

Present Truth

A magazine dedicated
to the restoration
of New Testament Christianity
in this generation

Sola Gratia Solely by Grace
Solo Christo Solely by Christ
Sola Fide Solely by Faith

JUNE 1973
Vol. 2, No. 3

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Present Truth

Present Truth is a magazine dedicated to the restoration of New Testament Christianity and committed to upholding the great Reformation principle of justification by faith.

Editor: Robert D. Brinsmead
Publishing Editor: Norman Jarnes

Publishers: A group of Christian scholars and businessmen without denominational sponsorship who have united to uphold the objective gospel amid the present deluge of religious subjectivism. Multitudes are being caught up in the popular and frantic effort to find satisfaction in some sort of religious experience. *Present Truth* is a voice in this barren wilderness of groveling internalism, a voice which boldly proclaims those great principles upon which the Reformation was founded—namely:

1. *Sola gratia.* God's saving activity outside of us in the person of Jesus Christ is the sole *ground* of our salvation.

2. *Solo Christo.* Christ's doing and dying on our behalf is the sole *basis* of our acceptance and continued fellowship with God.

3. *Sola fide.* The Holy Spirit's gift of faith through the hearing of this objective, historical gospel is the sole *means* whereby Christ's substitutionary life and death are imputed to us for justification unto life eternal. He who is thus justified by faith and filled with God's Spirit will glory only in Christ's cross and make God's saving work in Christ the central affirmation of his Christian witness. Though he will be careful to obey God and please Him in all things, he will continue to repent rather than glory in the feeble attainments of his own Spirit-filled life.

4. *Sola Scriptura.* The Bible and the Bible only is the Christian's objective and infallible rule of faith and practice, alone sufficient that he may "be established in the present truth" (2 Peter 1:12).

Present Truth is not only committed to the task of upholding these founding principles of the Reformation, but it believes that we today must allow these principles to call all that we do and all that we teach into question. These principles call all traditions into question and all statements about the truth into question—even the ones set forth in this magazine. Our vision is a new Reformation that will recover what the Reformers bequeathed us and complete the restoration they so nobly began.

To Contributors: Since truth is above the preferences and prejudices of any denomination, the editors welcome contributions from anyone and will judge them on their merit alone. If you wish a manuscript returned, please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Subscriptions are free upon personal request. Simply send your subscription request, together with your name and address, to either of the following *Present Truth* addresses:

P.O. Box 1311
Fallbrook, California 92028
U.S.A.

P.O. Box 333
Tweed Heads, N.S.W. 2485
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Present Truth is supported solely by freewill offerings. Gifts are tax deductible in the U.S.A.

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Letters

Who Are You Guys?

Sir / I found the special issue, "Justification by Faith," most exciting. This was the first time I had seen the publication. I should like to be placed on the mailing list for future issues.

I should like to have more information about the editor—his educational background and personal data. Also, I should like to know more about the sponsors—the group of Christians—mentioned in the special issue, i.e., names, etc.

Presbyterian Minister
North Carolina

Sir / I have read the April issue with great pleasure. If you give your consent, I plan to copy several paragraphs in the editorial and use them for Reformation Sunday. . . . Who are you guys, anyway?

P.W.
Methodist Minister
Arizona

* See our masthead inside the front cover. Also, see the article by Geoffrey J. Paxton, page 17 of this issue. —Ed.

In Defense of Pentecostalism

Sir / The Pentecostal movement is vast and includes so many shades of thought that it is difficult to form a definition that is really accurate. However, I believe that you, like so many critics of the movement, aren't really hearing what the most responsible leaders of the movement are saying. When you evaluate the literature, you conclude that it is centered on the Holy Spirit's work in the heart rather than on God's work in Christ. When you study the literature on the work of the Holy Spirit, why should you be surprised that it is about the Holy Spirit? If I asked you to do a treatise on the work of the Holy Spirit, wouldn't it be about the Holy Spirit? The Pentecostal movement, in its most responsible leadership, also has a great volume of material centered on God's finished work in Christ.



I believe that God raised up the Reformers to bring back into focus the great truth of a Christ-centered gospel via the truth of justification by faith alone. But that does not mean I am a Lutheran. Further, I believe that God used the Wesleyan revival to return to the truth of the inner witness for salvation and the necessity of the sanctified life. And this does not make me a Methodist. Could it not be true that God has raised up the Pentecostal movement (with all its imperfections) to bring the church back to dependence upon the Holy Spirit, to restore the miraculous to the bride of Christ in preparation for the end time? This I believe, but it does not make me a part of the Pentecostal movement. I wish, rather, to incorporate into my life the central *truth* of the Reformation, the central *truth* of the Wesleyan revival and the central *truth* of the Holy Spirit's work as underlined by the Pentecostal movement.

Thank you for taking time to listen to my observations. I would be most happy to receive your further publications.

D.D.

Pastor, Mission Church
South Dakota

Holiness Theology and Catholic Answers

Sir / That I am a Christian is not a matter of doubt either in my mind or the minds of others. My experience of salvation was a colossal experience of the love of God. In a Wesleyan holiness service, I later totally dedicated myself to God to receive the Holy Spirit, and the love of God rolled over my spirit like a mighty stream.

I moved out of the 7th chapter of Romans, with its neurotic, sick darkness, into the glorious light of Romans 8 and, from that day to this, never believed that the experience of Romans 7 was the miserable lot of a Spirit-filled, sun-bathed, sanctified person. Through Jesus Christ, I have the victory over sin.

I recently took the test on page 5 of your special issue with the questionnaire, "Are You Catholic or

Protestant?" Without suspecting what I was doing, I was astounded to grade myself, finding that on nine questions out of ten I had given the Catholic answer. I disagreed with your answers on all questions except number four. This makes me, a Spirit-filled Protestant, a total Catholic.

Yet I know I am right. I am a theologian, graduate of Garrett Theological Seminary, and have another graduate degree, and have been a pastor for thirty years.

I am conscious of having a greater victory over sin and of standing on a higher plane, ethically and spiritually, than that which you describe as the highest possible to man. Therefore I do protest the ground on which you stand.

I do not believe, as a Christian, that your work is a true work or that your publications are worth the effort. To me, your doctrine is of no use in the world. The world has had its fill of religion without holiness. I am sorry, but I have to reject *Present Truth* because of my loyalty to the God who sanctified my soul.

H.D.

Methodist Minister
Missouri



Arminianism?

Sir / I am in general agreement with Mr. Robert Brinsmead. I believe he states the Scriptural doctrine of justification by faith with great clarity and power. However, I believe he not only departs from Luther and Calvin but also from Scripture when he sees Christ's atonement reaching to all men: ". . . in order that He might stand before justice and exhaust the penalty of a broken law for every sinner that ever lived." —*The Australian Forum*, topic 2, "The Jesus Revolution," p. 3. I believe he is guilty of allegorizing in his reference to Samson. If, as Mr. Brinsmead states, ". . . God forgave the sinful race at the cross" (*Ibid.*, p. 4), then autonomous man can resist the grace of God and reject faith in the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit may want to give the gift of faith, but He may be rebuffed by the one to whom He intended to give it. Grace is not irresistible. The will of man—sinful man—is as sovereign as the will of God! Will man, or will he not? . . .

Please do not think that I am not in basic agreement with you—I am! You apparently are Arminian; I am Calvinistic. However, I believe that the great Reformer, Martin Luther, was much more of a Calvinist than your Mr. Robert Brinsmead gives him credit for being.

I respect your excellent work in *Present Truth*. I can only hope that you will give other Reformed Christians, such as Dr. Cornelius Van Til of Westminster Theological Seminary, a forum in your publication. Perhaps that is too much to ask. But I hope not.

R.H.
Texas

Sir / I have just received a second issue of your magazine, *Present Truth*. I was impressed with the first copy I received and rejoiced to see the zealotry with which you defend the great truths of the Reformation, which was simply a return to the Word of God. There are so few publications which seek to do this in this day and age.

Candidly, I must at the same time confess that I was suspicious as I am of all new publications which I receive. Eagerly I awaited the next issue. Again I find in this issue much that commends itself. Enclosed with this issue was a copy of *The Australian Forum*, topic 1, "An Appraisal of Pentecostalism." I must emphatically disagree with the view expressed on page 3, column 2. This is not the truth set forth by the Reformers Luther and Calvin but rather the rank heresy espoused by Jacobus Arminius. You seem to have completely ignored the great Reformation doctrines of predestination and election. By continuing in the direction of Arminianism, you will only end in the subjectivism and humanism which you so rightfully profess to abhor.

From the paragraphs in question, I get the distinct impression that you believe Christ died for all men and thereby only made salvation available for the "fallen race," or "humanity." The next step is up to man, who must, of his own ability, believe. And thus you also destroy the whole meaning of the substitutionary atonement and subject Christ to the position of a spectator on the sidelines, waiting and watching, not knowing why or for whom He died!

I would be interested in hearing your comments.
V.P.
Reformed Church Pastor
Nebraska

* *The columns of Present Truth are open for good articles from Calvinists and Arminians. The editor is not Arminian. See the article, "Do We Distort the Gospel," page 11 of this issue.* — Ed.

Historical and Futurist

Sir / I appreciate your magazine very much and the defense it makes for the doctrine of justification. It has helped me clarify my own understanding of theology.

I am surprised, however, at the view you take of prophecy, according to page 28 of the special issue on "Justification by Faith and the Charismatic Movement" in the article, "Protestant Revivalism, Pentecostalism and the Drift Back to Rome." The literal

interpretation of Revelation 13 and 14 places those activities in the period of time called the Great Tribulation, when the true church of Jesus Christ is removed from the earth and is with the Lord (Rev. 3:10; 4-5; 2 Thess. 2, esp. vv. 6, 7). I see no reason to spiritualize these passages. When we do that, there is no end to the speculations that can occur. I am simply surprised that you, who interpret so very literally in the area of justification, are inconsistent when you approach prophecy.

A footnote on that same page of your special issue indicated that you will present a discussion of your view of prophetic interpretation in a future issue. Perhaps you will answer there why you take the historical view over the futurist. If you do not answer there, then I would appreciate an answer from you to that effect.

A.R.
Nebraska

Nit-picking, Devisive, Heretical

Sir / After looking through your special issue of *Present Truth*, I have come to four conclusions:

1. The whole tenor of your magazine is one of "nit-picking."
2. Your message and purpose appear to be devisive.
3. I see your message and purpose as non-Christian in nature.
4. I am not interested in receiving any more of your publications since I consider myself to be a devout churchman in Christ's holy catholic church.
Minister, United Methodist Church
Montana

Sir / I haven't the slightest idea how we ever received such an offensive publication as *Present Truth*. I don't know where you get your cockeyed notions, but they certainly are not based on the Scriptures that I am familiar with. In fact, I find them to be anti-Christ.

In a day when we should be emphasizing our oneness in Christ, you seem to have a particular knack of pointing out the "noble differences."

Rest assured that I will advise this congregation to listen to the true "trumpet sound of the gospel," which certainly would not be found in this magazine. Please remove this subscription from your list, for I never want to see it again.

W.W.
Pastor, Presbyterian Church
Ohio

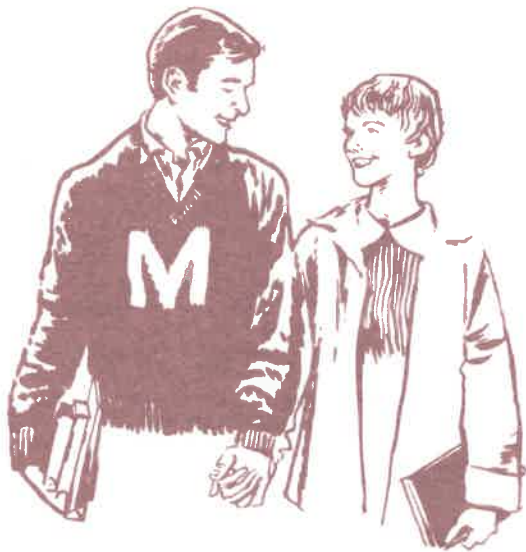


Sir / It might interest you to know that I was brought up as a Baptist. I rejected that teaching as heretical, erroneous and hazardous to my mental and spiritual, as well as emotional, health. My prayer for all such is that they might come at last, through Christ's mercy, into the Ark of Salvation, the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, of which I have the honor to be a priest through the Orthodox and Apostolic Laying On of Hands of a bishop in the Historic Catholic Succession. As a result, I have the power to absolve sins, to consecrate bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ and also to pronounce God's blessing upon man. How great a treasure! It is this that is the New Testament Church of which you speak but yet do not speak, for in its place you have seemingly built a man-made edifice which enshrines the Bible (which was written by the Church in the first place) and seemingly teach that the Catholic Church has no power, authority or mission.

I have sent for some of your other booklets on the grounds that I want you to have a fair hearing. But I fear that my suspicions are firmer than I thought—the booklets seemingly (if the magazine is any guide) are no more and no less than a clever front to attack the Bride of Christ, the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church, of which Rome (in spite of her medieval errors) is a part.

We live in an age when honesty and sober thinking are required. I should do that and have a good conscience rather than to say something else and tell a lie. May the Blessed Mother bring you to truth. God bless you all in your search.

G.W.
Catholic Priest



Informative and Helpful

Sir / Thank you so much for sending me, at the request of my friend, the sample issue of *Present Truth* dealing with the Pentecostal issue ("Justification by Faith and the Charismatic Movement"). I found it most informative and most helpful. My experiences here at the University of Minnesota as campus pastor confirm the presence and power of the emotionalism, subjectivism and individualism so thoroughly critiqued in that number of your magazine. The need for solidly Biblical teaching is a desperate one at present, both within the Christian community and without.

B.B.
Pastor
Minnesota

Why Are Articles Not Signed?

Sir / Thank you for sending me the current issues of *Present Truth*. I am very sympathetic with your emphasis on New Testament Christianity and Reformed doctrine as over against some of the divisive teachings of our time. The articles are well-written and incisive although, for credibility in our academic environment, they should be signed. The authors should be willing to accept personal responsibility for their views, especially with regard to Scripture.

O.C.
College Professor
Massachusetts

* *The editorial in the special "Justification by Faith" issue stated that the articles of that issue were by the editor. —Ed.*

Satisfied Readers

Sir / This is some of the best reading material that has come across my desk in some time. Thank God someone has decided to attempt "restoration of New Testament Christianity in this generation."

T.F.
Episcopal Minister
Florida

Sir / The day is far spent, and your literature and emphasis come as refreshing rain upon a dry and thirsty land.

R.P.
Lutheran Pastor
Oregon



Sir / In the past week I received your *Present Truth* and found it to be one of the most fascinating magazines I ever had read. It is pungent as salt and healthy as the ideal diet. I want more!

D.S.
Baptist Minister
Massachusetts



Sir / *Present Truth* has become for me an anchor in the present storm of confusion. My soul writes fervent "amens" upon every page. How I praise our Lord for bringing this witness to His remnant. Please send me several copies of the July-August issue for distribution to pastor friends who, I believe, will be most appreciative and will desire to subscribe.

J.M.
Baptist Minister
North Carolina

Sir / The clarity with which your articles set forth Reformation teaching is exceptional and exciting. Especially helpful was your relating of Romanism to Pentecostalism. In my thinking about the Pentecostal revival (both Protestant and Catholic), I had concentrated on sorting out the Scripture and my own thoughts on the doctrine of the "gifts." Your articles have unearthed for me the even deeper problem and account for a cleavage I felt but was unable to put my finger on.

