

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

AUGUST 1973
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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.

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Appreciation for Dialogue

Sir / I find myself in fairly constant disagreement with some of the positions which are taken in articles in your magazine. *But* I am grateful for it. Although I am not a Protestant theologian but an Anglican who is not altogether "reformed," so much of the writing in *Present Truth* does indicate a familiarity with the facts of history which is seldom seen anywhere else. Your most recent issue is a case in point, and I am grateful to you and your writers for a willingness to deal honestly with the great issues which Calvin and Luther confronted.

I shall hope that your contribution to the current scene in theological dialogue will continue and that your sharpness in definition of issues and positions will also continue. I do not expect to be convinced, but I am grateful for the conversation with your writers through your pages.

T.D.

Episcopalian Minister
South Carolina

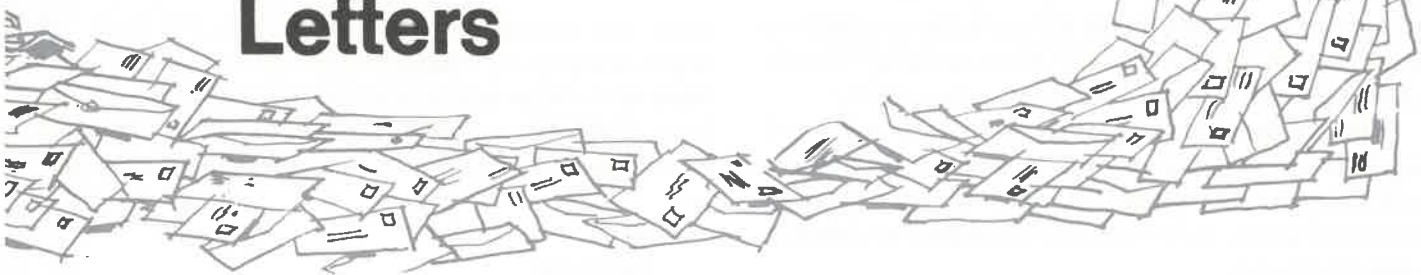
Holiness Movement and Campus Crusade

Sir / First, I appreciate the basic intent of the publication and find myself in agreement with the basic truth that God's Word teaches salvation by faith in Christ. Thank you for this emphasis.

However, I have to take exception with much of the material which "lumps" the charismatic movement, neo-glossalalia (or tongues speaking) and the Pentecostal movement with the Wesleyan holiness movement. On page 26 of your special issue, "Justification by Faith and the Charismatic Movement," it is stated: "This issue of tongues caused a split between

Letters Letters Letters Letters

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California 92028.



the holiness and Pentecostal movements; yet the basic emphasis of the two movements remains the same." This was not true then and is not true now.

I would suggest further research by you or your writers and/or contributors into Wesley's theology, the theology of James Arminius and those who hold to this Scriptural teaching that the hearts of believers can be made "perfect in love." One of the best capsule definitions of "full salvation," or the doctrine of entire sanctification, which the Nazarenes, along with others of like precious faith, experience, teach, preach and try to conserve, is found in Dr. Richard S. Taylor's book, *Preaching Holiness Today* (published by and available from the Nazarene Publishing House, Box 527, Kansas City, Missouri 64141), which states: "God saves men from sin to holiness through faith in Jesus Christ by the inward action of the Holy Spirit in two works of grace and in subsequent supervision and discipline."

God bless you. Brush up on your Wesleyan theology and the basic emphasis of the holiness movement as represented by the Church of the Nazarene and others.

J.J.H.
Nazarene Pastor
West Virginia

Sir / I have read the issue of *Present Truth* entitled "Justification by Faith and the Holiness Movement" and would like to comment. I wrote you previously expressing concern that you did not understand the holiness movement. This issue certainly confirms this in my mind.

Are you also going to review Campus Crusade? Have you seen their two personal counseling books? Do you know that we agree about 99% with them in theology? Why not make the next issue one that

attacks them, as few would associate them with us and thus do not realize the great error they are spreading?

R.H.
Free Methodist Minister
Kansas

Don't Rock the Boat

Sir / I, as pastor of the First Baptist Church here, am not interested in the least in receiving your propaganda against the Holy Spirit and His work in our world today.

I wonder if you have ever given any attention at all to Jesus' warning against sinning by blaspheming the Holy Spirit.

Would you please remove us from your subscription list, and I pray that the divisions which you are causing in the body of our Lord Jesus might soon be brought to an end.

W.H.T.
Baptist Pastor
New York

Amen!

Sir / We want to do a series of studies from the excellent articles published in the *Present Truth* issue, "Justification by Faith and the Charismatic Movement." This subject has been and remains a relevant and problematic issue within our denomination and local church.

Thank you for the clear warning, reasonably written, that you have provided. Serious and lasting damage has resulted from this radical form of religious experience. I believe God has gifted you editors and

sponsors with a timely message. Please continue to publish the truth.

H.W.H.
Mennonite Minister
Oregon

Sir / I was thrilled at the clarity of expression and the overwhelming impact of the simple truth as presented in the special issue of *Present Truth* entitled "Justification by Faith and the Charismatic Movement."

In an age when apostasy is more a matter of degree than "whether or no," it is exciting to read a publication that, throughout, rings in clear tones of Scriptural truth, undimmed by traditional or denominational shrouds.

S.R.

Sir / Your articles have helped in a great way to set some things and people straight on the gospel of the grace of God.

These past two months have been the happiest two months of my ministry here. Let no man tell you that *sola gratia, solo Christo, sola fide* and things like that are dull and dry!

G.C.B.
Presbyterian Minister
South Carolina

Sir / Thank you for the tremendously helpful information in the *Present Truth* issue on "Justification by Faith and the Charismatic Movement." This was very well presented and much needed. I agree with your editorial conclusion that this movement is erasing the difference between Reformation churches and the Roman church.

If possible, I would like to have twelve copies of this issue for distribution to church leaders.

R.G.Y.
Baptist Minister
Iowa

Sir / I was given a copy of *Present Truth* yesterday and, starting at 8:00 p.m. last night, I read until 1:30 this morning; and when I got up, I read some more until I finished it.

What a blessing! God has met some needs of my heart through reading *Present Truth*.

J.G.

Reformed Comment

Sir / I don't know who gave you our names; but whoever it was, I thank him for it and you for sending us your new magazine.

My background is Protestant Reformed.

A concept which has recently been projected upon my serious consideration is that the death of Christ purged and cleansed all the sins of all men. The Protestant Reformed denomination teaches that Christ only died for the elect. The book, *The Death of Christ*, by N.F. Douty, was very helpful on this subject.

M.C.
California

Lutherans Take Note!

Sir / Your paper, *Present Truth*, is exciting . . . far more than *Christianity Today*. I want to receive a copy of each issue.

This is an urgent plea that you make. The plainness of speech and references to the Scriptures are very much needed. This is the first urgent plea that I have heard outside of the Churches of Christ to restore New Testament Christianity. It needs to become a movement once again instead of a plea.

This could become a movement as surely as the neo-Pentecostalism has become a movement.

While attending Augustana Seminary in Rock Island, Illinois, several years ago, I mentioned to the Lutherans several times that I had a greater respect for Martin Luther than they did. I am surprised but happy that any Lutheran would speak out as you have spoken in the recent issue of *Present Truth*.

I will be looking forward to the next issue.

S.L.R.
Church of Christ Minister
Arkansas

**The Lutherans may have more friends outside official Lutheranism than they realize. The editor is not Lutheran either.—Ed.*

Non!

I have examined at least two of your magazines during the past few months. I want this address removed from your mailing list.

You are just playing word games. You are not helpful at all but only confusing. You quote reliable

historical documents with a flair for obscuring truth, not revealing it. Your questionnaires are a real joke.

I shall look forward to not receiving this publication again. Rest assured it will not fall into the hands of others in the parish so long as I am able to sidetrack it.

D.W.W.

Methodist Minister

Iowa

**At least Present Truth is getting a decided response one way or the other.—Ed.*

Revival Paper

Sir / After reading your special "Justification by Faith and the Charismatic Movement" issue of *Present Truth*, especially the part about John Wesley, I'll have to recant some of my "teasings." Because the Holy Spirit took of the things of Christ and showed them to me, satisfying me that Christ is sufficient, I had become critical of the way my brother was always quoting Wesley, as if Wesley should be adhered to rather than Christ. So I teasingly sang to him:

Be like Wesley, this my song,
In the home and in the throng;
Be like Wesley all day long!
I would be like Wesley.

Well, after reading what you had to say about Wesley, I almost felt like singing the chorus.

I enjoyed receiving your paper. It seemed to me to be a "revival" paper in the age of revivalism. I read recently in E. Stanley Jones' obituary that he had opposed revivalism, and I wondered why. I think your paper points out what is true revival in contrast to revivalism. And since I am always needing revival, your paper helped me today. Thank you.

W.L.

Methodist Minister

Maryland

Pentecostal Is Convinced

Sir / I have been wrestling with a knotty problem in determining my own course for the past two years. Your publication, *Present Truth*, has done a great

deal in helping me finalize what was an inevitable decision. On Friday, February 2, I met with the officials of the Assemblies of God and withdrew my fellowship.

Pentecostal Minister

California

New Insight

Sir / I must say that your issue on "Justification by Faith and the Charismatic Movement" opened the door to some precious insights. Many of your observations are so new to me that I will have to spend a great deal of time rethinking Romans.

C.W.G.

Baptist Minister

North Carolina

Ammunition

Sir / We have had access to a number of your *Present Truth* articles, and because we have a "tongue speaking" minister (Christian Reformed), we are interested in spreading your excellent material among our church friends.

W.V.

Christian Reformed Layman

Michigan

Lutherans Pro and Con

Sir / Voila! Two sample copies of the magazine, *Present Truth*, arrived in my mail last week. I wondered, at first, what was coming next, but my fears were soon allayed. What a pleasure to read the magazines cover to cover and find a clear presentation of Biblical and Reformation theology! This is the kind of magazine for which I have been waiting.

There is little doubt but that we have all been caught up in the great ecumenical age and have subjected our people to the indefiniteness of the resulting theology. The sweep of the charismatic movement has left so many in doubt about the Christian gospel and its real meaning. Thanks for clarifying the truth in your magazine. I have received a new inspiration for my preaching and ministering to my congregation.

It is my hope that you will continue to challenge the non-Scriptural trends of our day without reprinting mistakes of the past. Let it be a present-day affirmation of the right division of law and gospel,

and the great truth of justification by faith. May the Lord bless your efforts!

L.R.L.
Lutheran Minister
Saskatchewan, Canada

Sir / I am a Lutheran pastor, and I don't see your point. It sounds as if Lutheran doctrine and the charismatic movement are at swords' points, but this is not the case. The people who have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in my church have become more balanced and better Lutherans. Maybe it has something to do with the way it is presented.

H.J.H.
Lutheran Minister
Pennsylvania

Sir / Please take us off your mailing list at once. I have enough negative ax-grinding around here without your help. You proclaim objectivity and are about as biased and subjective as any publication I have read. Please be open and look at the love around you in your Christian brethren.

I.S.
Lutheran Pastor
Maryland

Sir / How I came to write to you I cannot remember, as I am constantly writing various sources for certain material. It was not with much enthusiasm that I requested your magazine; but upon receiving it and reading the "Justification by Faith" issue, I literally without letup read the four samples you sent me. My joy was unbounded and my faith greatly strengthened by your articles. I thank the Lord of heaven and earth that some men have discovered the heart of Christianity and intend to bring it to the attention of others.

In studying the pros and cons of dispensational premillennialism, I find this to be another subject which either ignores, obscures or contradicts the central truth of justification by faith. No doubt you will get to this topic as time goes on.

O.S.
Lutheran Minister
California

Sir / Your material is like a fresh breeze dispelling the smog!

