

Justification by Faith and Liberty of Conscience

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The purpose of this paper is to show the relationship between justification by faith and liberty of conscience leading to the freedoms we have today. We will consider this topic from history, especially from the time of the Protestant Reformation. Under consideration also will be opposition to these concepts. We will take into account briefly how these concepts were either received or rejected in nations such as France, Germany, Spain, England and the United States of America.

We will begin with America. The United States is a nation born in freedom. On July 4, 1776 there was voted by leaders of the American Revolution the acceptance of the Declaration of Independence. The second paragraph of the Declaration is the most widely known: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

Before the "pursuit of happiness" there must be "liberty" and before "liberty" there must be "life." The gifts of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are biblical concepts. These gifts from our Creator are given to every man, woman and child through the death of Christ Jesus. He died for us that we might live. His death resulted in "life", for all mankind. This is clearly revealed in Romans 5:18 where Paul states unequivocally that it is "through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life."

Waggoner commented on this verse thus:

"By the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." There is no exception here. As the condemnation came upon all, so the justification comes upon all. Christ has tasted death for every man. He has given Himself for all. Nay, he has given Himself to every man. The free gift has come upon all. The fact that it is a free gift is evidence that there is no exception. If it came upon only those who have some special qualification, then it would not be a free gift. It is a fact, therefore, plainly stated in the

Bible, that the gift of righteousness and life in Christ has come to every man on earth. There is not the slightest reason why every man that has ever lived should not be saved unto eternal life, except that they would not have it. So many spurn the gift offered so freely.¹

Liberty follows life, and the pursuit of happiness follows liberty. Stated again for emphasis—it was through Christ’s righteous act in His death on Calvary that the gifts of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness were given to mankind. Liberty and life are the foundation of our government. And the documents following the Declaration of Independence—the Constitution and the Bill of Rights—are logical implementations for carrying out the practical aspects of the Declaration for a government of the people, by the people and for the people.

These concepts began to emerge during the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century. This is especially true of justification by faith and liberty of conscience. The gifts of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness came to Luther experientially when he accepted Christ as his Savior and was thereby justified by faith in Christ alone.

Luther proclaimed liberty of conscience as the essence of the faith that justifies. He declared: “Let there be no compulsion. I have been laboring for liberty of conscience. Liberty is the very essence of faith.”² Earlier, when he was on trial during the Diet of Worms (1521) he was pressured to recant what he had written. He answered, “I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience. May God help me. Amen.”³

The gospel Luther proclaimed set men and women free from religious tyranny and princely oppression. Then, German peasants decided to revolt. Their goal was to overthrow the existing socio-economic system in German-speaking lands. The Revolt not only involved peasants, but also merchants, artisans, members of the minor nobility and a few Protestant pastors. This became known as the Peasant Rebellion of 1524-25. Luther was implicated in that revolt because of his teaching of the freedom that comes from the gospel of justification. He

¹ E. J. W Waggoner “Present Truth [UK],” October 18, 1894.

² Merle D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, b. 9, ch. 8, (quoted in GC 189).

³ Martin Brecht, *Martin Luther*. tr. James L. Schaaf, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985–93, 1:460.

became so concerned about the Rebellion that he retreated from his position on liberty of conscience for everyone, and sided with the princes of Germany against the peasants.

Realizing that his words and deeds had served to encourage popular action against rulers, he sought to separate himself drastically from the movement, going so far as to urge the rulers' soldiers to "cut [the peasants] down, hit them, choke them wherever you can".... The Gospel, he said, cannot be used as a standard for governing in the world, which has its own rules and ways of justice, many of them, he acknowledged, unfair and blameworthy."

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The Peasant Rebellion "impelled Lutheran rulers to establish centrally controlled church organizations."⁵ Following the Augsburg Confession (1530) continual tensions arose between Charles V, "Holy" Roman Emperor and the German Lutheran princes. The conflicts were resolved finally with the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, which formally acknowledged Protestantism as a legitimate religion in the Empire. However, following the Diet of Augsburg there was a partial return to a church state union, not on the Imperial level, but in several state governments of Germany.

