

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

OCTOBER 1973
Vol. 2, No. 5

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Present Truth

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

Editor: Robert D. Brinsmead
Publishing Editor: Norman Jarnes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Universal Redemption and Calvinism

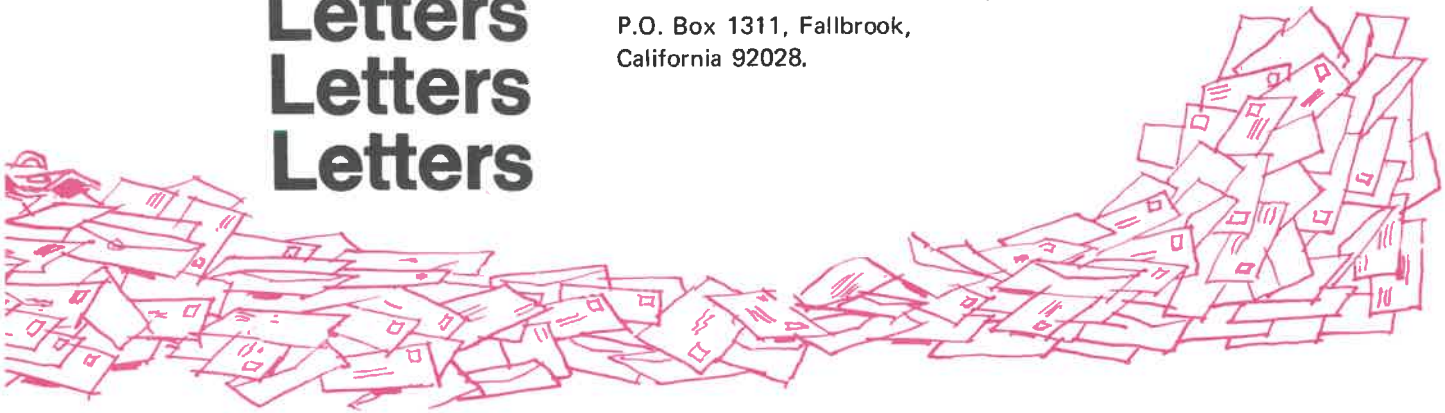
Sir / Let me thank you for your most perceptive views and treatments of justification and sanctification. You seek to base all that you say on God's Word, the Scriptures. Even though I am not convinced your view of redemption as universalistic is Biblical, yet you are correct to offer the gospel to all who are thirsty or weary or heavy laden. May I be so bold as to suggest that on the question of the perseverance of the saints (*Present Truth*, June, 1973) you are more Calvinistic (really Biblical) than some who proclaim so loudly that they are Calvinists.

The most perceptive and warm treatment of the whole subject of perfectionism is to be found in the two volumes on this subject by B.B. Warfield, published by Oxford Press. These original volumes are so much more complete than the reprint in giving a full exposure of this heresy of perfectionism within liberal theology as well as evangelical circles. How much good was done for my soul by the masterful Article I, "'Miserable-Sinner Christianity' in the Hands of Rationalists"!

T.T.E.
Presbyterian Minister
Alabama

Letters Letters Letters Letters

Address Letters to *Present Truth*,
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California 92028.



Eyes Opened

Sir / Having read the two special issues of *Present Truth* very carefully, I am convinced that what you are writing is indeed truth. I wish, therefore, to join the *Present Truth* mailing list.

Coming from a local church background that put a great deal of emphasis on "feelings," I had gone through both college and seminary still teaching and preaching a subjective gospel. Confronting the ultra-liberalism of the seminary community, I retreated even further into a doctrine of subjectivism. I must confess that all during this time I felt there was something not quite right about what I believed and taught. It was not until I took the little quiz in your magazine and went on to read the articles, that I began to seriously examine my beliefs.

Now, after a good bit of study, I see that what I had been preaching was not really "good news" at all. It was a "do it yourself" doctrine of good moral living rather than faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The truth which you proclaim in your magazine has made a real difference in my life and my ministry. People are responding far better to the gospel that I am now preaching. I look forward to receiving further issues of *Present Truth*.

L.A.

Methodist Minister
West Virginia



Immoral Revolution

Sir / May God bless you for your insight into Scripture and for the courage to print what you found!

I just finished reading Topic 6 of The Australian Forum, entitled "The Immoral Revolution," and would like many other preacher brethren in this area and this state to read it also.

It has challenged and humbled me because of my own spiritual blindness and laxity. Please send me twenty-five more copies as soon as possible. I will use them wisely and see that they are read and reread by Christians and non-Christians alike.

D.E.P.
California



Personal Testimony from Jesus Movement

Sir / As a "refugee" from the Jesus movement, I wish to encourage you in your efforts to set the records straight. After all, you have encouraged me beyond my expectations, and though my exposure to your literature is as of yet limited, I have come to respect your opinions as mature, thoroughly exhaustive and well-balanced.

My own personal experience, and that of many people I know, was (and is in some cases) one of seeking after a mystical experience from the Lord—I might even say a mystical relationship with Him—and upon receiving it, being overwhelmed with joy and expectations of fulfillment and satisfaction within that context. Only in retrospect did I realize that what I had experienced was not at all a revelation of God's work in Christ but rather an emotionally-based peer group high—one that faded away in the everyday life of a fickle human being. I hasten to explain to people in the charismatic movement that I am not at all down on emotions but rather emotionalism. What

hurt most of all, I suppose, was to see the shallowness of our relationships with ourselves (twenty-seven living in a Christian "house"). We developed intricate religious facades; the pressure to conform to an ideal was tremendous. The ideal was one of following a script for a "spiritual" life, i.e., the Bible. The problem was that we held it up to our noses like sheet music. As a result we tripped over Life (in Christ)—a form of legalism. So, as a result of being under this pressure to be "spiritual," we repressed honesty, the transparency of our own deep problems. I might add that this pressure to be "spiritual" was never spoken of or written in word; it was a very strong undercurrent that all were made aware of.

As a result of this shallowness, which I have observed everywhere in the Pentecostal movement and in the dead church in this country (liberal theology, etc.), I now know one too many apostate Christians or ones who seemingly have progressed no further than where they were two years ago. It is disturbing.

S.J.
California

Bolivian Missionary

Sir / A Brethren missionary here has introduced me to the *Present Truth* magazine, and it has come as water to a thirsty soul. In this part of the world, Reformed theology is very rare indeed, and in fact I don't know of a church in Bolivia where one can hear these doctrines preached.

There is a tide to be stemmed in this part of the world as is all too evident in the superficial evangelism around us and the dearth of theology in the churches.

R.C.S.
Missionary
Bolivia

Campus Crusade

Sir / I want to thank you for your thoughtful and penetrating discussion of the Campus Crusaders appearing in the August, 1973, issue of your magazine. It describes perfectly our own experience here, raises those warning flags which we have tried so often to hoist and expresses that desire on the part of the church to encourage genuine enthusiasm, warm hearts and changed lives, but in a context of God's eternal purposes. I think your lineup of the sequence of trying drugs, sex, and why not Jesus, was perceptive.

T.D.
Episcopalian Minister
South Carolina

Sir / I was extremely disappointed after reading your article, "A Friendly Dialogue with Campus Crusaders," in the August, 1973, issue of *Present Truth*. It is overwhelmingly apparent that your research was neither thorough nor objective.

M.W.
Georgia

Sir / I would like to thank you and your staff for the increased understanding of the gospel, especially as it often is being misrepresented in our culture. I was suspicious of *Present Truth* at first as you seemed more "sola Reformation" than "sola Scriptura," but I have come to respect the articles you print.

I was especially interested in your latest issue (August, 1973), as I became a Christian through Campus Crusade. I agree with your evaluation of their teachings and have personally seen problems some of them bring in Christian lives.

With so many young people today looking to Christianity, it is important that they get the real thing and not some tinselled counterfeit, because they are the future leaders of the church.

M.P.
Texas

Sir / Your latest *Present Truth* (August, 1973) has come to my office, and I have read it from cover to cover as usual. Up to now I have considered passing remarks about Campus Crusade for Christ as coming from lack of information. I am still not quite sure. I am challenged by your approach and would like for you to plumb this more deeply.

G.L.C.
Baptist Minister
Oregon

Dividing Principle

Sir / Your articles are very valuable in pointing out the dividing principle of justification by faith—a principle that marks the division between truth and deception, between victory and subtle surrender.

R.K.
Kansas

Sinning Saints?

Sir / You set forward the well-known Reformed position that "grace does not change the sinful nature of the believer. . . . the believer is always a saint, always a sinner. In Christ he is fully righteous; in himself, by reason of the sinful nature, he is fully sinful" (*Present Truth*, special issue, "Justification by Faith and the Charismatic Movement," pp. 19, 20). Permanent spiritual schizophrenia is the best the believer can hope for. What the power of Christ is unable to do toward liberating the human heart from the tyranny of inner sin, death—the great enemy—will accomplish. "I am crucified at the moment of death rather than with Christ," Paul is made to declare. Not only Wesley but Paul is made to limp along in the spiritual paralysis of Romans 7. God the righteous Judge has issued a pardon written in the blood of Christ on behalf of the sinner. But the prisoner who receives that pardon cannot expect that the prison doors will in fact be opened and that he will in fact be set free until death, the great liberator, comes to his rescue.

In all due respect to the deeply spiritual and scholarly Reformation theologians and preachers who have maintained this position, supposing thereby to the more greatly praise God's sovereign grace, I cannot accept that position for even one moment. I realize that fruitful discussion stops until we have sorted out our definitions and understanding of sin,

human nature, *sarx, pneuma, hagios*, etc. But it seems to me that the transcendent sovereignty of God's matchless grace is praised all the more when we say with Paul: "But now that you have been *set free from sin* and have become slaves of God, the return you get is sanctification and its end, eternal life." Rom. 6:22. "Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit." Gal. 5:24, 25. I could go on piling reference after reference from God's Holy Word indicating that the inner warfare in the believer's heart can be ended and that "there is therefore now no condemnation [even for the old nature] to those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has *set me free* from the law of sin and death." Rom. 8:1, 2. I don't know what being set free from the law of sin and death means to you, but I take these words at face value and do not try to squeeze their obvious meaning out by pressing them into a previously delimited theological position. Orthodoxy must always be amenable to Scripture—not the reverse.

Western evangelicalism has been too long infected with a defeatistic theology which offers believers nothing more in this life than a standoff with the nature of sin. The heart of the believer longs for something better. Sons of God desire to live, walk and talk like sons of God. They yearn for the intimacy of an immediate, direct relationship with their heavenly Father in the freedom of a heart made perfect in love. "Christ in you, the hope of glory!" That is the great hunger of the soul—a heart undivided in its love and loyalty to Christ, a heart made perfect in love.

It is clear that no man's nature lies beyond the reach of the cleansing blood of Christ (1 John 1:7). That is good news for a soul divided against itself. Many, like the apostle Paul, experience this cleansing of the old nature subsequent to their Damascus-road experience of justification.

C.S.C.

Nazarene Pastor
California

Sir / In the "Letters" section of the latest *Present Truth* (August, 1973) was included a letter from J.J.H., Nazarene Pastor, West Virginia. He quoted the following statement from Dr. Richard S. Taylor's book, *Preaching Holiness Today*: "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." As the Scripture sees it, this theology is in error; for as long as we live we sin—this is what the Scripture teaches.

For anyone to "feel" that since he came to faith, he is no longer a sinner and desperately in daily need of the cleansing blood of the Saviour, is nothing short of being self-righteous; and this is dangerous indeed since only the righteousness of Christ can stand before God.

Look at what the converted and "holy" men had to say who, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, wrote the Bible.

The apostle "whom the Lord loved" said, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." 1 John 1:8. John does not say "you" but rather "we." Thus John knew that he was a sinner and would remain a sinner, but a forgiven sinner, until the day he would pass into eternity to be with his Redeemer.

The apostle Paul, that great ambassador of the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, had this to say about himself long after his conversion: "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. . . . O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." Rom. 7:19, 20, 24, 25.

We see the same in the Old Testament as well: "For there is not a just man upon the earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." Eccl. 7:20.

To quote more passages would make me guilty of gross redundancy indeed, but these passages do prove a point. We all carry around for some threescore and ten this bag of sinful flesh, which is at war with the Spirit-filled new man.

I know that in the face of what I have said, some would quote me a passage like 1 John 3:9, which says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

But of what man is this passage speaking? Of the

flesh, the old Adam which was at war with the Spirit in the apostle Paul? Certainly not! This passage speaks of the Spirit-filled "new man," who surely cannot sin. But let us remember that we, like Paul, all have "split personalities"—two men, old and new, within us—and that because of this we do sin daily and because of this our lives are to be lives of daily repentance as we turn in faith to our Saviour for forgiveness.

D.F.H.
Lutheran Minister
Iowa



Get It All

Sir / A friend recently gave me a copy of your February, 1973, issue of *Present Truth*, in which you attempt to enlighten your readers on the subject of the holiness movement and holiness theology.

I notice that your writers emphasize the claim that they "got it all" in justification. Perhaps they did get all they know about, but as those described in Hebrews 5:12 to 6:3 and 1 Corinthians 3:1, 2, they are still on milk and not able to take meat. At the moment of justification, one is concerned only with forgiveness and is not in any position to make any consecration or dedication to God, which is imperative in seeking the gift of a pure heart.

You may find some day that the "all-sufficient imputed righteousness" is not "all-sufficient" after all.

F.M.S.
Oregon

Sir / I'm sorry you feel compelled to depict Pentecostalism in the poor manner in which you have.

We Pentecostals have experienced your faith; we accept it fully. But you have not experienced our Holy Spirit baptism. Too many writers today are writing about Pentecostals and Pentecostalism who never experienced the Holy Spirit baptism. Talking about something you haven't experienced personally is like coming back from where you haven't been.

J.R.E.
Missouri

Sir / I understood your articles to teach that one "got everything" at justification. This type of doctrine, which uses as its "golden text," "All things are yours in Christ," has, I think, robbed the church of much-needed power.

It would seem that the Pentecostals and charismatics are not worse than you who do not hold out any hope for the believer beyond his initial salvation experience.

W.C.M.
Florida



Negative

Sir / It is most obvious that your only reason for existence is to fight the holiness movement. Your purpose is thus totally negative.

I have never seen someone who can make such a bobble of interpreting Scripture. I am requesting that you drop me from your mailing list.

Methodist Minister
Kansas

Satisfied Readers

Sir / After reading and enjoying your publication, *Present Truth*, for a number of months, I thought it time to tell you how much I appreciate its timely articles. I find myself reading it with more intensity and benefit than other of my theological subscriptions and journals.

T.B.
Baptist Minister
Michigan

Sir / I am beginning my religious education at a Lutheran college, and your articles have been a blessing to myself and my classmates in helping us to understand some theological issues we are expected to know.

C.B.
Oregon

Sir / I recently received a copy of the special issue of *Present Truth* entitled "Justification by Faith and the Charismatic Movement." I must say that, without a doubt, it is the most complete and comprehensive compiling of Scriptural "truth" on this subject I have ever read. I want to share this with some of my preacher brethren.

D.W.P.
Baptist Minister
Texas

Sir / Your special issue, "Justification by Faith and the Charismatic Movement," came a while back but somehow was never read. Recently we have become involved in much discussion over the charismatic, and someone called attention to your magazine, which had also come to him. So I went home and dug out my own copy. It is a great help, and many thanks for sending it. I would appreciate receiving *Present Truth* regularly.

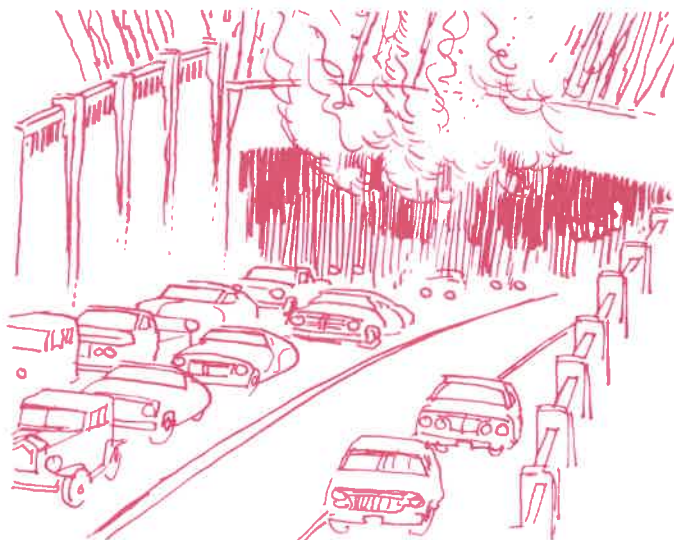
F.E.C.
Pastor, Advent Christian Church
Washington

Sir / Thank God for your magazine and your work. The opposition is a sign that your ministry is greatly needed, as is the approval of your work.

R.S.
Baptist Minister
Georgia

Sir / I am deeply appreciative of the fine work you are doing in proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ in these troubled times. It is heartwarming indeed.

P.O.
Lutheran Minister
Oregon



Sir / *Present Truth* is like a breath of fresh air at the end of a smog-filled tunnel. Your articles on the charisma movement have blessed me and given me stronger conviction for preaching the unvarnished truth of justification by faith.

I have been down the road of Pentecostalism, and I know the dangers therein.

B.J.
Baptist Minister
West Virginia

Sir / I have been an appreciative reader of your excellent magazine since it first came out. We need a clear message of sin and grace in this day of apostasy.

A.E.W.
Lutheran Minister
Minnesota

Confused

Sir / I am "caught up" in the "new movement" and want very much to forget it and return to my lifelong belief in justification by faith. I'm afraid that I am a confused Lutheran right now.

I would appreciate being on your mailing list.
H.G.B.
New Mexico



Meets the Need

Sir / I feel that *Present Truth* meets the need of the hour. I myself have been involved in the charismatic movement to some extent and found it very frustrating. I appreciate the way you base your teaching so clearly on Scripture and the Reformer's interpretation of Scripture. I know this is a tremendous help to many weak Christians. Only the truth brings true freedom of spirit.

L.P.
Philippines



Border of Apostasy

Sir / May God continue to bless the enriching ministry of *Present Truth*. My own ministry has been deeply affected as I preach from the great doctrines of justification by faith. I praise God that there is someone who is teaching sound doctrine in a day when even "evangelical" Christianity is floundering on the border of apostasy.

R.L.D.

Tell It Like It Is

Sir / *Present Truth* seems to be a magazine that tells it like it is. This is what we need in America today, and the people need to be aware of the facts. There is a greater need, and that is to make the Christian people aware of conditions in the world. I believe that your magazine will do that.

J.R.
Baptist Minister
Texas

THE QUESTION OF AUTHORITY



A few months ago this editor was meeting with a group of evangelical preachers in an American city. These men were concerned with the plague of Pentecostalism and religious subjectivism that was sweeping the churches. They were convinced that the challenge could only be met by a clear proclamation of the objective gospel. A Reformed pastor declared, "I have preached the gospel in my church. I'm always talking about grace, faith and justification, but it does not make the impact it should. What am I doing wrong?"

When this editor asked the preacher if he was just as diligent in arraigning his hearers before the high claims of God's law and the judgment seat of Christ, he admitted that he had allowed this phase of his Reformed heritage to fall into disuse. "Then you need look no further to answer the lack of quickening power in your preaching," he was told.

The Word of God is a sharp, two-edged sword. The two cutting edges are law and gospel. The gospel is good news to sinners, but it is a sheer waste of time to try to comfort those who do not mourn—that is to say, those who have not been made conscious of their sins by the proclamation of God's law. Jesus said that we should not cast our pearls before swine. Those who have not heard the law will not hear the gospel. As C.F.W. Walther (*The Proper Distinction Between*

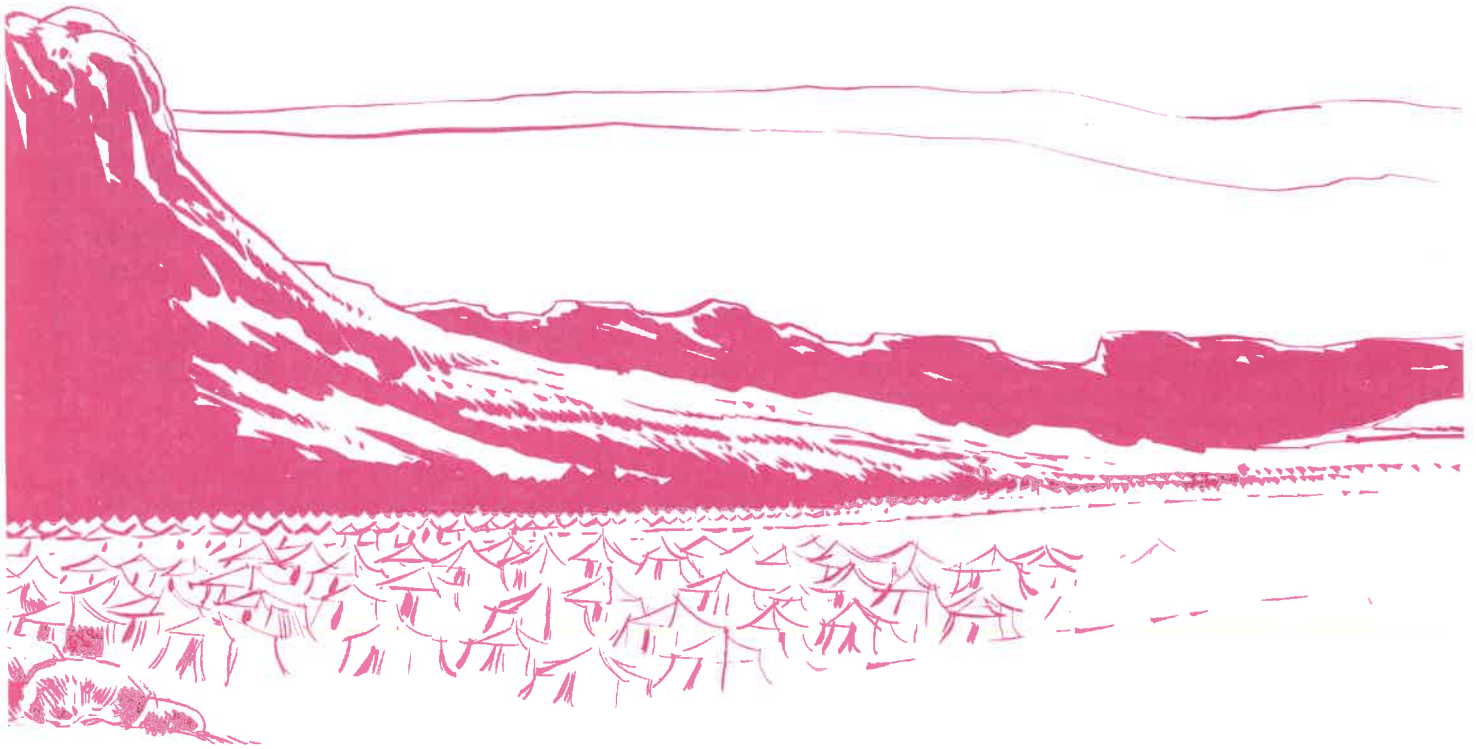
the Law and the Gospel) well says, "The law is for secure sinners, and the gospel is for alarmed sinners."