R.A.R.
Lutheran Minister
California

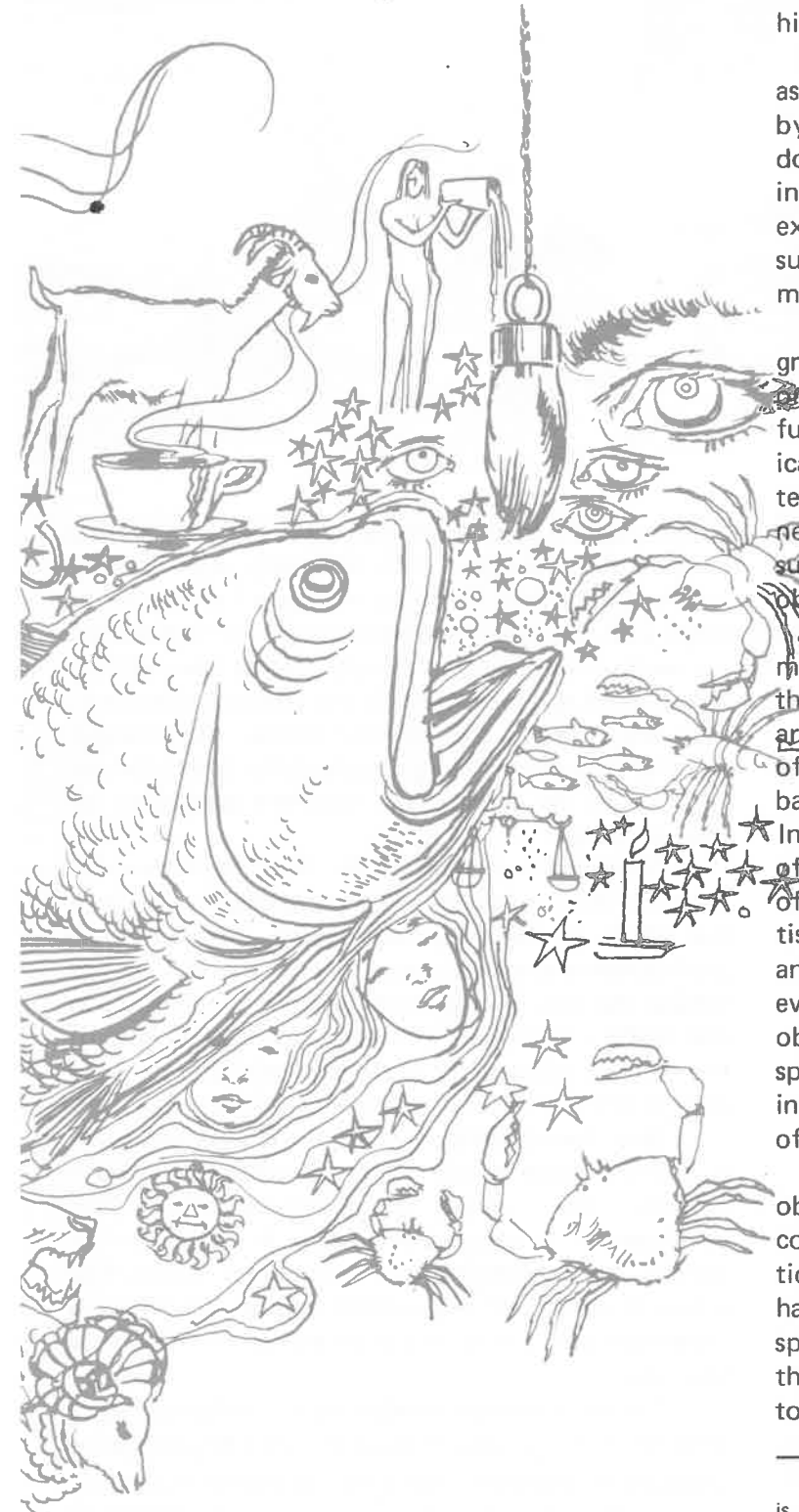
Guest Editorial

A Return to the Superstitious and Mystical



Irrational,

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



Much of the thinking of the Dark Ages was irrational, superstitious and mystical. The normal functions of the body were thought to be accomplished by the direct mediation of supernatural powers. Illness was generally attributed to the influence of heavenly bodies or to demon possession. If a man had a severe headache, it was not uncommon to pierce his skull to release the spirits.

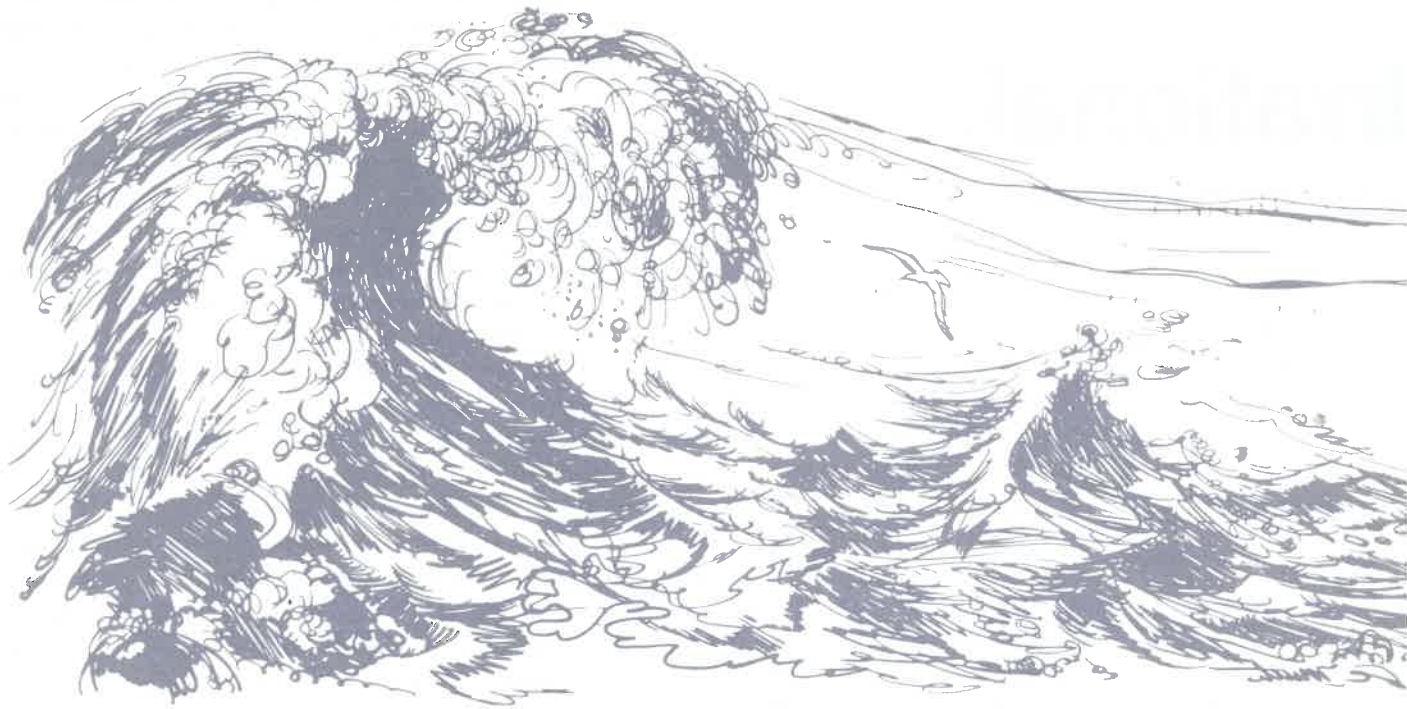
The earth—and man along with it—was regarded as the center of the universe. This was closely paralleled by the religious thinking of the age. The church's doctrine of justification by *gratia infusa* turned man inward to look for salvation in his own mystical experience. Civilization was drowned in religious subjectivism. "The noontide of the Papacy was the midnight of the world."—Wylie.

The Reformation was a mighty deliverance from groveling, religious subjectivism. By a clear emphasis on "original sin," the Reformers showed that it was futile to look for inner fulfillment within the historical process. And by proclaiming the long-lost Pauline teaching of justification through an imputed righteousness, they turned the focus away from man and his subjective religious experience to Christ and His objective, redemptive acts.

The Reformation, however, was not the only movement which turned the world from thinking that this earth was the center of the universe. The argument of Copernicus for a more enlightened view of the location of heavenly bodies, shook the most basic theological and philosophical canons of the day. Indeed, he "re-instated the older intellectual claims of scientific inquiry."—Stephen E. Toulmin. Instead of being shackled to a blind and superstitious dogmatism, men's eyes were opened to investigate, to observe and to make conclusions on the basis of empirical evidence. With the new scientific method, stressing objective evidence, reason and logic were reborn. The spark then lit by the Renaissance launched the world into the scientific age with its tremendous acceleration of knowledge.

As nature began to yield its secrets before the objective, scientific method, man found that he could rationally comprehend things like the circulation of the blood, digestion, genetics and illness. He had no more need to suspect the activity of witches, spooks and hobgoblins. Indeed, scientific breakthroughs became so stunning that modern man began to think that soon there would be no secrets, no

Dr. Jack Zwemer is a lay Christian scholar whose profession is an American educational consultant to a number of academic institutions.—Ed.



mysteries—that all things could be dissected and understood by man's cool rationality.

For sheer impact on modern man, the Renaissance, with all its dazzling humanistic achievements, has completely overshadowed the Reformation. In fact, there is good reason to believe that the great Reformation understandings have virtually been lost even in the most Protestant societies. The sons of the Reformation went to schools where they were regaled by the wonders and possibilities of science. Science became the great new religion—along with liberalism and rationalism. There was the heady feeling that science could solve all problems. Whereas the medieval mystics searched for inner fulfillment in spiritual experience, this age has assiduously sought for human fulfillment in material and scientific achievement.

Turning of the Tide

A man would have to be blind not to notice the turning of the tide which has taken place in the last five years. In one last, dazzling display of scientific glory, man has reached the moon. Just as suddenly he has found all this material idealism to be as dead as the lunar crust. Now there is a growing disenchantment with science. There is an awakening to the fact that rational humanism has not, after all, brought us any nearer to solving our basic problems—much less has it brought us inner fulfillment. In fact, the genius

of science unleashed the horrors of nuclear war, choked magnificent freeways with polluting automobiles, engineered greater machines to despoil the environment and developed communications to destroy the last sanctuaries of human privacy. Beside this insufferable cost of progress, there is the growing consciousness that science has definite limits. As biologist Gunther Stent says, there are mysteries which remain "hidden in an endless and tiresome succession of Chinese boxes."

Realizing that there is no inner fulfillment in material idealism, western man is being caught up in the trend to find his long-sought satisfaction in spiritualism and religious experience. This is what lies behind the new popularity of western Pentecostalism and eastern mysticism. It is a return, in principle, to the religious philosophy of the medieval church—with all that this will mean to civilization and to religion.

With this retreat from scientific objectivism, there is a pronounced return to the irrational, the non-objective, the mystical and the superstitious. This development is most pronounced in America—the world's most developed and enlightened nation. The extent of witchcraft, superstition and bizarre religious mysticism now being practiced across the nation, is amazing.

This phenomenon is displayed to a striking degree in some of the strange healing arts that are attracting widespread attention. Pendulum-swinging practitioners, spiritualistic mediums and healers no better or

religious and the supernatural were little regarded. Now the swing is back to the medieval philosophy with all which that implies.

The Third Alternative

As man continues to oscillate under the domination and influence of Platonic dualism, we must ask, Is there a third alternative? We answer, Yes! It is the great Reformation grasp of the Christian message—a grasp that has the most profound consequences for the church and for society.

Unfortunately, we look in vain upon the American scene for any significant institutional perception or support of the great Reformation insights. Even conservative evangelical Protestantism has so far lost contact with its own heritage that it scarcely differs from Roman Catholicism in its most fundamental religious emphasis.

Restoration of the great truth of justification by faith—upon which the church stands or falls—depends, therefore, upon the recovery of history. The truth once so fearlessly and nobly exalted must again be unfurled for a new and final Reformation. Thus alone can the church go forth “fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners” (S. Sol. 6:10).

more enlightened than evil-smelling witch doctors, are growing in popularity day by day.

Religion has been so permeated by existential philosophy that, rather than being a bulwark to superstition, it has provided a firm basis for it. People are ready to try anything that “works”—attempted communication with the dead, ESP, tongues, magical incantations, astrology—and to pursue every miracle and wonder. A civilization that scorned all mysteries and, in cold rationalism, discounted the supernatural, is now ready to rush headlong after the most fantastic superstitions, guided by nothing better than the subjective motto, “If it works, it must be right,” or, “The proof of the pudding is in the eating of it.”

And there is no reason to rejoice because we see what many are now calling the greatest revival of religion the world has ever seen. The Bible speaks very explicitly that this condition will exist in the world immediately preceding the second coming of Christ—and that it will be Satanically inspired in an attempt to destroy true faith and obedience among God’s people in the final remnant of time (see 2 Thess. 2; Rev. 13:13, 14; 14:12; 16:13-15; 18:1-5).