Baptist Pastor
New Jersey



Sir / What you are doing in your marvelous magazine must surely be the most important event in this century! Religious journalism has surely sunk to a new low in our time, and any attempt to stay close to the objective facts and historic truth of Reformed Protestantism is bound to be rewarded and, in time, successful. The present wallowing in religious-mystical-subjective fantasy must surely be ill-fated and doomed to be short-lived.

P.D.
Congregational Minister
Ohio

Sir / This morning a fellow minister showed me a copy of *Present Truth* which he had received in the mail. While waiting for him, I had a chance to skim through it and am quite excited about what you are attempting to do. I sometimes feel quite alone in combating "subjectivity" and rejoice to know that there is an organized effort to enlighten church people about the objectivity of our salvation and about the Pauline and Reformation teachings."

J.O.
Presbyterian Minister
Pennsylvania

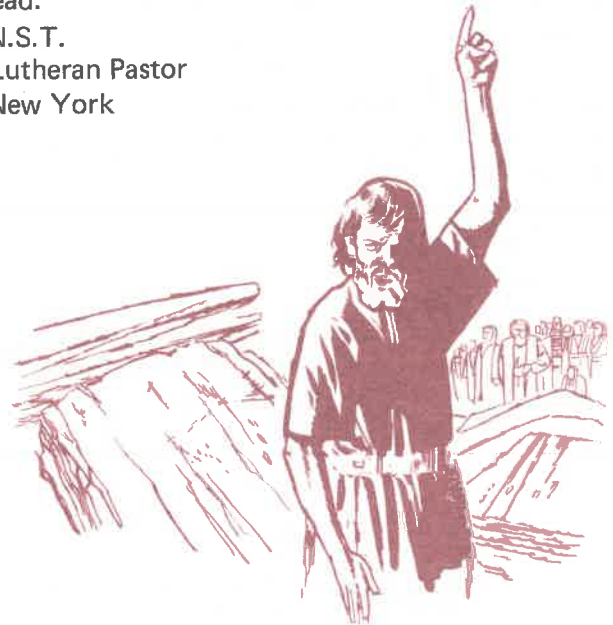
Sir / Thank you so much for the sample copy of *Present Truth*. It was very clear, concise and to the point on a subject dear to my heart—justification by faith. I spent a whole Saturday morning absorbing the timely articles, which I thought were excellent in content. Some of the material I quoted in my last Sunday morning's message on "God's Marvelous Grace."

With the charismatic movement pressing in all around our area as well as across the nation, we pastors need to keep on well-defined Biblical grounds, at the same time stating our position in love.

R.M.
Methodist Minister
Michigan

Sir / The issue you sent included one of the finest statements on the doctrine of justification that I have ever read.

N.S.T.
Lutheran Pastor
New York



Sir / In a time when evangelical Christians are making the sign of the fish and the gospel is like a voice crying in a wilderness, I can't tell you what a breath of fresh air your publication is.

D.T.
Lutheran Pastor
Oregon

Sir / The sample copy of *Present Truth* came at the precise time I most needed it. There is no doubt about the need for such a periodical as this. I can hardly wait to receive succeeding issues.

Q.E.
Presbyterian Minister
Ohio



Sir / . . . I am deeply impressed! . . . I especially enjoyed reading the article, "Protestant Revivalism, Pentecostalism and the Drift Back to Rome." Quite an "eye-opener"!

F.J.
Methodist Minister

Sir / I am most impressed by the objective presentations of all viewpoints concerning basic doctrinal issues. I am also impressed with your aims in promoting "a restoration of pure New Testament teaching," which is surely the greatest need of our time. Though the subscription offer is free, I should like to know if the publication is available to the general public and, if so, how much the subscription fee would be. I would be happy to promote a mailing list in my congregation in either case as I feel that such quality materials could be of great benefit in Bible study groups, etc.

C.C.
Baptist Minister
California

* Present Truth publications are available, without obligation, for distribution to churches. Expenses are paid by freewill contributions. —Ed.



Sir / We are drowning in a sea of pseudo-Christianity. May the Lord increase your kind.

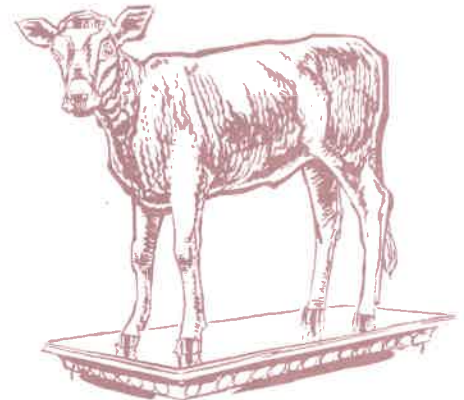
B.A.
Baptist Minister
California

Sir / At the G.L.A.S.S. convention last week, I was given a copy of your publication. I have at least tried virtually every religious magazine on the market—but I have never been so challenged, pleased or helped before. I cannot adequately thank you—perhaps the Lord will. . . .

J.B.
California

Sir / If at all possible, I would appreciate very much if you could send me fifteen to twenty copies of your magazine, *Present Truth*. The issue I refer to was a special issue entitled "Justification by Faith." This material within that particular issue is fantastic and astounding! It is absolutely the best news I have heard of since I met the Lord Jesus Christ at the cross and knew He had died for me and relieved me from the guilt of sin. . . .

Mrs. E.W.
New Jersey



Don't Stop with the Reformers

Sir / I wish to acknowledge the receipt of the special issue of *Present Truth* on "Justification by Faith" and have looked through this publication because for many years I have been busy with precisely this topic. Perhaps you know of my little book under the title, *Justification*, which was published about a year ago by Eerdmans in Grand Rapids.

I am enthusiastic about the idea to restore justification among the central and decisive topics of theology. Indeed, the neglect of justification by faith by all American churches, except perhaps a few Lutheran communities, has contributed to the silly dance around golden calves of ever new "theologies of . . ." which have no value and truth whatsoever. Thus it is all right to raise the flag of the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae* again, just in our time and in this land. However, I wonder at two things:

1. I have just returned from the fourth meeting of a conference of New Testament exegetical scholars in Rome, at which year after year, on the initiative of Roman Catholics and paid by the Benedictine Monastery S. Paolo fuori le Mura in Rome, nothing else but the epistle to the Romans is studied very, very carefully. The Orthodox, Anglican, Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist, Methodist, etc. professors who meet for that study see (in the Basilica of S. Paul and before it) always Paul at the right hand of Christ, Peter at His

left—this in contradistinction from almost all Roman churches, which place Peter at Christ's right. Even more important is the fact that the crypto- or semi-Pelagianism, which indeed left ample traces in justification decrees of the Trent and Vatican I councils, is shunned and condemned by the Catholic scholars present as much as by the Protestant. Sometimes it even seems, during our discussions, that the last have become the first and vice versa, as our Lord predicted. In the view of this fact and also of books like H. Kung's *Justification*, I wonder why your publication considers and describes "Roman" Catholic theology as a uniform *massa perditionis*. If they, "those Catholics," go in part through a late (delayed-fuse) Reformation only now, is it fair for us Protestants to act as though we did not need repentance and reformation and renewal too? Certainly, in the heavens there is more joy . . . , and, to be all too righteous may well prove as pernicious as to be all too wicked. (Eccl. 7:15-18).

2. As the Lutheran Helsinki Conference in about 1961 has shown, it will not do too much good, in our time, to operate only and exclusively with the terminology and the questions of the Reformation period. By God's grace enormous things were brought to light by the Reformer's exegesis, piety and courage. But lest we become people who adorn our prophets' tombs and yet become condemnable ourselves, it is necessary that we keep on working. Amazing new aspects have been brought to light among those that are serious exegetes; a very hard struggle for more light is also going on among dogmatic thinkers. Let me mention Kasemann and Jungel as exponents of the two groups I have in mind. Would it not be wise if, in your holy zeal for justification by Christ, grace and faith alone, you abstained a bit from too much reliance upon justification by the work of the Reformers alone, and if you joined in the quest for an even clearer and better expression and communication of what the Reformers taught us? Or else you might be in danger of joining those who say, Lord, Lord, and yet don't do the will of the same Lord.

M.B.

Theology Professor
Switzerland

** We do not intend to take the Reformers as the final word. The truth of justification by grace alone, for Christ's sake, through faith, must call all our traditions into question. We hope to let it do that in future issues. But how can we go on from the Reformation if we have drifted so far away from the truth God restored to the church in the sixteenth century? —Ed.*

The Order of Salvation

Sir / The special issue of *Present Truth* devoted to discussions of "Justification by Faith" is the first copy of the magazine that I have seen. Its emphasis on the "material principle" of the Reformation and its opposition to Romish theology speaks clearly to these times when the Protestant churches have largely rejected the Bible.

Among the magazine's excellent pages, however, there was one article—so it seems to me—that did not properly represent the historic Protestant view. On page 18, Rome is characterized by the phrase, "Regeneration—a necessary condition for justification," and the Reformation is characterized by the phrase, "Regeneration—the immediate consequence and fruit of justification." With respect to this latter phrase, there are two points to be considered: (1) the article's argument from the Bible is incomplete and in places fallacious, and (2) the historical evidence necessary to conclude that the theology of the Reformation is in view, is missing.

On the first point I shall try to be brief. Page 18, column 2, after quoting Romans 4:5 that God justifies the ungodly, says, "This scripture certainly contradicts the notion that God justifies only regenerate saints." The paragraph fails to show any contradiction. The following paragraph correctly states that God justifies the uncircumcised; but Romans 4:9-11 (quoted) does not mention regeneration, as would be necessary for a conclusion about regeneration; and the appended explanation, which says that "the new life is the sign and witness of the blessing of justification," does not reproduce the thought of the passage from Romans, for the scripture says that circumcision (not the new life or regeneration) is the sign. Page 19, point 4, adds to Romans 5 something about a "new heart," which is not found in the text. Finally, so far as Scripture and argument go, page 19, column 2, says, "To those who respond to His drawing, the Spirit gives faith and repentance." Is this not Romanism? An unregenerate sinner, totally depraved, dead in sin, who does not seek God, whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, who has no fear of God before his eyes, cannot respond. He will become able to respond only after the Spirit resurrects him to newness of life.

The second point is the absence of evidence that Reformation theology makes faith prior to regeneration. The only attempt to provide evidence is a quotation from John Wesley on page 21. But John Wesley was a disciple of Arminius, whose rejection of the Reformation doctrines was declared heretical by the

Synod of Dort in 1620. Therefore Wesley's theology is not a competent testimony to what the Reformers taught.

One of the best witnesses of what the Reformation taught is the Westminster Confession of 1645-49. Its reliability is such that thousands of ministers from that day to this have subscribed to it. The men who framed it were the most devoted ministers of their day, the most competent and the best informed on the theology of the previous century. The Westminster Confession X, 1, 2, states, "God . . . enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God . . . renewing their wills . . . effectually drawing them . . . they being made willing by his grace . . . [are] enabled to answer this call and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it."

To which I should like to add John 5:24: "He who hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not come into judgment, but has [already, perfect tense] passed from death to life." Note that when the sinner hears and believes, i.e., exercises faith, he has already been regenerated.

Further evidence that this is the Reformation view and that the theologians who remained true to the Scripture so testify, will be found in W.G.T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, page 509: "A man is not regenerated because he first believes in Christ, but he believes in Christ because he has been regenerated." The whole chapter defends this position.

Similar thoughts are found in H.B. Smith, *System of Christian Theology*, page 557, and even in the wavering theologian, Augustus Strong, Volume III, page 825.

Then finally, Charles Hodge, the prince of American theologians, in successive chapters, discusses regeneration in Volume II, chapter 14, and in Volume III, chapter 15. Faith comes in chapter 16; and chapter 17 continues with justification. It is clear, therefore, that the article herein discussed does not correctly describe the Reformation position as against Romanism.

G.H.C.
University Professor
Indiana

**Thank you, Professor, for your stimulating comments. We are aware that some later Calvinists have tended to place regeneration before justification. As for Calvin, he declared, ". . . justifying grace is not separate from regeneration although these are distinct things."—John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, III, II, II. In fact, in a certain passage in the*

Consensus Tigurinus, Calvin very decisively places justification before regeneration, not in temporal, but in logical, sequence. He writes: "Dum fide inserti in Christi corpus, idque spiritus sancti virtute, primum iusti censemur gratuita iustitiae imputatione, de inde regeneramur in novam vitam."— Cited in Francois Wendel, Calvin: the Origins and Development of His Religious Thought, tr. Philip Mairet (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), p. 256.

A further comment: Surely you are not unaware that the whole Lutheran stream of the Reformation very decidedly places justification before regeneration. The Formula of Concord distinctly says that "the renewal . . . follows justification" and "succeeds the righteousness of faith" (see Book of Concord, p. 253). John Wesley did not follow Luther on everything, but he certainly followed Luther on the order of salvation. We would like some Lutheran scholars to comment on this letter.—Ed.



Allies of Pentecostalism?

Sir / I should like to know if you are planning to do anything on the subject of Explo '72 and Key '73 and Campus Crusade for Christ? These are allies of Pentecostalism and seem to be picking up many of the college people today. I have some in my parish who have gotten all excited about the work of the Holy Spirit in evangelism. I too feel that we need the Holy Spirit in evangelism, and we Lutherans have been very remiss in recognizing the work of the Holy Spirit. But the emotional type of Spirit-filled (?) evangelism of Bill Bright and the Campus Crusade movement hardly answers to what the Scriptures teach, especially in light of St. Paul's message of justification.

R.F.
Lutheran Pastor
Michigan

Address Letters to *Present Truth*, P.O. Box 1311, Fallbrook, California 92028.

Do We Distort the Gospel?



The truths of divine revelation are full of paradoxes. There appear to be many contradictions in the Bible. This is because truth can very often be expressed to the human mind only by two statements which appear to be antithetical.

Much harm is done when men seize only one side of the paradox and teach that as if it were the whole truth. Others feel that they can easily "harmonize the apparent contradictions." Failing to appreciate that the full truth is a paradox, they bend one side of the paradox to "harmonize" with the other. This results in a distortion of the message of God's Word. Have you ever looked into a mirror which throws a distorted image of your figure? All your features may be there, but they are thrown out of proportion.

Systematic theology may have its place, but there is a real danger in reducing the varied and paradoxical aspects of infinite truth to a rigid system of human logic.

Let us illustrate these principles with some concrete examples from the Word of God:

1. Fear and Confidence

The Bible writers commend that spirit which

fears God and trembles at His Word (see Isa. 66:5; Phil. 2:12; Heb. 4:1; Rev. 14:7). They also exhort us to approach God with fearlessness: "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace. . . ." "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter. . . ." Heb. 4:16; 10:19.

Here is a paradox. We are admonished to live before God with fear and fearlessness, trembling and confidence. Luther, perceiving the truth of the paradox, said that the Christian must live in a sort of "desperate confidence."

