable assurance of salvation, universalism clearly departs from the biblical witness and thus has never been part of mainline Christian or Adventist thought. Some scholars, however, disagree; the most famous Protestant theologian who seemed to have embraced universalism is Karl Barth. See Olson, *Story of Christian Theology*, 586.

6. Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 891, 1015.

7. For a theological critique of universalism, see Todd Miles, *A God of Many Understandings: The Gospel and Theology of Religions* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2010), 95–120. See also G. C. Berkouwer, *The Return of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), 387–423.

in the process of salvation and individuals have no way of affecting or changing this divine decision. Freedom of will regarding spiritual matters is denied. Those who are predestined to be lost—that is, the reprobate—do not experience the genuine wooing of the Holy Spirit toward repentance and conversion. Those who are predestined for salvation will, solely by the grace of God, experience conversion and become Christians. Decreed by God in eternity past, salvation cannot be lost; thus, the phrase “once saved always saved.”

Obviously, this position has serious implications on the Protestant belief of justification by faith, with the slogans *sola gratia*, *sola fide*, and *soli Deo gloria* having specific meanings. *Sola*, in all three phrases, indicates that God is in complete control of the process of salvation, and human free will is excluded. *Gratia* is understood as a gift from God that precludes the possibility of rejecting it; in other words, grace is irresistible. In monergistic literature this is sometimes referred to as a “strong” or “total” theology of grace.⁸ Faith, in *sola fide*, is viewed as passive—that is, human faith does not have any influence upon God’s decision. This belief flows from the conviction that the fall damaged Adam and his posterity so completely that they are unable to respond to God’s offer of salvation. Thus, salvation becomes God’s work alone—through election—with no human input. Only predestined individuals receive the gift of faith from God, and predestined individuals simply accept that they are justified by faith—that *their* faith is in no way instrumental in their salvation. Within the monergistic paradigm, therefore, the phrase “justification by faith” does not mean that the person chooses, by faith, to accept God’s offer of salvation; rather, it means that an individual simply accepts the decision God made in eternity past. Accordingly, *sola fide* is basically reduced to the “aha” moment when the elect believer recognizes what has already been accomplished. For many monergists, introducing any human element into the process of salvation, including faith based on free human choice, implies a return to Catholic synergism.⁹

It goes without saying that the main purpose of monergism is to provide complete assurance of salvation by removing the “human element”—including choice—from the process of salvation. If a person

8. C. Matthew McMahon, *Augustine’s Calvinism: The Doctrines of Grace in Augustine’s Writings* (Coconut Creek, FL: Puritan, 2012), 32; cf. Steve Urlick, *Calvinism v. Arminianism* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2014), 112.

9. Jankiewicz, “Predestination and Justification by Faith,” 50.

has faith—a gift from God—it means that they are saved. Their lives will certainly *not* be subject to review. It is for this reason that monergistic rhetoric may be attractive to Christians who feel burdened by legalism.

It is historically documented that Reformers such as Jan Huss (1371–1415),¹⁰ John Wyclif (ca. 1320–1384),¹¹ and all the Magisterial Reformers—namely, Martin Luther (1483–1546), John Calvin (1509–1564), and Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531)—embraced a monergistic form of Christianity.¹² In their reaction against the Catholic emphasis on Christian works as essential for salvation, they adopted Augustinian monergism. Augustine (AD 354–430) believes that humanity in its totality is a condemned mass (*massa damnata*) and that the only solution for the human situation is God’s action in eternity past.

10. Thomas A. Fudge, *Jan Hus: Religious Reform and Social Revolution in Bohemia* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), 42.

11. Harry Buis, *Historic Protestantism and Predestination* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1958), 23.

12. While it is well known that both John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli were monergists, it is not often known that Luther was just as staunchly monergistic as his Reformed colleagues. *Ibid.*, 2, 48. Within Adventism, the popular misconception that Luther taught a Pauline version of justification by faith most likely resulted from the high praise the Reformer received from Ellen G. White, especially in *The Great Controversy*. To be sure, the Protestant Reformation initiated by Luther in 1517 was a major turn away from medieval Catholicism toward a scriptural understanding of justification by faith. This is probably why White lavished Luther with such high praise. And rightly so! He was, according to her, “God’s chosen instrument” and raised up by God “to do a special work.” Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1 (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1948), 372. Luther’s embrace of divine determinism, however, hampered his complete return to a scriptural understanding of justification by faith. In his desire to move away from the optimistic anthropology and merit-based view of salvation advocated by the Catholicism of his day, Luther embraced the view that advocated God’s extreme sovereignty to the complete exclusion of human free will. As a result, “faith,” in the “justification by faith” phrase, became a passive acceptance of the election that was accomplished without human input. Thus, Luther’s journey toward a Pauline understanding of justification by faith was stopped a few centuries short when he lingered too long in conversation with Augustine. For Luther on predestination, see Martin Luther, *On the Bondage of the Will*, trans. J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnston (Westwood, NJ: Revell, 1957); cf. Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 846; Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology*, 388; Thuesen, *Predestination*, 28; Jankiewicz, “Predestination and Justification by Faith,” 42–51. Influenced by Luther’s successor, Philip Melancthon, later Lutheranism for the most part rejected predestinarian doctrines as incompatible with the gospel.

