

Lesson 3—1 John 2:15-29

October 4, 2018

Before we get to this week's questions, I thought that it might be interesting—and helpful—to spend a little time discussing the point that Dr. Wright brings up at the very beginning of his commentary in ECL on pgs.143-144 about “the E-word”—Evil. He's quoting from a book, *People of the Lie*, by the psychiatrist, Dr. M. Scott Peck, who also published a book called *The Road Less Travelled*, (1978) which has sold a total of about 6 million copies. Familiar to anyone? It was not to me. That first book was about being a well-rounded person. The second one addressed the issue of evil.

That second book, *People of the Lie*, was about patients he had over the years who were capable of lying to everyone and anyone, including themselves—and it didn't bother them. They were people, it seemed, who did not have a conscience. I suppose we would classify them as sociopaths. Read pg.144 in ECL the paragraph beginning, “Peck had not been prepared for this” and finish after “...corrupting and dangerous influence.”

Like the patients Dr. Peck had encountered in his practice who would tell lie upon lie, the heretics who were distorting the teachings of Christ that were now being passed on through the Apostles, were denying the truth that God had placed within them upon creation and that was further reinforced by the power of the Holy Spirit that was given initially through Baptism, and then deepened in Confirmation and the Eucharist. That denial of God, which was born of the pride that they knew better—that “power of the Lie”—was born of a power that “was more than the sum total of their own deceptions.” Evil! Few are the people, even within the Church, who will speak of Evil anymore, but Evil exists. Few are those, even within the Church, who believe in Hell, but Hell is real. Those who insist on perpetuating these lies have a terrible influence upon those around them and society as a whole. Souls will be lost because of this insistence on denying truth.

Read 1 John 2:15-17.

Q: In vs.15-17, John writes about “the world” and “the things in the world” and what our attitude should be towards them. What does John mean when he says that we should not love “the world?” **A:** God created the world, so the world is good. It is like everything else that God created—if it is used or perceived in a disordered way, even though it is good, it can become a source of sinfulness or at least a near occasion of sin. Wright warns against turning the things of the world into something we hold above God, something we make an idol, or as the notation in ICSB for 2:15-17 says, “something that threatens to consume our attention and turn our affections away from God.”

Q#1-2.

Read 1 John 2:18-25.

“This passage covers one of the main themes in St. John's Letters—the fidelity of Christians being tested by the heretics.” Navarre pg.140 for 2:18-27

Prior to Q#3, there is a passage pulled from ECL about vs.18-19. Were you surprised to hear John write about the antichrist in the plural form—antichrists? I have always thought of the Anti-christ as a single being, the Devil. And who would have guessed that there were already ex-Catholics in John's day? Also, John declares it “the last hour.” “[T]he fullness of time already began with the Incarnation and the Redemption brought about by Christ.” Navarre pg.141 on 2:18 Eternity has already begun.

Q#3-7.

Read 1 John 2:26-29.

John has been describing those who were believers in the teachings of the Apostles and then split off and began to spread their own beliefs as “anti-messiahs” or “antichrists.” Now in the passage prior to Q#8, Dr. Wright continues to expound on this definition of an antichrist as someone who denies that Jesus is the Messiah, the anointed king, the Son of God—non-trinitarian. Of the many denominations of Christianity that have come from those who have left the Church begun by Jesus and spread by his Apostles, there are few that teach that Jesus is not the Son of God. The teaching that they most commonly deny is that the Bread and Wine are truly the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Jesus Christ, which in turn is a denial of Apostolic succession. Taking that into consideration, I certainly don’t think it would be proper to, as John does, call the people who lead or belong to these other Christian churches antichrists. They are doing the work of God. I would say, however, that their teachings do not contain the fullness of the faith that the Catholic Church contains.

From the research I did online, the Christian churches that I found to be non-trinitarian—those who do not believe in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as three separate beings, yet one God are:
“The Jehovah’s Witnesses, the Church of Jesus Christ of LDS, Iglesia Ni Cristo, Christadelphians, Christian Scientists, Dawn Bible Students, Living Church of God, Oneness Pentecostals, Members Church of God International, Unitarian Universalist Christians, The Way International, The Church of God International, the United Church of God, and Armstrongism do not believe in trinitarianism because they do not share history with the post-apostolic process that concocted the doctrine. Also, Unitarians believe that the Father is the sole deity and the Savior was not God. [Ever heard of some of these? Not me!]

Virtually all other Christian denominations believe in the 3-in-1 Trinity because they are the results of branch-offs from Roman Catholicism.”

Q: Apart from the one who would fit the Churches’ definition of the Antichrist (see below), what might fit the definition of “antichrists” in today’s world?

“The ‘deceitful one’ referred to in the New Testament, associated with the ‘mystery of iniquity’ which will precede the second coming of Christ, through which people will be led away from the truth to follow a false ‘messianism,’ by which man glorifies himself and human achievement in place of God and his Messiah come in the flesh, in whom the kingdom will be fulfilled.” (675-677)

Glossary of the Catechism of the Catholic Church

Q#8-12.

We must always be on our guard—maintaining a relationship with Our Lord, receiving the Sacraments, reading and studying scripture and the doctrine of our faith for as St. Augustine wrote, *“Many who are not of us receive, along with us, the sacraments; they receive Baptism with us, they receive with us what they know the faithful receive—the blessing, the Eucharist and the other holy sacraments; they receive communion from the same altar as we do, but they are not of us.”*

Next week: October 11, Lesson 4 1 John 3. “God’s Children Now.”