In Reformation times, the local princes in Germany became officially heads of the church in Protestant areas and were legally responsible for the maintenance of churches. Not until the 19th century, were the finances of churches and state regulated to a point where the churches became financially independent.⁶

From the Peace of Augsburg in 1555 to the end of the First World War and the collapse of the German Empire, some of the Protestant churches were state churches. Each state or regional church was the official church of one of the states of Germany. Each ruler was the formal head of the church such as the King of Prussia was the head of the Evangelical Church of Prussia's older Provinces. This was similar to that of the British monarch's role. However, this changed somewhat with growing religious freedom in the 19th century. The greatest change came after the German Revolution, with the formation of the Weimar Republic. The system of state churches disappeared with the Weimar Constitution (1919).⁷

⁴ Encyclopedia Britannica

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_tax#Germany

⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Evangelical_Church_in_Germany

Since Luther's time the connection between justification by faith and liberty of conscience has been almost forgotten. But not altogether. The correlation between these two teachings is heaven ordained and will be reunited in the third angel's message. Beginning in 1883, Ellen White quoted Luther (via historian D'Aubigne) four times regarding the relationship between these two concepts: "Let there be no compulsion. I have been laboring for liberty of conscience. Liberty is the very essence of faith."⁸

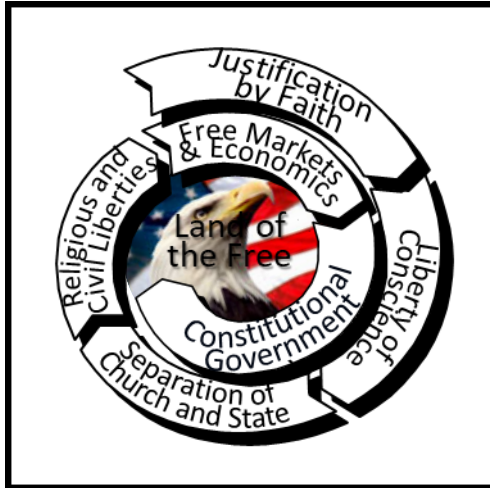
Consider the unintended consequences of justification by faith and liberty of conscience such as:

- 1) The Protestant Reformation
- 2) Separation of church and state
- 3) Religious and civil liberties
- 4) Free market system
- 5) Capitalism & economics (Capitalism is the economic and political system in which a country's trade and industry are controlled by private owners for profit, rather than control by the state or by the church. Capitalism is the economic practice of which Protestantism is the theory).
- 6) Constitutional governments

Freedoms specified in the first amendment to the Constitution of the United States are: freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, the right to petition, Habeas Corpus and trial by a jury of peers.

The outcome of Luther's God-given message of justification by faith triggered the unintended Protestant Reformation, and in time produced a dramatic impact not only on Christianity, but also on Western civilization. What's more, this impact has been experienced in every nation of the world. This is especially true in those nations that have accepted the principle of freedom of conscience. The United States led the way as the first nation to embody this principle in the law of the land. The following figure illustrates the unintended consequences of justification by the faith as articulated by Luther, then carried out throughout history to our time:

⁸ Ellen White, Signs of the Times, October 25, 1883; *The Spirit of Prophecy Volume Four* (1884), p. 148; *The Great Controversy* (1888), p 189; *The Great Controversy* (1911), p.189.



Both justification by faith and its first consequent principle – liberty of conscience – were rejected by France, Italy and Spain. Nations such as Germany, Sweden, the Dutch Republic, England and the United States in the process of time, accepted liberty of conscience as a God given right and continue to be blessed because of it.

France and Spain had been great super powers in their days of glory. Both fought fiercely against justification by faith and liberty of conscience as the Reformation persistently knocked for entrance into their kingdoms. When they rejected the gospel for the last time, they declined in power and have never recovered their supremacy. Italy never attained to world superiority. The papacy ruled Italy most of the time from its beginning in 538, which began the Dark Ages. And it was in Italy where the Catholic Counter Reformation was birthed in the city of Trent.

Just two months before Luther's death (February 18, 1546), the Council of Trent met for the first time on December 13, 1545. That Council met three times between its opening date to its closing date of December 4, 1563. The Council was a reaction to the Protestant Reformation. Its outcome reinforced Rome's doctrines of justification, the sacraments, and her authority based on tradition. Her tradition was put on a par with Scripture and even exalted above Scripture.