Thus the pendulum has swung from side to side in man’s desperate search for inner fulfillment. In the Europe of medieval times, man tried to find an inner fulfillment in religious experience. The material, the real and the body were little regarded. Then, in the Renaissance, man tried to find his fulfillment in the material, the real and the body. The spiritual, the



Word Power

Curtis Dickinson

Carnally-minded man can think of power only in the way it is seen or felt through the senses. He forgets that all power is invisible, and the most awesome power of all is word power. By a word armies march; by a word men are exalted or debased; by a word the course of a nation is changed. Words in the home result in emotional stress that is felt in business, government and all of society, altering the lives of millions. James did not overstate it when he said that the tongue is a little member but boasteth great things.

If a man's words have such power, how much more the Word of Christ? He was the Word that was "in the beginning with God. And all things were made through Him . . ." (Jn. 1:1-3) God's power is in His Word. "By the word of Jehovah were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth." (Ps. 33:6) In creation words expressed the will of God and caused that will to be realized. He spake and it was done. The Hebrew letter says that Christ is "upholding all things by the word of His power." (Heb. 1:3)

By words from His lips Jesus wrought His great works. To the sea He said, "Be still." To the palsied He said, "Arise." To a man dead four days He said, "Lazarus, come forth." And it was through His word that men heard that their sins were forgiven. To the palsied man, "Son, thy sins are forgiven." To a woman caught in adultery, He said, "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more." What possible experience could ever mean so much as to know that the Lord had spoken words of forgiveness!

When the Holy Spirit came with power to the

apostles, it was exercised by the words from their lips, that the gospel and the means of remission of sins might be made known. "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins." The keys of the kingdom were these words, given by Christ to Peter, to which three thousand responded that day and were "added" to the church. When the apostle Paul came on the scene (he whose life was full of experiences), he declared, "The gospel . . . is the power of God unto salvation." (Rom. 1:16) He preached not himself and his experiences but the Word of God with reference to Christ's death and resurrection, and the power was felt throughout the world.

Power is not in our subjective experience. The power is in what God has done through Jesus Christ, and this is effective for us when we believe the Word of truth and appropriate it in faith. The power of God is that power which He Himself has to cleanse us from sin through Christ's death, and when He pronounces us clean, we are clean. That pronouncement is made through Scripture, that which "God . . . hath spoken unto us in His Son."

Our generation is characterized by doubts and fears, by a frantic search for meaning to life. Churches are changing their creeds to make them acceptable to unbelievers. The testimony is not, "God says," but, "I think." Where Paul said, "I know," his modern counterpart says, "I feel."

Instead of looking to the record given by Christ, millions are lusting after the excitement of a new experience. They want to find a richer experience than faith in the gospel because they fail to see the glory of the gospel, the fact that Christ has made us fit for Himself by His death and resurrection. They are turning their eyes inward on themselves, when the true object of our attention should be Christ and His commandments. The sentiment prevails that those of us who take refuge in the revealed Word are depending on the "letter" of the law, where those who exult over experiences are living by the "Spirit." They fail to understand that evidence of the operation of the Holy Spirit is not signs and feelings but the fruit of truth. The experience Jesus demands of us is the experience of obeying His Word.

Once, after Jesus had performed a great miracle, a woman burst forth and exclaimed, "Blessed is the womb that bare Thee and the paps that gave Thee suck." Indeed, what an experience Mary had in being the mother of Messiah. Could there be a greater experience? Yes! Jesus said, "Yes, rather blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it." (Luke 11:28)

Grace

The grace of God is not something that is generated within man or produced by man's experiences but something which is wrought by God through Jesus Christ, and that nearly 2,000 years ago on the cross. It is known to us only through the Scriptures, specifically in the doctrines concerning Christ's coming into the world as human flesh, meeting the death

penalty on the cross and rising from the dead in order that believers might also be resurrected to live in His presence forever. This grace is the same to all people, for all time.

Granted that to realize the forgiveness of sins and the hope of immortality is a glorious continuing experience and to live under Christ's commands is to experience many dramatic changes, afflictions and victories; still it is none of this that gives power to save. The experience which saves us is that which Christ experienced when He died on our behalf and then rose from death to be our Mediator and Sovereign King. We can never experience anything even close to this. But we can believe it. I can believe that He died in my place. I can repent and be baptized and know that my sins are forgiven and know that I have assurance of eternal life.

How do I know? Because He said so.

Thus joy is not dependent upon experiences—these may sometimes be joyful and sometimes tearful—but it is the product of believing in Christ, the "peace and joy in believing." (Rom. 15:13)

Nothing that comes in the way of experience can remove this joy and peace. It is given in power through the Word of God.

"God . . . has spoken unto us in His Son."

The Shadow and the Solid Reality

Geoffrey J. Paxton

Geoffrey J. Paxton is an Anglican clergyman and principal of the Queensland Bible Institute, Brisbane, Australia. His entire ministry since his ordination in 1966 has been spent in Brisbane diocese.

All who are acquainted with the epistle to the Colossians exult in its Christ-exalting tone and content. After his prayer of thanksgiving (1:3-12), Paul expatiates on the supremacy of the Son of God (1:13-20), reconciliation through His death (1:21-23) and the glorious secret of God, "hidden for long ages and through many generations" (1:26, N.E.B.). "The secret is this: Christ in you, the hope of a glory to come" (1:27, N.E.B.; cf. also 2:3). Paul stresses the fact that he speaks to the Colossians about Christ Himself being the secret—the Christ in whom is hidden *all* (2:3)—to save them from being talked into error by specious arguments (2:4).

What was the danger against which the apostle was so earnestly warning the Colossians? The danger was nothing less than confusing the shadow with the reality! (2:17, N.E.B.). The "shadow" in this instance was empirical piety—regulations concerning eating and drinking (2:16), observances (2:16), self-mortification, angel worship and private revelations (2:18)—and the "solid reality" was Christ (2:17), the Head (2:19). To embrace an empirical, piety-centered religion is to embrace a shadow and to lose the solid reality. It is to give oneself to the perishable, the precepts of men, and to lose hold on the imperishable, the precept of God (2:22). To confuse the shadow with solid reality, to concentrate upon the rigoristic and self-mortifying activity, gives a great appearance of spirituality; but in actual fact it is stuck in the very ditch of legalism and futility (2:23).

To state the obvious, Paul does not repudiate practical morality and true piety (3:5-10; 3:18—4:6). But he does, with all his apostolic zeal, repudiate a confusion of such with the reality of Christ as alien righteousness. This explains his avowed repudiation of piety in Colossians 2:16-23 and his exhortation to piety in Colossians 3:5-10 and 3:18 to 4:6. The worldly deceivers (2:4, 8) thought that such piety, such self-mortifying rigorism, is in actual fact that which pleases God, when all the time it is Christ Himself, and Christ alone, who is pleasing to the Father. The believer is pleasing because he is in Christ and Christ is his life (2:9, 10; 3:3, 4). The seemingly wise (2:23) were placing their confidence in and receiving their encouragement from things on the earth, whereas Paul exhorts the Colossians to look away to heaven because that is where Christ is! (3:1, 2). The Colossian troublers were affixed to the *visible*, whereas Paul calls those in Christ to realize that their acceptability with God is a thing well and truly *hidden* (3:3). That righteousness which is the sole righteousness pleasing in God's sight can only be viewed by faith. Sight does not behold it until the time of the end (3:4).

Those caught away by the tradition of men (2:8) mistook their empirical piety for newness, whereas Paul exhorts the Colossians to good works on the basis of the fact that they have (already) put off the old man and have (already) put on the new man (3:9, 10). Paul would not have the Colossians tricked into think-

ing that the new man consists in not lying, etc. (3:9). When observable piety is the expression of faith in Christ as our alien righteousness, then such works are the fruit of the Spirit. If not, irrespective of how wise and spiritual and loving they appear, they are flesh!

Christian Faith

What, then, are some consequences of this New Testament message? What should it teach the evangelical church of today about faith?

1. Faith is always faith in the alien righteousness of Jesus Christ. This righteousness must never be confused with the new obedience of the believer, for the righteousness of faith is Jesus Christ Himself. He, Jesus Christ, is *all* in all. Faith in Jesus Christ as alien righteousness is the peculiar creation of the Spirit.

Has not piety, or what we are accustomed to call "sanctification," replaced the alien righteousness of Jesus Christ? That which ought to be the byproductive fruit of gratitude for a new life in the person of Christ, has become that which we offer to God for our acceptance in His sight.

2. Faith is never centered in conversion or the new birth. Conversion-mentality and not Christ-mentality characterizes so much preaching and teaching today. We need constantly to be on our guard against the tendency to substitute psychological and sociological newness for the New Man, Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is hidden except to faith, and faith (*fides*) is opposed to sense (*sensus*) and sight.

Hence we need to exercise great care in the use we make of the "changed life." Empirical piety may be ambiguous. It may not be empirically different whether it comes from the Spirit or the flesh. The exchanged life of Christ creates the changed life of the believer, but the changed life of the believer must never occupy the place of the exchanged life of Christ. The tendency to present our own righteousness to God in the place of the one true righteousness of Christ, is the constant leaning of the flesh.

Christian Fulness

The Colossian message has much to say concerning the present-day emphasis upon fulness—and visible fulness at that. Colossians knows a fulness, and it may benefit us greatly to have a closer look at it.

1. The fulness is in Jesus Christ (2:9), and by virtue of their faith-union with Christ, believers already

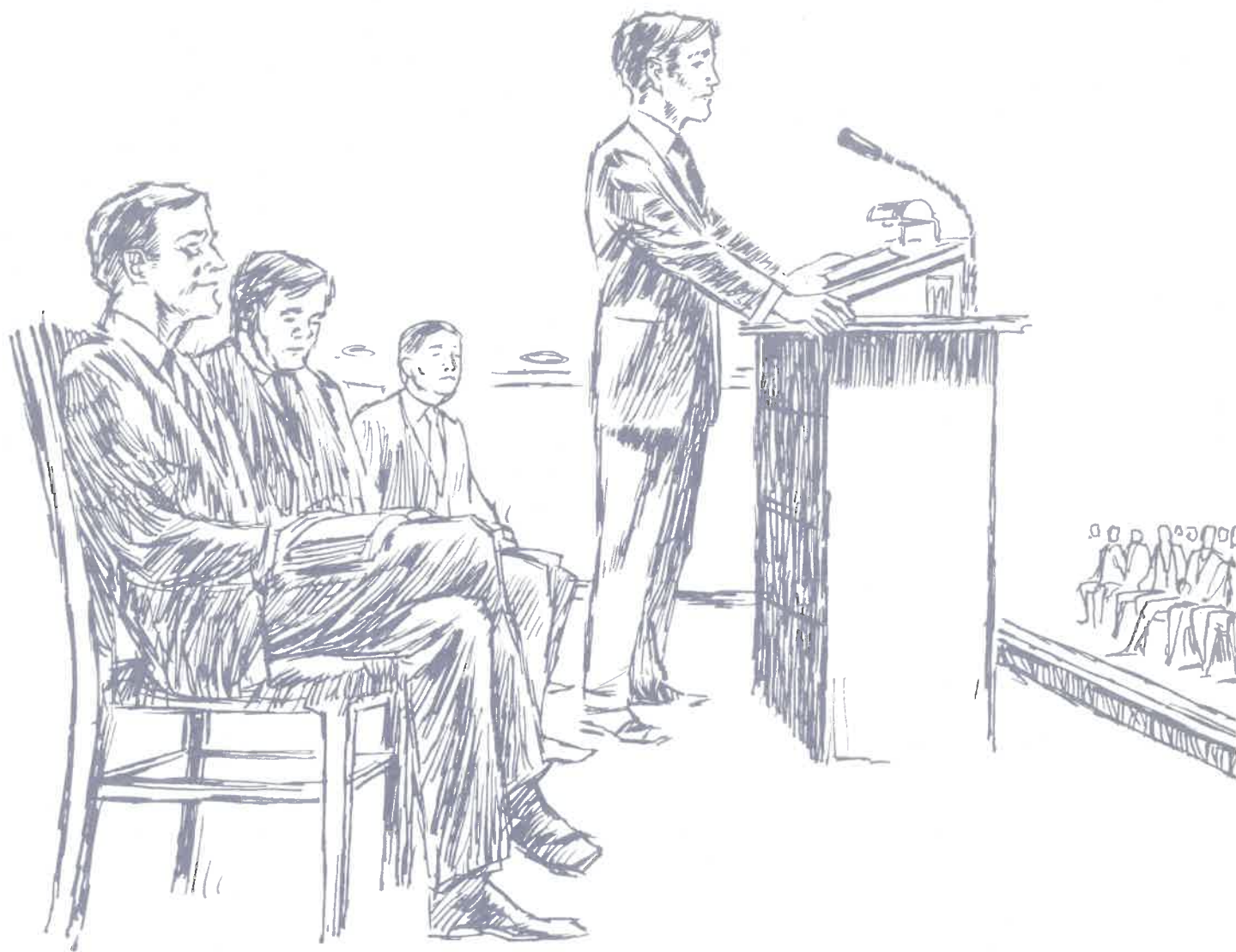
possess that fulness (2:10).