This action provides believers with an ultimate assurance of faith.¹³ During the seventeenth century, monergistic Protestant faith found its expression in the acronym TULIP (Total depravity, Unconditional election, Limited atonement, Irresistible grace, and Perseverance of the saints). This is the most prevalent form in which Protestant monergism manifests itself today.¹⁴

Synergism

In contrast to monergism, synergism (Gk. *σύν*, “with” and *ἔργ[ον]*, “work”) is a soteriological paradigm where God and humans cooperate in the process of salvation. This paradigm has a venerable pedigree, and has been embraced by the majority of the Christian tradition. A synergistic approach to salvation offers several important advantages over monergism: (1) as stated above, it is an intuitive approach to faith; (2) it appears to be more naturally aligned with Scripture than monergism; (3) it is based on a broad, rather than narrow, interpretation of Scripture; (4) it does not require awkward reinterpretation of words such as “whosoever,” “all,” “each,” “everyone” (Acts 2:21; John 3:16; Titus 2:11; 2 Pet 3:9),¹⁵ and (5) finally—its most consequential feature—it stresses the existence of genuine human free will in matters of salvation. It is this last characteristic that raises the ire of monergistic theologians.

Unlike monergism, however, synergism suffers a major complication. Monergism offers a unified approach to salvation: it is either

13. Jairzinho Lopes Pereira, *Augustine of Hippo and Martin Luther on Original Sin and Justification of the Sinner* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), 147.

14. The five points of Calvinism were defined during the Synod of Dort (1618–1619) in response to the five points of Arminianism defined in *The Remonstrance* (1610). For an exposition of the five points of Arminianism, see Olson, *Arminian Theology*, 30–39; cf. Freya Sierhuis, *The Literature of the Arminian Controversy: Religion, Politics and the Stage in the Dutch Republic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 50–51. For a defense of the five points of Calvinism, see John Piper, *Five Points: Towards a Deeper Experience of God’s Grace* (Geanies House, UK: Christian Focus, 2013); David N. Steele, Curtis C. Thomas, and S. Lance Quinn, *The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, and Documented* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2001). For an excellent critique of the five points, see David L. Allen and Steve W. Lemke, eds., *Whosoever Will: A Biblical-Theological Critique of Five-Point Calvinism* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2010).

15. Monergistic theologians interpret the “all” in such passages as “all who are elected.” See Jerry L. Walls and Joseph R. Dongell, *Why I Am Not a Calvinist* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 32.

monergism or it is not. There are no shades of Christian monergism.¹⁶ Synergism, on the other hand, has many shades, resulting in various approaches to salvation, all of which are under the same synergistic umbrella. Synergistic approaches to salvation tend to differ from denomination to denomination. Furthermore, various approaches are often found within the same denomination. This is also the case with Seventh-day Adventism.

At the extreme end of the Christian synergistic spectrum there is work-centered synergism, often identified with Pelagianism.¹⁷ Pelagianism views Adam's sin as having no effect upon his posterity. Humans are born with the same nature and freedom of will possessed by Adam prior to the fall. Thus, humanity may earn their salvation by their own effort. A variety of mediating approaches, often labeled as semi-Pelagianism or semi-Augustinianism, mix faith and works in differing configurations.¹⁸

16. Some attempt to speak of degrees of predestination by using the distinction between double and single predestination, thus introducing degrees of monergism. However, while theoretically possible, in reality there is no difference between the two views. See Jankiewicz, "Predestination and Justification by Faith," 44, 47–48.

17. Pelagianism was both an ascetic movement, which emerged in response to the perceived moral corruption of the fifth-century Roman clergy, and a theological position. It finds its roots in the teachings of the British monk Pelagius (ca. AD 360–418), who came to Rome around AD 405. Pelagianism asserts a highly optimistic view of human nature that allows a person to make the first steps toward salvation without the assistance of God's grace. It stresses obedience to God's commandments as a means of salvation. God, asserted Pelagius, would not ask human beings for something impossible to achieve. For a more detailed outline of Pelagianism, see Robert F. Evans, *Pelagius: Inquiries and Reappraisals* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1968), 22–25.