Trent was where the Catholic Counter Reformation formally began. The scholars who laid down the papal doctrines of justification and the sacraments during that Council were Spanish

Jesuits, namely Diego Lainez (or Laynez) and Alfonso Salmeron.⁹ These men were the best scholars in the Church of Rome at that time. Both men were sent to the Council, first by Pope Paul III¹⁰ who convoked the Council and oversaw the first eight sessions (1545–47). The twelfth to sixteenth sessions (1551–52) were overseen by Pope Julius III, and the seventeenth to twenty-fifth sessions (1562–63) by Pope Pius IV.

Nearly every word of Trent's doctrine of justification came from the minds of Lainez and Salmeron. Lainez presented a three-hour-long speech, which was widely regarded as the most thorough on the topic of justification. In Session 6 of the Council of Trent, human works were declared meritorious (with God's help of course). The Decree on Justification, taught in Chapter 16, reads "we must believe that nothing further is wanting to those justified to prevent them from being considered to have, by those very works which have been done in God, fully satisfied the divine law according to the state of this life and to have **truly merited eternal life.**" (Emphasis supplied).

Following the Decree on Justification are 30 Canons condemning those believing the Scripture teaching of justification by faith in Christ alone. The curses of Canons 9 and 24 are the clearest of them all:

"Canon 9. If anyone says **that the sinner is justified by faith alone, meaning that nothing else is required** to cooperate in order to obtain the grace of justification, **and that**

⁹ "At Trent, Lainez came into prominence just as soon as the question of justification was reached. Luther and his followers had gone astray chiefly on this very doctrine. No more important subject could have come before the council. Long discussions preceded the definition, and Lainez and Salmerón stood out most prominently. These dogmatic discussions, in the early sessions of Trent, took place without formality of precedence. The theological discussions were under the charge of Cardinal Cervini, later Pope Marcellus II; he arranged that Salmerón should be among the first speakers on each topic, so as to set down the right doctrine from the outset; Lainez should be the last to speak, so as to sum up the discussion and point out clearly the errors of preceding [Catholic] theologians. The two Jesuits were immensely influential against some of the Lutheran ideas wherewith unfortunately not a few of the theologians of the council were tainted." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, article: "James Lainez."

¹⁰ Pope Paul III "chose three Jesuits, Lainez, Salmerón, and Lefèvre as sole papal theologians to the Council of Trent. The latter died in Rome before the council began its sessions. Lainez and Salmerón were joined by two other Jesuits at Trent, Le Jaye who represented the Bishop of Augsburg, and Covillon the theologian to the Duke of Bavaria." *Ibid.*

it is not in any way necessary that he be prepared and disposed by the action of his own will, let him be anathema.”

“Canon 24. If anyone says **that justice received is not preserved and also not increased before God through good works, but that those works are merely fruits and signs of justification obtained, not the cause of its increase**, let him be anathema.” (Emphasis supplied).

These curses against the Reformation’s teaching of justification are Jesuit sourced. Not only were Jesuits heavily involved at Trent, they were involved in education, politics, wars, espionage, assassinations and other activities with a single goal in mind—the destruction of Protestantism by hook or by crook. They succeeded.

However, they were not successful in their quest to assassinate Protestant Queen Elizabeth I of England. She began her reign (1558) during the time of the Council of Trent. One of the plans to assassinate the Queen was about 23 years (1586) after the Council ended. This plan is known as the Babington Plot. The chief conspirators were Anthony Babington and John Ballard.

Babington and others were recruited by Ballard, an English Jesuit priest, to help plan and execute the assignation of the Queen. With help from agents of Spain and from the Pope they determined to put Catholic Mary, Queen of Scots, on the English throne. This plot was to be the prelude to a full-blown invasion of England by Spanish led Catholic forces. However, the plan was discovered and the English conspirators including Ballard were executed.¹¹

There had been a long-term goal to invade England by the Spanish forces of King Philip II with the assistance of the Catholic League of France. They hoped to restore the Catholic religion in England. The League of France worked to eradicate Protestants—mainly Huguenots—from Catholic France during the time of the Protestant Reformation. Pope Gregory XIII, the King Philip II of Spain and the Jesuits were all supporters of this French Catholic party. The Catholic League was in the vanguard at the St. Bartholomew's day Massacre (1572). Pope Gregory XIII minted a commemorative medal in honor of the Massacre.