Consider the serious distortion that will result from only stressing one side of the paradox. The timid soul, distrustful of self, needs the assurance that the great King on the eternal throne opens wide His everlasting portals to the trembling touch of a little child. On the other hand, the confident clamor of the Jesus Revolution needs to be confronted with the truth that reverence and godly fear are the first law of worship. Our God is awful in majesty, holiness and sin-hating purity. We must not dare to approach Him with any careless familiarity or to make of Him a popular somebody. We remember what Luther said about some of the radical spirits of Wittenberg. "They talk to God," complained the Reformer, "as if He were a shoemaker's apprentice." We too protest against the irreverent familiarity of much popular revivalism. We do not need youth leaders who merely tell our young people to approach God with fearless boldness, lest they fall into the error of irreverent presumption. The youth need the whole truth of God's Word. When they are taught to fear the Majesty of heaven and to tremble at His judgment seat, then may they properly understand what it means to come boldly before Him by faith in the name of Jesus.

2. Rest and Activity

The gospel is a call to rest. The Lord invites us, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. 11:28. And the apostle Paul says, "He that is entered into His rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His." Heb. 4:10. Yet the believer in Jesus is just as

earnestly called to labor. Jesus adds, "Take My yoke [an instrument of toil and service] upon you. . . ." Matt. 11:29. The apostle Peter admonished believers, ". . . giving all diligence, add to your faith. . . . give diligence to make your calling and election sure." 2 Peter 1:5, 10. Again he says, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind. . . ." 1 Peter 1:13.

Jesus and His apostles repeatedly call us to strive, labor, work, be careful to maintain good works, carry the cross, suffer, endure tribulation, fight the good fight and run the race with patience.

He who rests most fully upon Christ and His free salvation will be the most earnest in active labor for Him. A continual emphasis on resting in Jesus and waiting on the Lord, to the exclusion of an adequate emphasis on the other side of the paradox, leads to mystical *quietism*. An exaggerated emphasis on the duty of Christian activity leads to pietistic *activism*. The true message of justification by faith lies in between the two distortions.

3. Faith and Works

It was Melancthon who said, "We are justified by faith alone; but the faith which justifies us is never alone." The great apostle Paul is noted for his insistence on faith as the only instrument to receive God's justifying grace. Yet Paul could be just as insistent on the necessity of a labor of love. No one will be saved by his good works; yet it is just as certain that no soul is saved who remains without good works.

People can become lazy through a one-sided emphasis on faith. Luther was led to complain about this. Of course, he was fully aware of the opposite error. The Reformer likened his efforts with some of his people to getting a drunken German peasant onto a horse—put him up on one side and he falls off the other. Some teachers will keep harping, "There is nothing for you to do. All you have to do is believe." We cannot deny that there is some truth in the statement. If faith is taken in the full, broad, Biblical sense, it is all that is necessary. But many people do not understand faith in the fullest sense. The preaching of the cross of Christ will create faith—a faith that will be busy and active in the service of God and man. Faith is not an opiate that lulls people to sleep. Faith is a stimulant that will stir all the energies of the soul. Never should the impression be given that good works are unnecessary or unimportant. No one can really read the practical teachings of Jesus and obtain

this distorted impression.

Two things are clearly taught in Paul—justification by faith and a final judgment according to works. These two great truths may appear to be paradoxical, but both need to be taught. In his great classic on *The Doctrine of Justification* (reprinted by The Banner of Truth Trust, 1961), James Buchanan reports how his teacher, Dr. Chalmers, used to say, "I would have every preacher insist strenuously on these two doctrines—a present Justification by grace, through faith alone—and a future Judgment according to works." Buchanan adds, "And all faithful ministers have made use of both, that they might guard equally against the peril of self-righteous legalism, on the one hand, and of practical antinomianism on the other."—Pages 252, 253.

4. Law and Gospel

The whole Bible may be divided into these two—law and gospel. Law requires us to do, work and run the way of God's commandments. Anything that commands us what we should do, how we should live and what we must be, is law, e.g., "Love thy neighbour," "Be kindly affectioned one to another," "Love not the world," "Live peaceably with all men." Law is not only taught in the Old Testament but all through the teachings of Jesus and His apostles. On the other hand, the gospel says, "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord," "Be still, and know that I am God." It does not tell us what our hand owes to God but proclaims what God's hand freely gives to us. In Jesus Christ, God gives us all that the law requires (Rom. 10:4)—perfect righteousness for its fulfillment and perfect atonement for its satisfaction.

Edmund Schlink points out in his *Theology of the Lutheran Confessions*, "As the law cannot be preached without Christ, so Christ's work cannot be preached without the law."—Page 86. How could we know our sin and the greatness of our debt without the law? (Rom. 3:20; 7:7-13). He who has never had the law instruct him about the bitterness of his sin, could never appreciate the sweetness of the gospel of saving grace. Further, since the gospel gives us all that the law demands of us (Rom. 10:4), how can we appreciate what God gives unless we have first heard the law?

Law and gospel must be carefully distinguished. This is the cornerstone of the Reformation. Yet both must be preserved in proper tension, and, as the Formula of Concord says, "These two doctrines [law

and gospel], we believe and confess, should ever and ever be diligently inculcated in the Church of God even to the end of the world."—*Book of Concord* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1957), p. 261.

The power of gospel preaching will be in proportion to the power of preaching the law. Let the law fall into disuse, and the gospel becomes a tame old tale, a mere sentiment, "cheap grace," a message that bores the world. Let the law be exalted and proclaimed as the expression of God's holy will, and sinners will cry out, "What must I do to be saved?" On the other hand, when the gospel is pushed aside, moralism, pharisaism and self-righteousness triumph, and the social-gospel advocates try to establish the kingdom of God by human activity.

If we stand by the faith of the Reformation doctrine of justification by faith, we shall see that the gospel does not cancel out the law nor does the law weaken the free gift of the gospel. Neither can be neglected without neglecting the other.

We live in an age when authority is under fire, and back of all this is the human hostility against the authority of God, His government and His law. Much of today's so-called preaching of justification by faith by so-called Protestants, is wishy-washy sentimentalism that does not lead the hearers to repent of their transgression of God's holy law nor does it produce lives that show any great respect for that law. Such preaching bears no resemblance to the message of the Puritans, the Reformers and, least of all, the apostles.

Law and gospel are a paradox. They must be preserved in proper tension. Unless we do this, we shall distort the gospel of Christ.

5. The Nature of a Christian Man

Is a Christian a sinner or a saint? Luther struggled with this problem until he produced the famous formula that became a firm plank in all Reformation theology—*simul justus et peccator*, which means, *at the same time righteous and a sinner*. This is a tremendous paradox. The Roman Catholic party could not grasp it. But the more this paradox is examined, the more it shines with light, throwing clarity on many otherwise unsolvable riddles.

The believer in Jesus is righteous before God because God pronounces him righteous for the sake of Christ. Further, he has by the Spirit become a new creature and has actually begun to be righteous. On the other hand, he must not imagine that he is without sin (1 John 1:8), must confess the sinfulness

of his nature (Rom. 7:14-25) and must constantly plead forgiveness in that he continues to fall short of God's ideal in his best endeavors and holiest duties (Eccl. 7:20; Rom. 3:23). He still has a sinful nature the same as all men, and, because of this, the flesh fights against the Spirit and the Spirit fights against the flesh (Gal. 5:17).

In order to have a true view of the Christian life, both sides of the paradox need to be considered—daily victory over sins and the sinful nature by the indwelling power of God's Spirit on the one hand, and the inevitability of sinfulness on the other hand.

The "holiness movement" emphasizes the victorious life possible to the Christian. It dwells on such statements as, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." It emphasizes much truth that cold, formal orthodoxy needs to hear. Yet the "holiness movement" falls into the serious distortion that comes by too little attention to the other side of the paradox—the inevitable sinfulness of all the saints in this life, which is graphically portrayed in Romans 7:14-25.¹

The modern Pentecostal movement appeals to the human desire to escape from the continual consciousness of personal sinfulness and human inadequacy imposed on even the saints because of the inherited sinful nature. Many are thus tempted to look for some exciting experience in the Spirit to lift them out of the daily tension of being *simul justus et peccator*. Much of the holiness-Pentecostal emphasis is a premature seizure of the glory that shall be—an attempt to bring the *not yet* of eternity into the *now* of historical process.

On the other hand, much of the more orthodox stream of Protestantism falls into the distortion of negativism through a correct but unbalanced emphasis on human sinfulness. Consequently, a great number of professing Christians easily excuse sin, carouse on God's mercy and expect the hereafter to bring such victory as they ought to experience here and now.

6. Security and Danger of Falling

A Calvinistic Presbyterian meets an Arminian Methodist and says, "I hear that you Methodists believe in falling from grace."

The Methodist replies, "I hear that you Presbyterians believe in horse stealing."

¹Most "holiness" authors and preachers try to avoid the embarrassing implication of Romans 7:14-25 by saying that this passage does not apply to a victorious Christian or a Spirit-filled believer. Of course, this argument is not new—it was used by Roman Catholics who opposed the Reformers.

"We certainly do not," says the Presbyterian.

"But don't you think it possible for a Presbyterian to steal horses?" quires the other.

"Yes, of course it is possible, but we don't believe in it," answers the Presbyterian.

"Neither do we *believe* in falling from grace," says the Methodist.

Most of our readers will be well aware of the arguments used to support both Calvinism and Arminianism on this point. The Calvinist likes to stress the security of the believer (less sophisticated traditions call it "once-saved-always-saved"). The Arminian is well armed with those scriptures which warn the believer about the danger of falling away from faith in Christ. This writer was being questioned by a Christian gentleman in New Zealand at the conclusion of a forum presentation. He wanted to know whether this writer stood solidly on what he claimed was the Reformation platform of "once-saved-always-saved." The conversation went something like this:

Mr. X: "You don't deny the doctrine of eternal security for the man who has accepted Christ, do you?"

R.D.B.: "I believe in the eternal security of the *believer*. But remember, Bible believing is not just one act. In the New Testament, the word *believe* is generally written in the present continuous tense."

Mr. X: "Then I can take it that you are not Arminian?"

R.D.B.: "That's right!"

Mr. X: "Oh, I'm glad to hear that!"

R.D.B.: "Tell me, upon what scripture do you base your doctrine of eternal security?"

Mr. X: " 'I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.' John 10:28. 'Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost. . . . ' John 17:12. 'Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.' Rom. 8:30."

R.D.B.: "While we can both gain great comfort from these scriptures that pledge security to the believer, do you also believe the following scriptures? 'Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well: because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear.' Rom. 11:19, 20. 'Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away.' John 15:2. 'But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have

preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.' 1 Cor. 9:27. 'Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.' 2 Peter 1:10. 'And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprovable in His sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.' Col. 1:21-23. 'Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?' Heb. 10:29. 'Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.' Gal. 5:4. Now do you believe these texts too?"

Mr. X: "Yes, I have to believe those scriptures too, because they are in the Bible."

R.D.B.: "But do you really take these scriptures just as seriously as the other texts you cited about the security of the believer?"

Mr. X: "I don't suppose I really do."

R.D.B.: "This is why Luther had the correct position on this question. He fully realized that the truth of the matter could only be expressed by two groups of statements which seem to be antithetical. His emphasis was neither Calvinistic nor Arminian. He took each side of the paradox with equal seriousness and preserved the tension between confidence in his security in Christ and fear of the possibility of his falling from grace. I will not ask you to take the texts you quoted to me less seriously. I simply appeal to you to take the other side of the paradox just as seriously. Unless you do this, your view of truth will be distorted."

Mr. X: "Thank you. I'd like to do some further study on this point."

7. Predestination and Atonement for All

Some of my friends feel that they must believe in a "limited atonement" in order to be consistent with the Bible doctrine of predestination. Some of the letters to the editor even claim that the entire Reformation stood on the concept of predestination and limited atonement. We readily admit that,

humanly speaking, predestination and limited atonement are consistent. But we also hasten to add, "Extreme views have the advantage of remarkable consistency."—H. Bezzel, *Berufung and Beruf* (Neuendettelsau, 1926), p. 64. Such consistency is achieved by either ignoring or destroying the paradoxical nature of divine truth.

We would also point out that the greatest Reformer believed in predestination and an unlimited atonement. Some will reply, "Unfortunately, Luther wasn't consistent." If consistency means destroying the Biblical paradox, Luther would be first to admit his teaching was not consistent. But he was too well aware that the truths of divine revelation often appear antithetical and illogical to human reasoning.

In the book of Romans, Paul does not start with predestination as his theme. He moves from justification by faith to predestination. He does this to show that God is wholly the author of our faith and that every notion of human merit must be rejected.

Even those Reformers who adopted the view of a more rigid determinism did not defend their view of predestination for its own sake. Their central concern was the exclusion of human merit. Luther found the doctrine of predestination useful when disputing with men like Erasmus, because it took the entire initiative of our salvation out of our fallen wills and placed it in the divine will.

Let us now look at the other side of the paradox—the doing and dying of Jesus Christ for the sins of the whole world. Does the Bible teach that Jesus really died for all?

"And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." 1 John 2:2.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16.

"For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all." Rom. 11:32.

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:10, 11.

"And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15.

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Rom. 3:23.

"For there is no respect of persons with God." Rom. 2:11.

"Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Rom. 5:18.

"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead." 2 Cor. 5:14.

"For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." 1 Tim. 2:5, 6.

"For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe." 1 Tim. 4:10.

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. . . ." Titus 2:11.

"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Peter 3:9.

Not long ago this writer read a book on *Predestination* by a rigid predestinarian. A very large section of the book was devoted to "explaining" and "harmonizing" such texts as cited above with his rigid determinism. After many pages of juggling, labored explanations and fancy foot work, he expressed his satisfaction in having a view that was consistent. "Extreme views have the advantage of remarkable consistency."

Luther once received a letter from a man who was deeply troubled about whether he was one of those predestined to salvation. The Reformer replied:

"Look at the words [of John 3:16], I beseech you, to determine how and of whom He is speaking. 'God so loved the world,' and 'that whosoever believeth in Him.'

"Now, the 'world' does not mean Peter and Paul alone, but the entire human race. All together. And no one is here excluded. God's Son was given for all. All should believe, and all who believe should not perish, etc. Take hold of your own nose, I beseech you, to determine whether you are not a human being (that is, part of the world) and, like any other man, belong to the number of those comprised by the word, 'all'."—*What Luther Says*, comp. E. Plass (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1959), Vol. II, p. 608.

One of the reasons for the remarkable success of the Wesleyan revival was its universal appeal that Christ died for all. The sheer good news of God's unlimited grace set hearts singing, voices ringing and feet running. Wesley abhorred the thought of any cold determinism. His critics were able to point to some weaknesses in his theology, but Wesley had a better over-all concept of the character of God than did some of his more orthodox critics.² And few would deny that he accomplished more good.

Let us not distort the plain utterances of the Bible to fit our scheme of systematic theology.

²We hope that some of our readers who were disappointed with our criticism of Wesley's doctrine of the "second blessing" in the September-October, 1972, issue of *Present Truth*, will take heart at this comment.

8. Justification and Sanctification

We cannot speak without paradoxes when we deal with the relation between justification and sanctification. The whole of church history has been a struggle to hold them in proper tension.

We are justified solely by a work *outside* of ourselves, but we are sanctified by God's Spirit within us. The essence of Roman Catholic legalism is to depend on the work of inward renewal for acceptance with God. But the essence of Protestant antinomianism is to suppose that we can be sanctified and fitted for heaven by Christ's work outside of us.

No amount of sanctification can secure one's admittance to the kingdom of grace; but justification is always endangered if sanctification is not exercised. Obedience cannot secure the blessing of forgiveness; but by willful and persistent disobedience, the birth-right may be sold.

