

# Present Truth

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

*Sola Gratia*  
*Solo Christo*  
*Sola Fide*

Solely by Grace  
Solely by Christ  
Solely by Faith

Vol. 6 #5

**Letters—page 3**

**Editorial Introduction—page 5**

**Righteousness by Faith (Part 2)**

**CHAPTER 3: The Meaning of Righteousness  
in Scripture—page 6**

**CHAPTER 4: The Relation of Righteousness  
and Salvation—page 12**

**Christ, Our Wisdom—page 18**

# 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  
Research Director: Douglas Ort  
Art Director: Donald Muth

**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). It is the God-ordained account of and witness to the person and work of Jesus Christ.

*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.

*Present Truth* is committed to the time-honored verities of the Christian faith—such as the Trinity, deity of Christ, virgin birth, blood atonement, bodily resurrection and ascension, second coming, final judgment, justification by faith alone, sanctification through the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit, and glorification at Christ's soon return.

The *Present Truth* ministry receives no denominational support. It is made possible through contributions from those who are dedicated to the restoration of New Testament Christianity and committed to upholding the great Reformation principle of justification by faith. Your support is appreciated. All gifts are tax deductible in the U.S.A.

**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:

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

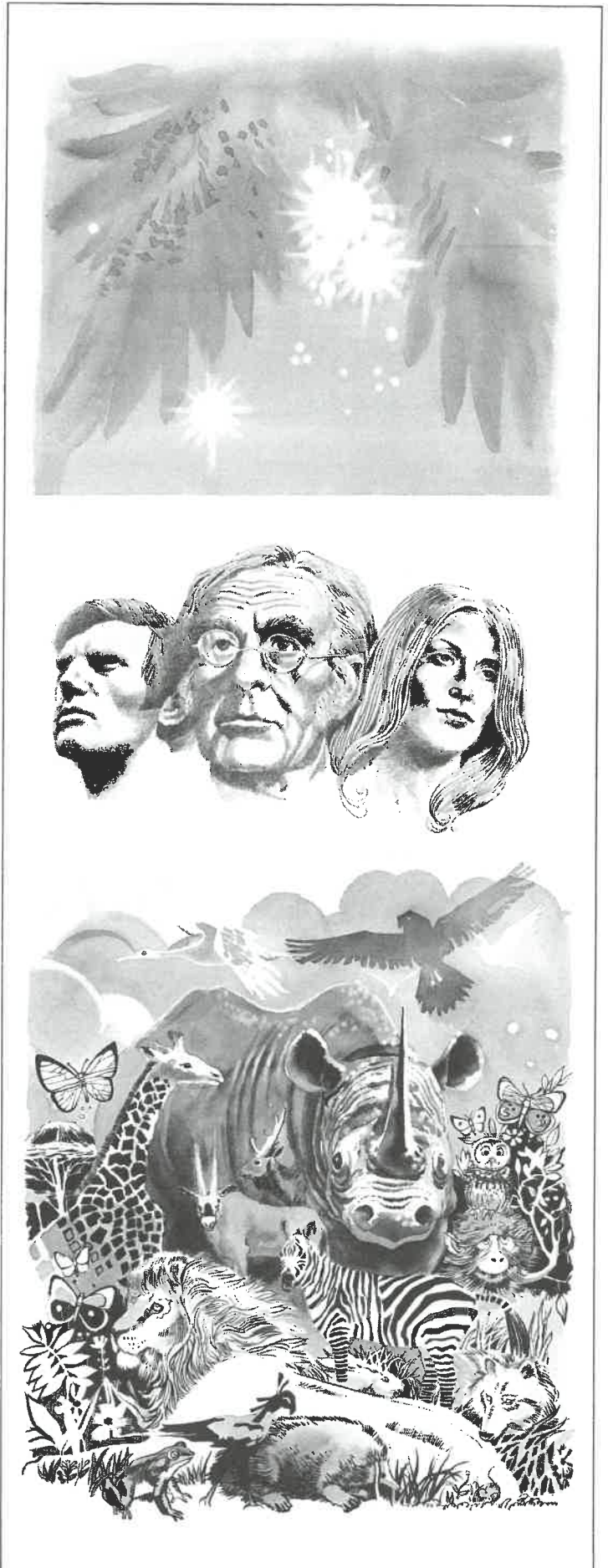
P.O. Box 333  
Tweed Heads, N.S.W. 2485  
Australia

**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.

**Moving?** Please send your change of address four weeks in advance. Be sure to include both your old and new address.

*Present Truth* is published by New Reformation Fellowship.

Copyright© September 1977 by *Present Truth*, P.O. Box 1311, Fallbrook, California 92028, U.S.A.