John Bunyan declared:

He that is dark as touching the scope, intent and nature of the law, is also dark as touching the scope, nature and glory of the gospel. . . . I say, therefore, if thou wouldst know the authority and power of the gospel, labor first to know the power and authority of the law. For I am verily persuaded that the want of this one thing, namely, the knowledge of the law, is the one cause why so many are ignorant of the other. . . . Again, that man that doth not know the nature of the law, that man doth not know the nature of sin; and that man that knoweth not the nature of sin, will not regard to know the nature of a Saviour.—John Bunyan, *The Doctrine of Law and Grace Unfolded*.

The God of the Old Testament is the God of law. He who is holiness personified demands a holiness from man which is without variableness or shadow of turning. "Obey and live; disobey and die," is as fixed as the stars in their courses. This inexorable demand of law provides the background to the glory of the New Testament message of justification by grace, on account of Christ, through faith. Take away that background, and the message of grace becomes a meaningless platitude.

It was a lively sense of God's holiness and deep



conviction of sin that prepared the Reformers to appreciate the light on justification by faith. And in every age where there has been a revival of genuine religion, men have been brought by the law to cry out, "How can a man be just with God?"

Protestantism has grown fat and flabby. Luther warned that people would become secure and lazy by the continual preaching of grace. To make matters worse, Protestantism's reaction against legalism has made the church very suspicious of *law*. In a recent article, Professor Gordon H. Clark shows that even the word *legalism* has evolved a new meaning. He writes:

The term *legalism* in theology used to designate a theory of justification by works. Liberals have now redefined it so as to exclude rules, laws and obedience from moral living! Amorphous love replaces definite commands. This enables the liberals to transfer the odium of legalism in its historic sense to the evangelical view that is not subject to such a criticism.—Gordon H. Clark, "Concerning Justification," *Christianity Today*, March 16, 1973.

The church today is not too concerned with the great Reformation article of justification largely because the law has fallen into disuse. *Justification* is a legal word, a law term. Dr. Strong defines it as being set right before the law. The message of justification

by faith is music to those who take the demands of God's law seriously and realize that "the law must be fulfilled so that not a jot or tittle shall be lost, otherwise man will be condemned without hope" (*Luther's Works* [Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press; St. Louis: Concordia], Vol. XXXI, pp. 348, 349). But this is a very permissive age. God is too often viewed as an easy-going Benevolence who forgives sins quite apart from upholding the integrity of His law. In an "Introductory Essay" to Buchanan's masterful volume on *The Doctrine of Justification* (reprinted by The Banner of Truth Trust, 1961), Dr. J.I. Packer says:

Protestants of today (whose habit it is to take pride in being modern) are accordingly disinclined to take seriously the uniform biblical insistence that God's dealing with man is regulated by law. . . . Thus modern Protestantism really denies the validity of all the forensic terms in which the Bible explains to us our relationship with God.

The modern Protestant, therefore, is willing to see man as a wandering child, a lost prodigal needing to find a way home to his heavenly Father, but, generally speaking, he is not willing to see him as a guilty criminal arraigned before the Judge of all the earth. The Bible doctrine of justification, however, is the answer to the question of the convicted lawbreaker: how can I get right with God's law? How can I be *just* with God? Those who refuse to see their situation in these terms will not, therefore, take much interest in the doctrine.

Nobody can raise much interest in the answer to a question which, so far as he is concerned, never arises. Thus modern Protestantism, by its refusal to think of man's relationship with God in the basic biblical terms, has knocked away the foundation of the gospel of justification, making it seem simply irrelevant to man's basic need.—pp. 5, 6.

Much of today's revivalistic preaching is sentimental and subjective. As Professor Joel C. Gerlach declares in *The Northwestern Lutheran*:

The emphasis is an old and familiar one. Accounts of personal encounters with Christ are given top billing at the expense of the salvation message. Experience is "in," doctrine is "out." . . . Church history has a name for people who want to experience Jesus without any doctrinal formulations, restricting creeds, or code of Christian ethics. They are antinomians. They flourished in Luther's day also.

For several months *Present Truth* has been doing a serious research of American evangelical literature. The amount of antinomianism advocated in much of it is scandalous. Big-name authors and some of the best-known Christian publishing houses are filling the land with theories which undermine the authority of God's law. If this were in the realm of civil government, it would be called by its right name—*treason*. Dispensational theories, ideas on Christian love, baptism-of-the-Spirit mentality and theories on grace—all are being used as if they were substitutes for obedience to God's law. This is a desperately permissive and lawless age, and surely society needs no encouragement from the church to cast off the discipline of law.

In previous issues of *Present Truth*, we have stated that Protestantism is drowning in a sea of religious subjectivism. No one can successfully challenge that observation. The cause is not neo-Pentecostalism and emotional revivalism. They are symptoms, not causes. The cause is rejection of God's law. If men reject the authority of an objective rule of life, what other authority have they to fall back on but their own subjective experiences?

In different ages the church has had to grapple with great points of the faith and clarify its theology. In the second century the great points of contention were creation, the incarnation and the resurrection. In the third and fourth centuries they were the Trinity and the two natures of Christ. In the tenth century the church grappled with the doctrine of atonement. In the sixteenth century the evangelical church had to clearly define the doctrine of justification by faith. The church today is desperately in need of a clearly defined theology of law. Witness

the flood of Christian existentialism, social relativism and neo-orthodoxy that has deluged the churches. Their rejection of legalism is commendable. But in their reaction they have undermined the Christian's only absolute, objective authority. They leave us with nothing to fall back on but our own human experiences. But experientialism is the worst form of legalism!

The great issue today is *authority*—the authority of God's Word versus the authority of human experience. The battle lines are being drawn.

It is in the context of this conflict that the angels of the Apocalypse proclaim their startling message:

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. And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication. And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb. . . . Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. Rev. 14:6-10, 12.

R.D.B.

Fugitive from Law

Geoffrey J. Paxton, B.D.



We are living in an age of "man, the fugitive." He is a fugitive from law. Almost, if not every area of human existence today reflects man's tragic attempt to escape from law.

Nature

Man is the escapee from law in the area of nature. Western thinking has believed in the law of nature, or natural law. In fact, from the time of the Renaissance onwards, natural law came to dominate Western thinking in our universities. This, however, cannot be said of our day and age. Things have changed.

Those who advocate natural law say that there is such a law in nature which man's enlightened reason can discover. Such a natural law is that by which man and nations must be ruled.

There are two voices against this view which have appeared over the last hundred years or so, and which have had a great influence upon the thinking of many:

First, Charles Darwin. Darwin contended that the one *constant* factor in the universe is *inconstancy*, or *change*. This being the case, it is impossible to speak of any absolute law. The universe has evolved by means of chance variations, and hence no law has

any absoluteness. In the light (*sic!*) of this hypothesis, to speak of law is to speak of social customs and statistical averages. The socially accepted gives us our laws. For readers who are interested in perusing a sociological outworking of this thesis, there is Emile Durkheim's *The Rules of Sociological Method*, especially his chapter, "On the Normality of Crime." It cannot be denied that, in essence, evolution is hostile to the very idea of law. Commitment to evolution is commitment to revolution. Law implies an unchanging order, a final standard, and this is the very thing the Darwinian cannot accept.

The second voice is that of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., associate justice of the Supreme Court. Holmes instigated a legal revolution in his book, *The Common Law* (1881). He attacked the doctrine of natural law as legal nonsense. Here is a sample:

The Life of the law has not been logic: it has been experience. The felt necessities of the time, the prevalent moral and political theories, intentions of public policy, avowed or unconscious, even the prejudices which judges share with their fellow-men, have had a good deal more to do with the syllogism in determining the rules by which men should be governed. . . . The substance of the law at any given time pretty nearly corresponds, so far as it goes, with what is then understood to be convenient, but its form and machinery, and the degree to which it is able to work out desired results, depends very much upon its past.

Here Holmes declares that natural law is as variable as the persons expounding it. Although Holmes did not

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have any illusions about the alternative to natural law (i.e., the experience of the people as embodied in the state), he preferred such to the philosophy of natural law. Hence, the courts must reflect the evolving experiences of society.

Although we do not agree with the position of Holmes, it must be said that if evolution is true, then Holmes' conclusions are inescapable. The anti-natural law school includes relativists, positivists, pragmatists, Marxists, existentialists and others! For most of these thinkers, the only real law is *positive* law, the law of the state. Positive, or state, law repudiates the notion of any higher law which stands *over* man and the state.

The Christian Answer

Christianity repudiates the old natural-law concepts even more strongly than did Darwin and Holmes.

First, Christianity does *not* believe that nature has any power, mind, consciousness or will in aid of itself. Nature is simply a collective noun, a name for the sum total of the universe. Christianity which is Biblical Christianity, has no use for any form of personification of nature save as a literary device to convey some message. Hence, strictly speaking, Christianity speaks not of the law of nature but the laws *over* nature.

Second, Christianity does not teach that nature is normative. That is, nature is *not* the standard; a thing is not good because it occurs in nature, because it is natural. This is the error of the moral anarchists. The truth is not "what is." Nature is not the standard because nature "suffers" from the fall of man into

sin. Nature is infected by sin and death.

Third, Christianity does not believe in the Darwinian demolition of any absolutes which govern and control nature despite nature's infection by the Fall. The Bible teaches that man is a creature that is more than biology, and man's law is more than a phase of his social evolution which changes as man changes. Man, the Bible teaches, is a creature of God who is created in God's image with knowledge, righteousness, holiness and dominion (Gen. 1:27, 28; Col. 3:14; Eph. 4:24). Man's reference point, therefore, is not society but God. True, the law of man's being is derived, but it is derived from God and not from society. The ground of man's health is the law, the Most High God (Deut. 6:24; 16:20). Man must not be judged socially but religiously, not by his fellow men but by God.

Fourth, though we acknowledge much truth in what Holmes has said about the traditionally-received doctrine of natural law, nevertheless we assert again that the Bible will have no pact with legal positivism, which makes the judges of the courts into gods. There is a far cry from the Platonic philosopher-kings, who are the totalitarian rulers over mankind. God is God. God has established various law-spheres over nature, laws governing physical reality. In all areas of our life, we are governed by laws. Whether we eat, sleep, work, worship or play, we move in the sphere of the divine law. Nature did not evolve the physiological laws which govern our sleep. Nature did not give us the laws of nutrition and laws of digestion. These, one and all, came from God when He created the universe. The answer to natural law *and* to legal positivism is the revelation of the Word of God in the Bible.



Conclusion

We conclude our remarks with some general statements concerning the Christian view of law.

First, we are living in an age which is most vocal about its contempt for authority. However, it is not possible to be free of all authority. Those who decry authority are either hypocritical or ignorant. It is not possible even to think without authority!

It may well be that God is denied and that every other man is denied, but such denial is the assertion of the positing of authority in the denying subject himself, in the individual. The man who repudiates all other authority becomes his own god. Such a one is hostile to all authority except his own. The authority of any system of thought is the god of that system. It may be, as mentioned above, the individual. It may be the people (*vox populi, vox Dei*). It may be an avant-garde intellectual elite. Whatever or whoever it is, it is the god of that system.

The Bible places authority in the Triune God, who has expressed Himself in the Bible. God is above and beyond man. The purpose of God's law and of His government is to establish man in godly order and true liberty.

The Bible places authority in this world *only* under God—husband *over* wife *under* God; parents *over* their children *under* God; the state *over* its citizens *under* God. All human authority is limited by God's authority.

The Bible places great emphasis, therefore, on law as the vehicle of authority. Every law presupposes an authority, and every authority denotes a law of

some kind to express itself.

Second, we are living in an age in which men are choosing chaos instead of God. If we believe that the universe evolved out of chaos, then chaos is the ultimate factor and force of the universe. Chaos is the absolutely lawless source of all things. Marx was delighted with the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species* because he saw it as "a basis in natural science for the class struggle in history."

The Bible is clear in its faith in creationism. God is Ultimate and not chaos. What is not often remembered is that God's way of regeneration is not by chaos (revolution) but by grace (regeneration), and grace establishes the law (Rom. 3:31). The purpose of the law is life (Rom. 7:10). Man in Jesus Christ dies to the law as an indictment but lives in Christ, not to despise God's law, but now to abide by it through the grace of God. Grace is the believer's life, and law is its condition.

The paradise of Eden was not a lawless domain. Law prevailed absolutely; and while it did, man was fully free. The tempter sought to have Adam and Eve become their own gods (which is another way of saying that he sought to have them repudiate the absolute authority of God expressed in and through the law) and choose what was good and evil themselves! The struggle in Eden was over the *source* of the law. Was it God or was it to be man?

*Thou shalt
remember that thou
wast a bondman
in the land
of Egypt, and
the Lord thy God
redeemed thee.*

Amazing Grace

Samuel McCafferty, B.D.

As the eighteenth century drew to a close, you and I might have entered a little Anglican church in Olney near London. Had we entered the vestry prior to the service, we would have heard the gray-haired preacher at prayer, and the words he would repeat time and again were, "Lord, I am the least of all Thy saints. What amazing grace, that I should enter this church to preach the unsearchable riches in Christ!" For John Newton vied with the apostle Paul as to his right of being the "chief of sinners." Raising himself up, he would walk to his desk and there, on a piece of paper and written in shaky handwriting, he would read and repeat the words of the Old Testament, "Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee." As he would enter his pulpit and look down, there, pinned to the lectern, were these same words. He never sat to study or stood to preach except he was reminded that God had delivered him from bondage.

Come into his rectory on Monday morning, stand outside his living-room door, and listen to the conversation. A voice we have not heard is saying, "God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform." "Aye," replies the preacher, "but all in grace." The voice is that of William Cowper, England's great poet who had come to a deeper knowledge of Jesus Christ as his Lord and Saviour as he listened spellbound to the preacher of Olney. Listen again and we hear another voice, described by those who knew it as that of the most thrilling orator in the British parliament. "Sir," he is saying, "I will give everything I have in Christ's cause that I might rid England of the terrible blight which scars her through the slave trade." The speaker is William Wilberforce, deeply influenced for Christ by the man whom God had so wondrously delivered from slavery and, later, from being captain of a slaving ship.

Born in 1725 to a respectable sea captain and a

nonconformist mother with deep piety, John Newton was one of the most amazing characters of the eighteenth century. His father had spent much of his early youth in Spain at a Jesuit college; and although the school had not implanted any of the Jesuit religious zeal in him, he entered life with a determined stateliness that led to his being respected among seamen. John's mother took it upon her to see that her son was educated in the best sense. Dr. David Jennings, minister of the Congregational church at Newstairs, Wapping, encouraged Mrs. Newton in her ambition to prepare young John for the day when he would go to Scotland's St. Andrews University to be educated for the ministry. (Being a dissenter, he could not enter an English university.) Mrs. Newton was not to see that day, for she died during her son's seventh year and, in some ways, was saved many heartaches. During his early years, however, John Newton was schooled by his mother in the catechism, with the prayer that if we bring up a child in the way of the Lord, when he is old he will not depart from it.

"What is profaneness?" asked Mrs. Newton.

"Abusing or despising anything that is holy or that belongs to God," replied her son.

"What is the first instance of profaneness?"

"If I make a mock of God or reproach His name, which is called blasphemy, or if I swear or take the name of God in vain or use it in a trifling manner without seriousness."

"What is the second mark of profaneness?"

"If I should spend that time amiss which God has appointed for His own worship and service."

Brought up in the denomination of Isaac Watts, young Newton recited Watts' hymns by heart:

Why should I join with those in play
In whom I've no delight;
Who curse and swear but never pray,
Who call ill names and fight?

I hate to hear a wanton song,
Their words offend mine ears;
I should not dare defile my tongue
With language such as theirs.

From a sermon preached by Samuel McCafferty, B.D., minister of the Ann Street Presbyterian Church, Brisbane, Australia. Mr. McCafferty recently completed a thesis on the *Evangelicals in England in the Nineteenth Century*.



Little did the mother know that ere ten years were passed, her son would curse and swear and sing a wanton song with a tongue that was as vile as any on a ship at sea.

Under the care of a stepmother, John Newton missed the love and spiritual care he had previously known. His father at sea saw little of his son. Two incidents stand out in those years. When twelve years of age, John was thrown from a horse and narrowly escaped death when he missed by inches the sharp stakes of a fence. Frightened by the incident, John Newton resolved that God must surely have given him another opportunity of life and therefore, by God's grace, he must resolve to live cleanly. But too soon he forgot the happening. The second incident occurred when he was fifteen years of age. He had arranged a trip on a rowboat with some friends to look over a warship. Arriving at the boatslip, he found that his friends, weary of waiting for him, had set out. As he stood cursing them from the shore, he suddenly saw the boat turn over and his friends struggling for their lives. One did not survive. Death had again been so close to him. Surely God had saved him for a purpose. What that purpose was, however, John Newton did not care to know. Instead, he forgot this occurrence also. It was these two incidents which

later helped force him to realize the danger of memory. And this was why he made as his special text, "Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee."

Captain Newton decided he must do something with his son, who was growing insolent, dreamy and dull, and who resented deeply any chastisement. So John Newton was sent to work in Spain as a merchant-businessman's assistant. Unsettled and impatient, he lost his job. Captain Newton then decided to take John aboard his own ship, but in this situation father and son irritated each other and John again found himself on land. It was now that the rot set in, for wandering the portside one night, he found himself in the arms of some burly naval men and was gang-pressed onto a ship. When the ship's captain realized he was Captain Newton's son, he was granted privileges and raised to the position of midshipman. But young Newton had been humiliated. The one thing which still gave him some self-respect was the love he had for Mary Catlett, daughter of the woman who had nursed his mother at death. It was this love which made him jump ship when he knew he would be sailing abroad, perhaps for four to six years. Unfortunately, the press gangs caught him and he was



delivered aboard ship. Before the full crew, he was stripped and beaten with lashes. He lost all rank and privileges, and was sent below deck to do the meanest tasks. His heart grew bitter. From now until he was thirty years of age and crippled by a stroke, John Newton sank to the lowest of the lowest. One can only understand the hymn "Amazing Grace" after reading about this part of his life. Putting aside all remembrances of the catechism, the now-confirmed freethinker began to mock those who thought on higher things.

Transferred from the Royal Navy to a merchant ship, he came under the influence of a merchant named Clow who had a marriage arrangement with a negro woman that treated Newton in a manner to which no white man was ever subjected—so much so that Newton became the slave of Clow's negro wife. When any white trader appeared, Newton hid himself, ashamed to be seen in his tattered clothes and shameful occupation as the slave of a negro.

Then one day in 1748, a ship, *The Greyhound*, called at Clow's plantation, and the captain inquired after a John Newton, son of an old sea-captain friend of his. With a feeling of great relief, Newton found himself being taken aboard and, on March 1, 1748, setting sail. The voyage was not an immediate return

home, as the captain still had some trading to do, so John Newton spent his days in drinking and revelry. But something happened on that voyage home, for God had not forgotten Newton. On the shelves of the captain's cabin was a copy of *Thomas à Kempis' Thoughts*. With time on his hands, Newton took down the book and began to read:

Since life is of short and of uncertain continuance, it highly concerns you to look about you and take good heed how you employ it. O hardness of men's hearts! O the wretched stupidity that fixes their whole thoughts and cares upon the present . . . whereas in truth, every work and word, and thought, ought to be so ordered as if it were to be our last; and we instantly to die, and render an account of it.

The shock of the words made Newton slam the book closed. He saw again his mother and heard again the words of Isaac Watts' hymns. In anger he jumped up and swore that for a freethinker as he was, he could not return to these things.

A few hours later he was facing the crisis of a sea storm and listening to the crew wailing that all was lost. In his diary Newton says, "I went to speak to the captain, and as I was turning from him I said, 'If this will not do, the Lord have mercy on us,' my first



cry for mercy since my childhood." That was a crucial cry, for now he began to think on deeper things. Could the God of mercy and grace, of whom his mother had spoken, really show mercy to such a blasphemer as John Newton? He was called to the helm, and for eleven hours he steered the ship. Here he had time to think. Should the ship sink, "he was bound for another life, but he was poorly provided for the voyage." From that moment the blasphemy stopped. John Newton picked up the captain's Bible and read, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" God's convicting work had begun.

Washed ashore in Ireland, Newton vowed to re-examine the Christian faith. Looking back on that day, he wrote, "I stood in need of an almighty

Saviour, and such a One I found described in the New Testament. . . . I was sincerely touched with a sense of undeserving mercy I had received in being brought safely through so many dangers."

God's mercy and grace were wider than he ever imagined, for Mary Catlett had remained true to him and was waiting to give her hand to him in marriage. However, Newton as yet was not finished with the sea, nor was he as yet willing to grant mercy and grace (such as God had granted him) to the African slaves. Offered captaincy of the ship, *The Duke of Argyll*, he set out for sea as an exchanger of liquor with white traders to woo slaves into the holds of his ships, to make his money from souls who were but numbers to him.