Historian Mack Holt, in his book *The French Wars of Religion, 1562-1629* wrote that while he was in partial agreement with the majority of other historians regarding the French Catholic League as being politically motivated, he felt the League was accused of wrong motives. He felt

¹¹ “Ballard, John (BLRT569J)”. *A Cambridge Alumni Database*. University of Cambridge. Online link

their motives were, for the most part, religious and therefore correct. He did admit, however, that the League was motivated by the theology of the Council of Trent. He wrote, “Its religious role was significant, as the League was the conduit between the Tridentine spirituality of the Catholic Reformation and the seventeenth century *devots*.”¹² (Devots [pronounced: devits] was the name given in France to those following a Catholic policy of opposition to Protestants inside France and who were in alliance with the Catholic Habsburg Monarchy abroad).¹³

King Philip II of Spain was not deterred from his plan to invade England even after the failed attempt of the Babington Plot to assassinate Queen Elisabeth. His Spanish naval invasion force was sent against England in 1588. This too was a failure. The Armada was defeated by the English fleet and almost completely destroyed by storms off the Hebrides. Consequently, Spain began her downward spiral losing her military might and her place among the mighty nations of earth.

And Queen Elisabeth? She died peacefully in 1603 after reigning 45 years. After her death, James, the son of Mary Queen of Scots, was given the throne of England. At the beginning of his reign he authorized the translation of the English Bible that was to bear his name. This Bible was translated from Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. The work began in 1604, was completed and published in 1611.

But this translation of the English Protestant Bible would have been destroyed if another plot, by Catholics, to assassinate King James had succeeded. Not only would the king have died, but nearly all the members of his family along with most of the members of Parliament. In addition, most of the scholars working on the translation of the Protestant Bible would have perished in the same plot to kill the king.

The assassination plot is known as The Gunpowder Plot or the Jesuit Treason Plot. The assassination would have taken place about one year after the translation of the King James Version of the Bible began.

¹² Mack Holt, *The French Wars of Religion, 1562-1629*, (1995) pp. 149-150.

¹³ <https://www.definitions.net/definition/DEVOTS>.

The plan was to be carried out by a group of 13 English Catholic laymen led by Robert Catesby along with several Jesuit priests implicated in the assassination plot. Their plan was to blow up the [House of Lords](#) during the State Opening of Parliament on November 5, 1605. Guy Fawkes, who had 10 years of military experience fighting alongside the Spanish Netherlands military against Dutch Protestants, was an explosive expert. Over time and under the darkness of night, gunpowder was smuggled into the basement under the House of Lords by Fawkes and other conspirators. On the night when Fawkes was to light the fuse to explode the gunpowder, he was caught. He was preparing 36 barrels of gunpowder when he was arrested, in the basement of the House of Lords, by police who had been tipped off about the plot.

In the days, and weeks following the failed plot, several of the conspirators were killed either in gun battles or by execution. Eight of the survivors, including Fawkes, were convicted and executed. This included several Jesuits. Two of the Jesuits implicated in the plot escaped the authorities and lived out their days elsewhere.¹⁴

Two of the executed Jesuits – Edward Oldcorne and Ralph Ashley – were beatified in 1929 by Pope Pius XI. To be beatified means they supposedly entered heaven, and according to the papacy they have the capacity to intercede on behalf of individuals who pray in their names. According to Dr Joseph Huntington, Papal Librarian since 2007, Ashley is the Patron Saint of Transvestites.¹⁵

Catholics claim these two Jesuits were martyred for their faith. The prosecutors tried and convicted them as traitors. During the trial of the Gun Powder Plot conspirators, Attorney General Sir Edward Coke, who led the prosecution in the Gunpowder Plot case said: “I never yet knew a treason without a Romish priest; but in this there are very many Jesuits, who are known to have dealt and passed through the whole action.”¹⁶

¹⁴ Thomas M. McCoog, (2004), "Gerard, John (1564–1637)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press.