18. Semi-Pelagianism was a theological position that emerged in the wake of the Pelagian controversy of the fifth century. During the controversy, two diametrically opposed positions emerged: Pelagianism, which asserted a hyper-optimistic view of human nature and the belief that individuals could take the first steps toward salvation without the assistance of God's grace, and the Augustinian position, advocating extreme anthropological pessimism and the resultant soteriological determinism. For the most part, however, early medieval theologians were not willing to commit themselves to either Augustinianism or Pelagianism. Threatened more by Augustine's determinism, which many of them saw as a theological innovation, they devoted their energy to finding a position that in some ways combined elements of both soteriologies. The leading proponents of semi-Pelagianism, which had many shades during the post-Augustinian era, were fifth-century theologians John Cassian (ca. AD 360–435), Vincent of Lérins (d. ca. AD 445), and Faustus of Riez (ca. AD 410–495). During the Council of Orange (AD 529), semi-Pelagianism was condemned as Catholic soteriology moved closer to Augustine. Thus, Catho-

At the other end of the spectrum there is grace-centered synergism, which fully embraces the Protestant faith expressed in *sola gratia et fides* and *solī Deo gloria*. For grace-centered synergists, the *sola* of the slogans always remains just that: *sola*. This means they believe that God *alone* initiates the process of salvation, restores human free will through His prevenient grace,¹⁹ enables good works, oversees the entire process of salvation through the agency of the Holy Spirit, and crowns it with the salvation of those who choose to become followers of Christ. All of this is accomplished solely by God's grace, and thus grace-centered synergists are in agreement with the Protestant slogans *sola gratia et fides* and *solī Deo gloria*. Grace-centered Protestant synergism—which I also call “biblical monosynergism”²⁰—finds its roots in the writings of Philip Melancthon (1497–1560),²¹ in some branches of the Radical Reformation, and particularly in the writings of Jacob Arminius (1560–1609) and his follower John Wesley (1703–1791).

Monergism, Synergism, Free Will, and the Investigative Judgment

As previously noted, the most significant difference between monergism and synergism is that the latter, in all its forms, embraces

lic theologians prefer the term semi-Augustinianism, rather than semi-Pelagianism. For a detailed description of semi-Pelagianism and the controversies surrounding it, see Rebecca Harden Weaver, *Divine Grace and Human Agency: A Study of the Semi-Pelagian Controversy* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1966).

19. Prevenient grace (literally, “the grace that comes before”), also referred to as enabling grace, which is the grace that enables human beings to freely respond to God's offer of salvation. See Olson, *Arminian Theology*, 35.

20. Please note that monosynergism, as defined here, is not a combination of monergism and synergism, or some sort of *via media* between the two. It is a meta-theological paradigm that expresses the priority of God's grace in the process of salvation but that, at the same time, allows human response through the agency of prevenient grace.

21. Melancthon initially agreed with Luther's monergism. This is evident in his earliest edition of *Loci Communes* (Melancthon's systematic theology), first published in 1521. In the 1535 edition of *Loci Communes* he distances himself from Luther's monergism. Thus John M. Drickamer, “Did Melancthon Become a Synergist?” *The Springfielder* 40, no. 2 (1976): 100, writes, “Melancthon definitely did become a synergist. In the early days of the Reformation he taught divine monergism in strong terms. He sided with Luther during the controversy with Erasmus and his confessional writings taught monergism. By the middle 1530s, however, he was already leaning heavily in the direction of synergism.”

the existence of genuine free will. Pelagianism and various forms of semi-Pelagianism assert that the fall did not damage humanity in such a way that free will was lost.²² Grace-centered synergists (or biblical monosynergists²³) agree with monergists that the fall did damage humanity in such a way that they are not able to respond to God's offer of salvation. Thus, they embrace the teaching that, regarding spiritual matters, human beings are "totally depraved"; however, in contrast to monergists, grace-centered synergists believe that God restores human free will through the agency of His prevenient grace.

It is the existence of human free will that necessitates some sort of review on the part of the Creator; otherwise, what would be the point of providing His creatures with free will? Some critics of the Seventh-day Adventist doctrine of the investigative judgment opine that an omniscient God does not need a lengthy review to know who are His. This is beside the point. Whether long or short, whether it began in 1844 or not, such a review is a theological necessity. It is not surprising, therefore, that all synergistic religions—both Christian and non-Christian—and all synergistic denominations embrace a form of investigation or review of the lives of believers. "We shall all," writes Wesley in his famous sermon *The Great Assize*, "stand before the judgment-seat of Christ . . . and in that day 'every one of us shall give account to God.'"²⁴ Wesley was, of course, a monosynergist.²⁵

This is not the case with monergism. For Christian monergists, the idea of a review of human lives, which might possibly be linked with

22. The only difference between Pelagianism and semi-Pelagianism is that the former affirms that Adam's posterity has the same kind of free will as Adam had before the fall, whereas the latter embraces the position that while the fall weakened human free will, it did not destroy it.

23. See footnote 20 in this article.

24. John Wesley, *The Great Assize: A Sermon* (London: John Mason, 1829), 6.

25. When writing on Wesley's eschatology, some Wesleyan scholars, such as Thomas Oden, actually use the term "investigative judgment." This terminology is therefore not unique to Adventism. See Thomas C. Oden, *John Wesley's Scriptural Christianity: A Plain Exposition of His Teaching on Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 354. Donald Barnhouse was thus clearly incorrect when he wrote that the investigative judgment doctrine has "never been known in theological history until the second half of the nineteenth century, and which is the doctrine held exclusively by the Seventh-day Adventists." Donald Barnhouse, "Are Seventh-day Adventists Christians?" *Eternity*, September 1956, 43. The doctrine of the pre-advent, or investigative, judgment has always been conceptually present in pre-millennial, synergistic Christian soteriology.