Returning home, he was led to read the book, *The Life of Colonel James Gardner*, written by Philip



forced to take a job as tide surveyor at Liverpool.

From now on, Newton fell under the influence of the great Calvinistic-Methodist preacher, George Whitefield. On his thirty-third birthday Newton spent eleven hours in fasting and prayer, seeking God's will for his future as a minister of the gospel. The outcome was that he linked himself with the established church, eventually becoming the Anglican parish minister of Olney. It is here, in the small rectory, that to this day we can find the words above the mantelpiece, "Thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee." He knew what redemption meant, for he had not only been in bondage but had led many others into it. Well indeed could he repeat the words of the apostle Paul, ". . . [I] am less than the least of all saints." Because of the great depths from which he had been raised, John Newton knew, more than most of us, how great is the grace of God. It is little wonder that he became known as the preacher of joy, the writer who cries out:

Should my tongue refuse to sing,
Sure the very stones would speak . . .

This is the man who wrote "Amazing Grace." He knew of it from his own experience. His epitaph of his own choosing relates that all was of God's grace. He died in 1807; and in the parish church of Woolnoth can be seen on his grave:

John Newton, Clerk.
Once an infidel and libertine.
The servant of slaves in Africa was by
the rich mercy of our Lord and Saviour
Jesus Christ
Preserved, restored, pardoned and
appointed to preach the faith he had
long labored to destroy.
In all 16 years at Olney in Bucks, and
27 years in this Church.

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

Doddridge. Gardner had been killed in 1745 during the Jacobite rebellion. Newton saw his own life closely paralleled by that of Gardner, who had been converted by reading Isaac Watts' words:

The world beheld the glorious change
And did Thine hand confess;
My tongue broke out in unknown strains
And sung surprising grace.

Deeply influenced by the book, Newton began to think seriously of his future, but again he returned to sea as captain of a new slave ship, *The African*. A crisis came in November, 1754, when at home on furlough he suffered a slight stroke. Indeed, "God moves in a mysterious way, His wonders to perform." It was the end of Newton's days as a mariner. He was

Law and Gospel

Louis Berkhof (1873-1957)

Louis Berkhof died in 1957, at the age of 83, after a long and distinguished career as a teacher of theology at Calvin Theological Seminary, Grand Rapids, Michigan. He attained world-wide fame as an author of the Reformed faith. We here reproduce from his *Systematic Theology* a portion of his comments on the law and gospel.—Ed.

The Law and the Gospel in the Word of God

The Churches of the Reformation from the very beginning distinguished between the law and the gospel as the two parts of the Word of God as a means of grace. This distinction was not understood to be identical with that between the Old and the New Testament, but was regarded as a distinction that applies to both Testaments. There is law and gospel in the Old Testament, and there is law and gospel in the New. The law comprises everything in Scripture which is a revelation of God's will in the form of command or prohibition, while the gospel embraces everything, whether it be in the Old Testament or in the New, that pertains to the work of reconciliation and that proclaims the seeking and redeeming love of God in Christ Jesus. And each one of these two parts has its own proper function in the

economy of grace. The law seeks to awaken in the heart of man contrition on account of sin, while the gospel aims at the awakening of saving faith in Jesus Christ. The work of the law is in a sense preparatory to that of the gospel. It deepens the consciousness of sin and thus makes the sinner aware of the need of redemption. Both are subservient to the same end, and both are indispensable parts of the means of grace. This truth has not always been sufficiently recognized. . . .

The promises which man appropriates certainly impose upon him certain duties, and among them the duty to obey the law of God as a rule of life, but also carry with them the assurance that God will work in him "both to will and to do." The consistent Dispensationalists of our day again represent the law and the gospel as absolute opposites. Israel was under the law in the previous dispensation, but the Church of the present dispensation is under the gospel, and as such is free from the law. This means that the gospel is now the only means of salvation, and that the law does not now serve as such. Members of the Church need not concern themselves about its demands, since Christ has met all its requirements. They seem to forget that, while Christ bore the curse of the law, and met its demands as a condition of the covenant of works, He did not fulfill the law for them as a rule of life, to which man is subject in virtue of his creation, apart from any covenant arrangement.

Reprinted from Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (London: The Banner of Truth Trust), pp. 612-615. Used by permission.

This excellent book can be obtained from The Banner of Truth Trust, P.O. Box 652, Carlisle, Pennsylvania 17013.

Necessary Distinctions Respecting the Law and the Gospel

a. As was already said in the preceding, the distinction between the law and the gospel is not the same as that between the Old and the New Testament. Neither is it the same as that which present day Dispensationalists make between the dispensation of the law and the dispensation of the gospel. It is contrary to the plain facts of Scripture to say that there is no gospel in the Old Testament, or at least not in that part of the Old Testament that covers the dispensation of the law. There is gospel in the maternal promise, gospel in the ceremonial law, and gospel in many of the Prophets, as Isa. 53 and 54; 55:1-3, 6, 7; Jer. 31:33, 34; Ezek. 36:25-28. In fact, there is a gospel current running through the whole of the Old Testament, which reaches its highest point in the Messianic prophecies. And it is equally contrary to Scripture to say that there is no law in the New Testament, or that the law does not apply in the New Testament dispensation. Jesus taught the permanent validity of the law, Matt. 5:17-19. Paul says that God provided for it that the requirements of the law should be fulfilled in our lives, Rom. 8:4, and holds his readers responsible for keeping the law, Rom. 13:9. James assures his readers that he who transgresses a single commandment of the law (and he mentions some of these), is a transgressor of the law, Jas. 2:8-11. And John defines sin as "lawlessness," and says that this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments, 1 John 3:4; 5:3.

b. It is possible to say that in some respects the Christian is free from the law of God. The Bible does not always speak of the law in the same sense. Sometimes it contemplates this as the immutable expression of the nature and will of God, which applies at all times and under all conditions. But it also refers to it as it functions in the covenant of works, in which the gift of eternal life was conditioned on its fulfillment. Man failed to meet the condition, thereby also losing the ability to meet it, and is now by nature under a sentence of condemnation. When Paul draws a contrast between the law and the gospel, he is thinking of this aspect of the law, the broken law of the covenant of works, which can no more justify, but can only condemn the sinner. From the law in this particular sense, both as a means for obtaining eternal life and as a condemning power, believers are set free in Christ, since He became a curse for them and also met the demands of the covenant of works in their behalf. The law in that

particular sense and the gospel of free grace are mutually exclusive.

c. There is another sense, however, in which the Christian is not free from the law. The situation is quite different when we think of the law as the expression of man's natural obligations to his God, the law as it is applied to man even apart from the covenant of works. It is impossible to imagine any condition in which man might be able to claim freedom from the law in that sense. It is pure Antinomianism to maintain that Christ kept the law as a rule of life for His people, so that they need not worry about this any more. The law lays claim, and justly so, on the entire life of man in all its aspects, including his relation to the gospel of Jesus Christ. When God offers man the gospel, the law demands that the latter shall accept this. Some would speak of this as the law in the gospel, but this is hardly correct. The gospel itself consists of promises and is no law; yet there is a demand of the law in connection with the gospel. The law not only demands that we accept the gospel and believe in Jesus Christ, but also that we lead a life of gratitude in harmony with its requirements.

The Threefold Use of the Law

It is customary in theology to distinguish a three-fold use of the law.

The Three Defined. We distinguish:

a. *A usus politicus or civilis.* The law serves the purpose of restraining sin and promoting righteousness. Considered from this point of view, the law presupposes sin and is necessary on account of sin. It serves the purpose of God's common grace in the world at large. This means that from this point of view it cannot be regarded as a means of grace in the technical sense of the word.

b. *A usus elencticus or pedagogicus.* In this capacity the law serves the purpose of bringing man under conviction of sin, and of making him conscious of his inability to meet the demands of the law. In that way the law becomes his tutor to lead him unto Christ, and thus becomes subservient to God's gracious purpose of redemption.

c. *A usus didacticus or normativus.* This is the so-called *tertius usus legis*, the third use of the law. The law is a rule of life for believers, reminding them of their duties and leading them in the way of life and salvation. This third use of the law is denied by the Antinomians.

The Christian Message and the Authority of Law

Robert D. Brinsmead



The law of God is something absolute and objective. It is outside and above the fluctuations of human experience. Whenever the authority of God's law is lacking, people must set up some other authority. While the Roman Church has set up the authority of the pope, many of the Protestant churches have set up the authority of human experience.

The aberrations of some of the sects have tended to make evangelicals so suspicious of law and legalism, that there has been a real tendency to run to the opposite extreme and neglect the proper use of the law altogether. Many have obtained the idea that the Christian can live without adherence to any rules or without submission to any discipline. This coincides with the spirit of this permissive age. But the

gospel can never be understood or appreciated without the background of law.

We challenge anybody to try to explain any of the great Christian doctrines outside the context of law. It cannot be done! What is sin if there is no law? What is the purpose of the atonement apart from the law? How can you explain repentance or faith if there is no reference to the demands of law? Is not *justification* itself a legal word which implies setting one right before the law? Consider also that great Bible word *righteousness*. Girdlestone says:

The word *righteous* or *just* (*dikaïos*) is almost always taken in the New Testament to represent that upright and merciful character in conformity with law which we have already met with in the Old Testament; and this is the case



whether the word is applied to God, the righteous Judge, to Jesus Christ, "the holy One and the Just," or to those who shall rise at "the resurrection of the just."—R.B. Girdlestone, *Synonyms of the Old Testament*, p. 168.

The God of the Old Testament is the God of law. He is the righteous God. All His acts and ways and words are said to be righteous (Ps. 7:9; 145:17; 1 Sam. 12:7; Isa. 45:19). Above all, His law is righteous, and He demands absolute obedience to it (Deut. 4:8; Ps. 19:9; 119:160; 106:3). Dr. Leon Morris, Australian evangelical scholar, has written:

The importance of law as a category for understanding the ways of God is seen in Abraham's question, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Gen. 18:25). God is designated by the legal term, "Judge." His relationship to the

whole earth may be expressed in legal categories. And the question gives expression to the certainty that He will act in accordance with moral law. The gods of the heathen could not be depended on in this way. They might be expected to react in the most capricious fashion. Not so Jehovah. This difference in understanding the connection of the deity with law may well be the basic reason for the superiority of the religion of Israel to those of the nations round about. Yahweh's actions were always in accordance with law. He could be depended upon to act righteously. And because He was righteous He demanded of His people that they should also act righteously, act in accordance with ethical law. If they did not, then this same ethical nature of Yahweh demanded that He should punish them. It was inevitable that the wrath of God should be the divine reaction to all sin. The Hebrew could depend on it. It was God's nature to act in this way. Jeremiah can say, "Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and the crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord"



(Jer. 8:7, marg.). Judgment is as natural to the Lord as the movements of the birds are to them.

Significant also is the fact that the men of the Old Testament sometimes seem to go out of their way to use legal illustrations when they have the divine activity in mind. Today we are inclined to be suspicious of "legalism." Indeed, if we can convict an opponent of too great an interest in law we are half-way to confuting him. No-one today is interested in a legalist. But we should not read this attitude back into antiquity. Legal categories were used not by way of compulsion, because the legal facts were plain and must be stated. They were used from choice. They were eagerly seized on and used with delight. The men of the Old Testament loved a good legal scene, and they never tire of depicting their God as taking part in one.

"The Lord standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the peoples. The Lord will enter into judgment with the elders of his people" (Isa. 3:13); "the Lord sitteth for ever: he hath prepared his throne for judgment. And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the peoples in uprightness" (Ps. 9:7f.). Or consider the very majestic legal scene depicted by Micah, "Hear ye now what the Lord saith: Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice. Hear, O ye mountains, the Lord's controversy, and ye enduring foundations of the earth: for the Lord hath a controversy with his people, and he will plead with Israel" (Mic. 6:1f.; cf. Is. 41:1, 21; 50:8; Jer. 25:31). The list could be prolonged. Yahweh and law went well together . . .

From this brief examination it seems quite clear that the Old Testament consistently thinks of a God who works by the method of law. This is not the conception of one or two writers but is found everywhere. It is attested by a variety of conceptions, many of them taken straight from forensic practices. Among the heathen the deity was thought of as above all law, with nothing but his own desires to limit him. Accordingly his behaviour was completely unpredictable, and while he made demands on his worshippers for obedience and service, there were few if any ethical implications of this service and none of a logically necessary kind. Far otherwise was it with the God of the Hebrews. The Old Testament never conceives of anything outside Him which can direct His actions, and we must be on our guard against the thought of a law which is over Him. But Yahweh was thought of as essentially righteous in His nature, as incorporating the law of righteousness within His essential Being.—Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (London: Tyndale Press), pp. 253, 254, 256-258.

Sin and the Law

If righteousness is conformity to the law of Jehovah (Rom. 2:13; Ps. 106:3; Luke 1:6), sin is lack of conformity to it. What could be clearer than the words of the apostle John, "Sin is the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:4.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism says, "Sin is

any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God." Dr. A.H. Strong likewise says, "Sin is lack of conformity to the moral law of God, either in act, disposition, or state."—A.H. Strong, *Systematic Theology*, p. 549.

Modern theology, however, scorns the simple Bible definition of sin and prefers to use a lot of fancy words to tell us what it is. Paul Tillich, for example, declares that "Sin is the unreconciled duality of ultimate and preliminary concerns, of the finite and that which transcends finitude, of the secular and the holy."—Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. I, p. 218. In a meeting of the American Philosophical Association at New Haven, Tillich also said, "When I use the word 'sin' I do not mean anything like the violation of the ten commandments."

Imagine how much conviction of sin would be created in the hearts of those listening to preachers who feed on Tillich! Neither will speaking in generalities prepare the hearts of sinners for the gospel. Ministers who do not wish to disturb the carnal slumbers of sinners, should follow this un-failing rule: Attack sin in general, but never become specific. Abraham Kuyper says:

Generalities are useless. . . . Ministers who seek to uncover and expose the man of sin by simply saying that men are wholly lost, dead in trespasses and sin, lack the cutting force which alone can lay open the putrefying sores of the heart.—Abraham Kuyper, *The Work of the Holy Spirit* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), p. 252.

In contrast to a lot of vague, philosophical theology, Lutheran scholar, Edward W.A. Koehler, says:

The Bible defines sin as "the transgression of the Law," as "anomia," lawlessness (1 John 3:4). No deed, word, thought, or desire are in themselves sin, but become sin by being at variance with the Law of God. To eat the fruit of a tree seems to us a rather innocent matter, but since God had forbidden it, it was a sin to Adam and Eve (Gen. 2:17). When Saul spared Agag, the king of Amalek, and the best of the sheep and oxen for sacrifice, it looked like a humane and pious thing; yet God had commanded him to destroy Amalek utterly, and so it was a sin to spare them (1 Sam. 15). When at the exodus from Egypt the children of Israel borrowed jewels of silver and gold from the Egyptians (Exod. 12:35, 36), without returning them, it was not a sin, because God expressly commanded them to do this (Exod. 3:22). Whether or not anything is a sin is not determined by what we think, or how we feel, about it, but solely by this: does it or does it not agree with the Word of God? Sin is not a physical, but a moral condition, and it consists in this, that a given act, behaviour, or condition of man is not what God wants it to be; it is nonconformity with the will of God. Thus, to sin means to do

what God forbids (Gen. 2:17), or not to do what He enjoins (James 4:17), or not to be as He wants us to be (Lev. 19:2). Hence, with respect to the Law, sin is a departure from its rule; with respect to God, sin is disobedience to His will.

Every departure from the Law is sin, whether this be great or small, known or unknown, intended or accidental, or even when it is against our will (Rom. 7:19). The question whether anything is or is not sin, is not determined by our personal opinion, our knowledge, our intention, or our will, but solely by this one fact, whether or not it is in agreement with the will of God. Our personal attitude may aggravate or mitigate our guilt, but it does not change the nature of the act or the conduct as a transgression of the Law. Even the good intention and purpose one may have, will not change an unlawful act into a lawful one (1 Sam. 15:1-26). We cannot sin to the glory of God (Rom. 6:1).—Edward W.A. Koehler, *A Summary of Christian Doctrine*, pp. 62, 63.

The apostle Paul makes three decisive statements about the law and sin:

Where no law is, there is no transgression. Rom. 4:15.

Sin is not imputed where there is no law. Rom. 5:13.

I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. Rom. 7:7.

From this we may confidently draw the following conclusions:

1. Where there is no knowledge of the law, there is no knowledge of sin.

2. Only those who take the law seriously will take sin seriously.

3. It is useless to preach the gospel to those who have not found themselves to be sinners before the law or those who are not interested in coming to terms with its righteous demands. The law is a mirror. While a man cannot wash his face in a mirror, neither will he desire to wash his face unless he looks into the mirror and sees his state of uncleanness.

Redemption and the Law

Just as we cannot understand what sin is apart from the law, so we cannot understand God's redemptive acts apart from the law. The word *redemption*, as used in both the Old and New Testament, means a release or deliverance by means of payment. The idea of price must not be forgotten. The word implies deliverance at a cost (see Morris, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-64).

While God is omnipotent, we must not entertain the idea that He accomplished our deliverance as an easy matter. This is why the Bible writers use a word

which implies deliverance at a great price. The question arises, Why a price? or, To whom did God pay the ransom? One theory of redemption, advocated by some of the church fathers, was that God paid the ransom to the devil. But man did not belong to Satan in the first place. Man might be the devil's captive, but certainly Satan was not man's rightful owner.

The apostle Paul relates *redemption* to the law when he says, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law." Gal. 3:13. Redemption is related to the justice of God, the moral Governor of the universe. God's justice requires that the law be fulfilled by a life of perfect obedience, and, where there is a failure to conform to His holy will, His justice requires satisfaction by an adequate penalty. God is merciful. He delights in mercy and longs to forgive. But He is also just and will uphold the moral order of the universe. Justice is an attribute of God's character just as much as is mercy, and justice demands that sin be punished and the death penalty executed. God cannot deny Himself, nor can He act contrary to His nature. The Bible writers never give the impression that God forgives sin without regard for justice. The only way God could forgive sinners and remain just was to see to it that His law was fulfilled by a holy life and satisfied by a penal death. This required a price so great that God was the only one in the universe who could save men by meeting the demands of justice. In the person of His Son, He came to this world and undertook for us. He stood in our place as our Substitute and Representative. In our name and on our behalf, He was "made under the law" (Gal. 4:4). First, by a life of holy obedience, He fulfilled its just claims of a perfect life. Then, by a shameful death, He bore the penalty of sin for the race of sinners. All this proved that "God will not, and God cannot, change His law by one hair's breadth, even to save a universe of sinners" (Lord Bacon).

It was this view of the atonement which led Adolphe Monod to cry out, "Save first the holy law of my God—after that you can save me." The great Puritan, John Flavell, observed, "Never was the law of God more highly honored as when Christ stood before its bar of justice to make reparations for the damage done." And Spurgeon declared, "I felt that it would not satisfy my conscience if I could be forgiven unjustly."

When men see the atonement only as a means of escape for themselves, a mere skillful way to have their sins pardoned, it will not have the necessary

ethical and moral motivation that real Christianity will produce. Those who do not see how seriously the atonement takes the law, will not be led to take the law seriously in their daily living. Our view of the atonement tends to be far too subjective. The object of the atonement was not just our salvation but that the divine law and government might be maintained and vindicated.

If there is a failure to relate the atonement to the law, the death of Christ may appear awesome—but completely unintelligible. On the one hand, people are left with the impression that an angry, vindictive God punished His Son so that, being appeased, He could let us off. (This heathenish view of sacrifice is the philosophy of antinomianism.) On the other hand, some imagine that there was nothing in the divine character or government which demanded punishment for sin. It is said that the death of Christ was merely an exhibition of God's love designed to change us. (This is the view of liberal humanism, which denies the Bible principle of salvation by substitution, representation and penal satisfaction. This is the philosophy of legalism.)

Repentance, Faith and the Law

"Repent ye, and believe the gospel," is the message of the New Testament. Without repentance, none can believe unto salvation. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." But unless men are caused to see what sin is in the light of God's law and what the atonement is in the light of God's law, they are not going to have any true repentance.

The Greek word for repentance (*metanoia*) literally means a change of mind or attitude—a change of mind or attitude to the law of God, of course! Bible repentance is repentance for sin, and sin is the transgression of the law, or lawlessness (1 John 3:4). The Bible declares, "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Rom. 8:7. Here we are told that the natural, unrepentant man is hostile to God and to His law. God and His law cannot be separated. Our attitude to one is our attitude to the other. Man is a fugitive from law. Like the prodigal, he thinks that freedom consists in being free from the authority of the Father. But repentance means a wholly new attitude to God and to the authority of His law—just as the returning prodigal had a completely new view of his father's authority.

How does such repentance come about? Before the apostle Peter called the Jews to repentance on the

Day of Pentecost, he told them what they had done and uncovered their awful guilt. Paul says, "I had not known sin, but by the law." Unless the law of God is proclaimed so that men are brought to see that they are damned sinners who deserve and ought to die, they will not repent. This was the point of Luther's conflict with Agricola, the first great Protestant antinomian.

Agricola said that the law was no longer needed to bring men to repentance. Just preach the love of God and the cross of Christ, and men will come to repentance, he claimed. This insidious opinion threatened to overthrow the cause of the Reformation in Germany. Luther and Melancthon united to oppose this heresy with all the authority of God-given truth, and for future generations they left it clearly on the record of history that the law of God must be maintained and diligently taught in the churches.

We repeat again: Unless the law takes hold of man and convinces him of his utter corruption, lost condition and exposure to the awful penalty of sin, he will not repent.