# Letters

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

## "Righteousness by Faith" (Part 1)

Sir / Having never intended to write you concerning your magazine, I had a sudden change of heart after reading your excellent July 1977 issue. First of all, I was unaware that Luther's "Commentary on Galatians" (1531) represented his mature thinking. The deeper I got into your article on "Righteousness by Faith" (Part 1), the more I began to realize how correct your interpretation of Luther's writings are. Then, when I read the article by the anonymous theology student, I began to see just how subtle is the difference between intrinsic (Catholic) justification and extrinsic (Protestant) justification. It is amazing that this was the main point which separated Luther from Rome.

I see now why even truly born-again Christians have been sucked into the charismatic movement, which the Roman Catholics have been so quick to capitalize on in order to further their ecumenicity. This really reinforces the importance of the right and scriptural viewpoint of the doctrine of justification by faith alone.

Richard C. Dove  
Baptist  
Kansas

Sir / Paul in Romans 6:11-22 shows that the person who has had his sins forgiven does not commit any more sin, but "being made free from sin," he now becomes a "servant to God," with "holiness" as his new state of being, which brings intrinsic justification before God, for this man does not "yield" his bodily "members" to the commission of sin but to a holy life of "righteousness." If he is living a holy life, then he is intrinsically justified, because there is nothing in his holy life which brings condemnation to him.

James, in chapter 1, shows how a man must live continually in the law of "liberty" which he entered when he became a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. In chapter 2, James shows that a man is "justified" by his good "works" after he has been justified by his faith in Jesus Christ. He is extrinsically justified by His faith in Christ, but he is intrinsically justified by his good works, which follow his extrinsic justification. James refers to the case of Abraham, who was justified by his faith in God's promise to give him a son, which was extrinsic justification; but then, after he had been thus justified, he was justified by his good works when he obeyed God's command to

offer his son Isaac as a burnt offering, and this was intrinsic justification. He had imputed righteousness when he believed God's promise to give him a son, but he had imparted righteousness when he obeyed God's command to offer his son as a burnt offering. It is all summed up by James when he writes, "Ye see, then, how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only" (James 2:24).

What Martin Luther and the Roman Catholic Church teach is of no consequence when we have the Bible as our standard of faith and practice.

Delmar H. Bryant  
Ohio

Sir / Your two issues on "The Man of Romans 7" (June 1977) and "Righteousness by Faith" (July 1977) are excellent and edifying. Both of them have to do with the believer's position or status in the sight of God. That status has been made quite clear in one sentence in the Lord's prayer: "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." It is the prayer of a child of God addressing the "Father in heaven" and yet the prayer of a sinner asking forgiveness. Christ clearly taught that believers are both saved and sinful.

Believers are *made* righteous by faith in Christ, through which Christ's righteousness is imputed to them. Hence, they are justified (not sinless) by God and in God's sight. "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6). Yet the God-fearing are often referred to as "righteous" because they are accounted as such by God or because of their moral character. Even so, no man is by nature moral, but carnal.

Bert Brower  
Minister  
Michigan

Sir / Thank you for *Present Truth* and its timely emphasis. It is difficult for me to express my deep appreciation for your publication. I find it fascinating and interesting, and it furnishes a real spiritual insight in understanding the Scriptures.

In regard to extrinsic righteousness in your recent July 1977 issue, I recall Dr. Herschel H. Hobbs, former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, saying in a Bible conference that the ending of the Greek word *dikaosune* (righteousness) implies "not necessarily so." In other words, the Greek word for righteousness does not mean that the subject himself

is intrinsically righteous. Rather, extrinsic righteousness is clearly implied.

Roger S. Dorsett  
Baptist Pastor  
Alabama

## Clear

Sir / My thanks to the entire staff of *Present Truth* for their efforts in presenting the gospel so clearly to many of us. How good it is for laymen to have access to such material without having to go through endless volumes of theology, for which we are not equipped.

Jerry Asleson  
Montana

## Objective Gospel

Sir / I haven't had any formal theological training, but I can see and agree with your statements concerning the objective gospel and justification by faith.

Mike Chism  
California

## Infatuated

Sir / The Spirit of God applied the central truth of justification to me at a very needed time. Recently I had become so infatuated with the inner life both in my thinking and reading that I began to err, unconsciously assuming that my "holiness" was the basis for fellowship, if not acceptance, with God. How many other believers must be victims of the moral emphasis! My own edging into legalism revealed the doctrinal problem that lay beneath the surface.