2. The fulness which the believer has in Jesus Christ is, of necessity, hidden with Christ (3:3) and will not be manifested until Christ is manifested (3:4).

3. This possession of fulness does not mean a cessation of the battle against those things which seek to pull us away from the Head. It is not always remembered that the positive statements concerning the possession of fulness, riches, etc., were made of a group that still needed to be told to mortify their earth-bound sensuality (3:5), to stop lying to each other (3:9) and to persevere in prayer! (4:2). Such richly-endowed believers were involved in the grind of daily existence!

4. This possession of fulness in Christ does not eradicate the hope of the believer (as does so much present-day fulness teaching) but rather is the basis and guarantee of such a hope! (1:27). Because he has put on the new man (3:9, 10), the believer does not expect a here-and-now empirical completion but rather looks forward to, and indeed presses forward to, a final fulness and newness which will (then) mean the cessation of all further grind and battle!

Finally, anyone who reads the epistle to the Colossians thoughtfully must be struck by the silence concerning the Holy Spirit. Without any intention whatsoever to deprecate the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, there may be a real corrective here to so much Spirit-centered mentality. My own particular understanding here is that faith in Christ as our fulness and righteousness before God, and the believer's union with Christ, are but different ways of speaking of an important facet of the Spirit's work. A comparison of Colossians 3:15-17 with Ephesians 5:15-20 is quite instructive. The passages are very similar indeed. Could "Let the Holy Spirit fill you" (Eph. 5:18, N.E.B.) and "Let the message of Christ dwell among you in all its richness" (Col. 3:16, N.E.B.) be the same reality? Is not the tendency (!) of our day to interpret the Ephesian passage in such a way that gives more place to *sensus* than to *fides*? How would the Holy Spirit fill the Ephesian congregation if it were not with the message of Christ? Perhaps Colossians is an exposition of what Ephesians 5:18 ought to mean in the life of every congregation.



PART 1: A Friendly Dialogue with Campus Crusaders

In his recent speaking itinerary through the United States, this editor had the privilege of friendly dialogue with some fine Christian gentlemen from Campus Crusade for Christ (C.C.C.) who happened to attend his seminars. The substance of these exchanges, taken from notes, is here reproduced. This editor has had a long acquaintance with C.C.C. through careful reading of most of the available literature and by contact with supporters and advocates of the movement.

The comments in the following discussion, more often than not, deal with general principles and revivalism in general. This is done because it would be unfair to single out C.C.C. for criticism that should be directed to the overall evangelical scene. Although the questions and answers were expressed out of deep conviction and concern, a good spirit prevailed in the discussion, proving that Christians can sometimes disagree without being disagreeable.—R.D.B.

Q. What are your impressions of the Campus Crusade movement?

Ed. The Campus Crusade movement is one of the most notable expressions of American evangelical revivalism today. It has a superb organization that is going, growing and fantastically successful. The office staff at the world headquarters are young, attractive, charming, gracious and vibrant. They and the mainstream of the movement represent the cream of American youth—educated, idealistic, middle-class. They have an irrepressible zeal and enthusiasm that is contagious. Who wouldn't be impressed!

Justification by Faith and the Current Religious Scene

Editor



Q. Do you agree with the claim that the revivalism seen in Campus Crusade is part of a great spiritual revival?

Ed. Dr. Bill Bright told me personally that we are now witnessing the greatest spiritual revival seen on this earth since the days of the apostles.

I think you would agree with me that numbers and noise are not the only indications of the value of a revival. We need to take into account the basic questions people are grappling with, or what Nygren would call *the fundamental motif* of a spiritual movement.

Consider the two great religious revivals that were so revolutionary that they actually changed the course of history. I am referring to the revivals in the times of the apostles and the Reformers. What was the central concern? The basic question people were

asking was, "How can a man be just with God?" "How can I be acceptable and pleasing before a righteous and holy God?" The question was *theocentric*. Men's earnest inquiry grew out of an overwhelming sense of God's holiness and their own guilty standing and corrupt state.

This is not really the basic question that people are asking in present-day revivalism. This has been a very permissive age, and a lot of it has rubbed off on those of us who call ourselves evangelical. God is cast in the role of an easy-going Benevolence who forgives sin out of sheer mercy. There is very little confrontation with the God of law, righteousness and judgment. Few of us are confronted with Luther's question, "How can I find a gracious God?" We take it for granted that God is gracious. Never have young people had so much time, so much freedom and so many means to run after pleasure. Yet they are bored and unsatisfied. The uppermost question they are asking is, "How can life become an exciting adventure? How can I have a bundle of fun? I have tried sport, sex, pot . . . What next?" In the context of this question, revivalists come along and say, "Try Jesus."

You may ask, "What is wrong with trying Jesus?" Our reply is this: Man's original sin was to make his own happiness his primary concern. (The Greeks called this *eudaemonism*, which means making the attainment of *happiness* the goal of life.) The ultimate sin is to enlist Christ as a means to this end.

We seriously question the fundamental motif of much of this type of revivalism. It is *egocentric* instead of *theocentric*. It does not change the goal but merely changes the method. Instead of regeneration (the creation of a new motif, a new goal and a new center), it offers sublimation. (Man merely pursues his egocentric goals on a higher level.)

If the current religious fervor is to have any depth or substance, it has to be on a higher plane than *eudaemonism*. We have to stop trying to deal with God as if He were Santa Claus. ("We believe in you, Santa Claus. Now let's get down to the real thing. Where are the toys?")

We desperately need to hear the gospel preached in the Biblical context of our accountability before God's law and His judgment seat. Says the Revelator:

"And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to Him; for the hour of His judgment is come: and worship Him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." Rev. 14:6, 7.

When the demands of God's law and the reality of judgment take hold of the ears of people, they will no longer be asking, "How can Christ satisfy my desire to have a grand ball and a bundle of fun?" but, "How can I satisfy God's righteous claims upon my life?"

Q. "Present Truth" seems to be knocking experience. Do you discount the need for a real experience?

Ed. On the contrary. What we are saying is this: The only way to get a real Christian experience is to stop making it your focal point of concern. This may sound paradoxical, but divine truth is full of paradoxes. The only way to live is to die; the only way to save your life is to lose it; you become rich by forsaking all; and so on.



When I was a boy, my daily chore was to milk an ornery, old, red cow. Instead of standing in the center of the stall, she had a frustrating habit of standing at an angle. Then there was insufficient room between the wall and her body for me to operate. The more I tried to push her away from the wall, the more she would lean her body toward the wall. Since she was stronger than I was, I had to devise another plan. I found that by going around on the other side and pushing her toward the wall, she would push back until she was standing in dead center—just where I wanted her. So I got the desired result by pushing in the opposite direction.

The surest way to fail in our Christian experience is to join the multitude who are caught up in the frantic pursuit of a satisfying Christian experience. Books on how to find this joyous, satisfying, deeper experience,

fill the land like the frogs of Egypt. A man or woman who can regale other seekers with his own fantastic religious experience is much sought after to revive the saints. The appeal of almost all revivalism is the prospect of discovering a marvelous human experience.

How different is all this subjective revivalism from the objective message of the apostles. These men did not turn the world upside down by telling people about their exciting experience, nor was the burden of their preaching to tell people how to discover the ecstatic experience of a Spirit-filled life. They had something infinitely bigger and more weighty about which to preach. God Himself had visited this planet in the person of Jesus Christ. By the amazing spectacle of a sinless life, He fulfilled the law for all men. By dying on the cross, He took our place, made atonement for all sin and buried our life of failure in the tomb. By the power of His resurrection, He destroyed death, opened Paradise and shut the gates of hell for every believer. Hear Paul proclaim:

"Christ has utterly wiped out the damning evidence of broken laws and commandments which always hung over our heads, and has completely annulled it by nailing it over His own head on the cross. And then, having drawn the sting of all the powers ranged against us, He exposed them, shattered, empty and defeated, in His final glorious triumphant act." Col. 2:14, 15, Phillips.

The gospel is the good news of what God has done outside of us in the person of Christ. It is the proclamation of a historic, objective reality. It is not about our experience but about Christ's experience. This was the central affirmation of the apostles.

The New Testament message of justification by Christ's *imputed* righteousness means that we are accepted by a life lived and a work done outside of ourselves. The focus is not internal but external. It is Christ's experience that is of supreme importance to us. "By His knowledge [His experience of bitter suffering and death] shall My righteous Servant justify many." Isa. 53:11. "We shall be saved by His life." "By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." Rom. 5:10, 19. All that is necessary for our acceptance and fellowship with God has been done. There is no need to chase after some elusive, mystical experience to give me status with God, with my fellows or with myself. Faith looks up and says, "Mine are Christ's living, doing, and speaking, His suffering and dying; mine as much as if I had lived, done, spoken, and suffered, and died as He did."—*Luther's Works* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1957), Vol. XXXI, p. 297. Does this do away with Christian experience?



Certainly not! It is the only way to have a good experience. Listen to these words from Luther:

“For ‘gospel’ [Evangelium] is a Greek word and means in Greek a good message, good tidings, good news, a good report, which one sings and tells with gladness. For example, when David overcame the great Goliath, there came among the Jewish people the good report and encouraging news that their terrible enemy had been struck down and that they had been rescued and given joy and peace; and they sang and danced and were glad for it [1 Sam. 18:6].

“Thus this gospel of God or New Testament is a good story and report, sounded forth into all the world by the apostles, telling of a true David who strove with sin, death, and the devil, and overcame them, and thereby rescued all those who were captive in sin, afflicted with death, and overpowered by the devil. Without any merit of their own he made them righteous, gave them life, and saved them, so that they were

given peace and brought back to God. For this they sing, and thank and praise God, and are glad forever, if only they believe firmly and remain steadfast in faith.

“This report and encouraging tidings, or evangelical and divine news, is also called a New Testament. For it is a testament when a dying man bequeaths his property, after his death, to his legally defined heirs. And Christ, before his death, commanded and ordained that his gospel be preached after his death in all the world [Luke 24:44-47]. Thereby he gave to all who believe, as their possession, everything that he had. This included: his life, in which he swallowed up death; his righteousness, by which he blotted out sin; and his salvation, with which he overcame everlasting damnation. A poor man, dead in sin and consigned to hell, can hear nothing more comforting than this precious and tender message about Christ; from the bottom of his heart he must laugh and be glad over it, if he believes it true.”—*Selected Writings*, Vol. IV, pp. 394, 395.

To learn that my acceptance with God is grounded on something entirely outside my own experience, brings the joy of sheer freedom. When faith grasps that my righteousness, security and real life are outside and above my own poor experience, I am liberated from all this internal groveling. Christ, my Representative, is accepted at the right hand of God; my Substitute is pleasing to God; His righteousness satisfies justice. By faith I am accepted, pleasing and righteous before God "in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:6).

Q. Then you are not against Christian enthusiasm?

Ed. Many stuffy, old churches need the youthful enthusiasm of people like the Campus Crusaders. But we need to be careful that our enthusiasm is in the objective gospel rather than in our own subjective experience.

Mary Magdalene was certainly enthusiastic when she ran to the disciples with the news of her risen Lord. But she didn't regale them with details of how she felt. Peter did not bore his listeners on the Day of Pentecost with a dry, theological discourse, nor did he tell them about his exciting experience of being filled with the Spirit.

I read in a recent paper, "The kids are very excited about what Jesus is doing in their lives." I met one of them—a fine, nineteen-year-old co-ed. Asked to tell what she was so enthusiastic about, she said, "I am excited about what Jesus is doing in my life. It is just like being in love. At times I am so excited I could lie down on the ground and scream." Six months later she added this: "I have not yet recovered from the awful after-depression of it."