But there is another element to be considered in repentance. The apostle declares, "The goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance." Rom. 2:4. This goodness of divine love and compassion is seen in the cross of Christ. Having seen his awful weight of guilt, the sinner now sees the Son of God bearing it on his behalf as his Substitute. When he sees the holy Father not sparing His own Son, he knows that the holy law can never be abrogated, modified or relaxed. When he understands that the law had to be fulfilled and satisfied before God could justly extend forgiveness to such a poor rebel, he repents. Now he is not just sorry because he fears the consequences of sin. He is sorry for sin. He sees what it has done to his God-given manhood. He sees how it has caused the infinite suffering of the Son of God. With David he cries, "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil." Instead of remaining hostile to the authority of God's law, he despises his past life of rebellion and is truly sorry that instead of choosing God's way, the way of obedience, he has chosen his own way, followed his own wisdom and sought to be a law unto himself.

Such repentance cannot exist where there remains a wicked intention to sin. Repentance implies an acknowledgment of the authority of God's law. It is to say, "I am sorry for my rebellious disobedience. I am sorry for the suffering it has caused my best Friend."

Of course, no sinner can originate "repentance

unto life." The Spirit of God creates it when the sinner does not resist hearing the law and the gospel.

The Spirit-inspired response to the preaching of law and gospel is always "repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). Repentance and faith are inseparable, yet their action is completely different. Repentance acknowledges the authority of God's law and confesses that it ought to be fulfilled. But merely acknowledging what ought to be done will not save anybody. The Bible does not teach that we are saved by repentance. It is by faith that the law is fulfilled (Rom. 10:4), and so it is by faith that we are saved. We must now haste to consider how this relates to the divine economy of salvation.

As Creator, Lawgiver and Governor of the universe (Isa. 33:22), God has made known His moral law, and His justice requires that man render perfect obedience. Those who do the law, and do it all the time, are blessed and justified (Rom. 2:13; Ps. 106:3). Those who fail to do it at all times are cursed and condemned (Gal. 3:10; James 2:10). As Luther says, "The law must be fulfilled so that not a jot or tittle shall be lost, otherwise man will be condemned without hope."—*Luther's Works* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press; St. Louis: Concordia), Vol. XXXI, pp. 348, 349. Repentance stands before the law with nothing to pay. But not so with faith. Faith is the eye of the soul which sees that Jesus fulfilled the law of God for us (Matt. 5:17). Faith is the hand that accepts the gospel treasure and brings before God the perfect obedience of Jesus Christ. Faith 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. . . ."—*Ibid.*, pp. 297, 298. Faith unites the needy soul to Christ and makes that soul a partner of the Lord of the universe, whose righteousness satisfies all the demands of the law. Thus, by faith the whole law—all that justice requires of us—is fulfilled, as it is written, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Rom. 10:4.

Ambrose, one of the church fathers, employs an Old Testament story to illustrate the action of saving faith. Jacob craved the birthright, but he knew he could not receive his father's blessing if he came in his own name and attire. Therefore he came before Isaac in the name and attire of his elder brother and, by so doing, secured the blessing. So faith "begs" or "borrows" the perfect righteousness of our Elder Brother, Jesus Christ. Nay more, faith claims Christ's righteousness as its very own and boldly approaches

the eternal throne for the blessing of justification.

In this light, we may understand why Paul protests that faith does not side-step the law but establishes it (Rom. 3:31). To trust wholly in Christ's law-honoring life and death, is the greatest honor that man can give to the law of God. Faith is not a way to get around the law. It is not a clever substitute for obedience. Faith enables the sinner to meet the claims of the law without compromising in any way the moral order of God's government.

Justification and the Law

Justification is a legal word which means to declare righteous, especially in reference to trial and judgment. It is a word that belongs to the law court. It is therefore impossible to understand this great Bible doctrine unless it is related to law. In the book of Romans, which is the Bible's great charter on justification, the word *law* is used fifty-six times. Dr. A.H. Strong points out, "Justification is setting one right before law."—Strong, *op. cit.*, p. 856.

At the outset of his great statement on justification, the apostle Paul declares, "The doers of the law shall be justified." Rom. 2:13. This is an eternal truth which can never be modified or relaxed. A just God and a just law will justify a man only on the condition of perfect obedience. There are two ways in which man may meet the terms. Either he can come before God in his own *personal* obedience, or he may come in the *vicarious* obedience of Another. But the principle remains: he must bring to God a life which fulfills the law.

The conflict between Rome and the Reformers was not over the question of whether or not righteousness was necessary for justification. Rome taught that men could be justified before God by a personal righteousness (albeit worked in their hearts by an infusion of divine grace). The Reformers said that men could be justified only by a *vicarious* righteousness (performed by Christ centuries ago and *imputed* to the believer). The dispute was never about whether the claims of the law should be satisfied but *how* they are satisfied.

For a thorough discussion of the relationship of justification to the law, we refer the reader to Dr. Buchanan's lecture in the appendix. See also Martin Chemnitz's material in the June, 1973, issue of *Present Truth*.

The great doctrine of justification by faith has often been taught in such a way that it is positively dishonoring to God and to His law. Many think they

are following Paul when they speak contemptuously of the law, not realizing that they are blaspheming the honor and majesty of God Himself. The great apostle unsparingly attacks law as a *method* of salvation but never, never as a moral and ethical norm.

Sanctification and the Law

The Reformers all clearly saw that the law has three main uses:

1. *Political*—to restrain evil in society.
2. *Theological, or pedagogic*—to point out sin and to be a schoolmaster (pedagogue) to lead the sinner to Christ.
3. *Didactic*—to be a guide to regenerate Christians.¹

A large section of Protestantism today has either neglected or abandoned the great Biblical and Reformation concept of "the third use of the law." (And we are not just referring to the liberals, some of whom have wandered so far from "the holy commandment" that they talk of condoning homosexuality.) A number of evangelicals have been actively promoting this brand of "evangelical" anti-nomianism for years. In fact, the American evangelical movement is largely caught up in the theories of dispensationalism, views which began to be promoted a little more than a hundred years ago in England. Dispensationalism and Reformation theology are incompatible. Dispensationalists deny the third use of the law. As Louis Berkhof says in his *Systematic Theology* (London: The Banner of Truth Trust), page

¹With regard to the third use of the law, some have tried to argue that Luther did not agree with Melancthon (who first coined the expression, "the third use of the law") and Calvin (who deals with the law's third use in great detail in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*). But their claim is not in harmony with the facts. What could be clearer than Luther's *Small Catechism*: "The purpose of the law is to train people to be decent and orderly, to show them that they are sinners so that they may repent and turn to Christ, and to serve as the rule of life for Christians." In *The Theology of Martin Luther*, Paul Althaus says, "Luther saw the commandments not only as a mirror in which he recognizes sin—although they certainly are and remain that even for the Christian—but beyond this as instruction about the 'good works' God wants; and such instruction is necessary and wholesome for the Christian. . . . Luther does not use the expression 'the third function of the law (*tertius usus legis*).'" Melancthon did use this expression and it was then adopted in the *Formula of Concord*, in Lutheran orthodoxy and by nineteenth century theology. In substance, however, it also occurs in Luther."—Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, pp. 272, 273. Reformed scholar, G.C. Berkouwer, says this about Luther: "Convinced though he was of the sovereignty of God's grace and of our inability to be justified by the works of the law, he nevertheless held the law in high esteem and spoke of its threefold intent to maintain the external order, to induce sinners to recognize their guilt, and to direct the life of believers."—G.C. Berkouwer, *Faith and Sanctification*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1952), pp. 164, 165.

614, "It is pure Antinomianism"

To what does a denial of the third use of the law amount? Lutheran scholar, John Warwick Montgomery, calls it sanctification desanctified (see John Warwick Montgomery, *The Suicide of Christian Theology* [Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1970], pp. 423-428; reprinted in *Present Truth*, March, 1973). It means the destruction of that great doctrine of Christian sanctification. Why? Because, to use the words of G.C. Berkouwer, "Sanctification and law are inseparable; within their compass moves all of redeemed human life."—Berkouwer, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

Just as sin, redemption, atonement, repentance and justification lose all true meaning apart from the law, so does sanctification. Sanctification flows from justification. At the same time as the repentant, believing sinner is justified by the imputation of Christ's righteousness (an act of God external to the sinner), he is renewed by the impartation of the Holy Spirit (an act of God internal to the believer). Justification sets him right before the law legally and positionally, but, being renewed in the spirit of his mind, he begins the life of new obedience. This is sanctification, and it means being conformed to the law of God morally and vocationally. "The children of God are ready to submit themselves to the holy law of God which is now the rule of their lives."—*Ibid.*, pp. 191, 192.

"Whatever in his [the converted man's] previous course of life was at variance with God's law is at once abandoned."—James Buchanan, *The Office and Work of the Holy Spirit* (London: The Banner of Truth Trust), p. 110. In the gift of the Holy Spirit, God writes His law in the hearts of the justified (Heb. 8:10). They are no longer hostile to it (Rom. 8:7), for the scripture is fulfilled:

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Rom. 8:3, 4.

This has been the doctrine of all the great Protestant divines since the days of the Reformation—whether they be Lutheran, Calvinistic, Anglican or Puritan. Melancthon, in his *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, clearly spelled out sanctification as the new obedience to the law.

There is not a trace in the Reformation, says he [Melancthon], of the supposed fixity of man's moral condition; as if faith were merely the reception of some obscure, external righteousness. It is quite otherwise. Once we

have been justified through faith we must keep the law. He mentions the decalogue by name.—Berkouwer, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

And since that time, there has not been one sound, responsible Protestant theologian who has deviated from this principle.

Acknowledging the law's third use is not a return to legalism or a new self-righteousness.

. . . Luther's theology rests primarily on thankful certainty, and out of it flows the duty of keeping the commandments.—Adolf Koberle, *The Quest for Holiness* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1938), p. 169.

A full-fledged acknowledgment of the third use of the law, rather than being the offspring of a legalistic orientation, issues from the benefaction of grace which liberates man from a precarious autonomy and places him under the direction of God's holy commandments.—Berkouwer, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

The believer no longer tries to sail heavenwards on clouds of self-righteousness. Having found anchorage in the righteousness of Christ, he has every reason to render obedience to God's law. In this new obedience the law receives again its original function, a function no longer conceivable in abstraction from the grace of God. For now the commandments are to the believer the gracious guidance of the Saviour—God.—*Ibid.*, p. 175.

Sanctification and law are truly inseparable. Remove one, and you destroy the other.

True Sanctification Versus Religious Subjectivism

The holiness-Pentecostal movement majors on the subject of sanctification. We do not disagree with a call to holiness. Surely it is never out of place and is sorely needed in the churches now. But we are against those teachings which leave the impression that holiness, or sanctification, consists in some sort of religious ecstasy or euphoria. Under the influence of this teaching, people think that sanctification is some religious rapture or the exercise of religious feelings and manifestations under extraordinary circumstances. In the minds of too many Christians, sanctification has become some indefinite, sentimental, mystical experience.

Just as we are justified by faith in an objective work (a work external to ourselves), so we are sanctified by faith(ful) obedience to an objective law (the Word of God, which is external to ourselves). Jesus prayed that we might be sanctified by the Word of truth (John 17:17), and the apostle Peter says that the soul is purified by "obeying the truth" (1 Peter 1:22).

Bible sanctification consists in submission to live by something objective—even the Word of the living God. It means that we no longer seek to be guided by our own wisdom, nor by mysterious and uncertain voices within ourselves.

The entire life of believers is now subject to the will of Another in genuine heteronomy, not as an oppressive menace to burgeoning life but as the sustaining statutory rule of the Other. It is essential that God's law is imposed from without. Now it comes to man as a threat to his autonomy, nullifies this autonomy, and rids him of its illusions. It would never issue forth from the depths of his own heart. The Scriptures do speak of the law as engraved in the heart of man but this God-given readiness to conform to the law of God by no means annuls its heteronomous nature. For it—this heteronomous nature of the law—is completely determined by its being inseparable from the Lawgiver. The law of God is not spread over this world like a net which can be considered by itself; it is the living God who issues that law so that no one can be aware of it without coming in contact with God himself. Therefore the law of God was of such great significance to the people of Israel. Through that law the Lord himself, in all his holiness, approached his people with love and grace. Rightly to understand the Lord is therefore to be docile; and the docile child does not dread his law. To such a child, as to the psalmist who composed Psalm 119, the law is the subject of never-ending litanies.—Berkouwer, *op. cit.*, pp. 176, 177.

Once this basic concept of sanctification is lost or abandoned, men have nothing to fall back on but their own subjective experiences. The issue is one of authority—the authority of God's law versus the authority of human experience.

Three Popular Antinomian Sentiments

There are three popular antinomian sentiments which sound so spiritual and pious that they deceive many evangelical Christians. Here they are:

1. "When you have the love of Christ in your heart, you don't need the Ten Commandments because love is the fulfilling of the law." But while the love of Christ constrains the Christian (2 Cor. 5:14), it does not inform the Christian as to the proper content of that action. This has been well stated by Horatius Bonar, beloved hymnologist and author, who in his book, *God's Way of Holiness*, writes:

But will they tell us what is to regulate service, if not law? Love, they say. This is a pure fallacy. Love is not a rule, but a motive. Love does not tell me what to do; it tells me how to do it. Love constrains me to do the will of the beloved

one; but to know what the will is, I must go elsewhere. The law of our God is the will of the beloved one, and were that expression of his will withdrawn, love would be utterly in the dark; it would not know what to do. It might say, I love my Master, and I love his service, and I want to do his bidding, but I must know the rules of his house, that I may know how to serve him. Love without law to guide its impulses would be the parent of will-worship and confusion, as surely as terror and self-righteousness, unless upon the supposition of an inward miraculous illumination, as an equivalent for law. Love goes to the law to learn the divine will, and love delights in the law, as the exponent of that will; and he who says that a believing man has nothing more to do with law, save to shun it as an old enemy, might as well say that he has nothing to do with the will of God. For the divine law and the divine will are substantially one, the former the outward manifestation of the latter. And it is "the will of our Father which is in heaven" that we are to do (Matt. 7:21), so proving by loving obedience what is that "good and acceptable, and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:2). Yes, it is he that doeth "the will of God that abideth forever" (1 John 2:17); it is to "the will of God" that we are to live (1 Pet. 4:2); "made perfect in every good work to do his will" (Heb. 13:21); and "fruitfulness in every good work," springs from being "filled with the knowledge of his will" (Col. 1:9, 10).

Plain-speaking D.L. Moody says:

The people must be made to understand that the Ten Commandments are still binding, and that there is a penalty attached to their violation. We do not want a gospel of mere sentiment. The Sermon on the Mount did not blot out the Ten Commandments.

When Christ came He condensed the statement of the law into this form: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself." Paul said: "Love is the fulfilling of the law." But does this mean that the detailed precepts of the Decalogue are superseded and have become back numbers? Does a father cease to give children rules to obey because they love him? Does a nation burn its statute books because the people have become patriotic? Not at all. And yet people speak as if the commandments do not hold for Christians because they have come to love God. Paul said: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid. Yea, we establish the law." It still holds good. The Commandments are necessary.—D.L. Moody, *Weighed and Wanted*, pp. 17, 18.

2. "When you are filled with the Holy Spirit, you don't need the law because the Holy Spirit tells you what to do." This is the kind of fanaticism that Luther had to meet in the more radical Anabaptists. They made a cleavage between Word and Spirit, and thought they could receive communications and revelations from the Spirit quite apart from the objective Word of God. The tragedy is that those who want to be led by God and want Him to speak to them apart from the guidance of the words of the

Bible, have no way of telling the difference between the Holy Spirit and their own carnal religious impressions. They try to live by uncertain voices within themselves. But the true work of the Spirit is to teach Christians not to live by inward resources but by trusting submission to an objective authority. The Holy Spirit bears witness to the truth, and God's Word is the truth. Anyone who gives the slightest hint that he need not carefully study the Bible to determine God's will for his life, is not led by the Spirit of God.

3. "The essential thing is a warm, heart relationship with Christ. When you have this personal relationship, you don't live by the do's and don'ts of the law." This sentiment should be consigned back to its right place—to the father of lies.

Certainly a Christian does not live by the commandments of men. He pays no attention to the do's and don'ts of *human* traditions. This is what Paul is talking about in Colossians 2:14-22. "Let no man therefore judge you . . . after the commandments and doctrines of men." But may God help us if we think that Paul is talking about the commandments of God. In another place the apostle says, "Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God." 1 Cor. 7:19.

The essential thing is a relationship with God, true! But let us not forget that *God sets the terms of that relationship*. His terms are obedience. Let us not fool ourselves in thinking that we can get above the do's and don'ts of God's Word. There are plenty of do's and don'ts in the New Testament just as well as in the Old. The epistles of Paul are full of imperatives: don't lie to one another; don't let the sun go down on your wrath; don't judge and criticize your brother; don't eat (the sacrament) with immoral men; don't be conformed to this world; don't take a brother in the faith before a law court; and many, many more. Try reading Romans 12 to 14, and see how many do's and don'ts are given to us. Or read Ephesians 4 to 6, Colossians 3 to 4 and 1 Thessalonians 5.

Our keeping the commandments of God does not establish our relationship with God. This is purely of grace, on account of Christ, through faith alone. ("I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt.") The duty of hearing and obeying Him springs out of the fact that He has delivered us and established a Father-son relationship with us. The "Thou shalt nots" plainly spell out the things that will spoil that relationship.

God even saw fit to impose some do's and

don'ts on man in his sinless state. To Adam and Eve He said, "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it." We can imagine the deceiver saying to the woman, "Listen, Eve. If you have a warm, loving relationship with God, that is all that matters. Since you have now achieved this wonderful experience, you have no need to live by the do's and don'ts of the law. In fact, the way you can prove you have entered this higher experience is to eat this fruit. That will prove that the only thing that matters is a love relationship with God." Eve forgot that divine love set the terms of that relationship. Through disobedience the relationship was destroyed.

God remembers that we are but dust. Because of Christ He does not impute sin to the faltering lives of the stumbling saints. But He cannot be in fellowship with those who "rebel against God's law by changing its demands and accommodating them to their own capacity. This is done by eliminations in the Decalogue and also by additions" (Edmund Schlink, *Theology of the Lutheran Confessions* [Philadelphia: Fortress Press], p. 75).

Conclusions

If the great doctrine of justification is to be restored to its rightful place in the church, we must preach "the second use of the law"—the law to point out sin, the law as a schoolmaster to lead to Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:24).

If the great doctrine of sanctification is to be restored to its rightful place in the church, we must proclaim "the third use of the law"—the law as a guide to justified believers.

If the second use of the law falls, so does the third, or vice versa. Then there is neither a correct basis for justification nor for sanctification. This is why the church is drowning in an unprecedented flood of religious subjectivism.

Again: we are justified by faith in an objective work, and we are sanctified by faith(ful) obedience to an objective law.

Let the church return to her unabashed allegiance to God's Word. Let her not be ashamed of her conscientious obedience to the commandments of God. Let her not be afraid to call sin by its right name. Let her shake off all traces of sentimental subjectivism. Let her take up the two-edged sword of law and gospel. Then will she again look "forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

The Strength of Sin is the Law

From a sermon delivered by the editor in the Montclair Community Church (Reformed Church in America), Denver, Colorado, March 9, 1973.

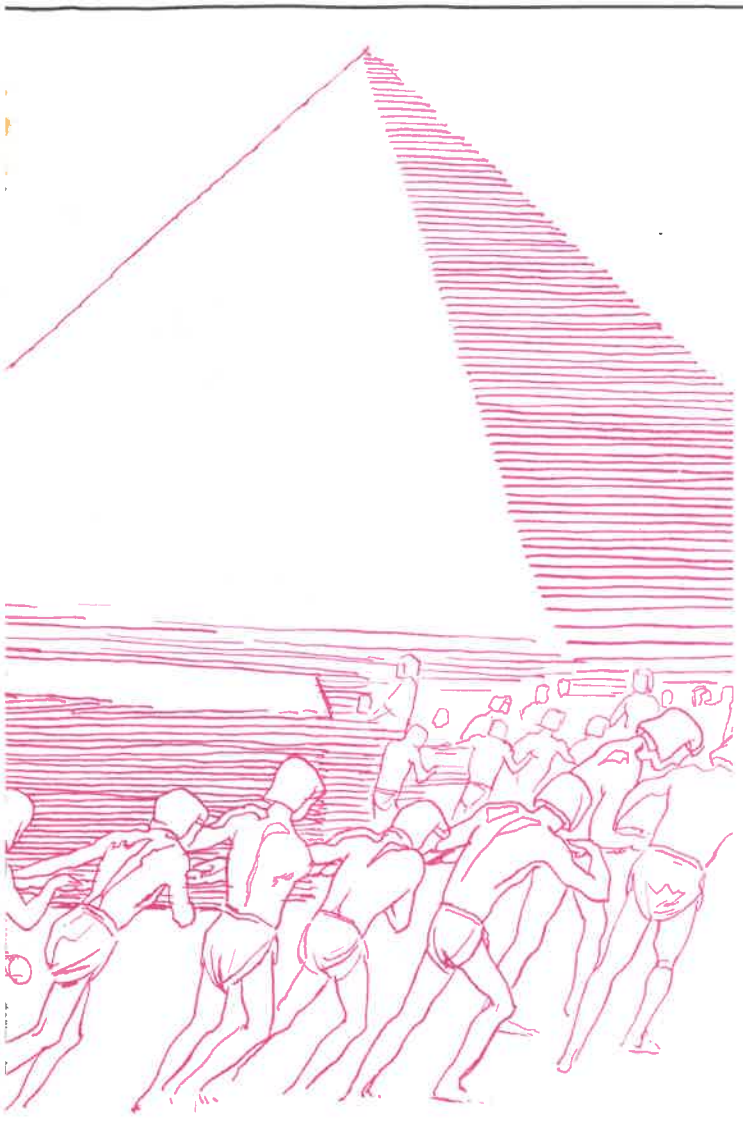


Jesus said, "Whosoever practices sin is the slave of sin." John 8:34. Sin has a lot of slaves. Not one is happy. They are all miserable. There are the willing slaves, who serve sin with both hands greedily. There are the unwilling slaves, who weary themselves to commit iniquity, who detest their bondage but who are slaves just the same.