Jay Wegter  
California

## Impressed

Sir / I have been highly impressed, provoked, stimulated and blessed by your magazine. I thank you for your scholarship, but mostly for your love of God, His Word and the whole body of Christ.

Neil Roger Roth  
Colorado

## Scholarly

Sir / Your periodical is much appreciated. I like your scholarly and biblical discussions of Christian doctrine. Keep up the good work.

Richard Trost  
Lutheran Pastor  
Iowa

## Fine Distinctions?

Sir / Being a person of rather limited formal training and having come into the ministry rather late in life, I do appreciate the clear and forthright presentation of the Reformation position as it appears in *Present Truth*. The articles are well written, and it is obvious that the authors both know and believe in what they write.

May I, however, share with you a gnawing question which seems to surface quite frequently when reading *Present Truth* and which did surface in particular after finishing your excellent article in the recent July 1977 issue on "Righteousness by Faith" (Part 1). I have basically two problems. The first is the so very fine distinctions which must be drawn between the Reformation position and the position of Rome. The second has to do with the fact that the "greatest" of the theological virtues seems to be given a secondary place.

While I think that I can understand and appreciate your subtle distinctions, I doubt if very many of my congregation could. It is my opinion that all truth suffers from the same source: that the "corruption of the best is always the worst." The vulnerability of pure Luther or Calvin to distortion is just as strong as for Rome, Canterbury or Eastern Orthodoxy. Indeed, the Bible itself must so suffer, as it obviously does, the terrible corruption of the very best—the very truth itself. And furthermore, when you speak of the danger of "superstition" with reference to the errors of Rome, I must say that in my everyday experience in the ministry, the superstition which comes to my attention is among those who are pretty much outside the church rather than in it. Those people who never enter a church, but who come for baptisms, weddings and burials, are the real superstitious people of these present times. Those who believe themselves the most enlightened are often the most superstitious, and I must therefore suggest that the secularists and humanists are by far more prone to superstition these days than the Romanists.

And then the matter of charity. What about the parable in Matthew 25? What about the "Not everyone who says, 'Lord, Lord!' . . ." ? It just does seem to me that at the great day of judgment, the fellow in the pulpit, no matter how pure his doctrine may be, will—or at least may—not be in nearly as secure a position as some rather unschooled soul who has just given a cup of water to a thirsty traveler on the road. Christendom has suffered more from lack of charity than from errors in doctrine. The great filioque controversy which divided East from West had so little to do with the truth and so much to do with an opportunity on the part of the Western church to act in charity toward their Eastern brothers in Christ. While I do not wish to discredit your position and would not dare to challenge the correctness of your arguments, the real issue is: Out of what kind of womb does the church bare a Mother Theresa of Calcutta? And alas, as long as Luther has a problem with the

letter of St. James, I'm afraid I'll be having a certain problem with Luther.

Daniel H. Goldsmith  
Vicar  
Vermont

## Needed Input

Sir / I have read all of your magazines from the inception of *Present Truth*. I can't begin to describe all the vast reaches of theology you and all the writers in the magazine have opened up to me. It is probably an understatement to say that your insights (or the revival of old truths) are a much-needed input into the life of the church today.

Luther said in his "Table Talk" that "no man living can properly distinguish between the Law and the Gospel . . . only the Holy Ghost knows this." No doubt Dr. Martin was probably speaking subjectively here with reference to the "exposing" and "comforting" power the Heiligen Geist effects (cf. John 16:8-11) through and in conjunction with His two words of law and promise.

Werner Elert in his book, *Law and Gospel*, says that the law can never *merely* be a rule of life, because its proper function is that of making sin apparent, i.e., "the law always accuses" (cf. Rom. 3:20; 5:20; 7:7; Gal. 3:19, 24). He points out that as long as each of us still possesses the old Adam (cf. Rom. 7:14f; Gal. 5:17), the law's spiritual and prime function will be the destruction of the old man and not the construction of the new man. Incidentally, it was these same lines of thought (cf. Luther's "Commentary on Galatians") that caused Luther to coin his famous phrase, *simul justus et peccator*. It is a strange fact that while the law tells us what God's will is (legislative), it at the same time is pointing a finger of destruction and wrath (even to Christians) because we do not fully keep it (judicial). This is why Luther could say, "When I look to myself all is flesh, i.e., sin, but when I look to Christ all is righteousness."

To make the law merely legislative or a guide for Christian living is to miss the point Paul labors to show in Romans and especially Galatians. As Elert puts it, "the Law is God's juridical activity," i.e., judgment in the life of every man.

Gentry E. Busenburg  
Oklahoma

## Likes Approach

Sir / I believe that *Present Truth* breathes a congenial air of the truth of the gospel. Your approach to doctrines such as election is both humble and Pauline—"For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." This determination separates reverent devotion to the truth of Christ from specious biblical extrapolation and invention.