But now we must look at the other side of the picture. Sanctification is endangered if it is not based on justification. There must be a constant return to justification, to the word of forgiveness, if sanctification is to be preserved from Pharisaism and self-righteousness. Prayer and service are only good by gracious acceptance. The truth of justification calls all that we do into question. True Christian growth can only exist where there is a growing appreciation of justification. We can never reach a point in our progress in sanctification where our acceptance with God does not rest entirely on forgiveness of sins.

The constant need of justification by faith means that human sinfulness is inescapable—for there is no man on earth that does not sin (Eccl. 7:20), and all continue to fall short of God's glory (Rom. 3:23). But sanctification teaches us of our positive duty to avoid sin. On one hand we are called to repose; on the other hand, to a life of fervent activity.

Justification gives us perfection, and sanctification urges us to press on toward it. Through justifying faith the heart is cleansed of all sin; yet are we called to go on purifying our souls by obeying the truth. And so we could go on to enumerate many aspects of the paradoxical relation between justification and sanctification. It is the paradox of present possession and future hope; to be pure and yet impure; to possess all things, yet have nothing (2 Cor. 6:10); to rest in faith, yet labor in love; to be made free by faith, yet to be made a servant of all by love; to be consoled, yet to be admonished. And we think of the paradoxical experience of the great apostle:

"We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." 2 Cor. 4:8-11.

How to Relate to the Paradox

In this life we must live by accepting and living with the paradox of having and not having, of being righteous and unrighteous, of being complete and incomplete, of rest and activity, of believing and working, of confidence and fear, of being able to do all things through Christ and not being able to do the things that we would, of avoiding sin and confessing its inevitability, of victory over sin and mourning that when we would do good evil is present with us, of advancement and repentance, of freedom and subjection, and so on. It is the mark of immaturity, we repeat, to emphasize only one side of the paradox, especially so as to cancel out the truth of the other side.

Law and gospel, faith and works, justification and sanctification, and all the great paradoxes, need to be kept in proper tension. If we proclaim the glory of God's justifying grace and imagine that this alone will motivate people to earnestly pursue sanctification, it will not be long before we shall realize that the sinful nature needs to be warned and sharply admonished in the pathway of obedience. But lest the language of Christian experience should become all too loud and confident, there must be a return to the critical sternness of justification; otherwise, sanctification will turn into romanticism or dangerous "holiness" pretensions.

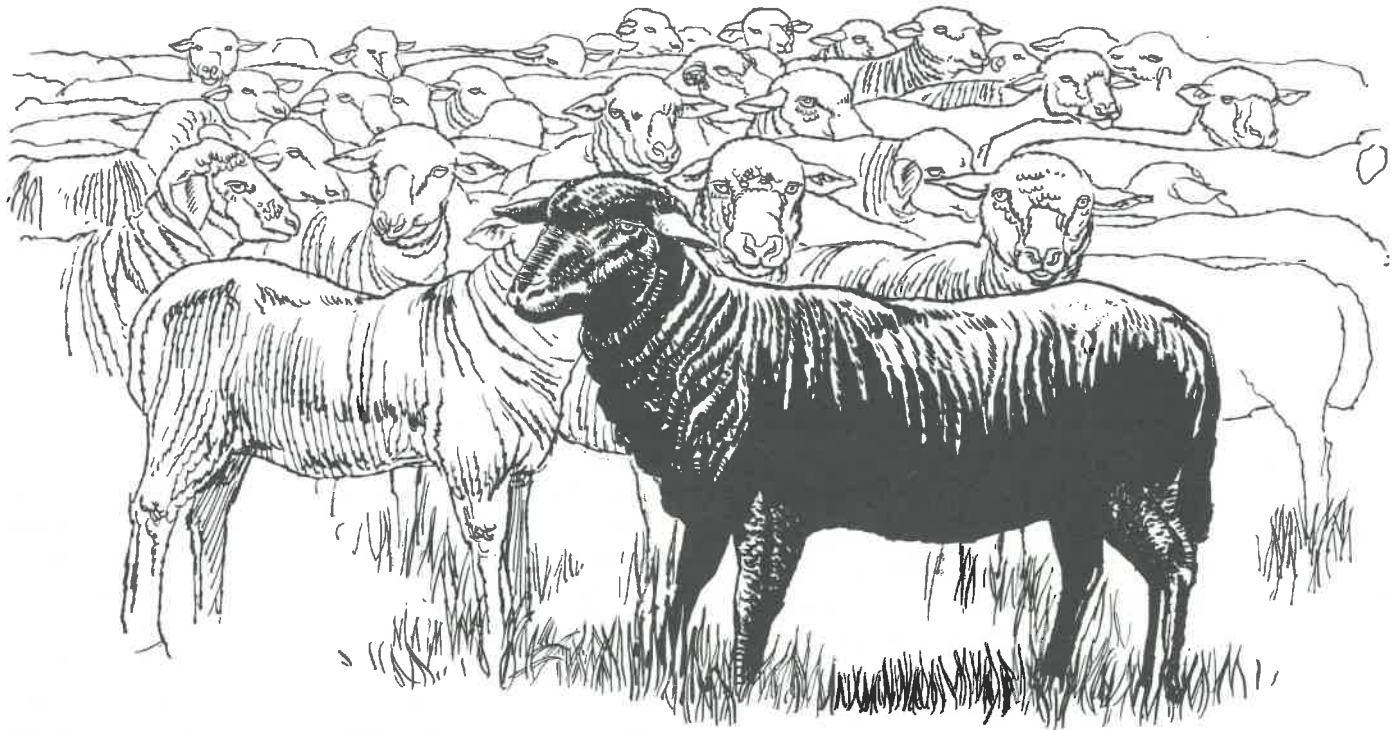
Think of flying a plane. There are two anti-theoretical forces—gravity and speed. One must not cancel out the other, but the secret of flying is to keep both in proper tension. If the tension of speed against gravity is not maintained, a person comes crashing down. If gravity ceases, he goes off into orbit somewhere.

Yours for balanced, undistorted preaching of Bible truth,

R.D.B.

Pentecostalism and the Australian Forum

Geoffrey J. Paxton, B.D.



No one can seriously deny the rapid spread of the charismatic, or neo-Pentecostal, movement over the last couple of decades. *Christianity Today* had this to say about this phenomenon:

"The force that appears to be making the greatest contribution to the current Christian revival around the globe is Pentecostalism. This movement, which began several decades ago, and which in its early years was very sectarian in character, is now becoming ecumenical in the deepest sense. A neo-Pentecostalism has lately appeared that includes many thousands of Roman Catholics. . . . A new era of the Spirit has begun. The charismatic experience moves Christians far beyond glossolalia. . . . There is light on the horizon. An evangelical renaissance is becoming visible along the Christian highway from the frontiers of the sects to the high places of the Roman Catholic communion. This appears to be one of the most strategic moments in the Church's history."—*Christianity Today*, Feb. 4, 1972, p. 8.

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From *The Australian Church Record*, Feb. 22, 1973, pp. 2, 3. Reprinted by permission.

This type of statement is rather typical of the many comments on this movement, which has made and continues to make colossal strides into every corner of Christendom.

Out of the Womb of Last-Century Revivalism

A historical blood test will show, beyond dispute, that the charismatic, or neo-Pentecostal, child comes from the holiness movement of the last century.

"John Wesley was father to much of the 19th century American religious fervor; one of his children was the Holiness Movement which gave rise to the Pentecostalism of the 20th century."—Kilian McDonnell, "The Classical Pentecostal Movement," *New Covenant*, Vol. I, No. 11 (May, 1972), p. 1. (*New Covenant* is a monthly publication serving the Catholic charismatic renewal.)

Bruner cites the Pentecostal historian, Charles Conn, who also affirms this historical descent, saying, ". . . the Pentecostal movement is an extension of

the holiness revival that occurred during the last half of the nineteenth century.”—Quoted in Frederick Dale Bruner, *A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970), p. 44.

Family Squabble and Subsequent Leaving Home

The child of the holiness movement was a black sheep of the family who now appears to have the privilege of painting the rest of the family.

The dominant emphasis of the holiness movement of the last century (and its twentieth-century successors) was “the victorious and Spirit-filled life.” Its focal point was the attainment of “an in-filling experience,” a degree of “surrender” which resulted in an uninhibited walk with God. Boardman, Inskip, A. B. Simpson, R. A. Torrey, Andrew Murray and Hannah W. Smith were some of the leading figures in this movement.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, some within the holiness movement began to speak about—and to seek for—a “baptism of fire.” This baptism of fire was seen as a miraculous visitation of the Holy Spirit. Opposition arose from those who regarded two blessings as quite sufficient! Despite such opposition, the “advocates of fire” continued to make an impact on the rest of the family with publications such as *Live Coals of Fire* (first published in October, 1899), which spoke of “the blood that cleans up, the Holy Ghost that fills up, the fire that burns up, and the dynamite that blows up.” The explosion took place eventually, and the Pentecostal child came into the world insisting on the physical sign of speaking in tongues as the evidence of the baptism in the Spirit.

It is important at this stage to emphasize that though the tongues issue caused the split in the family, resulting in the leaving home of the Pentecostal child, the basic underlying theology of the two groups was and is the same. Harold Lindsell quite rightly says:

“ . . . members of these groups [Keswick movement, the holiness movement and other deeper-life movements] believe in the in-filling of the Holy Spirit, believe that every Christian should be so filled, and believe there are conditions the believer must meet in order to have this experience. Many of them have had an in-filling experience and are convinced that they are in no way inferior in their daily walk to those whose baptism has been accompanied by tongues-speaking.”—Harold Lindsell, *Christianity Today*, Dec. 8, 1972, p. 9.

Family Reunion

The Pentecostal descendant grew in stature outside the family for some sixty years and was seen by Dr. Henry Van Dusen (Union Theological Seminary) as the “third force” in Christendom. Then about 1960, in the words of John Sherrill (*They Speak With Other Tongues*), “the [family] walls came tumbling down.” At first hundreds, and then thousands, and now millions, of Episcopalians, Methodists, Lutherans, Baptists, Presbyterians and Congregationalists began to be painted by the hitherto separated and somewhat outcast brother. The reunited brethren have become known as the neo-Pentecostal, or charismatic, movement. This neo-Pentecostal, or charismatic, force has become a transdenominational phenomenon which, though functioning outside the structures of traditional Pentecostalism, is in basic agreement with it.

Some members of the (deeper life, holiness movement) family refused—and still do refuse—to be painted. They disclaim any allegiance with this vociferous brother and usually concentrate on the superficial differences, such as liturgical conduct (“dancing before the Lord,” etc.) or even speaking with more than one tongue. Such, in the words of Lindsell already quoted, “are convinced that they are in no way inferior in their daily walk to those whose baptism has been accompanied by tongues-speaking.” This may well be the case, but there is also a certain embarrassment at the rather breathtaking growth of these brethren.

Why did big brother make such an impact on the family? Why are scores of folk from evangelical churches (to say nothing of the many non-evangelical churches) “going over” to the ranks of this movement? This question has not received anything like the ventilation that it deserves as far as this writer is concerned.

Big Brother Leads the Family to Rome via Duquesne and Notre Dame

“Within a month, what had begun at Duquesne spread to the University of Notre Dame and to the Catholic student parish of Michigan State University. From these three centers it spread further. . . . Soon people were speaking of a ‘Pentecostal movement’ in the Catholic Church.”—Edward D. O’Connor, *The Pentecostal Movement in the Catholic Church* (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1971), pp. 15, 16.

So writes the scholarly Benedictine, Edward O’Connor, concerning the beginnings and spread of the charismatic phenomenon within the ranks of the

Church of Rome.

How do the respective groups (non-Catholic charismatics and Catholic charismatics) view this inroad into the Church of Rome? Generally,¹ the non-Catholic neo-Pentecostals see the inclusion of Rome as a sign that God has decided to forego His denominational allegiances with a show of great power. Gelpi speaks of the Pentecostal phenomenon as having ". . . shown no respect for denominational boundaries. And with the appearance of Roman Catholic Pentecostalism, the movement may have achieved something like an ultimate."—Donald L. Gelpi, *Pentecostalism: A Theological Viewpoint* (New York: Paulist Press, 1971), p. 33.

Rev. Thomas A. White, in a circular letter to priests from the Catholic Enquiry Centre in Sydney, Australia, had this to say:

"My conclusion, for what it is worth, is that the Catholic Pentecostal Movement holds great promise for genuine renewal within the Church. Its power to revitalise the faith of many Catholics (particularly young people) is quite remarkable. Its possible ecumenical value is far reaching."

Kilian McDonnell, in his work, *Catholic Pentecostalism: Problems in Evaluation*, says:

"Within Catholicism Pentecostalism has met with considerably less resistance than it has within the historic Protestant churches, partly because the concept of the 'wondrous' is more at home in Catholicism than in main-stream Protestantism."—Kilian McDonnell, *Catholic Pentecostalism: Problems in Evaluation* (Pecos, N. Mex.: Dove Publications, 1970), p. 31.

McDonnell is not the only one who sees (what he inaccurately terms) "Pentecostalism" as having deep affinities with the spirituality of Rome. O'Connor makes no bones about asserting the same:

"Although they derive from Protestant backgrounds, the Pentecostal churches are not typically Protestant in their belief, attitudes or practices."—O'Connor, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

". . . it cannot be assumed that the Pentecostal movement represents an incursion of Protestant influence."—*Ibid.*, p. 32.

"... Catholics who have accepted Pentecostal spirituality have found it to be fully in harmony with their traditional faith and life. They experience it, not as a borrowing from an alien religion, but as a connatural development of their own."—*Ibid.*, p. 28.

"Moreover, the doctrine that is developing in the Pentecostal churches today seems to be going through stages very

similar to those which occurred in the early Middle Ages when the classical doctrine was taking shape."—*Ibid.*, pp. 193, 194.

It would not be wide of the mark to say that, if the next quotation from Fr. O'Connor is correct, neo-Pentecostalism ought to be heralded by the Vatican as a revival of the truest and best of her religion:

"Similarly, the traditional devotions of the Church have taken on more meaning. Some people have been brought back to a frequent use of the sacrament of Penance through the experience of the baptism in the Spirit. Others have discovered a place for devotion to Mary in their lives, whereas previously they had been indifferent or even antipathetic towards her. One of the most striking effects of the Holy Spirit's action has been to stir up devotion to the Real Presence in the Eucharist."—Edward D. O'Connor, *Pentecost in the Catholic Church* (Pecos, N. Mex.: Dove Publications, 1967), pp. 14, 15.

Earlier we raised a question regarding the impact of neo-Pentecostalism on evangelical Christians. We must now ask further questions. Is the experience the same in both Catholic and non-Catholic circles? Is this the same Spirit which led the Reformers to regard so much that is basic to Catholicism as a disastrous deviation—indeed, negation—of the gospel of grace? These questions, like the questions raised earlier, ought to receive serious consideration by all who are concerned for truth. Lindsell speaks of a painful plight (*loc. cit.*, p. 11) of Catholics who have been regenerated and who have spoken with tongues, but where is this plight being seen? The plight seems to be that there is little plight being experienced by so many who are Catholics and "Spirit-baptized" at the same time.

"Victory-Life," Pentecostalism and Romanism—Fundamental Affinity?