Scriptural quotations are frequently from the Revised Standard Version.

Some fool themselves in thinking that they can leave off sin as soon as they choose. Only those who have really tried to break from its service know that they are held by a mysterious power that no man can master.

A mysterious power . . . What is it? Is sin *itself* very powerful? Most of us would answer, "Yes." We glorify sin by imputing to it some wonderful power which it never did have. But sin has no intrinsic power of its own.



For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to Another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. Rom. 7:2-4.

Here is a woman who has a husband. She may hate him and prefer to be married to a better man. But she is held—bound—not by the husband but by the law. It is the law which binds her to the husband.

So we by nature are “married” to sin. It is much more desirable to be “married to Another, even to Him who is raised from the dead.” The power that holds us in that first union is not sin but the law. In Romans 7 Paul is talking about becoming “dead to the law” and being “delivered from the law.” vv. 4, 6. The point must be clear: We cannot escape the clutches of sin as long as the law binds us. We need to be “delivered from the law.”

Then, in verse 5, Paul goes a step further. “While we were living in the flesh [our unregenerate state], our sinful passions, *aroused by the law*, were at work in our members to bear fruit for death.” Sinful passions aroused by the law! How could one brought up to respect and honor the law tolerate such a thought as this! But now further: “But now we are discharged from the law, dead to that which held us captive.” v. 6. The law holds us captive! How could those who make their boast in the law endure the apostle’s message! But further: “But sin, finding opportunity in the commandment, wrought in me all kinds of covetousness. Apart from the law sin lies dead.” v. 8. That is to say, sin has no power apart from the law; but (if we may personify sin) sin goes to the law and says, “Will you grant me permission to take possession of this man?” “Yes,” says the law, “you have my permission.” Sin goes off with this authority, takes possession of the man and works in him all manner of evil desires.

The apostle anticipates our question, “Is the law sin?” “God forbid,” he replies. “The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.” vv. 7, 12.

But now the question arises, How can a holy, just and good law bind us to the service of sin, hold us captive and actually give to sin power to work in us all manner of evil desires? Is this the real purpose of the law? Did God give man a law to shut him up in the jail house of sin?

Sin’s power to enslave men is derived—derived from the law of God. Says the apostle Paul, “The strength of sin is the law.” 1 Cor. 15:56. Apart from the law of God, there would be no sin (Rom. 4:15; 5:13), and sin would have no power to hold men in its service. The greatest part of Romans 7 is spent in explaining this great truth.

First the apostle uses an illustration to show that it is the law which binds us to the service of sin:

The Purpose of the Law

And the commandment, which was ordained unto life, I found to be unto death. Rom. 7:10.

Originally the law was ordained to life. God made man perfect and gave him a perfect law. It was a "royal law," "the law of liberty." God promised Adam life on condition of perfect obedience. Adam was qualified to render perfect obedience by the very perfection of his nature. As long as he obeyed, the law justified him. The law was his friend and protector.

Then man rebelled against the law. With all the fury and power of divine authority, the law sentenced him to death, became his jailer and threw him into prison.

Let me illustrate: You have good laws in this great land. As long as you respect, honor and obey these laws, the law is your friend and protector. But suppose you rebel and become an enemy of the law. What then? The law will become your adversary. It will take hold of you and cast you into prison.

So it is that the law of God was originally ordained to life. But fallen, rebel man finds it unto death! The law has become his jailer. He has chosen the service of sin, and now the justice of God's law demands that he serve the master of his choice. Justice has bound him over to the miserable service of sin.

Suppose a criminal is thrown into jail and sentenced to the hard labor of crushing rocks till the day he dies. He may not have any particular love for crushing rocks. He may prefer doing something else. By what power is he kept at the miserable task? By the power of the law. The law put him into prison, and the law keeps him in prison. The only way he can be delivered from his miserable vocation is to be delivered from the power of the law.

Prisoners of Hope

Those who remember the world of Charles Dickens could vividly bring to mind the debtor's prison. If a man owed a debt, his creditor could get an injunction against him and have him thrown into prison. He could not come out until he paid the last penny.

We are in debt to the law of God in a twofold sense:

1. We owe it *fulfillment* by a life of perfect obedience.



2. We owe it *satisfaction* by the kind of death that will meet its penalty.

Justice demands that we stay in our debtor's prison, with no hope of coming out until we pay our debt to the law. We are shut in by an omnipotent power. The man who thinks he can break away from the service of sin by anything he can do, is trying to make himself greater than the law, which is as great as God Himself. There is no human power or devising that can deliver us from that just law, which has sentenced us to serve sin.

Yet the human race are "prisoners of hope."

But the Scripture consigned all things to sin, that what was promised to faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. Now before faith came, we were confined under the law, kept under restraint until faith should be revealed. So that the law was our custodian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith. Gal. 3:22-24, R.S.V.

Justification, which comes by faith, makes the



prisoner free. Not that there is any virtue in faith itself, but there is redemption in the object of faith—Jesus Christ Himself. The gospel is about Jesus Christ and what He has done for us. He so loved us that He considered heaven not a place to be desired while we were prisoners without hope. Seeing that we were hopelessly in debt to the law and that we could never be delivered by our own power, He stepped down and took our place.

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. Gal. 4:4, 5.

In our name and on our behalf, Jesus paid our debt to the law. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Gal. 3:13. Our debt was twofold, and He paid it twofold:

1. By a life of perfect obedience, He *fulfilled* the law for us.

2. By His death on the cross, He *satisfied* the law for us.

The old Scottish theologians called these the active and passive obedience of Christ. He was our Representative, and what He did was for us—so that it was just the same as if we had personally done it. We were lost in Adam but restored in Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:17-19). Just as we sinned in Adam, so we lived sinlessly and died to the penalty of the law in Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 5:14). The good news is that we paid our debt in the doing and dying of Jesus Christ.

Although Christ has signed our emancipation papers with His own blood, His redemption is effective only when we "repent . . . and believe the gospel."

Repentance is sorrow for sin, a change of attitude to the law of God. We were shut up because

we were rebels; and just as long as we remain hostile to God's law, we will remain in prison.

I once visited the old convict settlement in Port Arthur, Tasmania. Still exhibited is the "dark room," where were placed incorrigible prisoners. It was an underground room so dark that the blackness was terrifying. An hour in it would subdue most men. But there was one defiant fellow who was shut up in the "dark room" for a whole day. At the end of the day, the jailer opened the door to see if the poor wretch had had enough. But the prisoner spat in the jailer's face. You can guess what happened. He was locked in again!

The law is our jailer, and we may be sure that no one will get out if he is bent on despising the law of God. No one comes out without repentance.

It is faith, however, that frees us from the jail house of sin. Faith lays hold of what Christ has done, and God puts the obedience of Christ to the sinner's account. Therefore he who believes on Jesus Christ has fulfilled the whole law (Rom. 10:4). He is no longer a debtor. Before justice he stands as one who has borne the penalty of sin. He has died to the law in his Substitute, Jesus Christ. And in Jesus Christ he stands before it with a sinless life.

Therefore the law no longer binds the believer in Jesus to the prison house of sin. The jailer, seeing that the debt is paid, opens the jail, and the child of faith is free to pass out. He is no longer bound by the law to that miserable first husband. No longer can sin take occasion from the commandment to work in him all manner of evil desires. Justification makes the believer *legally* free from the old service of sin.

Faith that Works

Bondage is the result of a wrong relationship to the law. A rebel who hates the law has a wrong relationship to the law. Naturally the law will bind him as a slave to serve sin. The legalist also has a wrong relationship to the law. The doctrine of salvation by means of sincere obedience to the law is the worst kind of antinomianism. The man who holds this doctrine is a debtor, and sin will get permission from the law to stir up all kinds of evil passions in him.

Justification means to be set right before the law. And those who are set right before the law are not bound in prison. What joy to know that when we believe in Jesus Christ, sin has lost all its legal rights over us! We do not have to serve it any more. We have

no need to tremble at its power. Faith is not just a nod of assent. It works! Unless it works, it is not faith at all but a counterfeit. To believe the gospel is to believe that our debt to the law is paid, the law is no longer our jailer and sin has no more power to keep us in its service. How may we prove that we believe this gospel? By our works—by walking out of the prison house, by rising up in faith and going out of the house of bondage.

The time to exercise faith is not when we feel that sin has lost its power. No indeed! When our sinful nature clamors for indulgence, then is the time to prove the power in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Then it is time for faith to say, "Sin, you have lost all your power to hold me, for I am a believer in Jesus Christ." He who then steps forward in the faith of God's Word, will find the truth a living reality, for the same omnipotent power that bound him in prison is now on his side to keep him free.

Faith makes the Christian free, and by faith he maintains his freedom. This is freedom *not to sin*. With faith goes obedience, for the Christian has a new relationship to the law. It is no longer his enemy but his friend. It has become again "the royal law," "the law of liberty" (James 2:8, 12). He serves it "in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (Rom. 7:6). With Paul he says: "I delight in the law of God after the inward man." Rom. 7:22. "With the mind I myself serve the law of God." Rom. 7:25. "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." Rom. 3:31.

Scriptural Holiness

J.C. Ryle, D.D., Bishop of Liverpool (1816-1910)



Bishop Ryle delivered twenty papers on the subject of *Scriptural Holiness* at the time when the holiness movement was gaining prominence in America. The message of this great evangelical sage is well-balanced, spiritual, practical, easy-to-read and, above all, soundly Biblical. Although written in the last century, it seems he was writing especially for our day. His words tend to convince the understanding and arouse the conscience rather than tickle the ears and excite the imagination. We here reproduce a vital portion of his papers on *Scriptural Holiness*. The entire presentation was reprinted in 1956 by James Clarke & Co., Carter Lane, London E.C.4, England, under the title of *Holiness*.—Ed.

Cautions for the Times on the Subject of Holiness

(1) I ask, in the first place, whether it is wise to speak of *faith* as the one thing needful, and the only thing required, as many seem to do now-a-days in handling the doctrine of sanctification?—Is it wise to proclaim in so bald, naked, and unqualified a way as many do, that the holiness of converted people is *by faith only, and not at all by personal exertion*? Is it

according to the proportion of God's Word? I doubt it.

That faith in Christ is the root of all holiness—that the first step towards a holy life is to believe on Christ—that until we believe we have not a jot of holiness—that union with Christ by faith is the secret of both beginning to be holy and continuing holy—that the life that we live in the flesh we must live by the faith of the Son of God—that faith purifies the heart—that faith is the victory which overcomes the world—that by faith the elders obtained a good report—all these are truths which no well-instructed Christian will ever think of denying. But surely the Scriptures teach us that in following holiness the true Christian needs personal exertion and work as well as faith. The very same Apostle who says in one place, "The life that I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God," says in another place, "I fight—I run—I keep under my body;" and in other places, "Let us cleanse ourselves—let us labour, let us lay aside every weight." (Gal. ii. 20; 1 Cor. ix. 26; 2 Cor. vii. 1; Heb. iv. 11; xii. 1.) Moreover, the Scriptures nowhere teach us that faith *sanctifies* us in the same sense, and in the same manner, that faith *justifies* us!

Excerpts quoted from J.C. Ryle, *Holiness* (London: James Clarke & Co., 1956), pp. viii-xvii, 16-33.



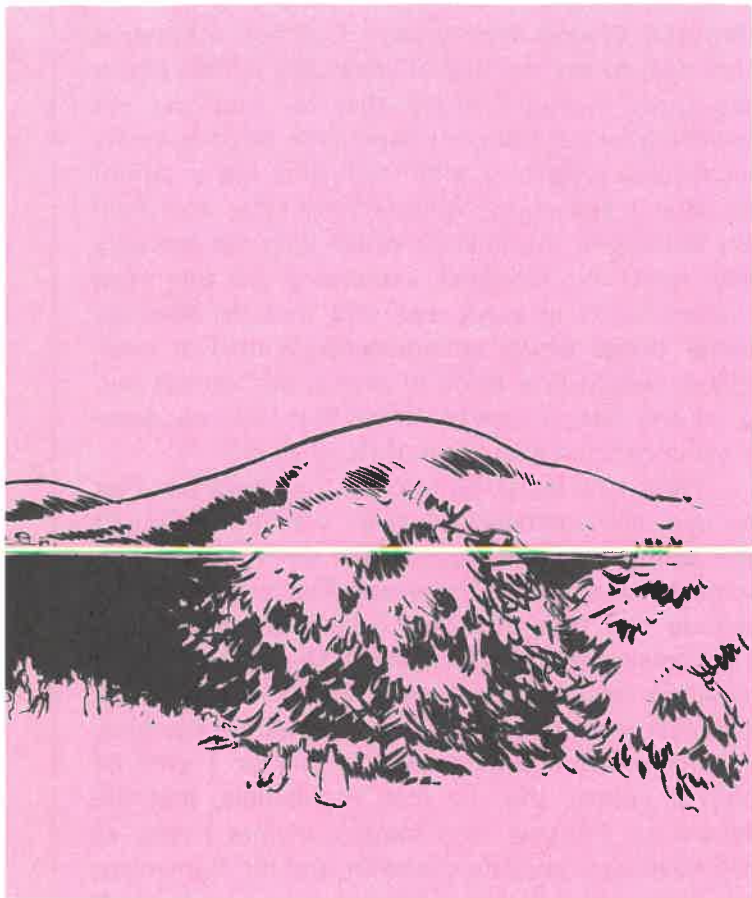
Justifying faith is a grace that "worketh not," but simply trusts, rests, and leans on Christ. (Rom. iv. 5.) Sanctifying faith is a grace of which the very life is action: it "worketh by love," and, like a main-spring, moves the whole inward man. (Gal. v. 6.) After all, the precise phrase "sanctified by faith" is only found once in the New Testament. The Lord Jesus said to Saul, "I send thee, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me." Yet even there I agree with Alford, that "*by faith*" belongs to the whole sentence, and must not be tied to the word "sanctified." The true sense is, "that by faith in Me they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them that are sanctified." (Compare Acts xxvi. 18 with Acts xx. 32.)

As to the phrase "holiness by faith," I find it nowhere in the New Testament. Without controversy, in the matter of our justification before God, faith in Christ is the one thing needful. All that simply believe are justified. Righteousness is imputed "to him that worketh not but believeth." (Rom. iv. 5.) It is thoroughly Scriptural and right to say "faith alone

justifies." But it is not equally Scriptural and right to say "faith alone sanctifies." The saying requires very large qualification. Let one fact suffice. We are frequently told that a man is "justified by faith without the deeds of the law," by St. Paul. But not once are we told that we are "sanctified by faith without the deeds of the law." On the contrary, we are expressly told by St. James that the faith whereby we are *visibly and demonstratively* justified before man, is a faith which "if it hath not works is dead, being alone."¹ (James ii. 17.) I may be told, in reply, that no one of course means to disparage "works" as an essential part of a holy life. It would be well, however, to make this more plain than many seem to make it in these days.

(2) I ask, in the second place, whether it is wise to make so little as some appear to do, comparatively, of the many *practical exhortations to holiness in daily life* which are to be found in the Sermon on the

¹"There is a double justification by God: the one authoritative, the other declarative or demonstrative.—The first is St. Paul's scope, when he speaks of justification by faith without the deeds of the law. The second is St. James' scope, when he speaks of justification by works."—T. Goodwin on *Gospel Holiness. Works*, Vol. vii, p. 181.



Mount, and in the latter part of most of St. Paul's epistles? Is it according to the proportion of God's Word? I doubt it.

That a life of daily self-consecration and daily communion with God should be aimed at by everyone who professes to be a believer—that we should strive to attain the habit of going to the Lord Jesus Christ with everything we find a burden, whether great or small, and casting it upon Him—all this, I repeat, no well-taught child of God will dream of disputing. But surely the New Testament teaches us that we want something more than *generalities* about holy living, which often prick no conscience and give no offence. The *details* and particular ingredients of which holiness is composed in daily life, ought to be fully set forth and pressed on believers by all who profess to handle the subject. True holiness does not consist merely of believing and feeling, but of doing and bearing, and a practical exhibition of active and passive grace. Our tongues, our tempers, our natural passions and inclinations—our conduct as parents and children, masters and servants, husbands and wives, rulers and subjects—our dress, our employment of time, our behaviour in

business, our demeanor in sickness and health, in riches and in poverty—all, all these are matters which are fully treated by inspired writers. They are not content with a general statement of what we should believe and feel, and how we are to have the roots of holiness planted in our hearts. They dig down lower. They go into particulars. They specify minutely what a holy man ought to do and be in his own family, and by his own fireside, if he abides in Christ. I doubt whether this sort of teaching is sufficiently attended to in the movement of the present day. When people talk of having received "such a blessing," and of having found "the higher life," after hearing some earnest advocate of "holiness by faith and self-consecration," while their families and friends see no improvement and no increased sanctity in their daily tempers and behaviour, immense harm is done to the cause of Christ. True holiness, we surely ought to remember, does not consist merely of inward sensations and impressions. It is much more than tears, and sighs, and bodily excitement, and a quickened pulse, and a passionate feeling of attachment to our own favourite preachers and our own religious party, and a readiness to quarrel with everyone who does not agree with us. It is something of "the image of Christ," which can be seen and observed by others in our private life, and habits, and character, and doings. (Rom. viii. 29.)

(3) I ask, in the third place, whether it is wise to use vague language about *perfection*, and to press on Christians a *standard of holiness*, as attainable in this world for which there is no warrant to be shown either in Scripture or experience? I doubt it.

That believers are exhorted to "perfect holiness in the fear of God"—to "go on to perfection"—to "be perfect," no careful reader of his Bible will ever think of denying. (2 Cor. vii. 1; Heb. vi. 1; 2 Cor. xiii. 11.) But I have yet to learn that there is a single passage in Scripture which teaches that a literal perfection, a complete and entire freedom from sin, in thought, or word, or deed, is attainable, or ever has been attained, by any child of Adam in this world. A comparative perfection, a perfection in knowledge, an all-round consistency in every relation of life, a thorough soundness in every point of doctrine—this may be seen occasionally in some of God's believing people. But as to an *absolute literal perfection*, the most eminent saints of God in every age have always been the very last to lay claim to it! On the contrary, they have always had the deepest sense of their own utter unworthiness and imperfection. The more spiritual light they have enjoyed the more they have seen their

own countless defects and shortcomings. The more grace they have had the more they have been "clothed with humility." (1 Peter v. 5.)

What saint can be named in God's Word, of whose life many details are recorded, who was literally and absolutely perfect? Which of them all, when writing about himself, ever talks of feeling free from imperfection? On the contrary, men like David, and St. Paul, and St. John, declare in the strongest language that they feel in their own hearts weakness and sin. The holiest men of modern times have always been remarkable for deep humility. Have we ever seen holier men than the martyred John Bradford, or Hooker, or Usher, or Baxter, or Rutherford, or M'Cheyne? Yet no one can read the writings and letters of these men without seeing that they felt themselves "debtors to mercy and grace" every day, and the very last thing they ever laid claim to was perfection!

In face of such facts as these I must protest against the language used in many quarters, in these last days, about *perfection*. I must think that those who use it either know very little of the nature of sin, or of the attributes of God, or of their own hearts, or of the Bible, or of the meaning of words. When a professing Christian coolly tells me that he has got beyond such hymns as "Just as I am," and that they are below his present experience, though they suited him when he first took up religion, I must think his soul is in a very unhealthy state! When a man can talk coolly of the possibility of "living without sin" while in the body, and can actually say that he has "never had an evil thought for three months," I can only say that in my opinion he is a very ignorant Christian! I protest against such teaching as this. It not only does no good, but does immense harm. It disgusts and alienates from religion far-seeing men of the world, who know it is incorrect and untrue. It depresses some of the best of God's children, who feel they never can attain to "perfection" of this kind. It puffs up many weak brethren, who fancy they are something when they are nothing. In short, it is a dangerous delusion.

(4) In the fourth place, is it wise to assert so positively and violently, as many do, that *the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans* does not describe the experience of the advanced saint, but the experience of the unregenerate man, or of the weak and unestablished believer? I doubt it.

I admit fully that the point has been a disputed one for eighteen centuries, in fact ever since the days of St. Paul. I admit fully that eminent Christians like

John and Charles Wesley, and Fletcher, a hundred years ago, to say nothing of some able writers of our own time, maintain firmly that St. Paul was not describing his own present experience when he wrote this seventh chapter. I admit fully that many cannot see what I and many others do see: viz., that Paul says nothing in this chapter which does not precisely tally with the recorded experience of the most eminent saints in every age, and that he does say several things which no unregenerate man or weak believer would ever think of saying, and cannot say. So, at any rate, it appears to me. But I will not enter into any detailed discussion of the chapter.²

What I do lay stress upon is the broad fact that the best commentators in every era of the Church have almost invariably applied the seventh chapter of Romans to advanced believers. The commentators who do not take this view have been, with a few bright exceptions, the Romanists, the Socinians, and the Arminians. Against them is arrayed the judgment of almost all the Reformers, almost all the Puritans, and the best modern Evangelical divines. I shall be told, of course, that no man is infallible, that the Reformers, Puritans, and modern divines I refer to may have been entirely mistaken, and the Romanists, Socinians, and Arminians may have been quite right! Our Lord has taught us, no doubt, to "call no man master." But while I ask no man to call the Reformers and Puritans "masters," I do ask people to read what they say on this subject, and answer their arguments, if they can. This has not been done yet! To say, as some do, that they do not want human "dogmas" and "doctrines," is no reply at all. The whole point at issue is, "What is the meaning of a passage of Scripture? How is the Seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans to be interpreted? What is the true sense of its words?" At any rate let us remember that there is a great fact which cannot be got over. On one side stand the opinions and interpretations of Reformers and Puritans, and on the other the opinions and interpretations of Romanists, Socinians, and Arminians. Let that be distinctly understood.