James J. Ludwig  
College Student  
Kansas

## Dull

Sir / It is all well and good to know the matters you constantly go over. But a few studies are enough for mastering the things you forever and tiringly repeat. I lose interest in the same matters always gone over and over in mostly the same dull manner.

Otis R. Anderson  
Rhode Island

## Central Article

Sir / Although I have written in the past, taking issue with *Present Truth's* eschatology and occasional use of neo-orthodox quotations, I must compliment you on your continuing emphasis on justification by faith. It is always tempting to "major on minors" theologically. It is refreshing to have you continue to major on the central article of the Christian faith.

Bryan G. Upton  
Pennsylvania

## Practical Doctrine

Sir / It was only a week ago that I borrowed a copy of your magazine from my brother-in-law. As a former Roman Catholic, the Reformation themes which you so brilliantly illuminate reinforced my opinion that "justification by faith" is indeed a practical doctrine deserving to be the center of Christian living (i.e., in its portrayal of the finished and continuing work of Christ on the believer's behalf).

Ralph N. Parish  
New Jersey

## Refreshing

Sir / I recently was given a copy of *Present Truth* magazine and was very impressed with the truly Christ-centered nature of the contents. The magazine is so refreshing after reading publications distributed by highly biased denominational organizations. How we need more truly gospel-centered publications in this day when Satan is corrupting churches and Christians all over!

Bob Crawford  
California

## Needed

Sir / I find *Present Truth* to be the finest Christian magazine I receive. It has solid biblical and theological content with a good degree of depth. It is such a relief to receive a magazine that is not fifty percent advertisements. Your articles are timely and vital to the health and future of the church. While I do not agree with everything in the magazine all the time, I do find that it really causes me to think and to discover where I really stand on issues not completely settled. Keep up the fine work. *Present Truth* is greatly needed among all Christians.

Forrest Long  
Minister  
Maine



## Editorial Introduction

This issue of *Present Truth* is devoted to a discussion of the meaning of three important biblical words: *righteousness*, *salvation* and *wisdom*. The articles were not written without considerable homework, and they will not be understood unless the reader is willing to do some too.

Dr. Graeme Goldsworthy did his doctoral thesis on the Wisdom Literature under Dr. John Bright at Union Seminary, Virginia. He is well qualified to write on the

biblical meaning of *wisdom*. His presentation will be richly rewarding to the thoughtful reader. This editor would like to say that he feels much indebted to Dr. Goldsworthy's insights into the Old Testament, especially his seeing the Eden kingdom order (God—man—created order) as the prototype kingdom of God.

Come, let us study diligently together.

R.D.B.



# Righteousness by Faith (PART 2)

## CHAPTER 3

Robert D. Brinsmead

### The Meaning of Righteousness in Scripture

Few would disagree with von Rad when he says, "There is absolutely no concept of the Old Testament with so central a significance for all relationship as that of *sadaq* [righteousness]."—Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* (Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1965), Vol. 1, p. 370. Richardson says, "Righteousness is for the Hebrews the fundamental character of God."—Alan Richardson, *An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament* (New York: Harper & Row, 1958), p. 79.

Nearly a century ago Kautzsch concluded that the root meaning of *righteousness* in the Bible is conformity to a norm. This definition was followed by most scholars. It has been pointed out that in the Greek language the word basically means conformity to social custom, while in Hebrew it means conformity to the standard decreed by God.

More recently (especially since the work of H. Cremer of Germany) it has been pointed out that while the ethical meaning of *righteousness* is essentially Greek, the relational meaning is essentially Hebrew. Paul, it is said, reflects the Hebrew idea rather than the Greek. Most scholars now regard *righteousness* as fundamentally concerned with relationships. Some have taken this line of thought so far as to say that the meaning of *righteousness* is "not an ethical state" and "cannot mean basically 'conformity to a (moral) norm.'"—See *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. G. Butterick (New York: Abingdon, 1962), Vol. 4, pp. 95, 99.

Then there are other scholars who have considered the biblical meaning of *righteousness* to be basically forensic (e.g., Wheeler Robinson, Bultmann, Ladd, Leon Morris). W. R. Smith follows this reasoning so far that

he says, "Righteousness is to the Hebrew not so much a moral quality as a legal status."—Cited in David Hill, *Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1967), p. 84.