We emphasized previously that there is an underlying agreement between so much of evangelical holiness teaching and Pentecostalism. We have also seen how some avant-garde Roman theologians are bent on stressing the fundamental affinity between Pentecostal spirituality and that of Rome. We now propose a third point of investigation: Is it possible that there is a direct (though underlying) affinity between so much evangelical "victory-life" spirituality and classic Roman Catholic spirituality? The noted Catholic author, Louis Bouyer, has claimed as much:

"The Protestant Revival . . . recalls the best and most authentic elements of the Catholic tradition. . . ."—Louis

¹Note the qualification. It is not easy to obtain an accurate account of this sort of thing. Such has been the dominant view expressed by non-Catholic neo-Pentecostals with whom I have come into contact.

Bouyer, *The Spirit and Forms of Protestantism* (Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1964), p. 186.

"We see in every Protestant country, Christians who owed their religion to the movement we have called, in general, Revivalism, attain a more or less complete rediscovery of Catholicism."—*Ibid.*, p. 188.

"... the instinctive orientation of the revivals toward the Catholic... would bring in that way a reconciliation between the Protestant Movement and the [Roman] Church. . . ."—*Ibid.*, p. 197.

Bouyer closes with an appeal to his fellow Catholics to prepare for the inevitable return of the separated brethren under the influence of contemporary revivals.

The Australian Forum

The Australian Forum came into being a little over twelve months ago. It is a nondenominational group dedicated to the gospel of grace alone as it is expounded in the New Testament and reaffirmed by the Reformers in the sixteenth century.

The main activity of the Australian Forum since its inception has been the conducting of forums in every major city of Australia, in Auckland, New Zealand, and in Seattle, Portland, Sacramento, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Denver and other places in the U.S. These forums have taken the form of presentation of papers and dialogue following.

The official organ of the Australian Forum is a magazine called *Present Truth*, which, over the past dozen months or so, has gone out, free of charge, to hundreds of thousands of readers. *Present Truth* is directed to Christian leaders mainly in the hope that it may provoke thought and fruitful action for the gospel.

Why did the Australian Forum come into being? It came into being because it firmly believes that there is only one gospel, which is the gospel of grace alone, and because it fears this gospel is being lost in an avalanche of religious emotionalism and subjectivism in our day. The forum believes that there is a basic affinity between the following pairs: (1) much victory-life piety—Pentecostalism (both traditional and neo); (2) Pentecostalism—Romanism; (3) much victory-life piety—Romanism.

The Australian Forum believes that, essentially, O'Connor of Notre Dame is correct in affirming the essentially non-Reformational character of Pentecostalism and its deep affinities with the medieval spirituality of Rome. The forum also believes that Louis Bouyer is correct, not so much in his optimism

concerning "the inevitable return of the separated brethren," but in his aligning of much of revivalistic-type Christianity with the "most authentic elements of the Catholic tradition."

The Australian Forum has sought never to enter into cheap and uncharitable polemics. The emphasis, from the beginning, has been on attempting to make clear the objective gospel of the *aliena justitia Christi* and to measure present-day claims against it. The forum has sought to stress (albeit imperfectly) what Lindsell has called "the heart of the salvatory process" (Lindsell, *loc. cit.*, p. 11). Though it has sought to challenge the charismatic movement on the relationship between its claims and the gospel, it has also sought to stir evangelicalism into a fresh look at its understanding of sanctification.

It is easy to be cheaply anti-Roman, and the Australian Forum—whether or not it has succeeded—has sought to avoid such. Much earnest and sincere discussion has taken place with Roman Catholics in order to discover their opinion of the basis of fellowship. The experience of the members of the forum has been that the "baptism in the Spirit" all too often looks like it is being made the basis of such fellowship, with the tragic brushing aside of the fundamental doctrinal questions.² It would be wrong to suggest that Protestant neo-Pentecostals are less prone to do this than their Catholic brethren, for such is not at all the case.

The Australian Forum believes that the question of theology is *the* central question, and its forums and magazine have therefore been dedicated solely to theological considerations:

1. The fundamental nature of the gospel as the authoritative declaration of what God has done in and through Jesus Christ, has been stressed over and over again. Negatively, the forum has stressed that the gospel is not at all primarily concerned with what God is doing *in* the believer. Testimony, therefore, is testimony to the objective (historical) realities of the *kerugma*. The pulsating heart of the New Testament is the Lordship of Jesus Christ over sin, demonstrated in forgiveness for the believing subject and decisive defeat for the devil and his cosmic henchmen. The New Testament writers *never* left this fact, nor ought we. Ethics are the explication and application of this fact for the individual and collective existence of the believer.

²Cf. *Ibid.* (remarks at bottom of page).

2. The Australian Forum has again and again sought to make clear that at conversion—itsself a work of the gospel—the believer receives all that God has to give him in this life, save, of course, increased understanding of what has taken place and what will most assuredly take place at the *parousia*. The notion of “receiving Christ” — an unfortunate expression smacking of man’s cherished autonomy—and then, at some subsequent stage, receiving the Spirit of His “fullness,” is seen by members of the forum as a flagrant—though no doubt unintentional—distortion of the Biblical presentation. Needless to say, this is a challenge to much victory-life, Pentecostal, neo-Pentecostal and Catholic “subsequence theology.”

3. The Australian Forum has sought to represent what it firmly believes to be the New Testament concept of the Christian life. The Christian life is one of unrelenting conflict (Gal. 5:17) until Jesus comes to “change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body” (Phil. 3:21). To deny this, explicitly or implicitly, and to offer release here and now, is to rob the Christian of his hope. The reason for the *parousia* meaning so little to so many for so long, might well be here—in the offer of here-and-now fullness by countless propagators of a totally un-Biblical “victory.”

A great deal of work needs to be done in the area of empirical piety and the relation of such to the “new man” of the New Testament. To put it another way, the concept of the “changed life” needs serious revision in the light of the teaching of the New Testament. Take the example of General Ralph E. Haines, Jr., quoted by Lindsell:

“What has the baptism of the Holy Spirit done for me? I think it has made me a better man, a better husband, and more understanding of my fellow man. I am much more excited by prayer and Bible study—and I believe more perceptive in both. I am a far stronger witness for Jesus Christ. . . .” —*Ibid.*, p. 9.

Now for a question: Could the reader imagine Paul saying the same sort of thing—“The Spirit-baptism has made me aware of being better [man, husband], more understanding [of others], more perceptive and a stronger witness”? Does Lindsell realize the import of what he writes when he says:

“Many of them [members of the Keswick, holiness and other deeper-life movements] have had an infilling experience and are convinced that they are in no way inferior in their daily walk to those whose . . .” —*Ibid.*

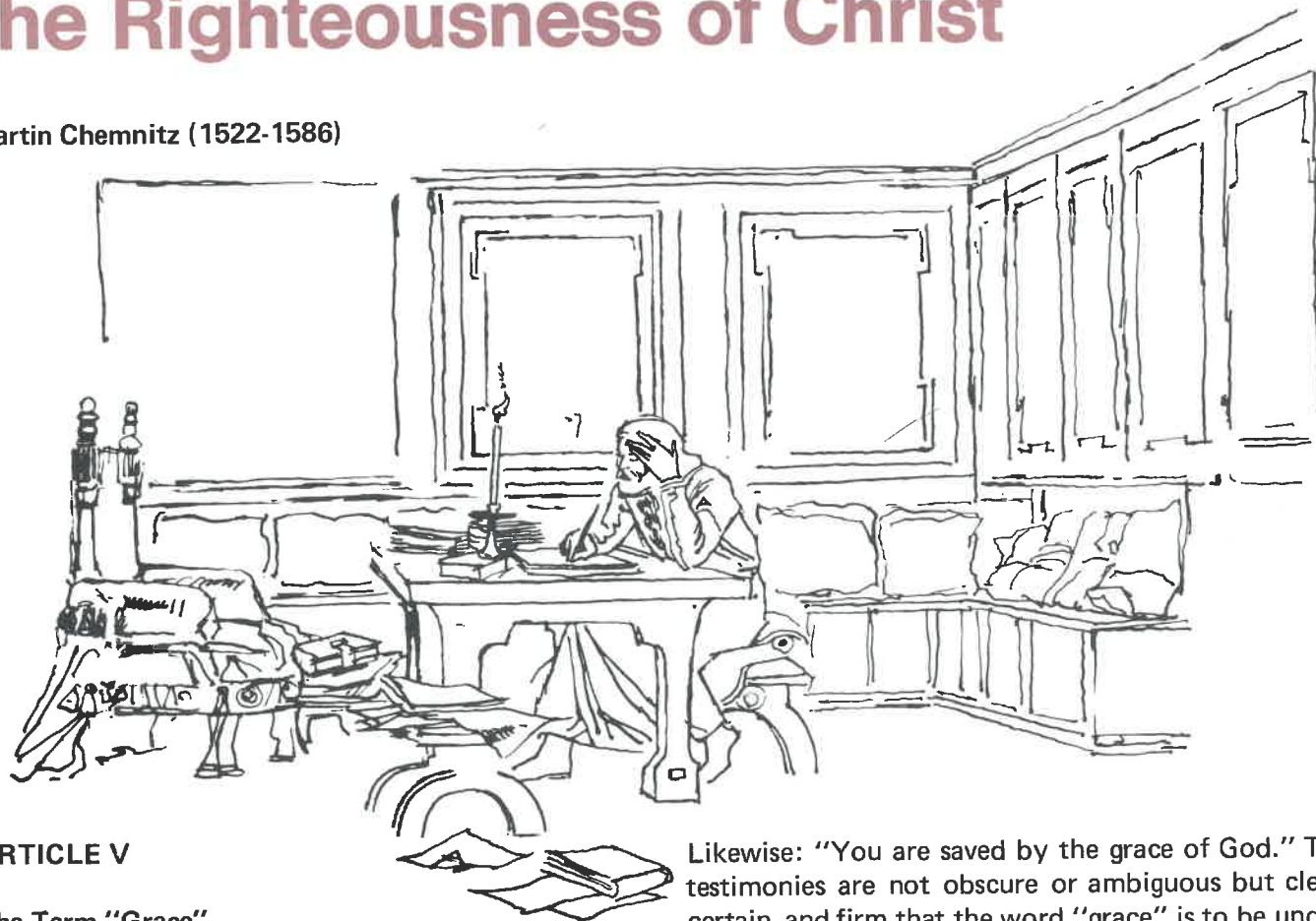
Does the infilling of the Spirit produce such an awareness of one’s spiritual worth? Members of the Australian Forum would like to suggest that the opposite is more likely to be the case. One would realize how poor a husband he is, etc. (cf. Rom. 3:27; 1 Cor. 1:26-31).

Sanctification, the Australian Forum has sought to stress, is not justification superseded but justification in action. Sanctification is the gospel peeping through the unpretentious existence of the one who has been confiscated by the Lord of glory. Nor is sanctification “a moment-by-moment freedom from sin” in the sense of “having none of it” and “not doing any of it.” Sanctification is an ever-increasing awareness of just how much of sin we do have and how much of it we, in actual fact, do! This is always one of the great needs of the Christian, for we are naturally predisposed to find our sinfulness in thought and deed quite incredible. Of one thing we may be quite sure—the Spirit will never diminish our awareness of sin; we will always want to say, “O wretched man that I am,” and, under the same Spirit’s leadership, go on to greater awareness of what grace means! Hence, “O wretched man that I am! . . . I thank God. . . .” is always the cry of the maturing Christian.

Bad theology is the cause of all our dilemmas. From whence comes this bad theology? Some would like to answer, “From incompetent preachers and teachers.” It must follow that this is the case. In what, however, does such incompetency consist? The Australian Forum feels that it can give but one fundamental answer to this question: “A failure to handle the Bible in a satisfactory manner.” Herein lies what could well be the greatest need of the evangelical church of God today. We do not know, countless thousands of sincere believers do not know, how to read the Bible. We are talking here of that ugly-sounding word *methodology*. We all have one, but it is having the correct one that is needed. The Australian Forum, with all its imperfections, has sought and is seeking to make a contribution towards a clear grasp of the gospel, which is the power of God for healthful existence.

How Grace Justifies Us by the Righteousness of Christ

Martin Chemnitz (1522-1586)



ARTICLE V

The Term "Grace"

1 The word "grace" in Scripture often means favor, good will, or mercy; sometimes, indeed, it also means the gifts which are conferred from good will. However, the question is what in particular the term "grace" means in those passages in which Paul argues that we are justified freely through the grace of God.

Editorial Note: From time to time, *Present Truth* will be reprinting beacon lights of the past on justification by faith. Following is a most significant portion of material from the pen of Martin Chemnitz. Chemnitz was the greatest pupil of Melancthon and a prince among the Lutheran divines of his age. The Romanists called him a second Martin Luther. He brilliantly defended the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith against the Council of Trent. We here reprint a section from a translation of his book, *Examination of the Council of Trent* (Concordia Publishing House), with kind permission from the publishers.

From *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part I, by Martin Chemnitz, translated by Fred Kramer. Copyright 1971 by Concordia Publishing House. Used by permission.

This significant book can be obtained from Concordia Publishing House, 3558 South Jefferson Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri 63118.

Likewise: "You are saved by the grace of God." The testimonies are not obscure or ambiguous but clear, certain, and firm that the word "grace" is to be understood in this argument of the gratuitous mercy, goodness, good will, or favor, of God, who embraces in His grace and receives into grace the unworthy for the sake of His Son, the Mediator. For Paul, in Rom. 5, clearly distinguishes between "grace" and the "gift of grace," as grace and truth are distinguished in John 1. Both are indeed the gift of the Son of God, the Mediator. However, when Paul says that we are justified and saved by grace, he understands that grace which the Scriptures distinguish from the gift of grace, that is, he understands not our newness but the mercy of God, or the gratuitous acceptance. That is clear from this, that Paul, in the article of justification, places grace in opposition to good works, not to those only which reason performs without the Holy Spirit but also the works of Abraham, which are gifts and fruits of the Spirit, Rom. 4:4: "To one who works, his wages are not reckoned as a gift but as his due." And what he says in Rom. 3:24-28, we are justified by grace without the works of the Law, that he applies in Rom. 4 to the works of the regenerate Abraham. And thus he places justifying grace in



opposition to Abraham's working through the renewal of the Spirit. For the statement in Rom. 11:6 is general: "If it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works; otherwise grace would no longer be grace." And when Paul says, 2 Tim. 1:9, He has saved us, "not in virtue of our works but in virtue of His own purpose and the grace which He gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago," there certainly grace cannot mean anything inherent in us. For the grace of Christ was given us ages ago, when we did not yet exist, yes, when the foundations of the earth had not yet been laid.

2 Scripture clearly shows by means of other synonyms or equivalent words how it wants to have the word "grace" understood in these debates. In Titus 3:4 it speaks of "the goodness and loving kindness" by which God embraces the poor and lost race of men. In the same place it says: "In virtue of His own mercy He saved us . . . so that we might be justified by His grace and become heirs . . . of eternal life." And in Eph. 2:4: "God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been

saved)." So also what is written in Heb. 2:9: "By the grace of God He might taste death for everyone," that Paul sets forth as follows, Rom. 5:8: "God shows His love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." And in Heb. 4:16 we read: "Let us draw . . . near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." These things are so clear that both Thomas and Richard of Middleton confess that some of the ancients explained grace as the good pleasure and gratuitous love of God, by which He chooses, calls, justifies, and adopts us, according to Eph. 1.