one's destiny,²⁶ is anathema. The decision of a sovereign, all-knowing God, made in eternity past, cannot be changed or questioned. Such a review would diminish God's glory, diminish the effectiveness of His grace, and, most importantly, introduce a human element into the process of salvation. This is why a great chasm exists between a monergistic system of belief and those who espouse any form of synergism. While some may grudgingly acknowledge grace-centered synergism as heterodox (as shown in the next section), anything beyond that is heresy.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the strongest arguments against the investigative judgment doctrine come from monergists. Their arguments, cleverly disguised as representing the true form of biblical Christianity, tend to focus on the cross of Christ alone and the absoluteness of Christian assurance. Supposedly, only a monergistic point of view can provide a Christian believer with true assurance of salvation. In reality, the attack on the investigative judgment doctrine is a monergistic attack against any form of synergism. Being unfamiliar with the dynamics of the monergism/synergism controversy, the defenders of the investigative judgment doctrine—even those embracing a grace-centered synergism—are often forced on the defensive. But, for monosynergists, there is nothing to be defensive about. The eschatological review of believers' lives is a fact necessitated by the existence of free will.

While having an overall positive effect upon Adventism, the conversations between evangelical and Adventist leaders during the 1950s illustrate the standoff between monergism and synergism. They also demonstrate the inability of monergistic scholars to grasp the dynamics of grace-centered synergism.

A Clash of Meta-Paradigms²⁷

During the early 1950s, East Pennsylvania Conference president T. E. Unruh listened to a radio series on righteousness by faith in

26. At least this is how the investigative judgment has often been portrayed in Adventist literature and sermons.

27. The events referred to in this section are described in detail in R. W. Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press, 1979), 543–545 and George R. Knight, *A Search for Identity: The Development of Seventh-day Adventist Beliefs* (Hagerstown, MD: Review & Herald), 164–168. The theological analysis that references the monergism/synergism divide, however, is my own.

the book of Romans. The series was presented by Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse, a prominent Presbyterian pastor and an editor of the renowned *Eternity Magazine*. Unruh was impressed with Barnhouse's message and sent a letter of appreciation. In his reply, Barnhouse expressed surprise that an Adventist would appreciate his message, since "it was well-known that Adventists believed in righteousness by works."²⁸ Thinking he could clear up some misunderstandings, Unruh mailed a copy of *Steps to Christ* to Barnhouse. Barnhouse read the book, published a harsh critique of it and its author, and ripped it apart on air. Discouraged, Unruh did not pursue further correspondence.

Unruh may not have become so discouraged had he understood that Barnhouse was a monergist,²⁹ and thus judged *Steps to Christ* according to the precepts of his soteriological paradigm. Both the title and the message of the book would have irked him greatly. From the monergistic perspective, steps to Christ and human free will are impossible.

Barnhouse, however, did not forget his conversation with Unruh, and sometime later he initiated a series of evangelical-Adventist conversations. These conversations culminated in a controversial statement, which Barnhouse published in *Eternity Magazine*. The statement proclaimed that while many Adventist beliefs were heterodox, as long as Adventists held on to the essentials of the Christian faith, such as the full deity of Christ and the efficacy of His atonement on the cross, they could be counted as "born-again Christians and truly brethren in Christ."³⁰

One "heterodox" belief particularly critiqued by Barnhouse and his colleague Walter Martin—a specialist on American cults—was the investigative judgment doctrine. Adventists put forth a valiant but ultimately unsuccessful endeavor to convince their evangelical colleagues of the biblical foundations for the investigative judgment in the 1957 book *Questions on Doctrine*.³¹ Three years after the

28. Barnhouse, quoted in Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, 543.

29. Barnhouse, who died in 1960, was a Calvinist. Calvinism, of course, interprets Scriptural revelation from a monergistic perspective. See W. C. Ringenberg, "Barnhouse, Donald Grey," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984), 126.

30. Schwarz, *Light Bearers to the Remnant*, 544; Knight, *A Search for Identity*, 165.

31. Leaders, Bible Teachers, and Editors, *Seventh-day Adventist Answer*

publication of *Questions on Doctrine*, Martin, also a monergist, published a book on Adventism, *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*.³² While to a large degree this book was a sympathetic presentation of Seventh-day Adventism, Martin devoted considerable effort to explain and refute the investigative judgment doctrine. Similarly to Barnhouse's critique of *Steps to Christ*, Martin conducted his critique from a monergistic perspective, giving little consideration to the foundational monosynergistic theological framework of Adventism.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Martin dismissed the investigative judgment doctrine in these words:

Seventh-day Adventists, we believe, needlessly subscribe to a doctrine which neither solves their difficulties nor engenders peace of mind. Holding as they do to the doctrine of the investigative judgment, it is extremely difficult for us to understand how they can experience the joy of salvation and the knowledge of sins forgiven.³³

Indeed, for a monergist who believes in the unbridled sovereignty of God, total grace theology, and the non-existence of human free will, a review of believers' lives is a needless exercise. The fate of believers has already been determined in eternity past. What is there to review? "For those who believe in 'eternal security,'" Martin wrote, "there is *no* judgment for the *penalty* of sin."³⁴ Such a judgment, according to this view, "diminishes Christ's work on the cross."³⁵ This, however, is a misunderstanding of the Adventist version of synergism.