If a ship keeps its anchor within its own bosom, it will be tossed to and fro by every wind. To avoid

being driven onto the rocks, it must cast the anchor to something outside of itself.

There are two aspects of God's work—His work *for us* and His work *in us*. Faith must be grounded on His work *for us*. That is the gospel. It is the only thing big enough for security. Ten thousand ecstatic experiences won't save us or give us any status with God. The essence of God's work within us is to teach us to rely wholly on His work without us.

Paul sent Timothy to discover the state of the church in Thessalonica. "I sent to know your faith," he wrote in his letter to the church (1 Thess. 3:5). When we ask one another, "How is your experience?" we tend to direct our attention to the ups and downs of human experience. When we ask, "How is your faith?" we direct attention to the changeless reality of God's finished work in Jesus Christ.

Q. Is it a mistake to look for a satisfying experience of inner fulfillment?

Ed. Yes, it is a terrible mistake! Yet the search for inner fulfillment is the fundamental motif of most evangelical revivalism. "Accept Christ into your heart and experience the satisfaction of a fulfilled life," is the Campus Crusade sales pitch. There are going to be a lot of frustrated people about soon. History has furnished us with two great experiments in seeking internal fulfillment. First, the medieval church demonstrated the results of trying to find fulfillment in an internal experience. (In classical theology this was called *gratia infusa*.) The result was some of the greatest ignorance, superstition and religious corruption that the world has ever seen. Second, the Renaissance has demonstrated the results of trying to find fulfillment in humanism, rationalism, and material and scientific idealism. The age in which man has reached the moon is the most bewildered, disillusioned and frustrated age in civilized history.

Shall we now return to the medieval principle of seeking fulfillment and satisfaction in internal, spiritual experience? This is where popular revivalism is now headed.

The great Reformation of the sixteenth century grew out of an awakening to the fact that life cannot be fulfilled within the historical process—with or without grace. This is the very substance of what the Reformers discovered in the doctrine of *original sin*. Human nature is radically corrupt, and this corrupt nature remains even in Christians until they die. "Every good work of the saints while pilgrims in this world is sin," declared Luther when writing against Latomus



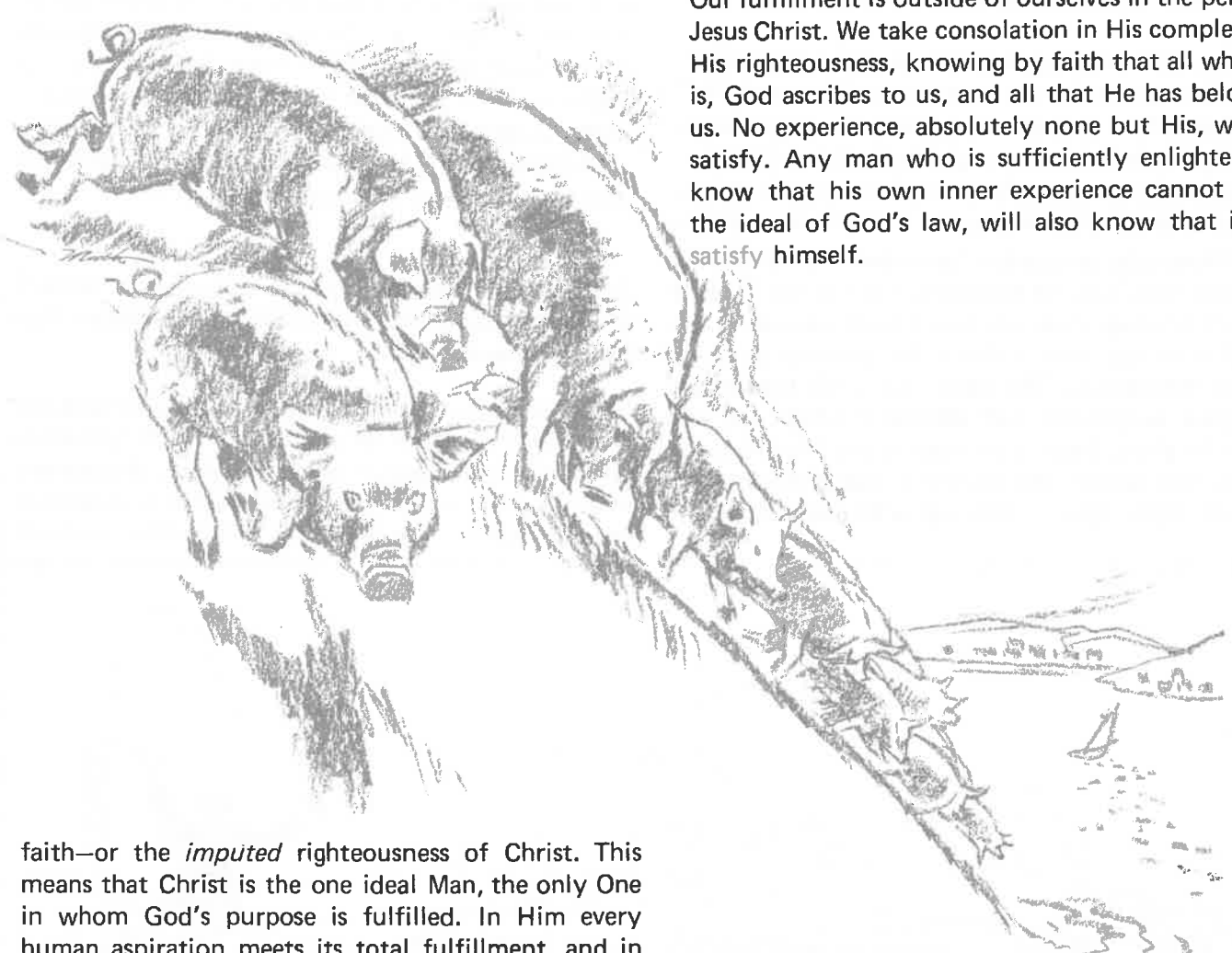
from the Wartburg—meaning that because of the taint of human imperfection, no saint could satisfy the demands of God’s law. Even the good deeds of holy prophets are filthy rags when compared with the righteousness which the law demands (Isa. 64:6). “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?” (Rom. 7:24). Such was the confession of a Spirit-filled apostle. All continue to fall short of God’s glory (Rom. 3:23), and not even the best saint at his best state with his best deed, can satisfy the righteousness demanded by God’s law. So the fact of *original sin* means that no man can experience fulfillment within the historical process.

The Reformers found the solution to the human dilemma in the Pauline doctrine of righteousness by

realized in Him.” Col. 2:10, Phillips.

Within the historical process, this fulfillment is ours only by faith, never by empirical reality until Christ shall come again. In the present gift of the Holy Spirit, we have but the down payment and first fruits of that inheritance (Eph. 1:13, 14; Rom. 8:23); and instead of gloating in smug satisfaction about the enjoyment of spiritual fulfillment, “we . . . groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” (Rom. 8:23).

Again we say, the principle of imputed righteousness teaches us that we can find no internal fulfillment within the historical process. Sin dwells yet in the best of saints (Eccl. 7:20; 1 John 1:8). Within there still remain things to perplex, discourage and frustrate. Our fulfillment is outside of ourselves in the person of Jesus Christ. We take consolation in His completeness, His righteousness, knowing by faith that all which He is, God ascribes to us, and all that He has belongs to us. No experience, absolutely none but His, will ever satisfy. Any man who is sufficiently enlightened to know that his own inner experience cannot satisfy the ideal of God’s law, will also know that it can’t satisfy himself.



faith—or the *imputed* righteousness of Christ. This means that Christ is the one ideal Man, the only One in whom God’s purpose is fulfilled. In Him every human aspiration meets its total fulfillment, and in Him the law finds entire satisfaction. In Him human nature is perfected, accepted and restored to fellowship at the right hand of God. He is our Man, His humanity is ours, and His righteousness is ours. Instead of trying to find fulfillment in ourselves, faith finds it outside of ourselves in the person of Christ. Says the apostle Paul, “Your own completeness is only

It is a sad spectacle to see this mad, Gadarene stampede after a satisfying inner experience. Yet crusaders and revivalists tell people that they can have it, deluded enthusiasts proclaim that they have attained it, and books spell out secret formulas about how to get it. It is sheer “evangelical” Romanism.

In fact, some Roman Catholic scholars are very critical (and rightly so) of the extreme subjectivism manifested by Protestant revivalism.

Q. Didn't Jesus tell us that He came to give us an abundant life?

Ed. Yes, it is a life filled with all the fulness of the Godhead (Col. 2:9) and all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3). That life is laid up for us at the right hand of God, and we are directed to wait for Christ's coming for the empirical possession of it (Col. 3:1-4). Meanwhile, it is ours by faith alone; and by the gift of the Holy Spirit, we now enjoy only the "firstfruits," or down payment, of it (Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:14).

Our complaint against the popular "deeper-life" movement is not that it makes this "abundant life" too wonderful. It does not present it as wonderful enough. It reduces it to the imperfect state of Christian experience here below, where "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh" (Gal. 5:17).

Those who reduce the "abundant life" to the life here and now, have no true perspective of the hope of Christ's coming. They are like a bride who wants to have her honeymoon without the personal presence of the bridegroom. The New Testament focuses on two great events—the first coming of Christ and His return in glory. Faith is directed to the finished work of His first advent and possesses that abundant life by faith alone. Hope is directed to the second advent,

"when Christ, who is our life, shall appear" and bestow that life upon us by empirical reality. If we try to bring the "not yet" into the "now," we will have a very poor substitute for the real thing—as well as lose the eschatological tension of the New Testament message.

Besides looking to the wrong life, this "radiant Christian experience" mentality gives a romanticized coloring to Christian sanctification. Bible sanctification is not a mystical, spiritual rapture. It is not a happy flight of feeling. It is not taking off on some mystical, spiritual trip. Bible sanctification means trusting God in trial, in darkness as well as in the light; it is walking by faith and not by sight; it is consistently obeying every word from the mouth of God and steadfastly doing His will. In other words, it is not measured by the state of religious feelings and is quite different from some kind of spiritual euphoria. True Christian experience does not always appear to be a spectacular adventure. But to fusslessly trust God and keep His commandments is worth more than all the noise of Christendom.

Q. On what basis do you say that most of today's evangelical revivalism is more akin to Romanism than to the Reformation?

Ed. The main difference between the Reformers and Rome was a matter of emphasis. The Reformation doctrine of justification by an *imputed* righteousness meant that the sinner's faith was directed to a work of grace outside of himself. The fundamental emphasis





was on the objective reality of Christ's experience on the sinner's behalf. The Roman doctrine of justification by an *infused* righteousness meant that the sinner's attention was directed to an inward work of grace. The fundamental emphasis was on the subjective experience of Christ's indwelling in the heart.

Although most Protestant revivalism may give lip acknowledgment to the doctrine of imputed righteousness, the fundamental motif is subjective experientialism. It is therefore more in harmony with the non-Reformation tradition.

Groups like Campus Crusade will find that they are more at home working in common cause with Roman Catholics than with Protestants who return to the objective Reformation emphasis of law and gospel. In fact, this is already beginning to be clearly demonstrated.

Q. We would like to see a true revival. In what direction should we move?

Ed. 1. In order to steer clear of shallow, sentimental revivalism, we need a strong, virile emphasis on law and gospel. The righteous demands of God's law need to be set forth in such a way that men may start crying out, "How can I be just in the sight of God?" rather than asking, "How can I escape the boredom of life and have a bundle of fun?" If the gospel is not preached in the context of God's judgment (Rev. 14:6, 7) and the deep conviction of the sinfulness of sin, it will have no real power to move people from death to life.

2. The doctrine of justification by an *imputed* righteousness must be moved to the center of attention (see article, "The Centrality of Justification by an Imputed Righteousness," this issue). This will prevent the language of Christian experience from becoming too loud and confident.

3. Campus Crusade should abandon its "second blessing" theology, evidenced in its doctrine of "carnal Christians" and "Spirit-filled Christians" as well as its liberal quoting from "holiness" authors in its literature. Its doctrine of sanctification completely swallows up justification just as Pharaoh's lean cattle swallowed up his fat ones. Campus Crusade doctrine is decidedly holiness-Pentecostal, although it eschews speaking in tongues. This explains why many in the movement keep gravitating into Pentecostalism.

4. The doctrine of "Christ in you" needs to be delivered from serious distortion by placing the greatest emphasis where the New Testament places it—on God's work *in Christ* and the believer's position *in Christ*.