ARTICLE VI

The Adverb "Gratis"

1 Paul added the little word *gratis* in order that he might illustrate more fully the specific and true meaning of the term "grace" in the article on justification and salvation and secure it against all corruptions: "Justified *gratis* by His grace." The meaning of the Hebrew word דָּנָן ("gratis") is thus understood, for it is set in opposition to the payment of a price or satisfaction, Gen. 29:15: "Should you serve me for nothing (דָּנָן)? Tell me, what shall your wages be?" Ex. 21:2: "He shall go out free, for nothing"; Num. 11:5: "The fish we ate . . . for nothing"; 2 Sam. 24:24: "I will not offer burnt offerings . . . which costs me nothing." It means also that something is done without cause, or without merit, beside or contrary to merit, as in Ps. 69:4: "They hate me without cause";⁷⁴ Ps. 109:3: "They attack me without a cause"; Prov. 24:28: "Be not a witness against your neighbor without cause";⁷⁵ 1 Sam. 19:5: "Why will you sin against innocent blood by killing David without cause?" 1 Kings 2:31: "Take away . . . the blood . . . shed without cause"; Ezek. 6:10 and 14:23: "I have not done this evil without cause, says the Lord"; Jer. 15:13: "Your treasures will I give as spoil without price," that is, to those from whom you have not deserved such a thing; Lam. 3:52: "They have hunted me like a bird . . . without cause," that is, those whom he gave no cause. In these examples the Greek interpreters always translated the Hebrew word דָּנָן with the particle $\delta\omega\rho\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\nu$ ("gratis"), which is used in the New Testament as follows: 2 Cor. 11:7: "I preached the Gospel without cost ($\delta\omega\rho\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\nu$)

⁷⁴All editions have "Ps. 54:" However, the passage is found in the Vulgate in Ps. 68:5, in the RSV in Ps. 69:4.

⁷⁵In this passage the Vulgate text has *frustra* instead of *gratis* for the Hebrew דָּנָן .

to you"; Rev. 21:6: "I will give water without price"; 2 Thess. 3:8: "We did not eat anyone's bread without paying, but with toil." Sirach 29:7: "Many are deceived δωρεάν, that is, when they would have deserved something far different.

2 I have quoted these examples because they illustrate the meaning of the little word *gratis*. For the enemies of David are said to have hated and persecuted him *gratis* ("without a cause"), because there was in David no cause or desert why they should hate and persecute him; rather, they found cause in him why they should not have hated him, but the cause of the hatred was in the evil disposition of the enemies. And in Ezekiel God is said not to punish *gratis* ("without a cause"), that is, those in whom He finds no cause or desert of punishment. From this it can be understood why Paul in Rom. 3:24 adds to the word "grace" the particle "gratis." For in Gen. 39:4 the text says of Joseph: "He found grace in the sight of Potiphar." But there is the added note "because he was a prosperous man," that is, on account of the eminent gifts which he noticed in Joseph he loved him and made him great. Therefore, lest anyone think that we are justified and saved by the grace of God in the same manner, Paul adds the particle "gratis," which shows: (1) that the cause or merit that we are justified before God to life eternal neither is nor inheres in us; (2) that God finds in us many causes why He could condemn us; (3) that God receives into grace and accepts to life eternal the unworthy, who deserve something far different, out of pure goodness and mercy, for the sake of His Son. This is the same as what the psalm says, "He did not deal with us according to our sins nor reward us according to our iniquities," and what Daniel says, "Not according to our righteousness, but according to Thy mercy." Therefore we are justified freely (*gratis*) by the grace of God, not because we are or become perfectly just and without sin in this life but because the mercy of God forgives and covers the sins which it finds in us, for Christ's sake (Rom. 4). "For God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them" (2 Cor. 5:19). And through Christ there is proclaimed to us forgiveness of sins from everything from which we could not be justified by the Law (Acts 13:38-39). For this is "the knowledge of salvation . . . in the forgiveness of their sins" (Luke 1:77). For "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive our sins." For "if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus

Christ; and He is the expiation for our sins" (1 John 1:8-2:2). Therefore, to one who trusts Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness without works. (Rom. 4:5)

ARTICLE VII

What That Righteousness Is Which We Plead Against the Judgment of God in Justification

1 What we have said above is clear, firm, and certain from the testimonies of the Scripture. But the question, the explanation of which will shed much light on this subject, is whether and how God justifies the ungodly who is without righteousness. For human courts often acquit a wicked man either through an error or through carelessness or through wickedness when wickedness is either ignored, or not heeded, or approved.

2 These things, however, neither can nor should be attributed to God in any way in the justification of a sinner. For in Prov. 17:15 and Is. 5:23 God Himself pronounces it an abomination to justify the ungodly in this manner. Nor is it a right answer in this place if it is said that, because God is the freest of free agents, He acts justly even though He does what He Himself pronounces an abomination. For that norm of righteousness which is revealed in the Law is the eternal, immovable, and unchangeable will of God. For sins this norm requires the fullest satisfaction, and for righteousness it requires the most complete and pure fulfillment of the Law. But is God, when He justifies the ungodly *gratis* by grace, without the works of the Law, in conflict with and contrary to Himself, because He has revealed His will differently in the Law? Not at all! For in Mal. 3:6 He says: "I the Lord do not change," and in Num. 23:19: "God is not man, that He should lie, or a son of man that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not fulfill it?" Therefore Paul says, Rom. 3:31, that we do not overthrow the Law when we teach that a man is justified by faith without the works of the Law. On the contrary, we uphold it. And in Matt. 5:17-18, Christ says: "Think not that I have come to abolish the Law. . . . Truly I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished." Therefore that sentence of the Law will remain firm and fixed, that satisfaction is required for sins, and not just any kind of satisfaction but one that is sufficient and worthy; and that for righteous-

ness a fulfillment is required and an obedience that is in every way perfect and absolute. However, we cannot in this life render such a satisfaction and have such a righteousness. And yet it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than that one iota and one little dot of the Law should fall, which is not satisfied by the perfection that is owed. What then? Will therefore no man living be justified in the sight of God; will all be damned eternally?

Just this would happen if the outcome depended on us. But here the Gospel reveals to us that God in His secret council and surpassing mercy has found such a way and method that both the righteousness of God revealed in the Law might be satisfied and that man might be justified to life eternal gratis by the grace of God, through faith, without the works of the Law, namely, that the Son of God should be sent into the world and come into the flesh to deliver, justify, and save the human race. But how was this our Mediator made our Righteousness, our Deliverer and Savior? Was it by dissolving and destroying the sentence of the divine will revealed in the Law? The Son of God Himself certainly says that this opinion and persuasion is false, because this is impossible, according to Matt. 5:17-18; Luke 16:16-17. But He was for this reason made under the Law, not for Himself nor in His own name, but that He might redeem those who were under the Law (Gal. 4:4-5). Therefore He took on Himself in the place and in the name of us all the satisfaction for sins, the suffering of the penalties, and the fulfillment of the Law by means of the most perfect obedience. And for this reason He assumed our nature, that in that nature, which was under the Law, satisfaction and fulfillment might be made. However, because it had to be a satisfaction and fulfillment that would be adequate and sufficient for the sins and for the righteousness of the whole world, therefore it was necessary that the person of the Mediator should be both God and man, in order that the power and efficacy of the satisfaction and fulfillment might be infinite and sufficient for the whole world. But you say: "How does this relieve me, that another person made satisfaction to the Law, when it is I whom the Law presses down? 'You shall love!' 'You shall not covet!' And Rom. 2:8-9: 'Wrath and fury, tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil!' Yes, in Ezek. 18:20, God pronounces this sentence: 'The soul that sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be

upon himself.' Therefore, on account of a foreign righteousness he who is himself a sinner is not justified." I reply: It is certain that the Law requires righteousness of everyone, and from everyone such satisfaction and conformity as it requires. For it is not the teaching of the Law that we are redeemed and justified by a foreign satisfaction and righteousness; one man also cannot make satisfaction for another before God, as Ps. 49:7-8 says: "None can by any means redeem his brother or give to God a ransom for him: for the redemption of his soul is costly." However, the Gospel reveals and declares this mystery, which was hidden for long ages, that since the human race could not make satisfaction to the Law and the Law could in no way be dissolved and destroyed, God made a transfer of the Law to another person (a matter which belongs to the article of justification) who should fulfill the Law both by satisfaction and obedience for the whole human race. And because that person is both God and man, therefore His satisfaction is the expiation for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2), and hence Christ is the end of the Law for the salvation of everyone who believes (Rom. 10:4). And Him God sets before us through the ministry, that through His redemption, by faith in His blood, we may be justified gratis by the grace of God. (Rom. 3:25)

3 Because therefore (1) by the council of the entire Trinity the Son of God was sent into the world, made of a woman, made under the Law, that He might redeem them that were under the Law, that we might thus receive the adoption; and because (2) the satisfaction and obedience of Christ, the Mediator, God and man, is of such a nature and so great that it can be the expiation for the sins of the whole world and suffice for righteousness to every one who believes; and because (3) in the ministry Christ is set before us by God in order that we may be justified through His redemption by faith; therefore, when faith, in true contrition, lays hold of and applies to itself that satisfaction and obedience of Christ, then it possesses that which it can plead against the accusations of the Law in the judgment of God, and thus stand, that we may be justified.

The believers have, indeed, from the renewing by the Holy Ghost also an inherent righteousness; but because this is only begun, imperfect, and as a result of the flesh still defiled in this life, therefore we cannot by means of it stand in the judgment of God, nor does God justify us because of it, that is, absolve us from sins, receive us into grace, and accept us to

life eternal, as has been shown above from Scripture. Indeed, the satisfaction and obedience of Christ, by which He fulfilled the Law for us, is that righteousness, which is both sufficient and worthy to be pronounced just in the Judgment of God. And this is imputed through faith to the believers, so that through it and because of it they can stand in the judgment of God, in no other way, yes, in a much better way, than if they themselves had by perfect obedience made satisfaction to the Law. For they have by imputation a righteousness which is both God's and man's. Therefore, on account of the satisfaction and obedience of Christ, imputed to us by God through faith, the believers are justified, that is, they receive remission of sins, are absolved from the sentence of damnation, are received into grace, adopted as sons, and accepted to everlasting life.

4 We do not, therefore, teach that believers are justified without righteousness, a justification of the ungodly which God pronounces an abomination in Prov. 17:15 and Is. 5:23, but we say that it is necessary that in justification a righteousness should come in and intervene, and indeed, not just any kind of righteousness but one which is sufficient and worthy in the judgment of God to be declared suitable for eternal life. However, our inherent righteousness, which is begun in the renewal through the Holy Spirit, is not such on account of the adhering imperfection and impurity of the flesh. Therefore a different righteousness is necessary, by which, when it enters in and intercedes, we may be justified before God to life eternal. This indeed is the satisfaction and obedience, that is, the righteousness of Christ, the Mediator, which is offered through the ministry of the Word and of the sacraments, is apprehended by faith, and is imputed by God to the believers, so that we can interpose it between the judgment of God and our sins, so that we are protected under it as under a shield from the divine wrath which we have deserved, so that "covered by it we may now boldly and securely stand before the divine tribunal and thus be pronounced righteous to life eternal." These are words of Pighius, who, though he is otherwise a most bitter opponent of our doctrine, is nevertheless compelled by the evidence of the truth to acknowledge and confess this statement as true, godly and in harmony with Scripture.

5 With respect to Christ, therefore, who makes satisfaction to the Law for us, it is redemption, merit, and righteousness; but with respect to us, it is grace

or undeserved mercy, because the judgment of God does not find in us, even in the regenerate, in this life an inherent righteousness that is sufficient and worthy that we may be justified on account of it to life eternal. Rather, it finds in us, even in the regenerate, some, yes, many and varied, sins which we do not sufficiently know, on account of which, if He wanted to enter into judgment with us according to the severity of the Law, He could condemn us. Therefore it is by free grace that we unworthy and undeserving ones are justified. The obedience of Christ, indeed, is the merit on account of which we are justified. However, that God sent His Son into the world and that the Son of God, the Mediator, made satisfaction to the Law for us, this no worthiness of ours, no merit of ours, has brought about; but when we had deserved something far different, God decreed and bestowed this out of pure grace and mercy.

Neither do we merit by any worthiness of our own that the righteousness of Christ should be imputed to us, but it is imputed without works, gratis, by the grace of God to the believers (Rom. 4:16). Thus with respect to ourselves it is solely the pure gratuitous grace, goodness, love, and mercy of God when we are justified before God to eternal life. This explanation shows that the entire doctrine of justification is simple and clear.

6 But we do not ourselves devise this teaching, that Christ the Mediator has fulfilled the Law for us by the fullest satisfaction of the punishments and by the most perfect obedience and that this righteousness of the Mediator is imputed to the believers, that by it they may be justified before God to life eternal. But this is the specific and perpetual doctrine of the Gospel, of which we shall note down only a few clear statements.

Gal. 3:13: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us . . . that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles." You hear that the Gentiles obtain the blessing by which they are delivered from the curse on account of the redemption of Christ, by which He was made a curse for us.

Gal. 4:4-5: "God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the Law, to redeem those who were under the Law, so that we might receive adoption as sons." Therefore we are adopted as sons on account of the satisfaction and obedience of Christ.

2 Cor. 5:21: "For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." But how was Christ made

sin? Certainly by imputation. And thus we are made the righteousness of God in Him.

Rom. 8:3-4: "For God has done what the Law, weakened by the flesh, could not do; sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the just requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us." This most beautiful statement the Latin translation obscures; for what can that mean, *de peccato damnare peccatum*? However, the phrase is taken from the Septuagint, which translated "sacrifice for sin" perfectly and skillfully *περὶ ἁμαρτίας* ("for sin") and *τὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας* ("the sin offering"). Therefore the meaning is that a sacrifice for sin was required to expiate sin; but the sacrifice of a ram, calf, goat, a bird of the turtle or the common doves could not work that expiation. For the Law accuses and condemns not the nature of quadrupeds or birds but the nature of man, which is corrupted through sin. For this reason God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, that is, in the flesh by which He should be like His brethren in all things except sin; that He might "for sin," that is, with such a sacrifice for sin, in which the sacrificial victim was His own body, which owed nothing to sin, condemn sin in that same human flesh which sin had subjected to condemnation. And because He is the Son of God and was sent by God to become the offering for us, therefore His sacrifice has such power and efficacy, as Paul says, that the righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in us. But how? That we might be justified by the Law? By no means! For Paul sharply contends that we are not justified by the Law, but that the righteousness of the Law, that is, the most absolute righteousness which the Law demands and requires of us, may be fulfilled not by us but in us, because Christ, who has fulfilled the Law for us, is in us; that is, He dwells in us through faith (Eph. 3:17). However, that fulfillment of the Law which takes its beginning from us does not belong here but in another place, as Paul says: "Christ is not in those who do not have the Spirit of Christ." Therefore, he says, "Who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit." And in Matt. 20:28 we read: "The Son of man came . . . to give His life as a ransom for many."

1 Tim. 2:6: "He gave Himself as a ransom for all." Rom. 10:4: "Christ is the end of the Law that everyone who has faith may be justified." In Rom. 5:9, Paul says that we are justified through the blood of Christ. And in explanation of this he says that we are reconciled to God by the death of His Son. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made

sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19). But how? Paul answers in Rom. 4:5: "Because faith is reckoned as righteousness." Not because faith is in itself such a virtue but because it lays hold of, accepts, embraces, and possesses Christ, who is the end of the Law for righteousness to everyone who believes. For this is the righteousness which God imputes without our works to those who are made blessed. For through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus we are justified (Rom. 3:24). Jer. 23:6: "This is the name by which He will be called: 'The Lord is our righteousness.'" 1 Cor. 1:30: "Him God made . . . our righteousness." 2 Cor. 5:21: "That in Him we might become the righteousness of God." Is. 53:5, 6, 11: "Upon Him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with His stripes we are healed." "The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." "By His knowledge shall the righteous One . . . make many to be accounted righteous."