¹⁵ <https://answers.yahoo.com/question/index?qid=20120117172235AAjR1Tt>; <https://catholicsaints.info/blessed-ralph-ashley/>

¹⁶ T. B. Howell, *A Complete Collection of State Trials and Proceedings for High Treason and other Crimes and Misdemeanors from the Earliest Period to the Year 1783*, London, (1816), p. 171.

“In 1605 a small group of disaffected Catholics came within a whisker of blowing the king and parliament to smithereens.”¹⁷ Not only this. They came within that whisker of changing England forever. And there’s more. Not only would the translation of the Protestant King James Bible have been destroyed, but the United States of America most likely would have come under the control of Catholic Spain instead of Protestant England, if the plot had been successful. Let’s consider the founding of the United States and also today’s current events. Our founding was based on liberty of conscience, which in turn, is the consequence of justification by faith. However, this Biblical doctrine – justification by faith in Christ alone – as the foundation of liberty of conscience is unknown by most Americans today.

The papacy knew what was going on in America during and after the founding. Its purpose has been to gain control of the American continent, either by direct power or by those willing to be used as hapless papal pawns.

Rome appeared to change during the Vatican II Council. Many Catholics dropped their membership from the Catholic Church, convinced she had changed from what she had been in the past. But it was in appearance only.

The most debated topic of Vatican II was “The Declaration on Religious Liberty: *Dignitatis Humanae*--The Dignity of Humanity.” This appeared to be a departure from Catholic doctrine. Today, many Protestants, including scholars, continue to believe this appearance to be a truly Christian change. Protestants have been swamped by this strategic papal ploy instigated especially by American Jesuits, in particular, Jesuit John Courtney Murray.¹⁸ Roman Catholicism is Christian in form only, not in substance. She is not a Christian Church. She is not part of Biblical Christianity. We must keep in mind her ability in calculating cunning craftiness to change her appearance. But “let it be remembered, it is the boast of Rome that she never changes.”¹⁹ God, through the instrumentality of Mrs. White, gave us the fact of this matter as the following statement reveals:

¹⁷ <https://www.historyextra.com/period/stuart/9-places-associated-with-guy-fawkes-and-the-gunpowder-plot/>

¹⁸ Michael Davies, *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty* (The Neumann Press, 1992).

¹⁹ White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 581.

It is a part of her policy to assume the character which will best accomplish her purpose; but beneath the variable appearance of the chameleon she conceals the invariable venom of the serpent. “Faith ought not to be kept with heretics, nor persons suspected of heresy” (Lenfant, volume 1, page 516), she declares. Shall this power, whose record for a thousand years is written in the blood of the saints, be now acknowledged as a part of the church of Christ?²⁰

“The people need to be aroused to resist the advances of this most dangerous foe to civil and religious liberty.”²¹

A British writer, Michael Davies, a loyal Roman Catholic wrote a book entitled *The Second Vatican Council and Religious Liberty* (The Neumann Press, 1992). This book shows how Jesuit John Courtney Murray maneuvered the Second Vatican Council to supposedly replace the Catholic doctrine on church and State, with a new teaching based on the American Constitution. Davies opposed what he felt were changes made by Vatican II. He sounded an alarm as to what he perceived was happening in and during the time of that Ecumenical Council. Davies contended that the stand taken by church leaders in Vatican II as documented especially in the Declaration on Religious Liberty was not reconcilable with previous papal teachings.

Most helpful in his book are papal decrees denouncing liberty of conscience and nations who uphold this freedom. The following are relevant portions of some of the Papal Encyclicals written in the 19th and 20th centuries regarding this freedom. Among other related items of interest, Pope Pius X in February, 1906 wrote: “That the State must be separated from the Church is a most pernicious error.... Hence, the Roman Pontiffs have never ceased, as circumstances required, to refute and condemn the doctrine of the separation of Church and State.”²²

Pope Gregory XVI (1831 to 1846) ruled during the time of the Great Advent Awakening led by William Miller. This pope condemned “indifferentism” and “liberty of conscience.” Indifferentism means that a person can be saved outside the Catholic Church, by faith in Christ. The pope wrote:

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 571.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 566.