2 Corinthians 5:10: A Monergist Version of the Investigative Judgment

In the light of the previous paragraph, it is important to bear in

Questions on Doctrine (Washington, DC: Review & Herald, 1957). See the discussion in Darius W. Jankiewicz, "The Theological Necessity of the Investigative Judgment: Albion Ballenger and His Failed Quest to Subvert the Doctrine—Part I," *Theologika* 35, no. 1 (2020): 33ff.

32. Walter Martin, *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1960).

33. *Ibid.*, 182–183.

34. *Ibid.*, 182. Emphasis original.

35. Richard Kyle, *Religious Fringe: A History of Alternative Religions in America* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 151.

mind that Christian monergism does not deny an eschatological review of human behavior. After all, the apostle Paul writes, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad” (2 Cor 5:10, NIV). Compelled by biblical evidence, Christian monergists recognize that, at the end of time, a review of human lives must occur. This review, however, follows rather than precedes the second coming. As Louis Berkhof, a well-known Calvinist theologian, explains,

some regard the final judgment as entirely unnecessary, because each man’s destiny is [already] determined at the time of his death. . . . Since the matter is settled, no further judicial inquiry is necessary, and therefore such a final judgment is quite superfluous. But the certainty of the future judgment does not depend on our conception of its necessity. God clearly teaches us in His Word that there will be a final judgment, and that settles the matter for all those who recognize the Bible as the final standard of faith.³⁶

Thus, it is apparent that monergistic theologians not only accept the necessity of an eschatological judgment, but also that the notion of investigation is embedded in the final judgment. Such an investigation has two objectives: first, to display “before all rational creatures the declarative glory of God in a formal, forensic act, which magnifies on the one hand His holiness and righteousness, and on the other hand, His grace and mercy;”³⁷ and second, to review the lives of all human beings.³⁸

An immediate question arises: if the matter of final destiny is settled by God’s decree in eternity past, what is the reason for the “investigative” phase of judgment? Monergistic theologians put forth this ingenuous solution: the purpose of judgment is *not* to ascertain who goes to heaven and who goes to hell; this was indeed determined in eternity past. Instead, the purpose of the “investigative judgment”—terminology some Calvinist thinkers actually employ³⁹

36. Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1941), 731.

37. *Ibid.*, 731.

38. *Ibid.*, 733.

39. Anthony A. Hoekema, *Seventh-day Adventism* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), 81, writes, “Here [Matt 25:31–32], indeed, we read about an ‘investigative judgment’—a judgment based on an investigation of the lives of those arraigned

—is to determine the *level* of reward or punishment. According to Berkhof, “there will be different degrees, both of the bliss in heaven and of the punishment of hell. And these degrees will be determined by what is done in the flesh.”⁴⁰ In other words, a review of human life is still necessary. Human works on earth are still determinative. However, human works do not determine salvation. Instead, they determine the degree of reward or punishment. Charles Stanley, a well-known Calvinist theologian and preacher, puts it this way:

The kingdom of God will not be the same for all believers. Let me put it another way. Some believers will have rewards for their earthly faithfulness; others will not. Some believers will be entrusted with certain privileges; others will not. Some will reign with Christ; others will not. Some will be rich in the kingdom of God; others will be poor. . . . Some will be given true riches; others will not. . . . Some will be given heavenly treasures of their own; others will not. . . . Privilege in the kingdom of God is determined by one’s faithfulness in this life. This truth may come as a shock. Maybe you have always thought that everyone would be equal in the kingdom of God. It is true that there will be equality in terms of our inclusion in the kingdom of God but not in our rank and privilege.⁴¹

Here lies the most significant difference between synergism and monergism: for the former, the investigative judgment has something to do with the believer’s salvation and occurs before the second coming; for the latter, it determines rank and privilege in heaven and hell and occurs after the second coming.⁴² With this distinction in mind, Martin writes, “Christians, therefore, need not anticipate any investigative judgment for their sins. True, we shall ‘all appear before the judgment seat of Christ to receive the deeds done in the body’ (II Cor. 5:10), *but this has nothing to do with any investigative judgment.* It is judgment for rewards.”⁴³

It becomes evident, therefore, that Martin and other monergistic Christians champion their own version of the investigative judgment while denying it to the Adventists. Instead, they judge Adventist

before the throne; but this judgment takes place after Christ has returned in glory.”

40. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 733–734.

41. Charles Stanley, *Eternal Security* (Nashville: Nelson, 1990), 125–126. Emphasis original.

42. For Catholicism the investigation occurs at the time of death (or at the second coming) and determines the believer’s fitness for heaven.