5. The New Testament has far more to say about Christ's intercession in heaven than His indwelling in the heart. Christ will never be truly on the throne of the heart until faith sees Him exalted on the throne at the right hand of God.

If the revival is based solidly on the New Testament, it can end in glorious fulfillment at the second coming of Jesus Christ. Otherwise, it will lead millions to unite in fulfilling Revelation 13:13, 14. Protestantism is clearly headed for the crisis.

PART 2:

The Exciting Discovery of the Spirit-filled Life

From a sermon delivered by the editor in the United Methodist Church, Bogata, Texas, March 18, 1973.

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." John 10:10.

"(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.)" 1 John 1:2.

"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son." 1 John 5:11.

Only God's Word and God's Spirit can reveal to the human mind the immeasurable greatness of the Christian's life. The Christian's life is in Christ. It is nothing less than Christ Himself. Says the apostle Paul, "*Christ . . . is our life.*" Col. 3:4.

From eternity Christ was equal with the Father. He was the glory of heaven. But He laid aside His royal crown and humbled Himself to take man's nature. The Majesty of heaven was born in a donkey's food box because there was no room for Him among men. All things were made by Him, yet on earth He had not where to lay His head. He was unrecognized and unhonored, yet He gave to the world an exact representation of the character of God.

The life which He lived in human flesh before the wondering universe was not for Himself but for us. He was our Substitute and our Representative. Before divine justice we are obligated to render perfect obedience to the law of God (Rom. 2:13). Righteousness is obedience to the law. This we owe to the law, but as sinners we are incapable of rendering it. In our place and in our name, Christ gave to that law all that justice required. His was a life of wonderful humility and infinite perfection. He not only did no sin, but He went about doing good. He was the unwearied servant of man's necessities. He did nothing for Himself. In that royal life there was not one selfish act, rude word, impatient look, impure thought or unholy disposition. In His humanity He revealed every divine excellence and every noble attribute.

Thus St. Paul declares, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Rom. 10:4. That is to say, in Jesus Christ there is a

life which totally fulfills the law, a life which measures with all the greatness and grandeur of God's law.

In another place the apostle says, "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Cor. 5:21. That is to say, Christ's life contains the righteousness of God—all God's righteousness in its infinite totality.

Again the apostle declares, "In Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Col. 2:9. Talk about a Spirit-filled life . . . ! The life of the Man Christ Jesus was filled with all the eternal fulness of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. In this life are "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:3).

Not only is Christ's life without sin, but it is a life in which there is no death. Although He tasted death for every man, He "abolished death" and "brought life and immortality to light through the gospel" (2 Tim. 1:10). His is a life which is raised far above the power of death and above all principalities and powers.

As believers, we must confess that our life is all that and nothing less than that, for "*Christ . . . is our life.*" Let the imagination take it in. Oh, but it can never take it in! Behold the life God has freely given us in the gift of His Son. He has given us a life which measures with the greatness and grandeur of God's law; a life that contains all of God's righteousness, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, all the fulness of the Godhead; a life in which there is no sin, no death; but a life raised far above the power of death and bathed in eternal glory.

When God gave us Jesus, He gave us a life so abundant that Paul could only say that God "blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). God emptied all heaven. He gathered up the riches of the universe, laid open the resources of infinite power and poured out all the accumulated love of eternity in the gift of Jesus. He would not have it said that one blessing in all His vast ocean of infinite blessedness was withheld. And all this He gave so that "in the coming ages He might show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness

toward us in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2:7, R.S.V.).

The life which God has given us is so abundant that it is greater and higher than the highest human thought can reach. It "surpasses knowledge" (Eph. 3:19, R.S.V.). What mind can comprehend the fulness of the riches of the Godhead? No wonder Paul exclaims:

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. . . . Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." 1 Cor. 2:9, 10, 12.

Yet if we did not see this "exceeding and eternal weight of glory" "through a glass, darkly," the overpowering glory of it would blot us out of existence.

"Christ . . . is our life." Nothing but the Holy Spirit could give us the faith to discover a life so amazing. Faith looks to all that the life of Christ did and all that the life of Christ contains, and says, "Mine are all these works and deeds, mine as much as if I had lived and performed them myself."

Where Is the Christian's Life?

In order that this inestimable treasure might be eternally secure to every believer, God took this life out of this earth and placed it at His own right hand in heaven. The Christian's life is secure at the right hand of God. His treasure is in heaven, where no thief can break in and steal it. So the apostle wrote to the Colossian believers:

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." Col. 3:1-4.

Do not fail to notice the location of the Christian's life. "*Your life is hid with Christ in God. . . . Christ . . . is our life.*" This is our inheritance, and it is laid up for us in heaven. For Peter declares:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are

kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." 1 Peter 1:3-5.

Through the Spirit the believer enjoys only the "firstfruits," or "down payment," of his inheritance here and now (Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:13, 14). He knows that his fulfillment is only realized in Christ (Col. 2:10), so he patiently waits for Him to appear. Meanwhile, the Christian's righteousness is in heaven (Jer. 23:6; Isa. 45:24, 25). The city of his affections is in heaven (Phil. 3:20). And his real life is in heaven (Col. 3:4).

Faith to know that our real life is outside of ourselves gives us the courage to face anything. Why need we be anxious about this earthly life, fretting when we do not have things or grieving when we lose them? As Luther could sing with holy defiance as he marched off to the Diet of Worms:

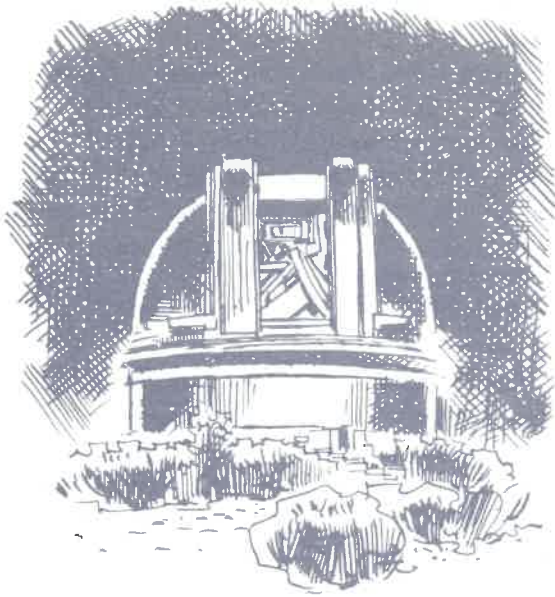
"Let goods and kindred go,
This mortal life also;
The body they may kill;
God's truth abideth still."

When faced with the prospect of death at the hands of his enemies, Luther remarked, "Let them take my old, wretched life if they will. They will only render me a service." He knew that his real life was where no demon or human foe could touch it.

Dwelling in Heaven or Dwelling on Earth?

What, then, is the exciting discovery of *the* Spirit-filled life? It is a life lived 2,000 years ago. It contains all of God's fulness, all of His wisdom and knowledge, and all of His righteousness. It is a life of wondrous perfection and infinite blessedness. Through faith that life is ours. It is laid up surely in heaven. It justifies us in the sight of God and entitles us to receive as much of the Holy Spirit that God sees we need until we shall be glorified at Christ's appearing.

In view of this glorious gospel, we are concerned at the direction of much of this "deeper-life piety." We are concerned because it is causing people to settle on something far less than the life more abundant. We are concerned because people are being taught to look to the wrong life. Their attention is directed inward to their own experience, and they suppose that, having some internal fulfillment of an abundant life, they are ready to go out and proclaim the exciting discovery of their Spirit-filled experience.



A friend told me of how he climbed Mt. Palomar, several thousand feet above a smog-filled California valley. He had a marvelous sensation of elevation and achievement. But then he looked through that great telescope and saw the galaxies out in space, millions of light-years above Mt. Palomar. As he contemplated those distances so vast that they boggle the mind, Mt. Palomar by comparison seemed like an insignificant pimple. So the abundant life which God has given us in Jesus Christ is as high above the highest experience of the saint down here on this earth as those galaxies are above Mt. Palomar. When people glory in their own "Spirit-filled" experience, it is because they have not looked through the telescope of God's Word to see the life filled with all of God's fulness. Instead, they run around, bragging about some feeble experience in this mortal existence. What a fantastic misrepresentation of the greatness and grandeur of the abundant life which God has given us in Jesus Christ!

No wonder the apostle Paul was concerned when he saw the Colossian church being led away from the gospel to look for some fulfillment and fulness in their earthly experience. After telling the church that such fulness is found only in Christ (Col. 2:9, 10), he made his Christ-centered appeal:

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." Col. 3:1-4.

Again, in his letter to the Philippians, Paul

warns the church against those who would "glory" in the "flesh" (see chap. 3). After speaking very humbly about his own experience and attainments, Paul admonished them:

"(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly [inward parts], and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)" Phil. 3:18, 19.

The apostle is not here referring to ordinary worldliness or gluttony. He is issuing a sharp warning against a false "gospel." He has in mind those who would glory in something other than the cross of Jesus Christ. Their gaze is on themselves. They cannot see any higher than their own spiritual navels. Then Paul adds by way of contrast, "For our conversation [life] is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." Phil. 3:20. These words are so clear that he who runs may read.

Is the life in which we glory in heaven or on earth? That was St. Paul's vital question to the Colossians and the Philippians. And it is the vital question of this hour.

Just a few days ago a certain Protestant clergyman was teaching a group of children this new (old) existential theology. He said, "Once we used to believe and teach that Christ was up there somewhere in heaven. Now we teach He is inside of us, that the heart is His throne and this is the dwelling place of God." Now, no Bible-believing Christian doubts that, through the Word and Spirit, Christ dwells in the heart of the Christian. But when this is stated in such a way that it undermines or does away with the pre-eminent doctrine of the exalted, objective Christ at the right hand of God, the door is thrown wide open to mysticism, spiritualism, pantheism and the most sentimental spiritual drivel.

In the Revelation, chapter 13, there are two groups brought to view—those who dwell on earth (Rev. 13:8, 14) and those who dwell in heaven (Rev. 13:6). That is to say, one class of worshipers find their fulfillment in that exalted life at the right hand of God; the other class of worshipers seek fulfillment on earth within themselves. This chapter is of immense importance to us today. It describes with fearful accuracy where Protestantism is now headed under the influence of so-called revivals (see Rev. 13:13, 14). It describes the final battle between the religion of heaven and the religion of earth. This battle we are now beginning to enter, and the religious world is now being polarized for the conflict.

PART 3:

The Centrality of Justification by an Imputed Righteousness

The doctrine of justification by Christ's imputed righteousness is not simply one doctrine among others. As Luther constantly declared, it is the basic and chief article of faith with which the church stands or falls and on which its entire doctrine depends. If anything in this article is given up, lost or compromised, warned the Reformer in the *Smalcald Articles*, "all is lost, and the Pope, the devil, and all our adversaries will gain the victory." Again he said, "We cannot emphatically and often enough sharpen our thinking on this doctrine. We must devote ourselves to it with the greatest theological diligence and seriousness. . . . No other article of faith is so threatened by the danger of false teaching."

It can be seen that Luther did not think that the doctrine of imputed righteousness was only something to be preached to mere Christian beginners or that it could be forgotten as a mastered accomplishment. He not only stressed that this truth cannot be learned too well but that it must occupy the central position in the teaching and thinking of the church.

If we were to judge Protestantism by whether or

not the doctrine of imputed righteousness is at the center of its thrust, we would have to conclude that Protestantism scarcely exists today. Not by any stretch of the imagination is Christ's imputed righteousness central in present-day thinking or witness. Some will make cursory mention of it, and even most who do mention it relegate it to something which is required at the time of Christian initiation. Apparently it is thought that more mature Christians can get past it and go on to higher things.

This present state of affairs in the Protestant movement explains the growing accord between Rome and the neo-evangelicals. No Roman Catholic dogma has ever changed; but with the Reformation doctrine of imputed righteousness removed from the center of the neo-evangelical witness, Rome sees more reason for affinity than for alarm.

It is not hard to demonstrate that Protestant revivalism, following in the tradition of Charles Finney, thinks very poorly of the great Reformation doctrine of justification. The inner experience of being saved or sanctified is overwhelmingly the center of almost

all revivalism. It has become a kind of Protestant *gratia infusa*. Neither can anyone challenge the observation that Pentecostalism, neo-Pentecostalism and Campus Crusade are entirely devoted to a focus on internal experience. It is the old Roman Catholic theology of *gratia infusa* wrapped up in some evangelical trimmings. For Rome it is a happy eventuality. Catholics are even being instructed to learn the evangelical patten so that they can move in with this stream of religious fervor.