Rom. 4:23, 24: "It was written for our sakes. It will be reckoned to us who believe in Him that raised up from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

You hear both things, that God imputes something to the believers, and what it is He imputes; namely, that Christ was put to death for our sins and that He was raised for our righteousness. Rom. 5:21: "Grace reigns through righteousness to eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord." Christ is, however, our righteousness. (Jer. 23:6; 1 Cor. 1:30; Rom. 10:4)

But how can we be justified to life eternal through this foreign righteousness? I reply, as Paul says, Gal. 3:27: "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." At the same time we have been clothed also with His righteousness. Rom. 8:32: "With His Son God gives us all things." But Christ has a perfect fulfillment of the Law, or righteousness, for us. Therefore the Father gives that to the believers that they may be justified on account of it.

7 What I have here briefly related is the constant teaching of the prophetic and the apostolic Scripture in the Old and in the New Testament concerning the justification of man before God to life eternal. On this we should, and safely can, place our trust that we may be justified on its account, that is, that we may receive remission of sins, be absolved from the deserved sentence of damnation, be received by God into grace, be adopted as sons, and finally be received to eternal life.

The Nature and Extent of the Pentecostal Movement

Jack D. Zwemer, D.D.S., Ph.D.



It is not possible to understand the problem posed by Pentecostalism without briefly considering the nature of a Christian man. Like all other men, the Christian man possesses a carnal nature that is utterly and hopelessly vile, unclean, impure and unrighteous. But unlike other men, the Christian man also possesses a spiritual nature. This nature is wholly clean, pure and righteous.

Thus the Christian is at the same time both clean and unclean, pure and impure, righteous and unrighteous. In such a man there rages an unrelenting conflict between his two natures. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh . . .

so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Gal. 5:17.

Steadfast Christians should recognize that this conflict continues without remission all through this mortal life. At the end as well as at the beginning, they are accepted in the Beloved—solely through what the Saviour has done for them. They live by faith in His merits and in hope of final release from the conflict when Jesus shall come to "change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body" (Phil. 3:21).

Down through the centuries there have always

been those to contend, however, that a Christian may ultimately attain release from the conflict in this life through the full eradication of the carnal nature by the work of the Holy Spirit in him. Such exponents believe that they need not always occupy the mourner's bench, content with the righteousness which they have in Christ in heaven, but may eventually reach the choir loft and sing of the righteousness which they have within themselves.

These are the apostles of the "victorious life," the "second blessing," the "baptism in the Holy Spirit." They are the spiritual kindred to the holiness movement which swept America and England in the last century.

Despite all its claims, the holiness movement had a problem. How could final Christian victory be certainly attested to the believer himself and to his brethren? How could one be sure that the carnal nature indeed had been wholly vanquished? Subjective experience and testimony alone could be questioned and doubted and, on the other hand, readily counterfeited.

For those on the fringes of the holiness movement in the nineteenth century, this problem was resolved by "spiritual gifts," or manifestations, such as holy clapping, shouting, laughing, shaking, barking, dancing or rolling, which witnessed to the inner experience. These demonstrations, however, were such crude excesses that they belied the victorious life rather than confirming it.

It was not long, therefore, until these earlier "gifts" were supplanted by the "gift" of unknown tongues, which ostensibly had a firmer Scriptural basis and provided more authentic evidence of the believer's condition.

To its devotees, the gift of tongues symbolized a higher plane of spiritual attainment which transcended the testimony of the Word of God to them and firm reliance on the objective work of Christ for them. The gifts of the Spirit were more coveted than the fruits of the Spirit. And while faith alone sufficed for Christian initiation, it had to be coupled with a variety of works to achieve the "second blessing"—the "baptism in the Holy Ghost."

Rather than constituting the "full" gospel, these pretensions are nothing but a perversion of the gospel. They presume to take the very righteousness of God in heaven, accounted to man, and actually compress it into a puny, fallen human vessel. Thus they cast the truth to the ground.

In the face of this terrible fallacy and many blatant and persistent indications of personal carnality, the movement survived and increased in vigor from

its beginning at the turn of the century. Since the Scriptural gift of tongues was granted the apostles on the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit was poured on the infant church, the modern tongues movement assumed the name, "Pentecostal."

By 1960, numerous Pentecostal bodies had extended from America throughout the world, had claimed more than eight million members and had become, in the words of Henry P. Van Dusen, "the great third force in Christendom."

The vigor and vitality of the movement then attracted both leaders and laymen in mainline Protestant churches alarmed over the dead orthodoxy of their communions, the spiritless tokenism of the social gospel, and their own deep spiritual declension.

Since 1960, the tongues and the so-called baptism in the Holy Spirit have invaded all the Protestant bodies. Millions, both of clergy and laity, have embraced the phenomenon in the neo-Pentecostal, or charismatic, movement. It has achieved new respectability to become the most pervasive and potent force in modern Protestantism.

Then, in 1967, neo-Pentecostalism penetrated the bastions of Rome. In Catholicism the charismatic movement has been met with open arms. It is regarded as the fulfillment of the medieval mystical ideal of Thomas Aquinas. It is hailed as the new Pentecost promised by Vatican II. It is extolled as the great ecumenical dream of the church. This very year it has been lauded at the Eucharistic Congress in Melbourne, Australia. It will also provide considerable impetus to the greatest evangelistic outreach America has yet seen, under the slogan, "Key '73." In this endeavor, Roman Catholics and more than 130 Protestant denominations are united under the chairmanship of the Assemblies of God president, Thomas Zimmerman.

Meanwhile the charismatic movement has already moved beyond the pulpit and the pews into the highways and byways of the earth. Here it has met and captivated the youth culture and generated much of the now-famous Jesus Revolution. Thousands of youth in America and elsewhere who once turned on to drugs and to sex are now turning on to Jesus with ecstatic tongues.

Soon it seems that all the world will be swept into this delusive wonder. Of multitudes revelling on the street corners over their supposed deliverance and new-found experience and powers, it can be said, "Verily . . . They have their reward." Hidden from human eyes, the Christian man will be in his closet, crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" This man will go down to his house justified.

Christian Perfection

P.T. Forsyth (1848-1921)

Editorial Note: P.T. Forsyth was an English theologian who is best known for his passionate concern with the theology of the atonement, and with vital Christian experience in contrast to formal religion. His contention was that the battle for New Testament Christianity must be waged to the end.

We here reproduce excerpts from his work entitled *Christian Perfection*.¹ Although we may not subscribe to all that Forsyth has written, we can appreciate his keen insight into the Biblical concept of perfection, especially in view of false "holiness" theology so prevalent today.

The Sin of the Regenerate

"Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not. . . . Whosoever is born of God cannot sin" (1 John 3:6, 9). . . .

Statements like these texts seem to be met with every kind of contradiction:

In the first place, there is the contradiction offered by John himself. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." . . .

In the next place, there is the contradiction offered by our own experience. We know that we sin as surely as we know our life in Christ. . . .

And our own experience is only enlarged by what we know of the experience of greater saints than ourselves. The history of holiness is a record of self-abasements on daily cause. It is a story of triumph and joy, but it is a daily humiliation all the same, and a real, concrete humiliation; not a vague and sentimental self-accusation, but a definite self-indictment as the fruit of a serious self-examination.

Moreover, texts like these seem in contradiction with the very nature of faith itself. . . . To say "I have now no sin" is to give up that relation to God which is the essence of faith, and to stand upon a new and subtle kind of legalism. The man who says that tries

to enter on a relation to God which is higher than faith, and therefore he falls out of faith. . . . The very nature of faith is trust of a Saviour, who is not the saviour of my past but of my soul; and it is trust for forgiveness, for forgiveness not only of the old life but of the new. . . . grace is not simple benediction, but blessing as the fruit of incessant forgiveness. . . .

It is a fatal mistake to think of holiness as a possession which we have distinct from our faith, and conferred upon it. That is a Catholic idea still saturating Protestant pietism. . . . Penitence, faith, sanctification, always co-exist; they do not destroy and succeed each other. . . . Faith is always in opposition to seeing, possessing, experiencing. . . . It is not our experience of holiness that makes us believe in the Holy Ghost. It is a matter of faith that we are God's children; there is plenty of experience in us against it. That we are justified and reborn is a matter of faith. . . . To claim sinlessness as the perfect state superseding faith is to fall from faith, not to rise from it. It is because we have sin that we believe—as belief must go in a religion whose nature is for ever revealed as Redemption. Our perfection is not to rival the Perfect, but to trust Him. Our holiness is not a matter of imitation but of worship. Any sinlessness of ours is the adoration of His. The holiest have ever been so because they dared not feel they were. Their sanctity grew unconsciously from their worship of His. All saw it but themselves. The eye is the beauty of the face because it sees everything but itself; and if it betray self-consciousness the charm is dimmed. The height of sinlessness means the deepest sense of sin. If we ever came to any such stage as conscious sinlessness we should be placing ourselves alongside Christ, not at His feet. . . . We should be self-sufficient. We should cease to live on a constant look to God in Christ, and repentance would cease. We should be near the fall that so often comes to the sinless. We should be in the moral peril of those who, feeling they have attained this sinlessness, are ready to call each impulse good and lawful, as born from the Spirit with which they are now possessed. . . .

Perfection is not sinlessness. The "perfect" in the New Testament are certainly not the sinless. And God, though He wills that we be perfect, has not appointed sinlessness as His object with us in this world. His object is communion with us through faith. And sin must abide, even while it is being conquered, as an occasion for faith. Every defect of ours is a motive for faith. To cease to feel defect is to cease to trust. To cease to feel the root of sin would be to have one motive the less to cast us on God for keeping. . . .

¹Reprinted in P.T. Forsyth, *God the Holy Father* (London: Independent Press, 1957), pp. 99-148.

Where does the solution of these contradictions lie? . . .

John himself believes in two kinds of sin, and both of them are possible to the believer. "There is a sin unto death . . . and there is a sin not unto death" (1 John 5:16, 17). It was a distinction current in the Old Testament, and it explains much in the New, where it is deepened. The sin unto death is when a man falls entirely out of communion with God. He loses the life of God from his soul permanently—I do not say eternally. He has not Eternal Life abiding in him. The world conquers him. The habit of his mind becomes earthly. . . . That is the sin unto death. And the sin not unto death is every transgression which still leaves the habit and sympathy of the soul for God a living thing. There are lapses which a man by vigilance, repentance, prayer, and well-doing can repair. Sin is a region he may visit, but it does not become his element. He falls into sin, but not into godlessness. . . . Every believer has more or less of this sin in him, and the risk of it always. But it does not cut him off from the divine life. There is a daily confession, a daily forgiveness, a daily cleansing of the channels of the grace of God. . . .

"Cannot sin" means not that he is not able to sin, but that his principle will not allow him to sin. As the regenerate personality he cannot do it. He may, of course, be at the same time something other than the regenerate personality in his actual condition so far. But in so far as he is the servant of that personality he cannot. "You cannot do it," we say to a man, not denying the physical possibility, as if he were paralyzed or in jail, but denying the moral possibility. . . . Ideally, whoso is born of God cannot sin. That is the *absolute* truth. That is a judgment of faith as distinct from a judgment of experience. It arises from what we know of God, of Christ, not of human life. . . . John concludes from Christ to man as the normal man in Christ should be, as Christ alone is. It is not a logical but a Christological judgment. . . .

What is the thing most deep and assertive in him [the professed believer]? I mean, what is most continuous in him? I do not ask what asserts itself *oftenest*, but what asserts itself most persistently on the whole, and in the end most powerfully and effectively. What is the real and only *continuity* of his life? Is it a sinful temper and bias, a sinful joy or indifference, broken only occasionally, and ever more rarely, by spasms of goodness, glimpses of holiness, freaks of mercy and truth? Or is it the sympathy and purpose of holiness, clouded at times by drifts of evil, and cleft, to his grief, by flashes of revolt? That is the question. And it is the way the question will be

put at the last. It will not be, How many are your sins and how many your sacrifices? but, On which side have you stood and striven, under which King have you served or died? A man may abide in the many-mansioned, myriad-minded Christ, even if the robber sometimes break into his room, or if he go out and lose his way in a fog. You stay in a house, or in a town, which all the same you occasionally leave for good or for ill. The question is, What is your home to which your heart returns, either in repentance or in joy? Where is your heart? What is the bent of your will on the whole, the direction and service of your total life? It is not a question settled in a quantitative way by inquiry as to the occupation of every moment. God judges by totals, by unities not units, by wholes and souls, not sections. What is the dominant and advancing spirit of your life, the total allegiance of your person? Beethoven was not troubled when a performer struck a wrong note, but he was angry when he failed with the spirit and idea of the piece. So with the Great Judge and Artist of life. . . . Perfection is not sinlessness, but the loyalty of the soul by faith to Christ when all is said and done. . . .

We may be essentially parted from our sin while yet it hangs about us. The constitution is renewed, but the disease recurs in abating force. The new nature asserts itself over the head of reactions. We lust for the fleshpots of Egypt, and we return upon our tracks and move in a circle; but it is, after all, but a loop upon our larger line of onward march. The enemy is beaten, though he makes guerilla raids and carries off something we deplore. Our progress is a series of victories over receding attacks which sometimes inflict loss. And the issue turns on the whole campaign, not on a few lost battles. . . .

Sanctity and Faith

"Every man *perfect* in Christ Jesus" (Col. 1:28). "Complete in Him" (Col. 2:10). Christianity is the perfect religion because it is the religion of perfection. It holds up a perfect ideal, it calls us *incessantly* to this ideal, and it calls *all* to this ideal. *Each* man is called, and each man is *always* called, to it. . . . [but] the means of reaching this perfection for us sinners is not achievement but faith.

Christianity is not the perfect religion in the sense of being revealed as a finished, rounded, symmetrical whole. It is not perfect in the sense of a closed circle, or a plastic form, which can be altered in nothing without being spoiled. That is the Greek, pagan idea of perfection; whereas in Christianity we enter the perfect life maimed. The pagan idea of

perfection is balance, or harmony of parts with each other. It is self-contained and self-poised. The Christian idea is faith, or harmony of relations with the will and grace of God. It is self-devoted, complete in Him; the perfection not of finish but of faith. It is perfect, not because it presents us with perfection, but because it puts us in a perfect attitude to perfection. Our perfection is not some integrity which we *possess*, in the sense in which the Vatican possesses the faultless Venus, or Christ's infallible Vicar. The one is as pagan in its idea of perfection as the other. . . . But Christian perfection is something which we are put in the perfect way to *realize*, in the sense that we realize a living, moving ideal of character and life. . . . it is something into which we are *redeemed*. The perfection of Christianity is not even in the *ideal* of perfection it offers, but in the *power* of perfection it implants; not in its ideal of a Son of God, but in the power it gives, with *the* Son of God, to become sons of God by believing in His name. . . .

There are two notions of perfection which are wrong, and a third which is right. But all three are right compared with the notion that we are to wait for perfection till some indefinite time in the infinite future. All three urge that Christian perfection is a condition of actual, living people in this world. It is a religion, a faith; it is not merely a hope.