43. Martin, *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventism*, 178. Emphasis supplied.

teachings using a monergistic yardstick. According to this yardstick, no matter how grace-centered Adventism might be, it will always fall short of the monergistic view of God's sovereignty.⁴⁴ Adventism would have to embrace monergism as its undergirding theological meta-paradigm in order to be considered a genuine expression of biblical Christianity by the monergistic segment of the evangelical world. Viewed from the perspective of monergism, the Adventist doctrine of the sanctuary with the investigative judgment makes no sense at all and would have to be abandoned. Historicism as a method of prophetic interpretation would have to be discarded, as it is incompatible with the monergistic meta-paradigm. But all that would come at a great price. Such a move would destroy not only the overarching Adventist theological framework of the great controversy, but possibly Adventism itself. From being a prophetic movement, Adventism would become another Christian denomination with heterodox beliefs such as the seventh-day Sabbath and conditional immortality. This brings us back to Ballenger and his criticism of the Adventist doctrine of the investigative judgment.

Ballenger and Monergism

In his criticism of the investigative judgment doctrine, Ballenger took a page from the monergists' playbook and judged the doctrine by the standards of that ideology. The subtle influences of this ideology become evident in his explanation of the atonement, and the cross of Christ becomes the singular focus of his attention. Mimicking monergistic Christians, Ballenger argues that the investigative judgment doctrine makes the atonement "dependent on what man has done for God instead of what God has done for man," thus introducing the human element into the doctrine of salvation.⁴⁵ Furthermore, he asserts that the investigative judgment doctrine diminishes the value of Christ's sacrifice on the cross; that it invokes fear in the hearts of believers, thus adversely impacting Christian assurance; and, finally, that it is not found in the Bible and thus redundant theologically.

44. This is exactly the charge that Anthony A. Hoekema, a Calvinist, makes against the Adventist version of the investigative judgment. For him, the doctrine is to be rejected because "*it violates Scriptural teaching about the sovereignty of God.*" Hoekema, *Seventh-day Adventism*, 82. Emphasis original.

45. A. F. Ballenger, "Notes by the Way," *Gathering Call*, October 1917, 5. A. F. Ballenger, *An Examination of Forty Fatal Errors* (Riverside, CA: self-pub., 1907), 52–23.

It is thus not surprising that Ballenger opened himself up to the charge that he had embraced universalistic monergism. His discussions with church leadership at the 1905 General Conference Session proved particularly vexing, as he was informed that his teaching undermined the pillars of Adventism and amounted to heresy.⁴⁶ He was accused of promoting universalism, and was forced to vigorously deny this accusation for the rest of his life. The following incident expresses his frustration and desire to be understood correctly. At the end of the question time, he was asked by W. W. Prescott whether he believed that when Christ paid the penalty on the cross, He freed the whole human family from death. Ballenger hesitated in answering this question, claiming there was insufficient time to explain his teachings fully. Finally, pressed, he answered,

I will say it plainly. I do not believe that any man will ever groan under the same guilt under which Christ groaned on Calvary; but that men will groan because they reject so great salvation. "Of how much sorer punishment think ye he shall be thought worthy who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God?" I know that now I will be charged with teaching Universalism; but this is not universalism [*sic*].⁴⁷

Ballenger clearly understood that universalism had no scriptural support. He claimed that while it was true that Christ died for all people, not all people would be saved.⁴⁸ To escape the trap of universalism, Ballenger taught that Christ, through His death on the cross, placed all humankind on the "platform of life." Eternal life, however, "was on a higher platform, a gift of grace to be had by choosing."⁴⁹ This, according to Ballenger, was a "thousand miles from universalism."⁵⁰

Ballenger was also forced to defend himself against charges of predestinarian monergism. While he agreed that Christ's death on the

46. The reader is referred to Edwards and Land's meticulously researched volume *Seeker After Light: A. F. Ballenger, Adventism, and American Christianity* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2000) for a complete account of Ballenger's conflict with the church.

47. A. F. Ballenger, "Statement," May 22, 1905, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University.

48. A. F. Ballenger, *The Proclamation of Liberty and the Unpardonable Sin* (Riverside, CA: self-pub., 1915), 126.

49. A. F. Ballenger, "The Triumph of the Trust," *Gathering Call*, January 1916, 5.

50. *Ibid.*; A. F. Ballenger, "Notes by the Way," *Gathering Call*, April 1914, 6.

cross was a “once and for all” penalty for sin that was paid without consultation with or cooperation of sinners,⁵¹ he disagreed with the limitation of the benefits of the atonement to the chosen elect, thus “leaving the rest of the world in hopeless despair,” and also with the notion that once saved, the sinner could not fall away from the grace of God.⁵² In response to the charge of predestinarian monergism, he would point out that “a gift of grace [is] to be had by choosing.”⁵³

Ballenger’s problem was that while he was strongly attracted to the monergistic assurance of salvation arguments and used them in his polemic against Adventism, his understanding of salvation continued to incorporate a human element. In short, he could not fully embrace monergism, and thus remained a reluctant synergist. While he taught that atonement was solely an act of God, he was unable to embrace the monergistic understanding of human free will. In Ballenger’s soteriology, therefore, the final responsibility for salvation seemed to be in the hands of human beings, who, exercising their free will, choose their destiny. This choice would be reflected in the way in which they live their lives after conversion.⁵⁴