We could continue illustrating how scholars sometimes contribute to confusion as much as to clarification. Everyone who follows the ordinary sense of words will somehow equate the English word *righteousness* with ethics, behavior and moral character. Imagine the layman's perplexity when he reads in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, for instance, that *righteousness* does not mean moral character and is not ethical at all. He might even give up altogether when he reads, "Righteousness as it is understood in the Old Testament is a thoroughly Hebraic concept, foreign to the Western mind and at variance with the common understanding of the term."—*Ibid.*, Vol. 4, p. 80. We do not want to deny the value of Hebraic insights, but as we hope to demonstrate in this study, *The Interpreter's Dictionary* is getting way out of the ballpark. Against these comments in *The Interpreter's Dictionary* we could place the comments of the French scholar, Edmond Jacob, in his *Theology of the Old Testament*. He acknowledges that we need to adjust our thought to the Hebraic use of the word *righteousness*, yet then he adds this caution: "But we must not allow an unbalanced reaction to send us to the opposite extreme and think of righteousness as something fundamentally different from what we understand by this term."—(New York: Harper & Row, 1958), p. 94.

*Righteousness* is one of the great words of Scripture, and as with the Old Testament word *kaphar*, it is not easy to wrap up its meaning in one single word or even in one single concept. It has several shades of meaning generally combined, and according to the context, one aspect may be more conspicuous than the others. Of all the scholars that we have read on the meaning of *righteousness* in Scripture, J. A. Ziesler (*The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1972]) does as well as any. In fact, in our opinion he is outstanding in the early part of his book.<sup>1</sup> If a layman takes a concordance, he can also work through *righteousness* in the Bible and arrive at a fairly good picture of what is involved.

We may outline the meaning of *righteousness* in Scripture as follows:

## 1. Relational (Covenant)

The covenant between God and man is the basis of biblical religion. All divine-human relationships are

## Righteousness is one of the great words in Scripture.

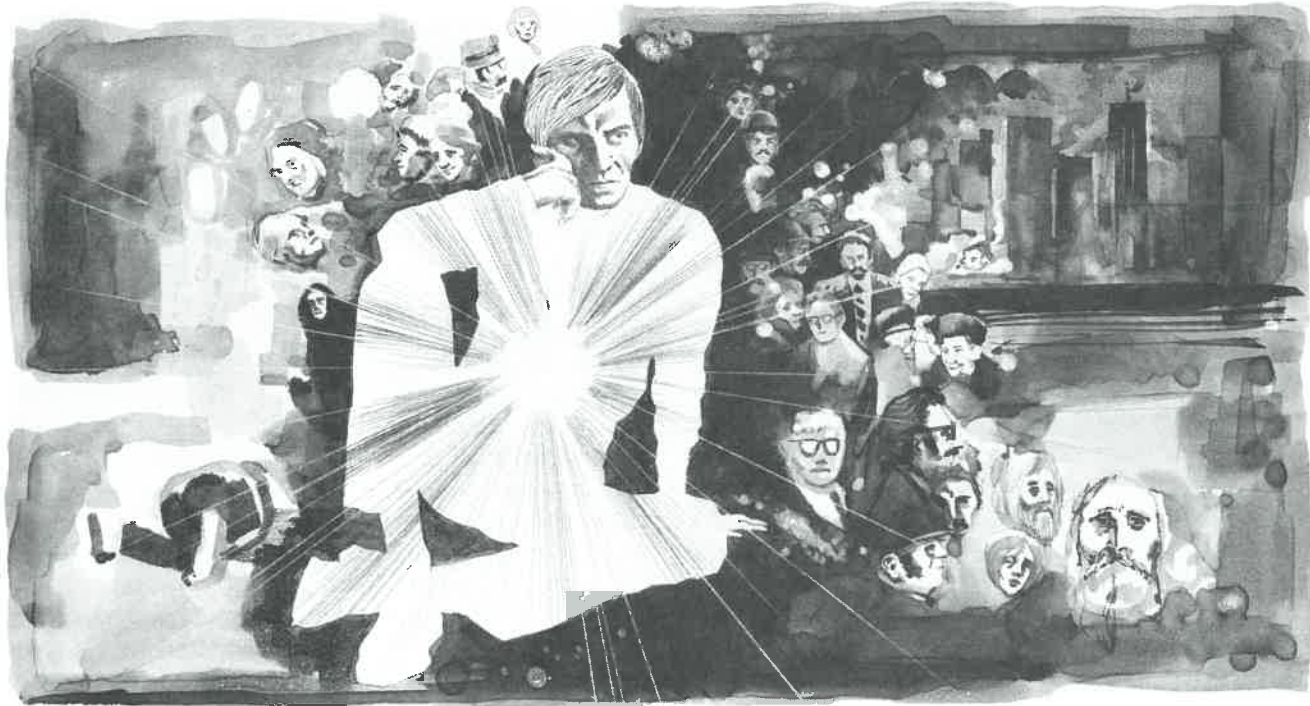
based on covenant. *Righteousness* is one of the great words of the covenant. It is used in reference to God's covenant with Abraham (Gen. 15:6; 18:19). In Psalm 15 and Ezekiel 18 we have a description of a righteous man. The setting is the covenant relation between God and Israel. When one does what is expected of him as a covenant partner, he is righteous. Thus von Rad defines *righteousness* as "loyalty to the covenant."—Von Rad, *op. cit.*, p. 373.