In the face of such a fact as this I must enter my protest against the sneering, taunting, contemptuous language which has been frequently used of late by some of the advocates of what I must call the

²Those who care to go into the subject will find it fully discussed in the Commentaries of Willet, Elton, Chalmers, and Haldane, and in Owen on *Indwelling Sin*, and in the work of Stafford on the *Seventh of Romans*.

Arminian view of the Seventh of Romans, in speaking of the opinions of their opponents. To say the least, such language is unseemly, and only defeats its own end. A cause which is defended by such language is deservedly suspicious. Truth needs no such weapons. If we cannot agree with men, we need not speak of their views with discourtesy and contempt. An opinion which is backed and supported by such men as the best Reformers and Puritans may not carry conviction to all minds in the nineteenth century, but at any rate it would be well to speak of it with respect.

(5) In the fifth place, is it wise to use the language which is often used in the present day about the doctrine of "*Christ in us*"? I doubt it. Is not this doctrine often exalted to a position which it does not occupy in Scripture? I am afraid that it is.

That the true believer is one with Christ and Christ in him, no careful reader of the New Testament will think of denying for a moment. There is, no doubt, a mystical union between Christ and the believer. With Him we died, with Him we were buried, with Him we rose again, with Him we sit in heavenly places. We have five plain texts where we are distinctly taught that Christ is "in us." (Rom. viii. 10; Gal. ii. 20; iv. 19; Eph. iii. 17; Col. iii. 11.) But we must be careful that we understand what we mean by the expression. That "Christ dwells in our hearts by faith," and carries on His inward work by His Spirit, is clear and plain. But if we mean to say that beside, and over, and above this there is some mysterious indwelling of Christ in a believer, we must be careful what we are about. Unless we take care, we shall find ourselves ignoring the work of the Holy Ghost. We shall be forgetting that in the Divine economy of man's salvation election is the special work of God the Father—atonement, mediation, and intercession, the special work of God the Son—and sanctification, the special work of God the Holy Ghost. We shall be forgetting that our Lord said, when He went away, that He would send us another Comforter, who should "abide with us" for ever, and, as it were, take His place. (John xiv. 16.) In short, under the idea that we are honouring Christ, we shall find that we are dishonouring His special and peculiar gift—the Holy Ghost. Christ, no doubt, as God, is everywhere—in our hearts, in heaven, in the place where two or three are met together in His name. But we really must remember that Christ, as our risen Head and High Priest, is *special*ly at God's right hand interceding for us until He comes the second time; and that Christ carries on His work in the hearts of His people by the

special work of His Spirit, whom He promised to send when He left the world. (John xv. 26.) A comparison of the ninth and tenth verses of the eighth chapter of Romans seems to me to show this plainly. It convinces me that "Christ in us" means Christ in us "by His Spirit." Above all, the words of St. John are most distinct and express: "Hereby we know that He abideth in us by the Spirit which He hath given us." (1 John iii. 24.)

In saying all this, I hope no one will misunderstand me. I do not say that the expression "Christ in us" is unscriptural. But I do say that I see great danger of giving an extravagant and unscriptural importance to the idea contained in the expression; and I fear that many use it now-a-days without exactly knowing what they mean, and unwittingly, perhaps, dishonour the mighty work of the Holy Ghost. If any readers think that I am needlessly scrupulous about the point, I recommend to their notice a curious book by Samuel Rutherford (author of the well-known letters), called "The Spiritual Antichrist." They will there see that two centuries ago the wildest heresies arose out of an extravagant teaching of this very doctrine of the "indwelling of Christ" in believers. They will find that Saltmarsh, and Dell, and Towne, and other false teachers, against whom good Samuel Rutherford contended, began with strange notions of "Christ in us," and then proceeded to build on the doctrine antinomianism, and fanaticism of the worst description and vilest tendency. They maintained that the separate, personal life of the believer was so completely gone, that it was *Christ living in him* who repented, and believed, and acted! The root of this huge error was a forced and unscriptural interpretation of such texts as "I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. ii. 20.) And the natural result of it was that many of the unhappy followers of this school came to the comfortable conclusion that believers were not responsible, whatever they might do! Believers, forsooth, were dead and buried; and only Christ lived in them, and *undertook* everything for them! The ultimate consequence was, that some thought they might sit still in a carnal security, their personal accountableness being entirely gone, and might commit any kind of sin without fear! Let us never forget that truth, distorted and exaggerated, can become the mother of the most dangerous heresies. When we speak of "Christ being in us," let us take care to explain what we mean. I fear some neglect this in the present day.

(6) In the sixth place, is it wise to draw such a

deep, wide, and distinct line of separation between conversion and *consecration, or the higher life*, so called, as many do draw in the present day? Is this according to the proportion of God's Word? I doubt it.

There is, unquestionably, nothing new in this teaching. It is well known that Romish writers often maintain that the Church is divided into three classes—sinners, penitents, and saints. The modern teachers of this day who tell us that professing Christians are of three sorts—the unconverted, the converted, and the partakers of the “higher life” of complete consecration—appear to me to occupy very much the same ground! But whether the idea be old or new, Romish or English, I am utterly unable to see that it has any warrant of Scripture. The Word of God always speaks of two great divisions of mankind, and two only. It speaks of the living and the dead in sin—the believer and the unbeliever—the converted and the unconverted—the travellers in the narrow way and the travellers in the broad—the wise and the foolish—the children of God and the children of the devil. *Within* each of these two great classes there are, doubtless, various measures of sin and of grace; but it is only the difference between the higher and lower end of an inclined plane. *Between* these two great classes there is an enormous gulf; they are as distinct as life and death, light and darkness, heaven and hell. But of a division into three classes the Word of God says nothing at all! I question the wisdom of making new-fangled divisions which the Bible has not made, and I thoroughly dislike the notion of a second conversion.

That there is a vast difference between one degree of grace and another—that spiritual life admits of growth, and that believers should be continually urged on every account to grow in grace—all this I fully concede. But the theory of a sudden, mysterious transition of a believer into a state of blessedness and *entire consecration*, at one mighty bound, I cannot receive. It appears to me to be a man-made invention; and I do not see a single plain text to prove it in Scripture. Gradual growth in grace, growth in knowledge, growth in faith, growth in love, growth in holiness, growth in humility, growth in spiritual-mindedness—all this I see clearly taught and urged in Scripture, and clearly exemplified in the lives of many of God's saints. But sudden, instantaneous leaps from conversion to *consecration* I fail to see in the Bible. I doubt, indeed, whether we have any warrant for saying that a man can possibly be *converted* without being consecrated to God! More

consecrated he doubtless can be, and will be as his grace increases; but if he was not consecrated to God in the very day that he was converted and born again, I do not know what conversion means. Are not men in danger of undervaluing and underrating the immense blessedness of conversion? Are they not, when they urge on believers the “higher life” as a second conversion, underrating the length, and breadth, and depth, and height, of that great first change which Scripture calls the new birth, the new creation, the spiritual resurrection? I may be mistaken. But I have sometimes thought, while reading the strong language used by many about “consecration,” in the last few years, that those who use it must have had previously a singularly low and inadequate view of “conversion,” if indeed they knew anything about conversion at all. In short, I have almost suspected that when they were *consecrated*, they were in reality *converted* for the first time!

I frankly confess I prefer the old paths. I think it wiser and safer to press on all converted people the possibility of continual *growth* in grace, and the absolute necessity of going forward, increasing more and more, and every year dedicating and consecrating themselves more, in spirit, soul, and body, to Christ. By all means let us teach that there is more holiness to be attained, and more of heaven to be enjoyed upon earth than most believers now experience. But I decline to tell any converted man that he needs a *second conversion*, and that he may some day or other pass by one enormous step into a state of entire *consecration*. I decline to teach it, because I cannot see any warrant for such teaching in Scripture. I decline to teach it, because I think the tendency of the doctrine is thoroughly mischievous, depressing the humble-minded and meek, and puffing up the shallow, the ignorant, and the self-conceited, to a most dangerous extent.

(7) In the seventh and last place, is it wise to teach believers that they ought not to think so much of fighting and struggling against sin, but ought rather to “*yield themselves to God*,” and be passive in the hands of Christ? Is this according to the proportion of God's Word? I doubt it.

It is a simple fact that the expression “yield yourselves” is only to be found in one place in the New Testament, as a duty urged upon believers. That place is in the sixth chapter of Romans, and there within six verses the expression occurs five times. (See Rom. vi. 13-19.) But even there the word will not bear the sense of “placing ourselves passively in the hands of another.” Any Greek student can tell us



that the sense is rather that of actively "presenting" ourselves for use, employment, and service. (See Rom. xii. 1.) The expression therefore stands alone. But, on the other hand, it would not be difficult to point out at least twenty-five or thirty distinct passages in the Epistles where believers are plainly taught to use active personal exertion, and are addressed as responsible for doing energetically what Christ would have them do, and are not told to "yield themselves"

up as passive agents and sit still, but to arise and work. A holy violence, a conflict, a warfare, a fight, a soldier's life, a wrestling, are spoken of as characteristic of the true Christian. The account of "the armour of God" in the sixth chapter of Ephesians, one might think, settles the question.³—Again, it would

³Old Sibbe's Sermon on "Victorious Violence" deserves the attention of all who have his works.—Vol. vii, p. 30.

be easy to show that the doctrine of sanctification without personal exertion, by simply "yielding ourselves to God," is precisely the doctrine of the antinomian fanatics in the seventeenth century (to whom I have referred already, described in Rutherford's *Spiritual Antichrist*), and that the tendency of it is evil in the extreme.—Again, it would be easy to show that the doctrine is utterly subversive of the whole teaching of such tried and approved books as *Pilgrim's Progress*, and that if we receive it we cannot do better than put Bunyan's old book in the fire! If Christian in *Pilgrim's Progress* simply *yielded himself to God*, and never fought, or struggled, or wrestled, I have read the famous allegory in vain. But the plain truth is, that men will persist in confounding two things that differ—that is, justification and sanctification. In justification the word to be addressed to man is believe—only believe; in sanctification the word must be "watch, pray, and fight." What God has divided let us not mingle and confuse.

I leave the subject of my introduction here, and hasten to a conclusion. I confess that I lay down my pen with feelings of sorrow and anxiety. There is much in the attitude of professing Christians in this day which fills me with concern, and makes me full of fear for the future.

There is an amazing ignorance of Scripture among many, and a consequent want of established, solid religion. In no other way can I account for the ease with which people are, like children, "tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine." (Eph. iv. 14.) There is an Athenian love of novelty abroad, and a morbid distaste for anything old and regular, and in the beaten path of our forefathers. Thousands will crowd to hear a new voice and a new doctrine, without considering for a moment whether what they hear is true.—There is an incessant craving after any teaching which is sensational, and exciting, and rousing to the feelings.—There is an unhealthy appetite for a sort of spasmodic and hysterical Christianity. The religious life of many is little better than spiritual dram-drinking, and the "meek and quiet spirit" which St. Peter commends is clean forgotten. (1 Peter iii. 4.) Crowds, and crying, and hot rooms, and high-flown singing, and an incessant rousing of the emotions, are the only things which many care for.—Inability to distinguish differences in doctrine is spreading far and wide, and so long as the preacher is "clever" and "earnest," hundreds seem to think it must be all right, and call you dreadfully "narrow and uncharitable" if you hint that he is unsound! . . .

Sanctification

Sanctification is that inward spiritual work which the Lord Jesus Christ works in a man by the Holy Ghost, when He calls him to be a true believer. He not only washes him from his sins in His own blood, but He also *separates* him from his natural love of sin and the world, puts a new principle in his heart, and makes him practically godly in life. The instrument by which the Spirit effects this work is generally the Word of God, though He sometimes uses afflictions and providential visitations "without the Word." (1 Peter iii. 1.) The subject of this work of Christ by His Spirit is called in Scripture a "sanctified" man.⁴

He who supposes that Jesus Christ only lived and died and rose again in order to provide justification and forgiveness of sins for His people, has yet much to learn. Whether he knows it or not, he is dishonouring our blessed Lord, and making Him only a half Saviour. The Lord Jesus has undertaken everything that His people's souls require; not only to deliver them from the *guilt* of their sins by His atoning death, but from the *dominion* of their sins, by placing in their hearts the Holy Spirit; not only to justify them, but also to sanctify them. He is, thus, not only their "righteousness," but their "sanctification." (1 Cor. i. 30.) . . .

(1) Sanctification, then, is the invariable *result of that vital union with Christ* which true faith gives to a Christian.—"He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." (John xv. 5.) The branch which bears no fruit is no living branch of the vine. The union with Christ which produces no effect on heart and life is a mere formal union, which is worthless before God. . . .

(2) Sanctification, again, is the *outcome and inseparable consequence of regeneration*. He that is born again and made a new creature, receives a new

⁴"There is mention in the Scripture of a twofold sanctification, and consequently of a twofold holiness. The first is common unto persons and things, consisting of the peculiar dedication, consecration, or separation of them unto the service of God, by His own appointment, whereby they become holy. Thus the priests and Levites of old, the ark, the altar, the tabernacle, and the temple, were sanctified and made holy; and, indeed, in all holiness whatever, there is a peculiar dedication and separation unto God. But in the sense mentioned, this was solitary and alone. No more belonged unto it but this sacred separation, nor was there any other effect of this sanctification. But, secondly, there is another kind of sanctification and holiness, wherein this separation to God is not the first thing done or intended, but a consequence and effect thereof. This is real and internal, by the communicating of a principle of holiness unto our natures, attended with its exercise in acts and duties of holy obedience unto God. This is that which we inquire after."—*John Owen on the Holy Spirit*. Vol. iii, p. 370, *Works*, Gould's edition.

nature and a new principle, and always lives a new life. A regeneration which a man can have, and yet live carelessly in sin or worldliness, is a regeneration invented by uninspired theologians, but never mentioned in Scripture. . . .

(3) Sanctification, again, is the only certain *evidence of that indwelling of the Holy Spirit* which is essential to salvation. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." (Rom. viii. 9.) The Spirit never lies dormant and idle within the soul: He always makes His presence known by the fruit He causes to be borne in heart, character, and life. . . .

(4) Sanctification, again, is the *only sure mark of God's election*. . . . elect men and women may be known and distinguished by holy lives. It is expressly written that they are "elect through sanctification." . . .

(5) Sanctification, again, is *a thing that will always be seen*. Like the Great Head of the Church, from whom it springs, it "cannot be hid." "Every tree is known by his own fruit." (Luke vi. 44.) A truly sanctified person may be so clothed with humility, that he can see in himself nothing but infirmity and defects. Like Moses, when he came down from the Mount, he may not be conscious that his face shines. Like the righteous, in the mighty parable of the sheep and the goats, he may not see that he has done anything worthy of his Master's notice and commendation: "When saw we Thee an hungered, and fed Thee?" (Matt. xxv. 37.) But whether he sees it himself or not, others will always see in him a tone, and taste, and character, and habit of life unlike that of other men. The very idea of a man being "sanctified," while no holiness can be seen in his life, is flat nonsense and a misuse of words. . . .

(6) Sanctification, again, is *a thing for which every believer is responsible*. . . .

(7) Sanctification, again, is *a thing which admits of growth and degrees*. . . .

(8) Sanctification, again, is *a thing which depends greatly on a diligent use of Scriptural means*. When I speak of "means," I have in view Bible-reading, private prayer, regular attendance on public worship, regular hearing of God's Word, and regular reception of the Lord's Supper. I lay it down as a simple matter of fact, that no one who is careless about such things must ever expect to make much progress in sanctification. . . .

(9) Sanctification, again, is *a thing which does not prevent a man having a great deal of inward spiritual conflict*. By conflict I mean a struggle within

the heart between the old nature and the new, the flesh and the spirit, which are to be found together in every believer. (Gal. v. 17.) A deep sense of that struggle, and a vast amount of mental discomfort from it, are no proof that a man is not sanctified. Nay, rather, I believe they are healthy symptoms of our condition, and prove that we are not dead, but alive. A true Christian is one who has not only peace of conscience, but war within. He may be known by his warfare as well as by his peace. . . .

(10) Sanctification, again, is *a thing which cannot justify a man, and yet it pleases God*. This may seem wonderful, and yet it is true. The holiest actions of the holiest saint that ever lived are all more or less full of defects and imperfections. They are either wrong in their motive or defective in their performance, and in themselves are nothing better than "splendid sins," deserving God's wrath and condemnation. To suppose that such actions can stand the severity of God's judgment, atone for sin, and merit heaven, is simply absurd. "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified."—"We conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." (Rom. iii. 20-28.) The only righteousness in which we can appear before God is the righteousness of another—even the perfect righteousness of our Substitute and Representative, Jesus Christ the Lord. His work, and not our work, is our only title to heaven. This is a truth which we should be ready to die to maintain.—For all this, however, the Bible distinctly teaches that the holy actions of a sanctified man, although imperfect, are pleasing in the sight of God. "With such sacrifices God is well pleased." (Heb. xiii. 16.) "Obey your parents, for this is well pleasing to the Lord." (Col. iii. 20.) "We do those things that are pleasing in His sight." (1 John iii. 22.) Let this never be forgotten, for it is a very comfortable doctrine. Just as a parent is pleased with the efforts of his little child to please him, though it be only by picking a daisy or walking across a room, so is our Father in heaven pleased with the poor performances of His believing children. . . .

(11) Sanctification, again, is *a thing which will be found absolutely necessary as a witness to our character in the great day of judgment*. It will be utterly useless to plead that we believed in Christ, unless our faith has had some sanctifying effect, and been seen in our lives. Evidence, evidence, evidence, will be the one thing wanted when the great white throne is set, when the books are opened, when the graves give up their tenants, when the dead are arraigned before the bar of God. . . . He that supposes

works are of no importance, because they cannot justify us, is a very ignorant Christian. Unless he opens his eyes, he will find to his cost that if he comes to the bar of God without some evidence of grace, he had better never have been born.

(12) Sanctification, in the last place, is *absolutely necessary, in order to train and prepare us for heaven*. Most men hope to go to heaven when they die; but few, it may be feared, take the trouble to consider whether they would enjoy heaven if they got there. Heaven is essentially a holy place; its inhabitants are all holy; its occupations are all holy. To be really happy in heaven, it is clear and plain that we must be somewhat trained and made ready for heaven while we are on earth. The notion of a purgatory after death, which shall turn sinners into saints, is a lying invention of man, and is nowhere taught in the Bible. We must be saints before we die, if we are to be saints afterwards in glory. . . .

The Evidence of Sanctification

(1) True sanctification then does not consist in *talk about religion*. . . .

(2) True sanctification does not consist in temporary *religious feelings*. This again is a point about which a warning is greatly needed. Mission services and revival meetings are attracting great attention in every part of the land, and producing a great sensation. . . . Many, it may be feared, appear moved and touched and roused under the preaching of the Gospel, while in reality their hearts are not changed at all. A kind of animal excitement from the contagion of seeing others weeping, rejoicing, or affected, is the true account of their case. Their wounds are only skin deep, and the peace they profess to feel is skin deep also. Like the stony-ground hearers, they "receive the Word with joy" (Matt. xiii. 20); but after a little they fall away, go back to the world, and are harder and worse than before. Like Jonah's gourd, they come up suddenly in a night and perish in a night. . . . I declare I know no state of soul more dangerous than to imagine we are born again and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, because we have picked up a few religious feelings.

(3) True sanctification does not consist in *outward formalism* and external devoutness. . . .

(4) Sanctification does not consist in *retirement from our place in life*, and the renunciation of our social duties. . . .

(5) Sanctification does not consist in the *occa-*

sional performance of right actions. . . .

(6) Genuine sanctification will show itself in *habitual respect to God's law*, and habitual effort to live in obedience to it as the rule of life. There is no greater mistake than to suppose that a Christian has nothing to do with the law and the Ten Commandments, because he cannot be justified by keeping them. The same Holy Ghost who convinces the believer of sin by the law, and leads him to Christ for justification, will always lead him to a spiritual use of the law, as a friendly guide, in the pursuit of sanctification. Our Lord Jesus Christ never made light of the Ten Commandments; on the contrary, in His first public discourse, the Sermon on the Mount, He expounded them, and showed the searching nature of their requirements. St. Paul never made light of the law; on the contrary, he says, "The law is good, if a man use it lawfully."—"I delight in the law of God after the inward man." (1 Tim. i. 8; Rom. vii. 22.) He that pretends to be a saint, while he sneers at the Ten Commandments, and thinks nothing of lying, hypocrisy, swindling, ill-temper, slander, drunkenness, and breach of the seventh commandment, is under a fearful delusion. He will find it hard to prove that he is a "saint" in the last day!

(7) Genuine sanctification will show itself in an *habitual endeavour* to do Christ's will, and to live by His practical precepts. These precepts are to be found scattered everywhere throughout the four Gospels, and especially in the Sermon on the Mount. He that supposes they were spoken without the intention of promoting holiness, and that a Christian need not attend to them in his daily life, is really little better than a lunatic, and at any rate is a grossly ignorant person. To hear some men talk, and read some men's writings, one might imagine that our blessed Lord, when He was on earth, never taught anything but *doctrine*, and left practical duties to be taught by others! The slightest knowledge of the four Gospels ought to tell us that this is a complete mistake. What His disciples ought to be and to do is continually brought forward in our Lord's teaching. A truly sanctified man will never forget this. He serves a Master who said, "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." (John xv. 14.)

(8) Genuine sanctification will show itself in an habitual desire to live up to *the standard which St. Paul sets before the Churches* in his writings. That standard is to be found in the closing chapters of nearly all his Epistles. The common idea of many persons that St. Paul's writings are full of nothing but doctrinal statements and controversial subjects—

justification, election, predestination, prophecy, and the like—is an entire delusion, and a melancholy proof of the ignorance of Scripture which prevails in these latter days. I defy anyone to read St. Paul's writings carefully without finding in them a large quantity of plain, practical directions about the Christian's duty in every relation of life, and about our daily habits, temper, and behaviour to one another. These directions were written down by inspiration of God for the perpetual guidance of professing Christians. He who does not attend to them may possibly pass muster as a member of a church or a chapel, but he certainly is not what the Bible calls a "sanctified" man.