The first idea is Pietist; the second is Popish; the third is Protestant, Apostolic, Christian.

1. The Pietist idea pursues perfection as mere quietist sinlessness with a tendency to ecstasy. Its advocates are people sometimes of great grace and beauty; but it represents a one-sided, narrow, and negative spirituality. Its religion is largely emotional, mystical, and introspective. Its adherents are apt to be the victims of visions and moods. They seek perfection in a state of sinlessness. It is a condition largely subjective, ascetic, anaemic, feminine. It prescribes an *arbitrary* withdrawal from the interests, pursuits, and passions of life. It is a cloistered virtue. . . . There is an absence of true humility. . . .

2. The Popish idea of perfection has much in common with the Pietist. It is unworldly in the negative sense; it flees from the world, it does not master it. It is embodied in the monk and the nun. In the Roman system the monk is the ideal man, the nun the ideal woman. These stand on the summit of moral and spiritual greatness. They are likest Christ. They obey Christ most perfectly. . . .

The whole Roman system rests on the double morality involved in this distinction. It is a religion by double entry. It teaches that only some are called to perfection, while for the majority the demands

made are much more ordinary. . . . There are thus two grades or morality, two classes of men, two moral standards set up inside Christianity and inside the race. All are not alike before God. And all are not called to perfection in Jesus Christ; only a minority, only an aristocracy of Christians are. . . .

3. The Protestant idea of perfection is the possession of the righteousness of God. And the righteousness of God, in the New Testament idea, is something which is a gift of God to us, and no achievement of ours before Him. It is a justification of us, a righting of us, effected by Him, and on our side appropriated by the obedience not of conduct but of faith. On the human side, indeed, it *is* faith, which is held by God to be our righteousness, our true adjustment to the ultimate moral reality, which is Christ. In faith we are in the right and perfect relation to God. But God's justification of us is a perfect and complete thing. In faith, therefore, we possess the perfect will of God concerning us. We enter on a full salvation. We have as ours the fulness of Christ. The Roman theology knows only of a perfection, a righteousness, which is an acquisition, which is always growing and never there, which is not complete in the act of union by living faith, but must always be eked out by the sacraments and the obedience of the Church. There is, indeed, a true sense in which the perfection even of faith grows. It becomes actual in life and practice; but that adds nothing to the perfection which is ours in the incredible salvation which we take home by supernatural faith. Faith is implicit; what is explicit is experience. We but unfold a perfection which is in God's sight *there*, we do not accumulate a perfection which we are always striving to place there. The queen and mother of all the virtues is not our subjection and obedience to the Church. Implicit faith in anything institutional is usurped faith. The true faith is implicit in Christ, in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Faith is in its nature obedience, but it is the will's obedience to Christ. This is the root and mother of virtue; this is the new life with the promise and potency in it of all the perfection which may become actual in us by any sanctification. Our sanctification only unfolds in actual life the ideal perfection in which we really stand by faith in Christ. And yet this ideal perfection, being of pure and free grace, is not the vision foreseen by God of our moral effort's final success. But it is the finished and forgone gift of God in Christ through our faith, and the thing which alone promises the final success of any moral efforts. In giving Christ He gave us all things—*i.e.* perfection. It is not our moral success

that is presented as perfection to God even in anticipation; it is God's present to us of perfection that makes moral success possible. . . .

The error at the root of all false ideas of perfection is this: it is rating our behaviour *before* God higher than our relation *to* God—putting conduct before faith, deeds before trust, work before worship. That is the root of all pharisaism, Romanism, paganism, and natural and worldly morality. . . .

Growth and Perfection

"Not as though I were already *perfected*" (Phil. 3:12). "Let us who are *perfect* be thus minded" (Phil. 3:15). . . .

He [Christ] has been so treated as our perfect Example that His outward fashion of life has been copied at the cost of His inward principle. . . . our faith and fellowship in Christ is worth far more for our perfection than any effort to live up to Him as our example—useful as that may be. We are complete in Him, not merely by His help but by His indwelling . . . it is better to trust Christ and His work than even to imitate Him. He is worth infinitely more to the world as its Saviour than as its model, as God's promise than as man's ideal. He is more to be admired than copied, more to be loved than to be admired, and He is to be trusted more than all. This trust of Christ is the highest thing a man can do. Trust become habitual is our new nature, our perfection made perfect, our life and abiding in Him.

When Christ bids us be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect, He does not tell us to do what the Father does. The Father makes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on just and unjust. We cannot do that. We cannot affect sun or rain. We cannot copy God. He is Almighty as we are not. . . . We are not told to do *what* God does, but *as* He does. It is sympathy that is wanted more than imitation. What we are to imitate is the love and grace of God. And there is only one way of imitating that, only one way of learning it. It is by trusting Him. Love is learned by faith in the case of the unseen. With our visible lovers faith may come by love. With the Lover of our souls love comes by faith. Love of the unseen is the girdle of perfectness which is put on over the other garments of faith and hope and all the virtues, and after them, as the last touch which keeps them all in form and place. . . . in the main, when the New Testament speaks of the perfect, it means not the complete but the spiritually adult; not the fully sanctified but the duly justified. They are not people

who perfectly love, but who truly trust. They may be defective as yet in many points of character, or relations to each other. But they have entered on the right relation to Christ. They are not all ideal characters. Some are not even beautiful. But they will become so in time or eternity. They have started on that career. They have come to spiritual adulthood by faith in Christ. . . .

You know the difference between a youth and an adult. There is a step taken in life, a step hard to describe and various in its ways, by which the boy passes into the man, the girl into the woman. They are held fit for a share in things to which they were not admitted before. They become initiates in life where before they had been novices. . . . When St. Paul says, "We speak wisdom among the perfect," he meant that he was talking as he would to spiritual *men* and not to hobbledoys. . . .

It [faith] is a matter of spiritual manhood. It is a matter of maturity. . . . Faith is the condition of spiritual maturity in the sense of adulthood, of entering on the real heritage of the soul. It is the soul coming to itself, coming of age, feeling its feet, entering on its native powers. Faith is perfection in this sense. It is not ceasing to grow, but entering on the real and normal region of growth. . . . Growth is then progress, not *to* Christ, but *in* Christ. . . .

To *believe* in Christ, to *be* in Christ, and to *abide* in Christ, are three stages of the same perfection—which you may call the Petrine, the Pauline and the Johannine stages if you will. A man is perfect when he comes to belong to Christ instead of himself. . . . We are perfect in Christ, and in Him continually more so. In Christ we are what we are to be—not in the sense in which a closed figure is all it can be, but in the sense in which the perfect seed has the promise and power of the perfect tree. . . . In faith we are not panting, and straining, and rending ourselves after a perfection only ideal, possible, remote, and ever receding. We are not toiling to put achievement on the head of achievement, or mortification on the back of mortification, to reach heaven. That is a war of godless giants, which ends in failure, defeat, and chagrin. But we are unfolding a perfection which we already have in fee. We are appropriating what is already ours. We are sure that it is ours before it is ours. It is in us before it is on us. We have it with Christ before we have it with men. We are complete in Him before He completes Himself in us. We are perfect, and yet we are not perfect. We are as having nothing and yet possessing all things. We are in Christ, therefore we are complete; but we are in the world too, therefore we are not complete, but only on the

way to completion. . . . It is a perfection which both is and *grows*. True perfection is the power of perfect growth. But that does not mean unbroken growth. There are times when we lie becalmed, times when we have to tack, times when the current carries us astern, times when we are buffeted out of the straight course—when it is much if only we can keep at sea and not go to pieces on the rocks. Ignorance misleads us. Our charts fail us. Our crew mutinies, our passions take command, for a time. But, on the whole, we are on the living way. The master passion and bias of the soul is to Christ. The ruling will is the will of God, however certain impulses escape its control. We may still sin, but we are not sinners. Sin clings, soils, and may sometimes master. There are lapses, repentances, renewed forgivenesses. True perfection is not the power of unbroken growth, but of growing unto perfection, growing on the whole. . . .

We do not read that we are bidden to aim at any of the absolute qualities of God. That would be the old temptation, "Ye shall be as gods." How near the devilish suggestion lies to the divine, temptation to inspiration, "Be as gods" to "Be ye perfect." Our perfection is not to be rival absolutes, but to love and trust the absolute. Be as perfect in your relative way as God is in His absolute way, which contains all relatives. . . .

. . . take as . . . [an] illustration the Great Redemption itself which His obedience wrought. It was completed in His death. It was finished. Having died unto sin once, it was once for all. That death and conquest needs no repetition. . . . The whole work was in principle done, the everlasting victory was in spirit won. In the spiritual world the Cross is one long indubitable triumph of conclusive bliss. . . . What Christ did was a thing for ever complete and sufficient. Redemption is the condition of the world in God's eternal sight, and with it the perfect God is well pleased. . . .

But in *your* sight, actually, historically, is it a redeemed world? To your *faith* it is; viewed from this house, from this day, from this worship, from this pulpit, it is. It is so really, but is it actually? To your *sight* is it a redeemed world? . . . Where is Redemption in current affairs, in the course of past history, in the record even of the Church itself? It is so hard to see, that if we look away from the Cross we may not perceive it at all. . . . Yes, Redemption is finished and unfinished, complete in heaven, incomplete on earth. Incomplete on earth, with eternal promise and power. Imperfect but no fiasco. We are complete in Him in whom His own work is always complete. . . . Our one

perfection is to be in Him. He will perfect Himself in us in His time. . . . We have a perfect Redemption, however imperfectly redeemed we are at any one stage. In faith we are what we can never feel ourselves to be. We are by faith what we are not, but are ever growing by grace to be.

Practical Résumé

I would end by resuming the more practical and experimental features of perfection. . . .

. . . our perfection must be a limited one. It is not possible for any Christian at any one time to fulfil all possible duties and realize all possible excellences. Your perfection lies in what is possible to *you* with *your* character and position, in what *you* are called to be and do, in what lies on *your* conscience, in what concerns the situation in which *you* find yourself in life. . . .

The features of Christian perfection are these. First, *faith*. . . . By faith I do not mean only that utterly inward transaction in which the soul forgets the world and deals with God, committing itself to Him in a high, spiritual, mystic, rapturous act. It is not the fine frenzy of religious emotion, the glow of exalted adoration and surrender. That may be in it, but that is not necessarily of it; it is not its test. There is a better test of faith than rapture. It is confidence, patience, and humility. . . . It [faith] is filial trust in God's love, redemption, and providence amidst the duties, affections, pleasures, enterprises, perils, fears, guilts, gains, losses of active life. . . . It rests on an experience of Jesus Christ and God's grace in Him. It rests in God amid much ignorance; though we do not know the future, and do not understand the past. . . . It consists more of obedience and quiet confidence than of visions. And at the last it approves itself better (as I say) in *humility* and *patience* than in ecstasies. . . .

Humility is a frame of perfect mind not possible except to faith. It is no more depression and poverty of spirit than it is loud self-depreciation. It rests on our deep sense of God's unspeakable gift, on a deep sense of our sin as mastered by God, on a deep sense of the Cross as the power which won that victory. . . .

With humility goes *patience* as a supreme confession of faith. . . . It [patience] is a way of doing work—especially the true secret of not doing too much work. It is a way of carrying success. It is not renouncing will and becoming careless. It is an act of will. It is a piece of manhood. To part with will is to become a *thing*. It is not mere resignation or indifference—

which often goes with despair and not faith. It is a form of energy, even when it curbs energy. . . .

"I am ready not to do
At last, at last." . . .

Both humility and patience are only Christian in the spirit of *thankfulness*. Faith is for the Christian enveloped in praise. It is no gloomy humility, no sombre patience, no dull endurance, no resentful submission. It is all clothed with hope. . . . Whatever we offer to God, were it life and health itself, is offered in the name of Christ, in sequel to His Cross, as the joyful response to our redemption there. . . .

The next feature of perfection is *prayer*—prayer as a habit, joy, and prize of life. Humility takes the form of reverence and yet communion. The heart converses with God in Christ. It offers thanks, it confesses sin, it makes its petitions, but it above all converses with God. That is the inmost energy of faith—prayer. It is faith's habit of heart. All *acts* of prayer become but expressions of this *habit*. Work goes to this tune. Everything rises to God's throne. Everything the child does has a reference to the father, direct or indirect. Every form of prayer is speech with God the Father and Redeemer. . . .

A further feature of Christian perfection is *duty*. Humility takes shape as devotion to the will of God in the natural and social order that holds us. It is daily duty in our relations and calling. If it is a calling God cannot bless, it is not for you. If He can bless it, it is a contribution to Him. . . .

And the last feature of Christian perfection is *love*, and especially love to man. I have spoken of love to God, that may be a passion. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, strength, and mind." But the love of man is less so. It is at least less of an emotion than a principle, and especially a principle of action. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." But self-love is not an emotion so much as a principle, a habit of mind and action. So with the love of men. When will the public learn that that is not necessarily a tenderness of mood or manner? . . . Love is not mere natural benevolence. It is not easy compliance. . . . Its type is rather the family love that grows up unmarked as a part of us than the passionate love of man and woman, which we fall into, and which seizes us with a mighty hand. It is a principle and habit of heart and conscience, a frame or temper of life which steadily desires the welfare of men, and especially their salvation, as if it were our own. . . .

You cannot trust His [Christ's] love and righteousness without gaining the disposition to trust love and justice above all things everywhere. Why do so few people in Christendom really trust love as the ruling power in mankind? Because Christ is not for them a real personality, loving and loved; because they have been taught to seek Christian perfection in the completeness of some institution, or the maintenance of some law, or the fever about some conviction. Something Christian is the object of their enthusiasm more than Christ. . . . What we need is the personal impression of Christ, the personal sense of His cross, the fresh, renewing, vitalizing, sweetening contact of His soul in its wisdom, its tenderness, its action for us—and all so freely for us, so mercifully, so persistently, so thoroughly. What we need is the touch, the communion of that kind of perfection. We need to realize how in the Cross the defeat of that sort of goodness is really its victory, its ascent to the throne of the world. The Ruler of the world must be the consummation of the world. The Judge of *all* the earth must be the Law of all the earth. And the law of all must be the secret of all its harmony and perfection.

You must let that come home to *you*, to your own peculiar case. To be perfect with God you must have Christ come *home*, come HOME, to you and sit by your central fire—come home to *you*, to YOU, as if for the moment mankind were centred in the burning point of your soul, and you touched the burning point of God's. You must court and haunt His presence till it break forth on you, and it becomes as impossible not to believe as to believe is hard now. Then we realize what we were made for, made to be redeemed; we lay hold by faith of our destiny of perfection in another; we are already in spirit what it is latent in redemption that we shall be—what some curse in our nature seemed before to forbid and thwart our being. Our dry rod blossoms. We put forth buds one after another along the line of life. We grow into a stately, seemly tree, whose boughs are for shelter and whose leaves are for healing. Our pinched hearts expand, our parched nature grows green. The fever of life is cooled. Its fret is soothed. Its powers stand to their feet. Its hopes live again. Its charities grow rich. We feel in that hour that this is what we were made for, and we are sure that we are greater than we know. We find ourselves. We lose our load. We are delivered from our plague. Our weakness is made strong. Our enemies flee before us. Our promised land is round us. Life beckons where it used to appal. And all things with us are returning, through Christ, to the perfection of God from whom they came.

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