²² *Vehementer nos*, February 11, 1906.

From this poisoned source of indifferentism springs that false and absurd maxim, better termed the insanity, (*deliramentum*), that liberty of conscience must be guaranteed for everyone. This is the most contagious of errors, which prepares the way for that absolute and totally unrestrained liberty of opinions which, for the ruin of Church and State, is spreading everywhere and which certain men, through an excess of impudence, do not fear to put forward as advantageous to religion.²³

Pope Pius IX (1846 to 1878) followed Gregory XVI. He was pope during the Miller Advent Movement, with his monarchy extending beyond the time of the organization of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in 1863.

Pius IX was the only head of state to address Jefferson Davis, leader of the South during our civil war, as “Mr. President.” The pope penned the following three times in his letter to Davis: “Illustrious and Honorable President.”²⁴ Davis was sympathetic to Catholicism. And the pope’s desire was for Protestant America to destroy itself. He placed his hopes with the South during our civil war.

He was the first pope officially to declare himself “infallible.” This was done during Vatican I (1869-1870). He was a strong supporter of the teachings of the Council of Trent. And he had this to say against liberty of conscience: “The absurd and erroneous doctrines or ravings in defense of liberty of conscience are a most pestilential error--a pest, of all others, most to be dreaded in a state.”²⁵ That same pope in another Encyclical anathematized:

“those who assert the liberty of conscience and of religious worship,” also “all such as maintain that the church may not employ force.... From which totally false idea of social government they do not fear to foster that erroneous opinion, most fatal in its effects on the Catholic Church and the salvation of souls, called by Our Predecessor, Gregory XVI, an “insanity,” viz., that “liberty of conscience and worship is each man's personal right, which ought to be legally proclaimed and asserted in every rightly constituted society; and that a right resides in the citizens to an absolute liberty, which should be restrained by no authority whether ecclesiastical or civil, whereby they may be able openly and publicly to

²³ Encyclical *Mirari vos* (1832).

²⁴ Donald R. McClarey, “Jefferson Davis and Pio Nomo,” *Catholic Stand*, a Little Vatican Media Publication, September 9, 2014.

²⁵ Pope Pius IX, Encyclical Letter of December 8, 1864.

manifest and declare any of their ideas whatever, either by word of mouth, by the press, or in any other way.”²⁶

The Constitution of the United States guarantees liberty of conscience, of religious worship, and of a free press – all of which pope Pius IX hated. I have a cartoon of this pope crumpling the Constitution of the United States in his uplifted right hand while trampling our flag under his feet and killing the eagle, emblem of the United States, with his sword. This is from an 1855 engraving entitled: “The Aim of Pope Pius IX.” (The bald eagle was chosen June 20, 1782 as the emblem of the United States of America, because of its long life, great strength and majestic looks, and also because it was then believed to exist only on this continent).

In true Protestantism, liberty of conscience means freedom of religious belief and practice. When it comes to religious liberty, neither the church nor the state has any right to restrict it. Liberty of conscience is God’s gift to mankind. Anyone attempting to take it from another person is putting himself in the place of God, which is evidence of the Antichrist.

And further, liberty of conscience is an expression of justification by faith. Justification by faith carries liberty of conscience on the face of it – to achieve its recognition, acceptance and the reception of all other freedoms. Freedom of conscience based on justification by faith is foundational to all other freedoms, rights, and pursuits.

God raised up the Seventh-day Adventist Church in order to give His message of justification by faith in Christ alone, and its consequent – liberty of conscience, to the world in the time of the end. This is the message coming from the Holy of Holies in the heavenly temple. The message of justification by faith and liberty of conscience will prepare and enable those who believe it to stand for God in the closing days of earth’s history. If believed, this message will set people free and will give them strength to face the opposition powers represented as spiritual Babylon in the book of Revelation and the “little horn” power in Daniel. Antichrist is fiercely opposed to the message of justification by faith and liberty of conscience, which is at the very heart of the third angel’s message.

²⁶ Pope Pius IX, Encyclical Letter of August 15, 1854. See also *Quanta Cura* (“Condemning Current Errors”).