(9) Genuine sanctification will show itself in habitual *attention to the active graces* which our Lord so beautifully exemplified, and especially to the grace of charity. . . .

(10) Genuine sanctification, in the last place, will show itself in *habitual attention to the passive graces* of Christianity. When I speak of passive graces, I mean those graces which are especially shown in submission to the will of God, and in bearing and forbearing towards one another. . . . People who are habitually giving way to peevish and cross tempers in daily life, and are constantly sharp with their tongues, and disagreeable to all around them—spiteful people, vindictive people, revengeful people, malicious people—of whom, alas, the world is only too full!—all such know little, as they should know, about sanctification. . . .

Let us feel convinced, whatever others may say, that holiness is happiness, and that the man who gets through life most comfortably is the *sanctified* man. No doubt there are some true Christians who from

ill-health, or family trials, or other secret causes, enjoy little sensible comfort, and go mourning all their days on the way to heaven. But these are exceptional cases. As a general rule, in the long run of life, it will be found true that "sanctified" people are the happiest people on earth. They have solid comforts which the world can neither give nor take away. "The ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness."—"Great peace have they that love Thy law."—It was said by One who cannot lie, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light."—But it is also written, "There is no peace unto the wicked." (Prov. iii. 17; Ps. cxix. 165; Matt. xi. 30; Is. xlvi. 22.)

P.S.

The subject of sanctification is of such deep importance, and the mistakes made about it so many and great, that I make no apology for strongly recommending "Owen on the Holy Spirit" to all who want to study more thoroughly the whole doctrine of sanctification. No single paper like this can embrace it all.

I am quite aware that Owen's writings are not fashionable in the present day, and that many think fit to neglect and sneer at him as a Puritan! Yet the great divine who in Commonwealth times was Dean of Christ Church, Oxford, does not deserve to be treated in this way. He had more learning and sound knowledge of Scripture in his little finger than many who depreciate him have in their whole bodies. I assert unhesitatingly that the man who wants to study experimental theology will find no books equal to those of Owen and some of his contemporaries, for complete, Scriptural, and exhaustive treatment of the subjects they handle.

Aspects of Righteousness

Andrew Johnson

Righteousness may be defined simply as “that character or quality of being just or right.” The standard of righteousness is set forth in God’s person and law. The Scriptures distinguish at least four aspects, or kinds, of righteousness.

1. The Righteousness of God

Righteousness is an essential attribute of God’s being. “But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? The God who inflicts wrath is not unrighteous, is He? (I am speaking in human terms.)” Rom. 3:5. This attribute of God is unchanging and unchangeable. He is holy, righteous and just in the absolute and final sense. It is impossible for Him to deviate from His righteousness. There is not so much as a “shadow of turning” with Him. The righteous God cannot look upon sin with the least degree of allowance. “Thine eyes are too pure to approve evil, and Thou canst not look upon wickedness with favor.” Hab. 1:13. As a result, judgment has come upon all unto condemnation. And ultimately it will be visited upon the unrepentant and unbelieving sinner.

God is also righteous in all His ways. This is true even in the gospel. In the goodness of the grace of God, He is not just lenient with regard to sin and willing to overlook it because He is loving. God in no way belittles sin either in salvation or in His other dealings with mankind. And we will see that God even saves us by His righteousness and righteously.

2. Man’s Self-righteousness

In speaking about his brethren according to the flesh, Paul referred to many who had a zeal for God

but not in accordance with knowledge. “For not knowing about God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God.” If we will only stop to consider, we cannot but be impressed with the fact that we spend a great deal of time at self-justification—seeking to make ourselves acceptable to ourselves, to others and to God.

However, in the light of God’s Word, man’s righteousness is anything but acceptable. Actually, man’s righteousness is considered as filthy rags in God’s sight (Isa. 64:6). God’s description of man with respect to his own righteousness is very vivid and certainly not very complimentary. Romans 3:9-18 declares:

“... all [are] under sin; as it is written,

“There is none righteous, not even one;
There is none who understands,
There is none who seeks for God;
All have turned aside, together they have become
useless;

There is none who does good,
There is not even one.”

“Their throat is an open grave,
With their tongues they kept deceiving,”

“The poison of asps is under their lips;”

“Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness;”

“Their feet are swift to shed blood,

Destruction and misery are in their paths,

And the path of peace have they not known.”

“There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

What a description of man! And how different than man’s evaluation of himself! But this is as God sees us in His “all-righteousness.”

Why does man miss the mark so widely

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concerning self? No doubt it is always difficult to make a subjective evaluation of ourselves. But also we find that man's great mistake lies in the fact that his standards are arrived at by comparing himself with others. "But when they measure themselves by themselves, and compare themselves with themselves, they are without understanding." 2 Cor. 10:12.

We need to be reminded again and again that it is not only those who are condemned by society and regarded as reprobates that are lost, but "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). We are all together become unprofitable. Our sins have separated us from God. There is no possible way whereby our righteousness can make us acceptable to Him. It can only condemn us!

3. The Righteousness of Faith (Imputed)

But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction. Rom. 3:21, 22.

The *imputed, reckoned, or gift, righteousness* of God to sinful man transcends all Christian themes. There is nothing to compare with this in all of human thought, secular or religious. Natural man cannot conceive of it, and, for that matter, even some Christians find it hard to really grasp. There seems to be almost an instinctive fear among sincere people that this righteousness of faith would mean the end of all "real" righteousness within and among people. Most people no doubt feel that to say we do not have a righteousness of our own that is acceptable to God

and He will be satisfied with a righteousness of Another, reckoned to our account, would just be a stimulus to sins of all kinds. However, human reasoning must not determine the issue for us at this point. It must be determined by the revelation of the Word of God! The fact of the imputation of righteousness, or the reckoned righteousness of God, is certainly taught in the Bible. And its importance is transcendent.

Does God operate on the principle of imputation? Let us consider this for a moment. Adam sinned, and his sin ruined the human race. We are sinners by nature. We all carry within us the virus of original sin because of our identification with Adam. Death is the penalty of Adam's sin, and this is the lot of all men according to Romans 5:12: "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned. . . ." However, the Bible is crystal clear concerning the fact that the sin of man was imputed, or reckoned, to Christ. Jesus Christ is our sin offering, our propitiation.

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

For the love of God controls us, having concluded this, that One died for all, therefore all died. . . . He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Cor. 5:14, 21.

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is every one who hangs on a tree." Gal. 3:13.

And of course the principle of imputation is apparent throughout the Old Testament. We read in Isaiah



53:6: "All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him."

Jesus paid it all,
All to Him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain;
He washed it white as snow.

The truth I am about to state at this point is the most wonderful truth in all the world with respect to our relationship with God. What a shame that it should become so commonplace to us that it does not stir us! Here it is! The righteousness of God is imputed, or reckoned, to our account when we trust Jesus Christ as our personal Saviour. We stand before God, then, not in our own righteousness but in the very perfect, complete and entire righteousness of God. We stand before God in all the perfection of Jesus Christ. This gives us a perfect standing! We are "accepted in the Beloved." Not only is the punishment for our sins accredited to the account of Jesus Christ, our Substitute, but also His very righteousness becomes ours upon repentance and faith.

This is not brought about by man, for "Salvation is of the Lord." It is not increased by our goodness in any sense, nor is it decreased by our failures, which often befall us, contrary to our deepest desires.

In this day of religious subjectivism, how important it is to be reminded again and again of the tremendous fact that our acceptance with God is

dependent upon something outside of ourselves! This is not an experience within us. It is an experience in the heart of God as he reckons the believer righteous for Jesus' sake. This is the beginning of all God's work for us and in us.

Multitudinous are the Biblical illustrations concerning imputation to which we might call attention. There are, of course, the Old Testament sacrifices. The sinner confessed his sin over an animal, and then that animal was killed. It was the identification, typically in this case, of the sinner with his substitute that was in view as the animal was killed. The sinner's sin made him worthy of death. And that penalty of death was met in another. Christ is the antitype of that substitutionary sacrifice.

Likewise, we think of Abraham, father of the faithful. "He believed God, and it was reckoned [or imputed] to him for righteousness." Gen. 15:6. This happened when he believed God concerning the promised Seed that would come—Jesus Christ.

The little epistle of Philemon provides a delightful illustration of imputation. Philemon was a slave owner whose slave Onesimus had stolen from him and run away. Apparently Onesimus was apprehended in Rome and put in prison. There, Paul, who was also in prison, but for the gospel, made contact with Onesimus and apparently led him to Jesus Christ. Upon his release, it was Onesimus' responsibility to go back to his master. So Paul decided to send a letter along with him. This was to make it easier for Onesimus to return, for Paul had also been instrumental in leading Philemon to the Lord. In verses 17

and 18 of his epistle, the apostle wrote to Philemon, "If then you regard me a partner, accept him [Onesimus] as you would me. But if he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account." This is a superb illustration of what the Lord Jesus does for me. Jesus says to the Father, "If then You regard Me as a partner, accept him [Andrew Johnson] as You would Me. But if he has wronged You in any way [and I have], or owes You anything [and I do], charge that to My account." Oh, how wonderful! My sins have been reckoned to Jesus, and His perfect righteousness has been reckoned to my account.

This is justification by imputed righteousness. This affects our objective standing before God, *not* our inward state. This standing is brought about upon our believing in Jesus Christ. Our state, or sanctification, consists of our growth in grace and in knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But do not forget that our acceptance with God is dependent upon what Christ has done for us and our faith in just that. "Faith is counted for righteousness."

4. Imparted Righteousness

Finally, there is the righteousness imparted to us by the Holy Spirit. God has done a work for us that is the basis of our acceptance with God. And all that God does in us is a result of this. In Romans 8:4 we read, "... that the righteous requirements of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit."

Upon his believing, the believer in Jesus Christ is indwelt and filled with the Spirit. The Holy Spirit produces His fruit of righteousness in the life of the believer—not because of any specific act or attitude or condition fulfilled toward the Holy Spirit but because of simple faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. According to Galatians 5:22, 23, the normal life of the believer in Jesus Christ is a living out of the fruit of the Spirit, which is "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law." And in Philippians 1:11 Paul says, "... having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."

The gifts for service from the ascended Christ are produced by the Holy Spirit of God in our lives. "But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." 1 Cor. 12:7.

Again, the fruit and gifts of the Spirit are not

produced by self-effort by the believer but in the believer by the Holy Spirit (see Rom. 4). However, this ought not to be thought of as a mystical experience highly fraught with emotion and preoccupation with self or even with the person and the work of the Holy Spirit. The righteous requirements of God's law are fulfilled in us as we obey God's will. The law is still the standard, and always will be the standard, of God's righteousness. We are not justified by it, nor should we be motivated by it, nor even enabled by it; but it is still the standard that will be fulfilled in us as we walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

This will not be done perfectly or completely, but it will be done significantly and growingly. This evidences the reality of our being children of God. And certainly it evidences the reality of our sanctification. Strictly speaking, our justification does not depend upon sanctification. However, justification is evidenced by sanctification, and this should be a growing and increasing development in our lives as we learn more perfectly the will of God and appropriate His grace day by day.

A word of warning: Imparted, or infused, righteousness made possible by the Holy Spirit of God as we obey the will of God, should never overshadow our appreciation for the imputed righteousness of God in our thinking. Our imputed righteousness is objective and perfect; our imparted righteousness is subjective and imperfect. This is not to demean the work of grace in our hearts in sanctification. However, all that God works *in* us is but an earnest of the redemption of the purchased possession that will be ours when we come to glory. May we with Paul "press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." And may we say with the apostle:

Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal. Phil. 3:12-14.

Humility is always becoming to the believer in Jesus Christ. We ought not to be calling attention to ourselves, to our achievement and to what spirituality we may have attained. But rather, let us extol the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Saviour, who loved us and gave Himself for us.

Appendix:

The Law and Justice of God

James Buchanan (1804-1870)

Buchanan's *The Doctrine of Justification* is a classic of English Protestantism. We highly recommend it to our readers. It is obtained through The Banner of Truth Trust, P.O. Box 652, Carlisle, Pennsylvania 17013. In this issue of *Present Truth*, we are placing the lecture on "The Law and Justice of God" in an appendix. No doubt some will not venture to wade through it, but those who do will be greatly rewarded by this masterful presentation.—Ed.

It may be safely affirmed that almost all the errors, which have prevailed on the subject of Justification, may be traced ultimately to erroneous, or defective, views of the Law and Justice of God. His Law has either been supposed to be mutable and variable, so as to admit of being relaxed and modified,—as if its preceptive and penal requirements had no necessary connection with the demands of His eternal justice; or, it has been set aside altogether, as if its claims might be superseded by the divine prerogative of mercy, and as if a sinner could be pardoned and accepted without any provision being made for its fulfillment. It is the more necessary to consider Justification in its relation to the Law and Justice of God, because erroneous or defective views on this point, have been the chief source, not only of many speculative errors, but also of that practical unconcern,—that false peace and carnal security,—which prevails so extensively both in the Church and the world; and which springs, not from faith in the Gospel message, but from unbelief in the divine Law. For this reason, as well as from its close connection with the work of Christ, in fulfilling the Law, and satisfying the Justice of God, this topic is one of fundamental importance.

Prop. VI. As Justification is a forensic, legal, or judicial term, so that which is denoted by it must necessarily have some relation to the Law and Justice of God.

Reprinted from James Buchanan, *The Doctrine of Justification* (London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1961), pp. 282-305. Used by permission.

The truth of this proposition, in so far as it relates to the Justification of innocent and holy beings in a state of probation and trial, can scarcely be denied by any one who believes in a righteous moral government. The Law of God, in whatever way it was made known to them, was the rule of His moral government, and consequently the ground of His judicial sentence in regard to them; and His Law being a revelation of His essential and eternal character as a righteous Governor and Judge, His Justice can neither condemn any who are not guilty, nor accept any who are not righteous. To be accepted as righteous in His sight, every subject of that law must have a righteousness answerable to its requirements; for, if it be true that where 'there is no law there is no transgression,' it is equally true that where there is no law, there is no 'righteousness;' and if 'sin is not imputed, where there is no law,' neither can righteousness be imputed without reference to its requirements. The rule in both cases is the same,—and righteousness is nothing else than conformity to the Law, while sin is any want of conformity to it. That Law, considered as the rule of His moral government, requires perfect obedience; and as partial compliance with it is inadmissible, so it is impossible, from its very nature, that there can be any neutral character,—which is neither godly nor ungodly,—neither righteous nor wicked,—neither innocent nor guilty,—neither justified nor condemned.

Such being the nature of God's Law,—and that Law being an expression of His Justice,—it follows, that Justification must necessarily have some relation to both. In the case of the innocent, Justification would have consisted in the recognition and acceptance of a righteousness, personal and inherent, and amounting to a perfect conformity to the divine Law; in the case of the sinful, Justification,—if it be possible at all,—must still have some relation to the Law and Justice of God; since it includes the pardon of sin, which reverses the sentence of condemnation; and the acceptance of the sinner as righteous, which

implies some standard of righteousness as the rule of the divine procedure. What that righteousness is, or can be, in the case of the guilty, is the great problem which is solved only by the Gospel of Christ.

Prop. VII. The rule of Justification, as revealed to man in his state of original righteousness, was the Law of God in the form of a divine covenant of life.

There is a difference between the Moral Law, or the Law of Nature, considered simply as such, and the first revealed covenant of life: for although this covenant presupposed that law, and was founded upon it, the one cannot be identified, in all respects, with the other. The Moral Law, considered simply as the law of man's nature, was a rule of duty, which prohibited all sin, and required perfect obedience; and, considered as the instrument of God's righteous government, it necessarily implied the sanctions of reward and punishment, for these are the indispensable conditions of all government, and without them any rule of obedience would have been a mere exhortation or advice, rather than a formal law. But a Moral Law, however perfect, and although armed with the sanctions of reward and punishment, is not necessarily a covenant of life. It could only denounce punishment in the event of disobedience, and secure entire exemption from punishment, with such blessings as might be connected with obedience, while man continued in a state of holy innocence; but, considered simply as a law, or an instrument of government, it could give no assurance, either that he would continue in that state, or that, by continuing in it, he would ever become a confirmed heir of eternal life. Man might be naturally immortal, as a being destined,—not by the necessity of his nature, but by the sovereign appointment of God,—to an eternal existence; and yet as a subject of His government, the law under which he was placed could give him no assurance, that he could persevere in obedience, either in time or in eternity, so as to be exempt from its penalties, and entitled to an everlasting reward. The tenure by which life should be held, and the conditions of a holy and happy immortality, could not be discovered by the mere light of nature, even in a state of pristine innocence; and could only be made known by a revelation of God's sovereign will.

We find, accordingly, that this precise point was one of the earliest subjects of divine revelation. God is said to have promulgated a positive command, as the test of man's obedience; and to have annexed to it the threatening of death, in the event of transgression, with the promise of eternal life, which

was signified and sealed by its sacramental symbol—'the tree of life'—in the event of his continued obedience during the term of his probation. The threatening, in the one case, included the whole penalty of sin; and the promise, in the other, the whole reward of obedience: and both had reference to the same life which Adam then possessed, as having been created 'in the image and likeness' of God. The penalty might contain many distinct privations and sufferings; but the worst part of it, and that which embittered every other, was the curse of God,—the instant forfeiture of His favour, and the inevitable subjection to His wrath. The promise might comprehend many distinct benefits, temporal, spiritual, and eternal; but the best part of it, and that which sweetened every other, was the blessing of God,—the enjoyment of 'His favour, which is life, and of His lovingkindness, which is better than life.'

By the addition of a positive appointment as a test of man's obedience to God as the supreme Lawgiver, Governor, and Judge, whose will man was bound to obey by the law of his moral nature, that law was converted into a divine covenant of life. It was not, like many covenants between man and man, a mutual agreement between equal and independent parties,—for this had been at variance with the rightful supremacy of God, and the dutiful subjection of the creature; it was a constitution authoritatively imposed, as a test of man's obedience: for 'the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat'—including 'the tree of life in the midst of the garden,' which was the symbol and sacrament of His covenant promise,—'but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.' And yet it was more than a mere law; it was a law in the form of a covenant. In the words of Bishop Hopkins, 'If God had only said, "Do this," without adding, "Thou shalt live," this had not been a covenant, but a law; and if He had only said, "Thou shalt live," without commanding "Do this," it had not been a covenant, but a promise. Remove the condition, and you make it a simple promise; remove the promise, and you make it an absolute law: but, both these being found in it, it is both a law and a covenant.' In this form, the law continued to be binding on man by its precept, but God condescended, also, to bind Himself by His promise, and became, in the expressive words of Boston, 'debtor to His own faithfulness' to make that promise good. A new element was thus introduced into man's relation to God: he was still a creature

dependent on the power, and subject to the law, of his Creator; but he was now advanced to be a 'confederate' with Him, and, as long as he continued to obey, could look to Him as his covenant God.

But there is a wider difference still between the Moral Law, considered simply as the law of man's nature, and the law in its positive form, as a divine covenant of life. The law, as it was originally inscribed on the moral nature of man, was a *personal* rule of duty,—it laid an obligation on each individual singly,—and held him responsible only for himself; but the law, as it was subsequently promulgated in the form of a divine covenant, was a *generic* constitution, imposed by supreme authority on the first father of the human race, as the representative of his posterity,—and extending far beyond his individual interests, so as to affect the character and condition even of his remotest descendant. He was constituted, by divine appointment, the trustee for the whole race which should spring from him; and was placed in the deeply responsible position of their covenant head, and legal representative. He was a party to the covenant, not simply as a private individual, acting for himself alone, but as a public person, invested with an official character, and acting also for others. He could not have assumed this office, or acted in this capacity, of his own will; he must have been constituted the legal representative of his posterity by the same supreme will, which enacted the law under which he was placed.

The fact of this federal arrangement is revealed,—the reason of it must be resolved ultimately into the sovereign will, and supreme wisdom, of the Most High. His absolute supremacy, as the Creator and Lawgiver of the universe, is necessarily implied in His 'eternal power and Godhead;' and, while we may rest assured that it will ever be exercised in accordance with His holiness, Justice, goodness, and truth, we are utterly incompetent to determine what methods might be adopted by His omniscient wisdom, either for the creation, or for the government of His subjects, in the different parts of His universal empire. His sovereignty was displayed in the work of Creation. He constituted different orders of being,—inanimate, living, sentient, animal, intellectual, moral, and responsible,—and endowed them with their several properties and powers. But besides this, He brought them into being in different ways; and the constitution, under which they were respectively placed, was adapted to the method of their creation. Several classes, for example, of intellectual, self-conscious, moral, and responsible, creatures were brought into

being, such as angels and men. But all angels were brought into being individually, as our first parent was, by the direct exercise of creative power; there was, in their case, no birth, no hereditary descent, no paternal or filial relation, for 'they neither marry, nor are given in marriage;' whereas, in the creation of man, God called into being a single pair, and made them the natural root of the race which should spring from them; He placed them under a family constitution, and called their descendants into being mediately through them. There was a radical difference, therefore, between the angelic hosts, and the human race, in respect to the position in which individuals, belonging to each of them, were severally placed, and the relations which they sustained to one another: in the one, every individual was directly created,—connected with others by a common nature, and placed in social relations with them,—but not derived from any created being, and not dependent on any, as a child must be on his parents;—in the other, every individual is created mediately,—brought into being in a state of helpless infancy,—committed in trust for years to parental care,—dependent for his life, and health, and comfort on domestic aid,—endowed with faculties which are slowly developed, under the influence of instruction and example,—and liable, therefore, to be largely influenced, for good or evil, by the condition and character of those with whom he is so necessarily and closely related. Such was the radical difference between angels and men in respect to the natural constitution under which they were severally placed,—and there was a corresponding difference between them in respect to the law which was imposed upon them, as moral and responsible beings. The law, as prescribed to angels, was personal, and recognised only individual responsibility; for however they might be connected by social relations, or even subordinated, one rank to another, as 'principalities and powers,' in a hierarchical government,—and however they might be liable, in consequence, to the influence of each other's example,—they were so far independent that each stood or fell for himself according to his own conduct; and both those who 'kept,' and those who 'left,' their first estate, did so by their own voluntary act, and not by the act of any legal representative. Such a law was suitable to the condition of moral and responsible beings created directly each by himself, and probably like our first parent, in the full maturity of his powers. But the law, as prescribed to man, was generic, and recognised representative, as well as individual, responsibility: for while, as it was the law

of man's moral nature, it required—and must always continue to require—personal obedience, on the part of every individual as soon as he is capable of moral agency,—yet as a revealed covenant of life, it was imposed on Adam as the representative of his race, and made them dependent, for good or evil, on his conduct as their federal head.