*Covenant* is the biblical word for relationship. ". . . basically *righteousness* is a concept of relationship. He is righteous who has fulfilled the demands laid upon him by that relationship in which he stands."—George Eldon Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974), p. 440. Von Rad says that *righteousness* "is out and out a term of relationship."—Von Rad, *op. cit.*, p. 371. "Men's common life was also judged wholly from the point of view of faithfulness to a relationship."—*Ibid.* "*Righteousness* is loyalty to a relationship."—*Ibid.* This is illustrated by Saul and David in 1 Samuel 24:17 or by the story of Tamar in Genesis 38:26. Tamar, despite her behavior in seducing Judah, was more righteous than the patriarch because "she had shown loyalty to a relationship."—*Ibid.*

*The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* says that *righteousness* is the "fulfillment of the demands of a relationship." It gives many instances and examples of this throughout the Bible. Our quarrel with *The Interpreter's Dictionary* is not for bringing out this valuable aspect but for trying to isolate this aspect from ethics and moral character. For if, in the interests of being true to Hebrew thought, one stresses the relational meaning of *righteousness* but goes so far as to say that it is not ethical and does not mean moral character, a person ends up with an abstract concept of relationship. And that is not Hebraic. It is as Grecian as an abstract "immortal soul." Hebrew thought is concrete, dynamic and holistic. *Righteousness* means a right relationship, but one that is expressed in actions of practical piety and moral rectitude.

## Righteousness means a right relationship, but one that is expressed in actions of practical piety and moral rectitude.

<sup>1</sup>We say this even though we must later take issue with Ziesler's interpretation of the Pauline expression "the righteousness of faith." Ziesler has written a very valuable book. His "Introduction" presents a superb summary of some aspects of the debate on *justification*.



The great advantage of the relational concept is that it lifts *righteousness* out of the realm of impersonal ethics and shows us that it is first and foremost a thing of the heart, an expression of a right personal relationship.

In the original creation man was set within a certain relationship to God and to the created order. There is a kind of hierarchical order here: God is the supreme Suzerain, man is placed under God's rule, and the whole created order is placed under the rule of man (Gen. 1:27-29; Ps. 8:3-8). Man therefore has a certain relationship to God, to his fellow humans (Eve stands at Adam's side—neither above nor beneath him) and to the animals and the created environment (all are subject to man as long as man remains subject to God). God is first, man is second, and things are last. (The same order appears in the Ten Commandments.) Since God has set man in a certain relationship to Himself and to the created order, man can be true man (i.e., righteous) only when he rightly relates to God, to his fellows and to the environment. *Righteousness* "is the standard not only for man's relationship with God, but also for his relationships to his fellows. . . . it is even the standard for man's relationship to the animals and to his natural environment."—Von Rad, *op. cit.*, p. 370. The cattle are in-

**Righteousness means living as man was meant to live in all the relationships of life.**

cluded in the fourth word of the Decalogue (Ex. 20:10). "A righteous man regards the life of his beast" (Prov. 12:10).

When we consider all these relationships in the light of the Hebrew manner of concrete, dynamic thinking, we see that *righteousness* means living as man was meant to live in *all* the relationships of life. But evangelical piety has often reduced *righteousness* to an abstract heart-relationship with the Lord that transpires in the inner world of the "soul-box"—a private, inner experience which has very little to do with such concrete things as social justice and proper care of the body or the environment.

## 2. Ethical (Law)

While agreeing with those scholars who say that *righteousness* is the "fulfillment of the demands of a relationship" (*The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 4, p. 80), we cannot agree with those who say that *righteousness* is "not an ethical state."—*Ibid.*, p. 95. Ladd also seems to fall for this nonethical line of thought when he says, "It [*righteousness*] is not a word designating personal ethical character, but faithfulness to a relationship."—Ladd, *op. cit.*, p. 440.