When theologians include an element of human free choice in their soteriology—thus leaving the realm of monergism—they must be prepared to accept the next logical step: a review of human choices and their implication for salvation. Thus, at some time before Christ’s return to earth, God will conduct some form of review or evaluation of the believer’s life in order to determine whether His sacrifice was

51. Ballenger, *Proclamation of Liberty*, 64.

52. *Ibid.*, 125. Curiously, due to his misunderstanding of the nature of grace-centered synergism, Ballenger accuses Adventists of embracing extreme Calvinism. Adventist theology, according to Ballenger, emphasizes the fact that the atoning blood of Christ will only be effective for those sinners who truly repent. He exclaims, “Christ died only for the few; and we have landed in the center of the camp of the Calvinists who teach a limited atonement—that Christ died for only those who will be saved. But this Calvinistic conclusion positively contradicts the plain Word of the Lord.” A. F. Ballenger, “Was the Death of Christ Conditional?” *Gathering Call*, November 1920, 2. See also A. F. Ballenger, “Extracts from a Letter,” *Gathering Call*, December 1918, 2.

53. Ballenger, “The Triumph of the Trust,” 5.

54. Ballenger writes, “Commandment keeping has nothing to do with obtaining salvation, and yet refusing to keep God’s commandments, men commit the unpardonable sin.” A. F. Ballenger, *Before Armageddon* (Riverside, CA: self-pub., 1918), 180. He continues, “All men are under grace and not under law, yet the man who breaks the law because he is not under law, is in danger of committing that fatal sin which Paul and John call the ‘sin unto death.’” *Ibid.*

truly appropriated by the person, and whether his or her life reflected this accordingly.⁵⁵ Such a review is an inherent and necessary element of any Christian synergistic soteriology. Whether it is referred to as an investigative judgment, a pre-advent judgment, or an “if and then” process, it is still a review, or judgment, of the believer’s life.⁵⁶

It becomes clear, therefore, Ballenger, as well other critics of the investigative judgment doctrine, did not clearly perceive the great Protestant divide between monergism and synergism—between God’s sole salvific action and His allowing human free will in the process of salvation. Those Adventists who are critical of the pre-advent judgment doctrine also appear to misunderstand this dynamic, not realizing that a review of believers’ lives cannot be erased from Adventist soteriology. It is the existence of human free will—a gift that the Creator endowed upon humanity—that necessitates a review on the part of the Creator; otherwise, *human free will becomes a theologically redundant proposition.*

It is evident that Ballenger was mightily attracted by the concepts he may have encountered in monergistic literature. For the sake of complete Christian assurance, he came as close as he could to the gulf that divides monergism from synergism; and yet, ultimately, he could not cross the great divide between these two meta-paradigms. This is because, at heart, he remained a synergist. Thus, his quest to controvert the doctrine of the investigative judgment for the purpose of Christian assurance ended in failure.

55. While Ballenger would likely disagree with this conclusion, his idea that the benefits of the sacrifice of Christ will be withdrawn if an individual makes the wrong choice seems to support it. See Ballenger, *Proclamation of Liberty*, 196.

56. In the pamphlet *The First Angel’s Message or the Investigative Judgment* (n. d., Ballenger’s Collection, Center for Adventist Research, Andrews University) the Ballenger brothers argue that God does not need a hundred years of investigation in order to know who His people are. Interestingly, Ballenger accepts that there are books of record in heaven, but not that their purpose is for the examination of the saints. He explains: “The intelligences of heaven not only understand our actions but they can read the thoughts and motives which prompt our actions. Not so with man; he is not able to go behind the actions, nor is he able to see the strivings of the spirit of God with sinful men. Many men and women appear to us as very saintly, while they are most corrupt at heart. If, when we get to heaven, some of our dear ones or friends, who seemed to us to be honest Christians, are not there, we will be perplexed to know why. If we had no means of learning the fact we would have cause to wonder whether God was just in excluding them. The books are for the purpose of enlightening the redeemed”. *Ibid.*, 34.

Conclusion

The pursuit of Christian assurance is littered with difficulties and unanswered questions. Christian monergism claims to have solved the problem of Christian assurance by eliminating the human element in the process of salvation. On one hand, universalistic monergism offers ultimate Christian assurance but creates serious theological problems related to God's character, particularly the nature of His love and justice, and makes a mockery of human moral responsibility. This is an enormous price to pay for having complete assurance of salvation. On the other hand, predestinarian monergism also claims to provide believers with complete assurance. In addition to the problems associated with universalism, however, it adds its own. It is one thing to assert complete assurance for the elect, but it is another thing altogether to determine who belongs to that exclusive group. The question "How can I know that I am one of the elect?" has occupied the minds of many Protestant believers, with no clear answers ever proposed.⁵⁷