Thoughtful men, considering the actual condition of the human race,—the universal and constant prevalence of moral and physical evil,—the certainty that every child born into the world will sin as soon as he is capable of sinning,—the sufferings which are entailed upon him by his birth,—and above all, the inevitable doom of death, have felt that it is difficult, if not impossible, to account for these facts occurring under the moral government of God, by referring them to any mere personal law, such as implies only individual responsibility; and that their minds were relieved, rather than oppressed, by being told of a generic law, which was imposed on the father of the human race as the legal representative of his posterity, and which warrants them in regarding all their hereditary evils as judicial penalties on account of his actual sin, and not as capricious or arbitrary inflictions proceeding from mere sovereignty. So strongly has this been felt, that some, who have rejected the doctrine of federal representation and imputed guilt, have been compelled to acknowledge that the actual state of men, under the moral government of God, cannot be satisfactorily accounted for except on the supposition of 'a forfeiture prior to birth,' and to take refuge, as the only way of evading that doctrine, in the theory of a state of pre-existence, in which every man sinned and fell by his own personal disobedience. But if there be no scriptural evidence for this theory, the actual condition of the race can only be accounted for,—either by their relation to Adam as their natural root,—or by their relation to him also as their legal representative,—or to both these relations combined; for the latter is not exclusive, but comprehensive, of the former. Had Adam been created merely as the natural root of his posterity, and not constituted also their legal representative, many evils might, or rather must, have flowed from his sin, to all his descendants, in the way of mere natural consequence, by reason of their hereditary connection with him; for his immediate offspring were dependent on him, and their children again on them, both for instruction and example; but some of the consequences of his fall cannot be accounted for at all,—such as the universal and irrevocable sentence of death,—and none of them can

be accounted for so satisfactorily,—except on the supposition that, besides being their natural root, he was also their federal head. And this supposition is in evident accordance with the *analogy* of the constitution of nature: for if God manifested His sovereignty in creating angels individually 'without father, without mother, without descent,' and placing them under a personal law, adapted to this constitution, and recognising only individual responsibility; and if He also manifested His sovereignty in creating Adam as the root of a race which should spring from him, and placing him, as their representative, under a generic law, adapted to the family constitution, and recognising representative as well as individual agency,—in either case, the legal is adapted to the natural constitution; and there is such an analogy between the two, as serves to make the former credible, by reason of the undeniable certainty of the latter.

Prop. VIII. The breach of the Law in its covenant form by the sin of our first parents, rendered it for ever impossible that either they, or any of their descendants, should be justified on the ground of their personal righteousness.

If Adam was the legal representative and federal head of the race, then all its members 'sinned in him,' as such, 'and fell with him in his first transgression;' and they were involved along with him in the guilt which he had incurred, and the condemnation which he had deserved. This is necessarily implied in the fact, that, by sovereign divine appointment, he acted *for* them, and was dealt with as *one* with them, so that, according to his obedience or disobedience, they, as well as he, should be accepted, or rejected, of God. The direct imputation of the guilt of his first sin to all his descendants is necessarily involved in the public character which he sustained as their representative; and it is confirmed by the consideration that the penal consequences of his transgression have been entailed on every generation of his race. It does not imply that they committed the sin, or that they were personally accessory to it; for the transgression, considered as an actual sin, was his, and his only; but it was committed by him as their legal representative, and the guilt of it is theirs simply as they were represented by him. If representative, as distinct from personal, agency, be admissible at all under the divine government,—if it was expressly recognised in the first covenant of life,—and if it be also recognised in the new and better covenant, the covenant of grace,—then we reach the great general principle, that both righteousness, and guilt, may be imputed to

others on account of the obedience, or disobedience, of those by whom they were severally represented. But the principle does not imply, in either case, that the obedience was personally rendered, or the sin actually committed, by those to whom they are respectively imputed; for this were to overlook the fundamental difference between personal, and representative, action.

The direct imputation of the guilt of Adam's first sin to his descendants is not necessarily exclusive of their personal guilt, as individuals. The doctrine of mediate imputation, as taught by Placaeus and Stapfer, is erroneous in its negative, rather than in its positive part,—in what it denies, rather than in what it affirms. It denies the direct imputation of the guilt of Adam's first sin, and thus virtually sets aside his representative character; for if he acted as their representative, his conduct must directly affect the condition of all who were related to him, as such, under the covenant: but it affirms the imputation of personal guilt, arising from inherent depravity or actual transgression, and in this respect it teaches a solemn and momentous truth. For the direct imputation of the guilt of Adam's first sin is not exclusive of the additional charge of personal guilt in the case of every individual of his race; and it is of the utmost practical consequence that this fact should be distinctly realized. For the doctrine which affirms that 'God visits the iniquities of the fathers upon their children' has often been perverted and abused, and even applied as an opiate to soothe the conscience into a deep slumber, which may prove to be the sleep of death. We find, for example, two of the prophets expostulating with the Jews at Babylon on account of their sinful perversion of that doctrine: 'What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son, is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die.' This, and the corresponding statement of Jeremiah,¹ have often been urged as a scriptural argument against the doctrine of original sin; for although there is an important difference between the relation which Adam sustained to his posterity as the legal representative or covenant head, and that which other parents bear to their children, yet the general principle of individual responsibility which is so

clearly announced when it is said, 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die,' is equally applicable, it has been said, to both cases, and is sufficient to set aside the whole doctrine of hereditary guilt, and inherited suffering. But neither of the prophets meant to deny that the Jews in their capacity suffered in consequence, and on account, of the sins of their fathers; what they meant to teach was, that they did not suffer on account *only* of their fathers' sins,—that if their captivity was brought on them, as they knew it had been, by the guilt of their rulers and people in the land of Israel, it was prolonged by their own continued impenitence and rebellion in Babylon,—and that as soon as they repented and returned to the Lord with their whole heart, He would remember no more against them either their fathers' sins or their own, but 'receive them graciously, and love them freely.' It is expressly said that they did suffer partly on account of their fathers' sins;² and in the Decalogue itself, God had revealed Himself as 'a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that *hate me.*'³ But they had not duly considered these last words; they imagined that they suffered *only* because of their fathers' sins, and were unmindful of their own; and the prophets were sent to remind them of both, that by godly repentance they might be graciously restored. And it is deeply interesting to mark that both are included in the confessions and prayers of those among them who were suitably impressed and affected by the prophet's message: 'Our fathers have sinned and are not, and we have borne *their* iniquities.' 'The crown is fallen from *our* head: woe unto us, that *we* have sinned.' 'Turn thou us unto Thee, O Lord! and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old.'⁴ A similar perversion may be, and has been, made of the doctrine of original sin, as if we suffered only on account of Adam's guilt, and not also on account of our personal depravity and disobedience; and it is the more important to counteract this fatal error, because it is chiefly by the consciousness of his own inherent depravity, and the conviction of his actual transgressions, that a sinner is first impressed, as by that which is nearest to him, with a sense of his fallen and ruined condition, and is thereafter led up, like David, to the consideration of his birth-sin, saying first, 'I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me; against

¹ Ezek. xviii. 1; Jer. xxxi. 29, 30.

² 2 Kings xxi. 9, 16, xxiii. 26; Jer. xv. 4; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 9.

³ Ex. xx. 5.

⁴ Lam. v. 7, 16, 21.



Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight; and then, but scarcely till then, 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.'⁵

There can scarcely be a greater or more dangerous error than to suppose that the guilt of Adam's first sin is the only guilt with which we are chargeable, or that it is exclusive of the personal guilt of individuals. Such an idea could only be entertained on one, or other, of these two suppositions,—either, that there is no law to which man is now subject,—or, that there is no want of conformity to that law, and no transgression of it. But the doctrine of Scripture, while it affirms the direct imputation of the guilt of Adam's *first* transgression to his posterity,—and of that *only*, for he was their representative with reference merely to the one precept of the covenant,—affirms also the transmission of hereditary depravity, arising from his loss of original righteousness, and the corruption of his whole nature by sin. It follows that, as sinners, neither Adam, nor any of his descendants, could ever be justified on the ground of their personal obedience. This is self-evident so far as their Justification depended on the Law in its covenant form; for by breaking its precept, Adam forfeited its promise, and incurred its penalty for himself, and for all whom he represented; and this conclusion is so inevitable, that it can only be evaded by denying, as some have been bold enough to deny, his representative character altogether. It is equally certain that, in so far as their Justification might be supposed to depend on the Law as a permanent rule of duty, which continued to be binding on him and all his descendants after the fall, they could not be

justified on the ground of their personal obedience to it; for, besides being already subject to the penalty of the broken covenant, the corruption of their nature which immediately ensued, made it certain that they would individually contract fresh guilt, and be for ever incapable of fulfilling the righteousness which the Law required. It is the nature of the tree that determines the quality of its fruit, although the quality of its fruit may be an evidence of the nature of the tree. But if all men are born in the image of their fallen parent,—if 'that which is born of the flesh is flesh,' and if 'he that is in the flesh cannot please God,'—it follows that 'no man since the fall can perfectly keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed;' and consequently that no man can be justified by his personal obedience to that law, simply because 'the law is weak through the flesh,' or fallen state of man,—and although it was originally 'ordained unto life,' is now 'found to be unto death.' There is something that 'the law cannot do' (*τὸ ἀδύνατον τοῦ νομοῦ*)—*it cannot justify a sinner;* 'it condemns sin in the flesh,'⁶ and is no longer 'the ministration of righteousness,' but has become, through sin, 'the ministration of condemnation.' It thus appears that, whether the Law be considered as the original covenant of life, or as a permanent rule of duty, the breach of it rendered it for ever impossible that any man should ever be justified on the ground of his personal righteousness.

This conclusion can only be evaded on one, or other, of these two suppositions,—either that the law of God has been abrogated altogether, so as to be no longer binding,—or that it has been so modified and

⁵ Ps. li. 3-5.

⁶ 2 Cor. iii. 7.

relaxed, as no longer to require perfect obedience, but to admit of our being justified on easier terms. There is a third supposition, indeed, but it is so untenable that no man with a conscience in his breast can entertain or defend it, namely, that the law is still binding as a rule of perfect obedience, and that men are able to fulfill it. To those, if there be any, who are willing to take this ground, the Lord Himself has said, 'This do, and thou shalt live.' But He also said, 'The whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick;' and that 'He came to call, not the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' If there were any 'just men who need no repentance,' they would be beyond the range of His commission, for 'He was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' But discarding this supposition as unworthy of a moment's notice in a world of universal ungodliness and sin,—and looking only to the other alternatives, shall we say that the law of God has been abrogated? Then all duty has been abolished along with it,—our duty to God, our duty to men, our duty to ourselves; sin has disappeared, and even the possibility of sin has been annihilated,—for 'where there is no law, there is no transgression;' we are no longer the subjects of a moral government,—for where there is no law, there can be no reward or punishment; and even the voice of conscience, to which every man is compelled to listen, and by which he is made to feel that 'he is a law to himself,' is a mere chimera or illusion. Better far to be condemned by a righteous law, which, like God Himself, is 'holy, and just, and good,' than to live in a lawless world, or in universal anarchy!

But if the law of God has not been, and never can be, entirely abrogated, may it not be, and has it not been, modified and relaxed? This question has been answered in the affirmative by two distinct parties,—*first*, by some who hold that in the case of men who are unable, either from their natural infirmity, or the corruption of their nature by sin, to fulfill it, it must necessarily be accommodated to their weakness, and cannot reasonably require perfect obedience; and *secondly*, by others, who affirm that one object for which Christ came into the world was to procure for us a new law, or easier terms of acceptance with God, so as to supersede the perfect obedience which the original law required, and to substitute for it imperfect obedience, if it be only sincere, as the immediate ground of our Justification. These are distinct positions, and they rest, in some respects, on different grounds.

Those who speak of the law of God being modified or relaxed, in accommodation to the present

infirm and depraved state of human nature, must be held to proceed on a general principle, applicable to all orders of moral and responsible creatures, angels as well as men, and amounting, in substance, to this,—that wherever, and from whatever cause, they have become depraved, their inability or unwillingness to render due obedience, must relieve them, in proportion to the extent in which they prevail, from the obligations of duty, and deprive God Himself of the right to require it. From such a principle it would follow, that His law can no longer be regarded as a fixed rule of righteousness, or an invariable test of sin, but only as a sliding scale of duty, whose requirements would become less in proportion as wickedness increased; and that while holy angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, are 'not without law to God,' but bound to love and obey Him 'with their whole hearts,' evil spirits and wicked men, whose minds are filled with 'enmity against God,' would be relieved, by that very enmity which makes them unable or unwilling to serve Him, from all obligation to do so. That principle, consistently carried out to the full extent of its legitimate application, leads inevitably to this conclusion,—that the more wicked any creature becomes, the more must the law be relaxed in accommodation to his inability to comply with it, until he reaches a point at which he ceases to be a moral and responsible agent at all. The law of God is not thus dependent on the will of the creature, nor can its requirements be relaxed by the increasing power of sin.

Some, however, speak of the law of God as having been relaxed and modified in consequence of the incarnation, sufferings, and death, of Christ, so as no longer to require perfect obedience, but to accept such as is imperfect, provided it be sincere. But here several questions arise, to which distinct and definite answers may be reasonably expected from those who make our eternal welfare to depend on our obedience to this relaxed law. Where is it revealed in Scripture that Christ became incarnate, suffered, and died upon the Cross,—not to fulfill the law, but to alter it,—not to 'magnify the law and make it honourable,' but to modify its demands, and supersede it by a new law with easier conditions? Besides, what is that new law? What does it require? What does it forbid? What are its sanctions? Is it possible, in the nature of things, that any law can require less than perfect obedience, at least, to itself? Why, then, is the obedience which is required said to be imperfect? Is it imperfect with reference to the old law only, or also to the new? If it be imperfect with reference to the former, is there no sin in that imperfection? If it be imperfect with

reference even to the latter, how can it justify according to the rule of that law? What is the sincerity which is connected with this imperfect obedience? Is it more perfect than the obedience which springs from it? Does the new law require any definite amount of obedience? And if not, what is the graduated scale of duty, and what is its *minimum*? If the original law required perfect obedience, could it be abrogated, or even relaxed, otherwise than by God's authority? If it was not abrogated, but republished, at Sinai, was it relaxed by Christ, when He repeated it, saying, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,—for on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets,' or when He expounded its spiritual meaning in His sermon on the mount? Did He come to abrogate, or relax, that eternal rule of righteousness, of which He said,—'I am not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfill,'—'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled?' Or did His Apostles exceed their commission when they said, 'Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid! yea, we establish the law'?

It is true that the graces and duties of believers, although imperfect, are 'acceptable to God,' but only *through Jesus Christ*;⁷ they are the fruits of His Holy Spirit, but they are not in themselves, during the present life, an adequate fulfillment of any law, whether old or new; and they fall so far short of perfection, while they are so defiled by remaining sin, that they are but as 'filthy rags' when compared with the righteousness which the law requires. They cannot, therefore, constitute a justifying righteousness, and must themselves be accepted through the atoning sacrifice and perfect obedience of Christ. So far from relying on them as the ground of their acceptance, believers renounce them altogether, and repair continually 'to the fountain which has been opened for sin and for uncleanness;' and it is a sense of the imperfection of their obedience, arising from the constant presence and remaining power of indwelling sin, that imbues them, more and more as they advance in the divine life, with a 'broken and a contrite spirit,' and deepens their consciousness of personal unworthiness. For believing the divine law in all its perfection to be still binding on them as a rule of duty, even when they have been delivered from it as a covenant of works, and comparing its pure and spiritual requirements with all the obedience which they have ever been able to render, they are more and

more deeply convinced of their own sinfulness, and their absolute dependence on the grace of God, and the righteousness of Christ. For, in the words of Archdeacon Hare, 'they who have ever had a deep spiritual conviction of sin, and of their own sinfulness, retain that conviction to the end. Their growth in holiness does not stifle it, but on the contrary renders it livelier and more piercing; and thus, ascending step by step, we come to that singular phenomenon, that the holiest men would be the most oppressed by the conviction of their sinfulness, were it not for their conviction of Christ's righteousness, of which they become partakers through faith, incorporating them as living members in His body; and through which, being "clothed upon" by it, they may humbly hope to stand in the presence of God.' This gracious frame of mind,—this 'broken and contrite spirit,'—this growing humility and self-abasement, is one of the most characteristic marks of a true believer, and it is fostered by an abiding sense of the spirituality and perfection of the divine law; but could it exist, or would it not be supplanted by a very different feeling, were that law supposed to be so relaxed and modified, as to admit of our personal obedience to it being the ground of our Justification in the sight of God?

Prop. IX. The law of God, which is the rule of man's duty, is also a revelation of God's eternal Justice and Holiness.

Men talk lightly of His law being abrogated, modified, or relaxed, not considering that, besides being an authoritative expression of His supreme will, it is also a revelation of His essential nature, as the Holy One and the Just, and the rule of His universal empire, as the Governor and Judge of all. It is not the mere product of what Cudworth called 'arbitrary will omnipotent;' His will is determined by the infinite perfections of His character, and His character is the real ultimate standard of 'eternal and immutable morality.' His positive precepts may be resolved into the sovereignty of His will, regulated in its exercise by His omniscient wisdom; and these may be imposed, abrogated, or modified, according to His mere good pleasure; but His moral law, while it is an expression of His will, is also the image and reflection of His own moral perfection. God is 'holy, and just, and good;' and therefore His law also 'is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.' 'Be ye holy,'—this is the voice of His law, the expression of His supreme will: 'for I am holy,'⁷—this is the ground

⁷ 1 Pet. i. 15, 16; also, Lev. xix. 2, xx. 7, xxi. 8.

or reason of that law, and it is derived from His essential and unchangeable nature. 'The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works;' and, therefore, 'the righteous Lord loveth righteousness,' but 'He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity.'⁸ God is holy, and the law of the universe is 'holiness to the Lord;' God is just, and the law of the universe is 'justice;' God is true, and the law of the universe is 'truth;' God is love, and the law of the universe is 'love.' It reveals what He is, and what His creatures *ought* to be. Its precept requires obedience as a *duty*, or as what is *due* to Him, and its threatening declares punishment to be the *desert*, or the 'wages,' of sin. His law can never require more or less, either of obedience or of punishment, than is just and right; for 'a God of truth, and without iniquity, just and right is He.'⁹ To suppose that it ever required more than was due, or threatened more than could be justly inflicted, would be derogatory to all His attributes—His wisdom, His holiness, His justice, His goodness, and His truth.

It cannot, therefore, be modified or relaxed, since these perfections are unchangeable; and it cannot be abrogated, unless His moral government is to be abolished altogether.

The Moral Law,—considered as the rule of His government, and also as a revelation of His character,—must, still further, be viewed in connection with what is declared to be His great ultimate end in all His works,—the manifestation of His own glory by the actual exercise of all His perfections. He reveals His character in the Law; but it is the constant administration of that Law in His providence,—the application of it even to the works of Grace and Redemption,—and the final execution of it in the work of Judgment,—by which He will be most signally glorified. He has made Himself known by a series of divine revelations; but these are to be followed up by a series of divine works, in which the unchangeable perfections of His nature, on which His Law is founded, will be manifested in their actual exercise, according to the tenor of that Law. The fulfillment of His promises, and the execution of His threatenings, seem to be equally necessary for this end. The non-fulfillment of the one, or the non-execution of the other, would be derogatory to the honour of His Law, and to the glory of His perfections, which it was designed to reveal. In the exercise of His sovereignty, He may form a purpose

of mercy towards the guilty; but in carrying that purpose into effect, some provision is necessary, such as His own omniscient wisdom alone could devise, and His own infinite love suggest, for vindicating the majesty of His Law, and securing the ends of His moral government. If punishment was justly due to sin, and if it was ordained as a manifestation of His eternal justice and holiness, it must either be inflicted on every sinner with a view to that end, or the same end must be equally, or better, accomplished in some other way.

It thus appears that the Law, besides being an authoritative expression of God's will, is also a revelation of His eternal justice and holiness,—that it is the unchangeable rule of His moral government,—and that, however it may consist with a sovereign purpose of mercy towards sinners, it can never be abrogated, modified, or relaxed, but must be executed or fulfilled, in such a way as shall be manifest, in their actual exercise, the same divine perfections which it was designed to reveal, and secure the end of punishment itself—the glory of His great name.

Prop. X. The doctrine of the Law is presupposed in that of the Gospel, and the justifying righteousness which is required in the one, is revealed in the other.

That the doctrine of the Law is presupposed in that of the Gospel, has been already shown; and that the justifying righteousness which the Law requires has been revealed in the Gospel, will be proved hereafter, in discussing the questions which still remain to be determined,—namely, What that righteousness is, which is revealed as 'the righteousness of God?' How, and by whom, it was wrought out? Why it is available for our Justification? By what means we become partakers of it? And by what agency it is effectually applied? In the meantime, the proposition is merely stated for the purpose of indicating, in the first place, the indissoluble connection, and yet the radical difference also, between the Law and the Gospel; and, in the second place, the indispensable necessity of a careful study of the one, in order to a right apprehension of the other.

⁸ Ps. cxlv. 17, xi. 7; Hab. i. 13.

⁹ Deut. xxxii. 4.

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