Let us now leave these very obvious deviations from sound Protestantism to examine what we may well expect to be the last fort of the Reformation heritage—the good, conservative or middle-of-the-road evangelical Protestantism. This is where the shoe is going to pinch. Most of us who are interested enough to publish or read this type of material would like to think that we of all people are the sound evangelicals who recognize the difference between medieval and Reformation theology. But let us also submit to the acid test: Is the doctrine of imputed righteousness really at the center of our faith and witness? It is not easy to be self-critical, but it is time that we let that great truth which calls all doctrines into question, call the content of our own message into question.

We will now observe how the best evangelicals can often fail to keep the great doctrine of imputed righteousness from being at the center of their message.

1. Centering on the New Life

In their book on *Protestant Christianity*, John Dillenberger and Claude Welch pinpoint the vital difference between the Reformers (who did believe in the new life of the Spirit) and the sounder Anabaptists (who did believe justification by faith). "For the Anabaptists . . . the new life in Christ through the Spirit rather than justification by faith is the center." —p. 63.

And on this same point, evangelical Protestantism today reflects the Anabaptist rather than the Reformation focus. Says Paul Tillich in *A History of Christian Thought*: "For the kind of Protestantism which has developed in America is not so much an expression of the Reformation, but has more to do with the so-called Evangelical Radicals."—p. 225. "Luther's conflict with the evangelical radicals is especially important for American Protestants because the prevailing type of Christianity in America was not produced by the Reformation directly, but by the indirect effect of the Reformation through the movement of evangelical radicalism."—p. 239.

Most evangelical witness tends to lack a central theology of justification. Its overwhelming focus is on the internal experience of being born again and saved. There is much truth in it. The need for the new birth ought to be taught. But when it is not seen in the setting of the pre-eminence of justification by an imputed righteousness, there is grave danger that people come to think that salvation is based on an internal change within their own hearts. Then the focus is inward instead of outward, on Christian experience instead of Christ's experience, on a subjective happening instead of a historical reality.

In the popular evangelical message, people are urged to get saved by inviting Christ to come into their hearts. Being saved is then identified with having that internal experience of being born again by the presence of the indwelling Christ.

Aside from the fact that this comes perilously close to the Roman Catholic principle of salvation by the indwelling presence (as ably set forth by Cardinal John Henry Newman¹), it is a far cry from the apostolic message of salvation. The apostles did not begin by proclaiming that their hearers could be saved by having Christ come into their hearts to produce an internal experience. Their focus was not an internal happening but an external happening. Christ lived, died and rose again for the sinner's justification. The apostles proclaimed an objective, historical reality. Here was Paul's *kerygma*:

"We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that He hath raised up Jesus again. . . . Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." Acts 13:32, 33, 38, 39.

Salvation was said to be in something which God had already done outside the sinner in the person of Jesus Christ. As men listened, the Holy Spirit was present to give them faith. Now the hearers were exhorted to accept this salvation by faith. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Rom. 10:9.

Faith does not bring the person of Christ down out of heaven to come into the believer's heart,² for "the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on

¹Lectures on the Doctrine of Justification.

²Christ is present by His Spirit in the Word of faith (see Rom. 10:8). The person of Christ remains at the right hand of God.

this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above)" (Rom. 10:6). Rather, faith lifts the believer up to heaven and places him "in Christ." Then and then alone is the scripture fulfilled, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Cor. 5:17.

Rather than the new birth being the result of focusing on the inner change itself, the very opposite is true. We see this illustrated in Jesus' lesson to Nicodemus. After telling the proud ruler about his need of a new birth, Jesus did not lead the convicted sinner to dwell on his internal experience. He directed Nicodemus' eyes to that great external event which guaranteed his salvation. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:14, 15.

2. Centering on the Experience of Sanctification

The Christian experience of sanctification is a most necessary doctrine of the Christian faith. But when it subordinates justification and takes the center of attention, it becomes a return route to medieval piety. This is the greatest single weakness of the holiness-Pentecostal teaching, and a lot of it has rubbed off on the Protestant movement.

Why does the internal work of sanctification tend to swallow up justification by faith? We shall offer two reasons:

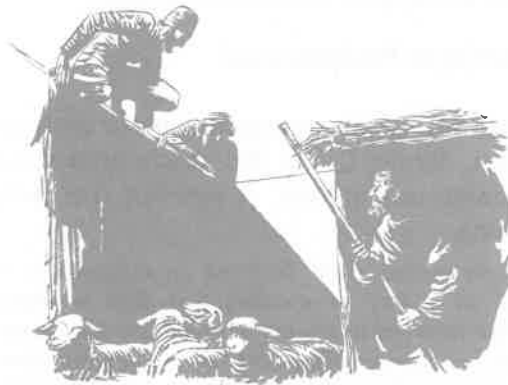
a. Arminian theology (which was the soil from which sprang the holiness-Pentecostal movement) greatly weakens the doctrine of justification by faith. It thinks of justification only in terms of forgiveness of past sins by virtue of Christ's death. It fails to see that justification is also the imputation of Christ's life of perfect obedience to the law—an obedience which gives to the believer a full and free title to eternal life (Rom. 4:5-7; 5:10, 18, 19). Consequently, final salvation is thought to depend largely on the active obedience of the believer in his life of sanctification.

b. Sanctification has often been separated from justification. When the renewing power of the Holy Spirit is separated from the doctrine of justification, all that is left is a cold, legal, intellectualized concept. Then there is only a fictitious "justification" which brings neither the Holy Ghost nor His transforming power into the life of the church. People profess salvation while their lives are a positive denial of it.

Then what happens? The preacher looks at the church and thinks, "These people have been 'saved,'

but they certainly need something else to lift them out of their low spiritual [carnal?] state." Along comes a "second blessing" or "renewal" expert who proceeds to say, "What these people need now is to learn the secret of the deeper life. They have been taught justification [?], but now they need to be taught the secret of sanctification."

This program is quite palatable to proud human hearts—especially to responsible people in the church who are supposed to have been "saved" for years. It would be altogether too humbling to admit that what is needed is a true, Bible experience of accepting the gospel, being justified by faith and being truly born



again in consequence of it. It is too hard to confess being among those thieves and robbers who have really tried to climb over the wall rather than to get into the fold by the one true door (John 10:1). So instead of submitting to going back and entering the real door of salvation, men think it much better to get a second blessing, some baptism of power that will correct their carnal condition. Being outside of Christ, they expose themselves to a false spirit and delude themselves that they are filled with the Holy Spirit because they can do fantastic things like speak in an unknown tongue—unknown to God as well as to man.

Certainly justification must be distinguished from sanctification.³ We must not transfer the property of one benefit to the other. But it is just as certain that they can never be separated. Union with Christ by saving faith results in justification as a judicial benefit, but it also results in sanctification as a moral benefit. One blessing cannot be enjoyed without the other. They are as related as light and heat. Where there is light, there will be heat.

Sanctification of the Spirit through a life of active obedience, is not optional. God does not justify the sinner in such a way that obedience to the Ten Com-

³One error is to confuse sanctification with justification. This is the essence of Roman Catholic legalism. The opposite error is to separate sanctification from justification. This is the essence of antinomian Protestantism.

mandments is optional. Submission to the Lordship of Jesus Christ is not optional. Faith that is unto justification means that the whole life turns from disobedience and submits to the sanctifying authority of Heaven's government. It is impossible to be justified and not have the renewing, transforming gift of the Holy Spirit. Justification means that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to the believer and that he stands before God as if he were perfect. God must, therefore, treat him as a righteous man; and He does this by giving the believer the gift and infilling of the Spirit. What is needed, therefore, is not a "second blessing" doctrine to add to justification but a true justification which will bring every blessing in its train.

3. Centering on Predestination

Calvinism has become synonymous with predestinarianism. While Calvin did teach predestination, and a double one at that, it was not the center of his teaching.

"Calvin moved from faith to an elaboration of predestination as a way of showing that God is wholly the author of our faith and that every notion of work or merit must be rejected. . . . Calvin moved from faith to predestination, not predestination to faith. The latter . . . was the pattern of most of his successors."—John Dillenberger & Claude Welch, *Protestant Christianity* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954), pp. 34, 35.

As it often happens, people tend to accentuate their controverted doctrines and harden their position in the midst of controversy. As the Reformed doctrine of predestination came under fire, Reformed orthodoxy hardened its position and moved predestination to the center of its theology.

A by-product of centering on predestination has been the reduction of Calvinism into the popular "once-saved-always-saved" theology. In its cruder simplicity, it means that the man who once accepts Christ will never forfeit eternal life even though he goes out and commits the most outrageous sins. This is a far cry from the Reformed doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. Calvin meant that the elect would persevere in a life of consistent piety, and if a man flagrantly failed to persevere, it just proved he was not one of the elect. But the modern mind is seldom disposed to cope with elaborate theology—perhaps very sensibly it wants theology reduced to a simple, pragmatic formula. And when Calvinistic predestination is reduced to that simple formula, it means "once-saved-always-saved."

Aside from the obvious difficulty of doing justice to the fearful warnings against falling away which are

found in the book of Hebrews, this type of evangelicalism cannot help people keep the great doctrine of justification at the center of their attention. Impossible! For if members of the church regard justification as something which was irreversibly accepted by them way back there on the day they were "saved," justification is relegated to a thing of the past.

The great Reformer who said that justification must remain the center, had an insight into the righteousness of faith which enabled him to keep it central. The Protestant movement today needs to rediscover that insight. Luther fully appreciated why St. Paul used the present continuous tense, "*Being* justified freely by His grace . . ." Rom. 3:24. With Paul it was not a matter of merely *becoming* justified and then going on to other things. (Relegating justification to a mere Christian initiation and attempting to go on to higher things was the great heresy which Paul had to meet in Galatia, Colosse, Corinth and other places.) The believer can only continue in the same way as he began (Col. 2:6; Gal. 3:1-5). He must continue to see himself as a sinner who does not fulfill the law, and he must continue to bring to God a righteousness of that other Man, which alone fulfills the law. While God does not impute His righteousness in degrees, nevertheless the believer must always live in the process of laying hold of it and the posture of receiving it. The Christian cannot take his election for granted (2 Peter 1:10; 1 Cor. 9:27). Luther declared:

"Therefore, no saint regards and confesses himself to be righteous, but he always asks and waits to be justified, and because of this he is reputed as righteous by God who has regard for the humble (Luke 1:48). In this sense, Christ is the King of the Jews, i.e. of those who confess that they are always beset by sin and who yet seek to be justified and detest their sins. Hence, 'God is wonderful in his saints' (Ps. 68:35), because he regards as righteous those who acknowledge and bewail themselves as sinners, but condemns those who think that they are righteous."—Martin Luther, *Lectures on Romans* (Library of Christian Classics), p. 113.

The doctrine of "once-saved-always-saved" and a supreme emphasis on the new-birth experience generally go along together. What happens then is that people tend to look to their "new birth" experience for assurance of eternal security. Instead of finding all their needed security by identifying themselves with the experience of Christ, they try to find their assurance through identifying with their own past experience of being "saved." This is one of the greatest single weaknesses of most evangelical Protestantism today.



4. Centering on the Indwelling Presence of Christ

Perhaps the greatest weakness of neo-evangelism is its overwhelming focus on the indwelling presence of Christ. It is all the more dangerous because the indwelling of Christ through His Spirit is an important New Testament doctrine. But the present-day emphasis is a distortion of New Testament emphasis. It is completely out of proportion. Take a good concordance (especially one which gives the original Greek words) and look up how many times the New Testament speaks on the objective "in Christ" as compared with the subjective "Christ in you," especially in Paul. The focus is overwhelmingly on the objective "in Christ."

In the present-day evangelical teaching, there is so much concentration on Christ dwelling, living, working and obeying inside the heart of the believer, that the whole Christian message is sunk into a sentimental, internal mysticism. It is developing into an evangelical "*gratia infusa*"—in apocalyptic terminology, "an image to the beast" (Rev. 13:13, 14).

With the risk of appearing too repetitious, we say again that the main New Testament emphasis is not on the Christ on the throne of the heart but on the exalted Christ on the throne at the right hand of God. It is interesting to see what Old Testament scripture is quoted or alluded to most often in the New Testament. It is Psalm 110:1: "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool."