Luther had it right when he proclaimed liberty of conscience as the essence of the faith that justifies as quoted above. There is an imperative necessity to present justification by faith and liberty of conscience as they are presented in the third angel's message of Revelation 14:9-12. These must not be separated. If we proclaim freedom of conscience apart from justification, we will lose both freedom and justification. If we present justification by faith without liberty of conscience, we will be unprepared to stand when the forces of the world unite against God's remnant. The two are inseparable from each other and they are inseparable from the third angel's message.

This message will swell into the "loud cry" of Revelation 18:1 which is the illumination on earth with the glory of Christ and His righteousness. This will be followed by the complete union and consequent fall of spiritualism and false Christianity – the spiritual fornicating Babylon who serves the nations of earth with her strong delusional drink (18:2-3) causing them to enforce her will against liberty of conscience and justification by faith. Notwithstanding the fierce opposition to God's heaven-sent message, He will call His people out of Babylonian bondage (verse 4). This call involves Jesus and His righteousness. People will ask, "Which way out?" His answer: "I AM the way." "By which teaching?" "I AM the Truth." "By what power?" "I AM the way." Christ is the Way, He is the Truth, and He is the power of God for everyone who will receive Him. This is the central message of the third angel.

Mrs. White saw the clear correlation between justification by faith and the third angel's message. In 1890, questions regarding this were answered by her in a single, to the point and succinct reply: "It is the third angel's message in verity."²⁷ This is the message God gave to Jones and Waggoner. This is a continuation and enlargement of the message given to Luther, although he wavered in the giving of it.

What about you and me? Do we present the third angel's message? Do we waver as did Luther? If we do not present justification by faith and liberty of conscience in, and as, the third angel's message, does it not follow that we are not giving the third angel's message as we should?

²⁷ Review and Herald, April 1, 1890.

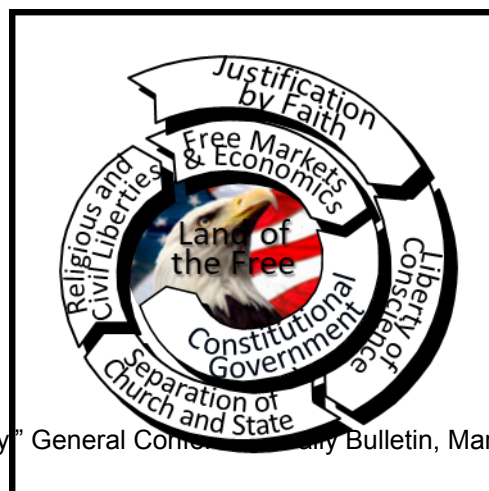
Stated positively, since “the message of justification by faith ... is the third angel’s message in verity,” it follows that we will proclaim liberty of conscience as the essence of this message even in the face of the fierce opposition.

A T. Jones presented the message of justification by faith and its essence—liberty of conscience. He wrote,

[T]here is a good deal more to the question of religious liberty than simply talking about religious liberty: Outside of the third angel’s message, there is no religious liberty in this world at this time. ... [I]f we would know the real principles of religious liberty—know them properly, and hold them all the time—we must get them from the third angel’s message; we must get them from God in the way he is giving them to the world at this time, and put them where they belong. ...

Now there are some people outside of the Seventh-day Adventist church who understand the principles of religious liberty so far as they know them; but they don’t understand them far enough. And it is the purpose of the third angel’s message, to hold before the world and everybody in it, the true principles of religious liberty. ... The truth is that, were it not for the third angel’s message, every soul of us would be in favor of religious legislation. Every soul of us, because we are just the kind of people who, without the blessing and influence of the Spirit of God, would be in that very business [of supporting religious legislation].²⁸

To sum up and to close this paper, the following figure is again presented to illustrate the unintended consequences of justification by faith from the time of the Reformation to the establishment of the United States of America. This nation of freedom God raised up, and with it the Seventh-day Adventist Church which is to proclaim justification by faith and its consequent – liberty of conscience in the end time setting of earth’s existence:



²⁸ A. T. Jones, “Religious Liberty” General Conference Daily Bulletin, March 15, 1891, p. 105.