Christian synergism, with its belief in human free will, also faces the problem of Christian assurance. The problem is exacerbated by the fact that there are many varieties of synergistic belief systems, each offering diverse solutions to the problem of Christian assurance. According to some of these systems, a review of believers' lives may indeed be a scary proposition. Perhaps this is how Ballenger perceived the investigative judgment process, and perhaps why he ultimately rejected it. In some respects, therefore, we should be grateful to Ballenger—as well as to Barnhouse and Martin—for challenging the church to develop a more grace-centered understanding of the investigative judgment. As often happens in the heat of polemic, however, Ballenger lost his synergistic bearings, became attracted to monergistic arguments against the investigative judgment, and

57. This question troubled most seventeenth-century American Puritans. They wanted to distinguish between those who were elect, and thus welcome into church membership, and those who should be "cast out into the world." They solved the problem by identifying "signs of grace," which could be perceived in the lives of those who were elected. Baptism, dedication to the church, an orderly family life, interest in reading Scripture, and moral health were usually considered "signs of grace." In conjunction with spiritual signs, material success also indicated divine favor upon the elect. See Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology*, 499; Michael Folley, *American Credo: The Place of Ideas in US Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 160.

threw the baby out with the bathwater. Thus, rather than following Ballenger to the end, we must place the investigative judgment within the framework of grace-centered synergism.

This study proposes that only grace-centered synergism, or biblical monosynergism—which accepts that it is God alone (thus *solī Deo gloria*) who initiates and completes the process of salvation, restores human free will through prevenient grace,⁵⁸ enables good works, and oversees the entire process of salvation through the agency of the Holy Spirit—offers believers a genuine and biblically based assurance of salvation and a positive view of the investigative judgment.⁵⁹ This can only happen when believers become convinced of their spiritual inability (total depravity)⁶⁰ and that their good works (sanctification) do not constitute the ground of their salvation as “it is God who works in [them] to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose” (Phil 2:13, NIV);⁶¹ only then may they embrace the fact that they are always covered by the righteousness of Jesus Christ so long as they hold on to Him by faith. The apostle Paul states, “Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against him” (Rom 4:7–8, NIV). This means that when believers appear before the

58. Ellen G. White, “Christ the Propitiation for Our Sins,” *Atlantic Union Gleaner*, August 19, 1903, 1. The term “prevenient grace” does not appear in White’s writings. The idea is, however, conceptually present in all her writings. E.g., Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 1956), 18, states, “That power is Christ. His grace alone [prevenient grace] can quicken the lifeless faculties [total depravity] of the soul, and attract it to God, to holiness.” For more on prevenient grace, see George Knight, “The Grace that Comes Before Saving Grace,” in *Salvation: Contours of Adventist Soteriology*, ed. Martin Hanna, Darius Jankiewicz, and John Reeve (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2018), 287–299.

59. Jiří Moskala, “The Significance, Meaning, and Role of Christ’s Atonement,” in *God’s Character and the Last Generation*, ed. Jiří Moskala and John Peckham (Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2018), 203–204, suggests that the adjective “investigative” should be supplanted by the more positive adjective “affirmative.”

60. White, *Steps to Christ*, 18, speaks of total depravity as the “lifeless faculties of the soul.” Total depravity does not mean we are as bad as we can be. This term simply means that humans are unable to initiate the process of salvation and produce good works that lead to salvation. Thus, salvation is *solī Deo gloria*. In Adventism total depravity does not lead to predestination, as in monergism. Instead, it leads to total dependence on Christ and His righteousness.

61. *Ibid.*, 57, 61. A careful reading of *Steps to Christ*, and especially the chapter “Test of Discipleship,” reveals beyond doubt that White was a grace-centered synergist.

judgment seat of God, Christ's righteousness covers them entirely.⁶² Thus, the investigative judgment should be welcomed, not feared (Pss 26:1; 27:1). This is congruent with the OT notion of judgment, which is always followed by the redemption of God's people.⁶³ It should thus be the believer's greatest desire to appear before the heavenly judge. And having a kinsman-redeemer as judge can be the foundation of an assurance far greater than anything Ballenger or Martin could offer.

In the final analysis, because of the nature of Christian faith, complete assurance of salvation on this earth is impossible. Faith is, after all, "a confidence in what we hope for and assurance *about what we do not see*" (Heb 11:1, NIV; emphasis supplied). Thus, complete assurance will only be possible in heaven when we see God face-to-face. Meanwhile, we are invited to pursue Jesus Christ—rather than assurance of salvation—and fix our eyes on Him who is "the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb 12:2, NKJV). When we do that, He, through the agency of His Holy Spirit, will produce in us true sanctification (2 Pet 1:3–4) and grant us a sufficient measure of Christian assurance to take away the fear of judgment.

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62. *Ibid.*, 62, says, "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." White, *The Great Controversy*, 484, states, "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.'"

63. Tom Hale and Stephen Thorson, *The Applied Old Testament Commentary: Applying God's Word to Your Life* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2007), 1034; cf. Christoph Barth, *God with Us: A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 80.