The Hebrew thought pattern tends to be concrete, dynamic and holistic. It is just not possible to talk about a relationship in a biblical way without including actions, behavior, ethics, conduct and rectitude.<sup>2</sup> Ziesler is

<sup>2</sup>It is ironic that when some scholars stress relationship apart from ethics in the interests of being Hebraic, they are never more Grecian.



justified in arguing for the ethical meaning of *righteousness*. It is, as he says, "the behaviour proper to 'the covenant.'"—Ziesler, *op. cit.*, p. 39. Leon Morris agrees that "'righteous' came to have ethical meaning and in many passages this is stressed."—Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, p. 262.

The prophets of Israel repeatedly demand behavior consistent with the covenant—conduct which is fair, impartial, merciful and right. *Righteousness* is the opposite of evil and wickedness. It often has the plain meaning of doing right, of faithful conduct in obedience to God's law (see Gen. 6:9; Ps. 37:12; Isa. 51:7; Deut. 6:25; 2 Sam. 22:21, 25; Ezek. 18:19-21; Hosea 14:9; Isa. 58:8; Prov. 21:21; Ps. 112:6).

The New Testament often gives to *righteousness* this meaning of right conduct or Christian behavior. In Matthew 25:37, 46 it has the meaning of loving activity toward Christ's brethren. In Matthew 6:1 it means compassionate deeds. A similar meaning appears in 1 John 3:7, 10-17, where *righteousness* basically means brotherly love. In 1 Peter 2:24 and 3:14 it means acceptable or right conduct. James gives it this meaning, too. Of course, we must not forget Paul. In Romans 6:13, 16, 20, 1 Thessalonians 2:10 and Titus 2:12 Paul is obviously talking about righteousness of life or godly behavior. Aside from the distinctive Pauline formula "the righteousness of God," Dr. Shrenk points out that *righteousness* "is almost always used in the New Testament for the right conduct of man which follows the will of God and is pleasing to Him, for rectitude of life before God, for uprightness before His judgment."—*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. G. Kittel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-1976), Vol 2, p. 198.

We agree that the ethical idea may not be the primary meaning of *righteousness*. But we suggest that ethics and moral character cannot be separated from the realm of relationships any more than obedience to God's commandments can be separated from love in Deuteronomy—or anywhere else in the Bible for that matter. We may therefore combine (1) the relational and (2) the ethical and say that *righteousness* is right relationship reflected in right conduct.

Despite what *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* says, "scholars generally agree that the basic idea [of *righteousness*] is conformity to a norm."—Ladd, *op. cit.*, p. 439; see Hill, *op. cit.*, pp. 83, 94; Shrenk in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 2, p. 185. Thus, in the Old Testament we find that the word *righteous* (or *just*) is applied to balances, weights and measures (Lev. 19:36; Ezek. 45:10; Deut. 25:15). This obviously means conformity to a proper standard.

Among the Greeks the word *righteousness* often meant conformity to social custom, doing the right thing with reference to what was acceptable according to the traditions of society<sup>3</sup>—much the same as the situation

<sup>3</sup>See Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 99.



## Ethics and moral character cannot be separated from the realm of relationships any more than obedience to God's commandments can be separated from love.

in Western society today. But to the covenant people of the Bible, the norm was not social standard but the will of the Lord made known in His law. For this reason, *righteousness* in Scripture has the plain, concrete meaning of obedience to the law of God.

And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He hath commanded us.—Deut. 6:25.

And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.—Luke 1:6.

*Righteousness* is "conformity to divine will" (Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 103), and the righteous man is "the man who conforms to law."—*Ibid.*, p. 100. "It is fundamental that the Lord has set his law before men and that he expects them to walk therein."—Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 262. Shrenk says that even in the New Testament, *righteousness* is based on the Old Testament and retains the idea of conformity to "the norm of the divine will."—*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 2, p. 185. In the Synoptics it often means "fidelity to the law" (Matt. 10:41; 13:17; 23:29; *ibid.*, p. 189). *Righteous* can be used to describe "the disciple or the Christian as the one who truly fulfills the Law or the divine will."—*Ibid.*, p. 190.

## Righteousness in Scripture has the plain, concrete meaning of obedience to the law of God.

We must not think that this idea of conformity to the law is only found outside Paul. In Romans 2:13 the righteous

is the one who as a doer of the Law will be declared righteous by the divine sentence . . . Not to be righteous means not to fulfill the Law because one is under sin . . . In 1 Thess 2:10 . . . Paul can use *dikaios* [righteous] in relation to the Christian life in the sense of the righteousness which corresponds to divine Law.—*Ibid.*, pp. 190-191.

In Romans 5:18-19 Paul uses the words *righteousness* and *obedience* interchangeably.