The remedy for this sentimental subjectivism is

to restore the New Testament doctrine of Christ's intercession at the right hand of God to its proper place. Ever since this mighty truth was cast down to the ground by the Babylonish captivity of the church, it is doubtful whether it has been restored to the overwhelming importance it occupied in the apostolic church. When the eye of faith sees the power and efficacy of Christ's intercession of righteousness at the right hand of God, the church will realize that its greatest power is not in an inward experience but in a work going on outside of itself in the throne room of the universe.⁴

Summary

The absence of a central theology on justification by faith and the concentration on internal experience, are swiftly moving the Protestant movement into greater and greater harmony with Rome. Will the popular wave of revivalism succeed in turning the Protestant movement into "an image to the beast"? In view of the prophecy of Revelation 13:13, 14, we ought to give serious thought to where things are headed in the bond of union which is developing between Rome and the neo-evangelicals. The time has surely come for a "new" Reformation which will restore the truth of the intercession of Christ's imputed righteousness to its rightful place.

⁴We recommend Louis Berkof's excellent treatment of *The Intercessory Work of Christ, Systematic Theology* (Banner of Truth Trust), pp. 400-405.



PART 4: Spiritual Capitalism

Power is an important word in the religious world as well as in the business world. We hear a lot about *power* from those who are promoting revival, renewal or Pentecostalism. It is said that Christians today need spiritual power within them so that they can turn the world upside down for Christ.

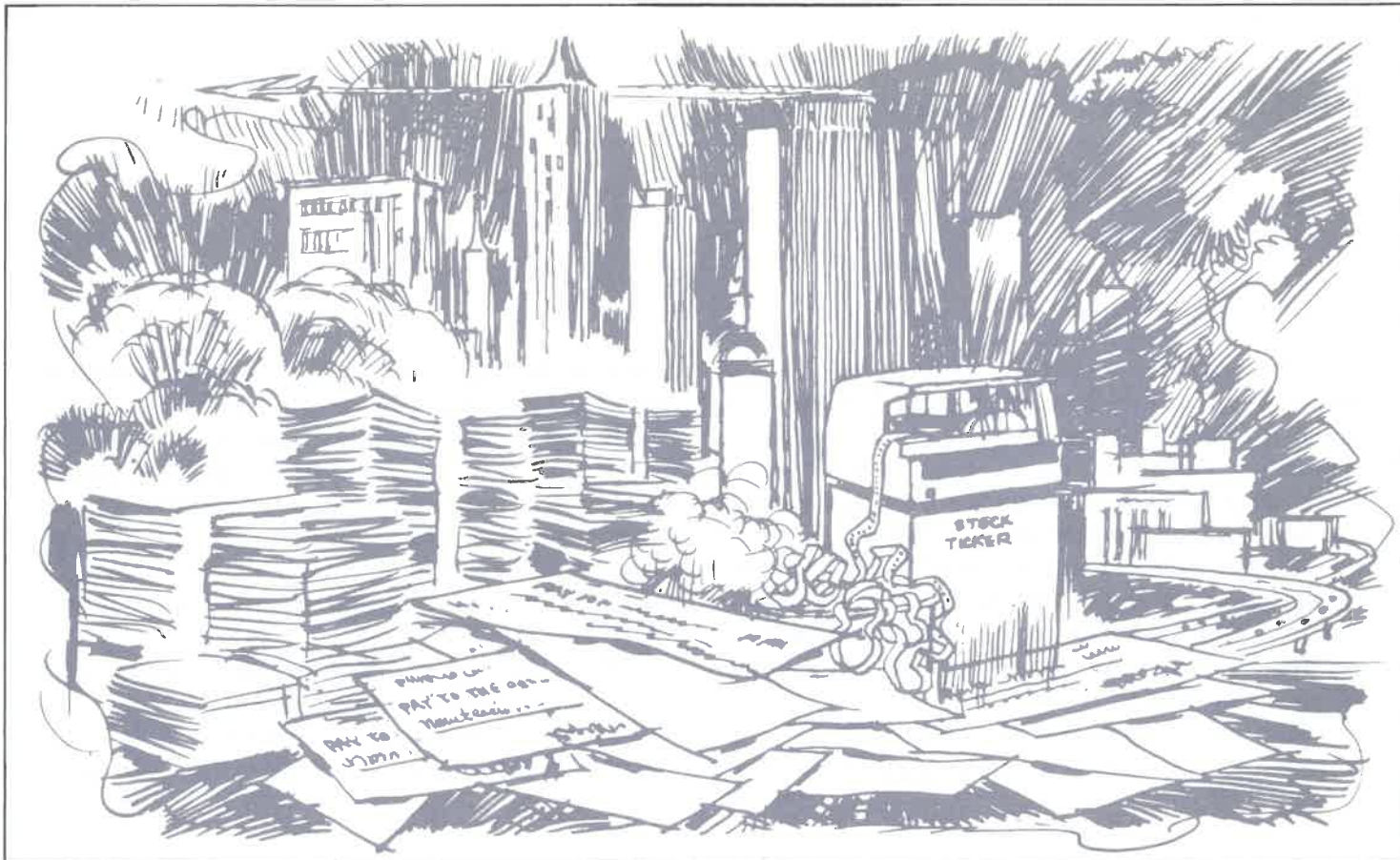
Now I believe in the power of "Christ within," or the power of the indwelling Spirit. But I submit that our faith needs to be in something bigger than an internal experience before we shall see a revival of apostolic power.

Let me illustrate my point from the world of business and economics. If a businessman aspires to

power in the world of business, he needs something more than personal inward resources such as brains, money and executive ability. These are important of course, but he needs the help of resources outside himself. If he has only his own inward strength and money to work for him, he is greatly limited. He needs the strength of another's capital. We call it *credit*. A proper use of credit is the businessman's greatest skill. *Credit is power.*

How did the great business tycoons manage to rise from nowhere and build a financial empire? By a skillful use of the resources of others! If they had merely worked on resources within their own head,





their own muscles and their own banking account, you would never have heard of their success stories. None of them could rise to power without credit. They not only got their own resources to work for them, but other people's resources. We call this method *capitalism*.

Capitalism and the Reformation

Max Weber and other scholars have observed that there is a relation between the Protestant Reformation and the rise of modern capitalism. I would like to point out one interesting parallel. Capitalism cannot exist without credit, and Protestantism cannot exist without imputed righteousness. When men learned how to use credit and put it to work for them, capitalism was born. When men learned how Christ's righteousness was credited (imputed) to the believer, Protestantism was born.

In fact, there even appears to be evidence that the Protestant awakening brought light and progress on many fronts—not the least an economic awakening. Economic progress followed in the wake of the Reformation. In every country Protestants became the nation's merchants. The Protestant nations became the most prosperous.

It is written in the Bible that Jacob had power with God. That is the greatest power a man can have. The medieval church tried to obtain power with God on the basis of an inward *infusion* of righteousness. Men looked inwardly, thinking that this was their only means of spiritual power. Economic practices were not much more enlightened. Men traded with "real" money such as gold, goods and perhaps services. It was very close to, if not very often, a real barter system.

The New Thinking

The Reformation taught men to think differently. They rediscovered the Pauline principle of imputed righteousness. They saw that Christ had provided for man an infinite fund of moral power. God has made its use dependent upon faith. As soon as the sinner believes in the doing and dying of Christ, God places the righteousness of His Son to the sinner's account in the bank of heaven. The righteousness of Christ is the sum total of God's righteousness (Rom. 3:21, 22; 2 Cor. 5:21). No man could contain it all within himself anymore than he could carry away a billion dollar bills in a couple of suitcases. Yet God gives all of Christ's omnipotent righteousness to the believer,



and the way He does it is by *imputation*. With all these resources to his credit, the believer has some real power behind him. One great aspect of the Holy Spirit's power is to give the Christian wisdom to use and depend upon that infinite credit. The power of imputed righteousness is the sum total of the power of Christ's life. Think about it!

Imagine a struggling businessman, hemmed in by lack of capital, with all his inward resources at the stretch, going in to see the Bank of America for help. The president tells him, "You can have to your credit all the money of this great bank. Here's the check book. Use our name." That man might not walk around with the exhilarating sense of inward power (for in himself his resources are very limited), but he would have a vast appreciation of the power in the name and credit of Bank of America.

Paper Money and Paper Transactions

It is amazing how Protestants are now showing so little appreciation for the pre-eminent importance of *imputed* righteousness. Yet it was this concept that gave birth to the Reformation. If it dies out,

Protestantism will die out.

The Roman Catholic Church has shown nothing but contempt for the Protestant doctrine of imputed righteousness. They call it a weak, unreal, "as if" righteousness. They never cease to marvel that Protestants can see any virtue in a righteousness wholly outside the believer. In contrast, they contend that a man is justified before God by a "real," "transforming," "inward" righteousness. *Imputed righteousness* sounds too much like "pie in the sky" for the realistic Catholic mind, so they prefer to talk about an infused righteousness which is substantially inside the believer's heart. Most Protestants today are really thinking like Catholics rather than Protestants. They are doing it without realizing it. All the concentration is on the power of an inner experience of some sort.

I remember talking to a Christian friend of mine who seemed to express the generally low estimate this age has on imputed righteousness. My friend said, "Imputed righteousness is just like paper money. It's better to possess the real McCoy. Imputed righteousness is only a paper transaction. It's much better to have the real inward experience."

I replied to him, "Bob, you would want to work on better principles than that if you should ever aspire to rise to the top in the business world. You

disparage paper transactions and think that dealing with 'real' currency is better. That's like the little corner store which has the notice displayed above the counter, saying, 'We buy for cash, and we sell for cash.' That is why it remains a little corner store. But how is all the really big business transacted—business that controls the flow of multimillions of dollars, thousands of men, resources of great business empires which belt the world? By 'paper transactions' if you please! Big business is accomplished by legal, paper transactions! When the big corporation needs a vast amount of capital to carry on, it gets some credit. The bank merely writes down something on a piece of paper. That corporation acts on the faith of that paper transaction, and things really happen. So if Christians are going to have power to turn the world upside down, they need a lot of credit. It is freely available if they only have faith to apply for it and faith to act on it."

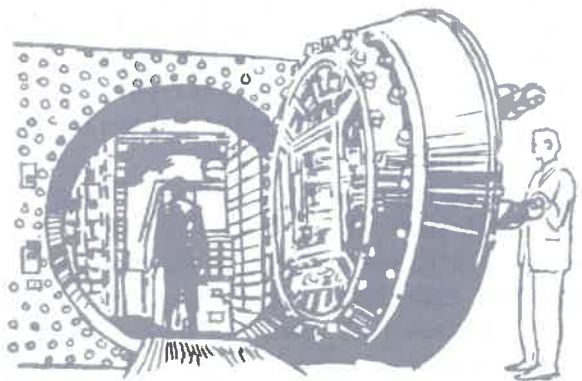
"As If" Righteousness

Let us call the doctrine of imputation "divine credit"—for that is what it is. This credit not only gives us power to act; it gives God power to act. Let us see this in the light of the great transaction of atonement.

Our sins were imputed to Christ. This did not make Christ a sinner, but He was regarded as a sinner. Imputation does not change the object; it changes the way the object is regarded. Now although Jesus was in Himself perfectly righteous and pleasing to God, the imputation of our sins to Him made Him appear *as if* He were a sinner and abhorrent in the sight of God. This was no make believe with God. God treated His Son, not on the basis of what He was in Himself, but on the basis of what He was by imputation. The sword of divine justice was unsheathed upon Him, and He died cursed, rejected and condemned by the guilt of the world's sin.

On the basis of this atonement, God can now be just and at the same time *impute* (credit) the sinless life of Christ to the believer (Rom. 3:26). Although he is sinful in himself and abhorrent to the holiness of God, the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believer makes him appear before God *as if* he were as righteous as Jesus. This is no make believe with God. God is now able, without any compromise to justice, to treat this sinner *as if* he were righteous. He gives him the gift and infilling of the Spirit, the ministry of angels, the protection of His law, the seal of sonship, and all the resources of heaven to his aid. The believer may not always live, feeling like he has some exhilarating power within him. In fact, he often feels quite desperately empty and sinfully weak. But being satisfied that Christ stands surety for him, he proceeds to act by faith in his credit with the bank of heaven. As he steps out in faith to obey God and to resist sin, he finds that he "can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth" him.

Christ's righteousness is not imputed to us to release us from the necessity of moral and ethical action but to give us all the rights and titles to act as sons of God—or as Paul says, "that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:4).



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