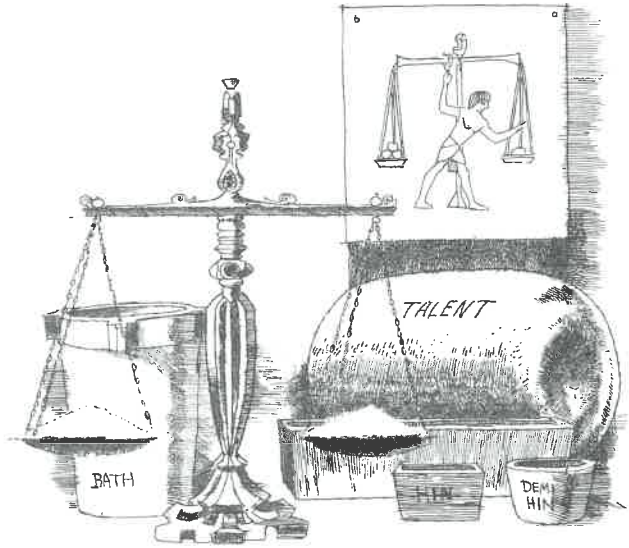
In the Reformation period the relation of righteousness to the law of God was given greater prominence than it is generally given today. For Luther and Calvin, the law was the norm of righteousness, the valid demand of God. Calvin, for instance, could say, "Righteousness consists in the observance of the law."—John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Bk. 2, chap. 17, sec. 5. Again he says: "The law of God contains perfect righteousness . . . We therefore willingly confess that perfect obedience to the law is righteousness."—*Ibid.*, Bk. 3, chap. 17, sec. 7. Chemnitz likewise says:

. . . that norm of righteousness which is revealed in the Law is the eternal, immovable, and unchangeable will of God . . . it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than that one iota and one little dot of the Law should fall, which is not satisfied by the perfection that is owed.—Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, Part 1, (St. Louis: Concordia, 1971), p. 498.

### 3. Forensic

Whether or not a person's life and activity are loyal to the covenant relationship is ultimately determined by God, who is both Lawgiver and Judge (Ex. 23:7; 1 Kings 8:32; etc.).

The idea of righteousness is often understood in a forensic context: the righteous man is he whom the judge declares to be free from guilt. It is the business of the judge to acquit the innocent and condemn the guilty (Deut. 25:1; see also 1 Kings 8:32). God is often pictured as the judge of men (Ps. 9:4; 33:5; Jer. 11:20). The verb appears almost exclusively in the forensic sense. He is righteous who is judged to be in the right (Exod. 23:7; Deut. 25:1), i.e., who in judgment through acquittal stands in a right relationship to the judge. The unrighteous man is he who is condemned. Some Old Testament scholars feel that this is the



primary connotation of the term. "When applied to the conduct of God the concept is narrowed and almost exclusively employed in a forensic sense.—Ladd, *op. cit.*, p. 440.

Among the Jews there was manifested an intense desire to be found righteous before God, especially in the final judgment (see Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 139). Being righteous, therefore, meant being "in the right before God."—*Ibid.*, p. 141. Right is settled by the Judge. "The righteous are those acquitted at the bar of justice."—Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 260. This is why some scholars say that *righteousness* in Scripture is fundamentally a legal status even though it may not be immediately apparent in a particular text.<sup>4</sup>

### Summary

We may reduce the meaning of *righteousness* in Scripture to three main conceptual strands:

1. Relational or covenantal
2. Ethical or lawkeeping
3. Forensic or being right in the verdict of God

There is no need to play one of these aspects off against the others. They can all be supported by the evidence. One concept is not inimical to the others. In fact, seen together, they make a dynamic whole.

In the first place, righteousness is relational. Ethical conduct (keeping God's commandments) flows from a right relationship or, we could say, is the expression of a right relationship. It is important that we preserve this order, because the covenant union is the root, and correct behavior is the fruit.

<sup>4</sup>Ziesler estimates that in the Old Testament the straightforward forensic and legal instances of *righteousness* only occur about 24.4% of all cases (Ziesler, *op. cit.*, p. 32).

Once we understand this, it clears up a lot of misconceptions about the Old Testament religion, which is sometimes made to appear quite legalistic. Israel's obedience to the law was something which sprang from her covenant relationship, and not the other way around (see Ex. 20:1-2). No amount of law-keeping could establish her privileged covenant relationship with God. As in creation, the divine-human relationship was wholly due to God's initiative or God's election. The relationship with God was not earned by obedience. It was a gracious donation by God. Israel could respond to her election by a grateful response of loyal and faithful obedience. The law, or covenant stipulations, constituted the content of that response. Law-keeping could only be meaningful when it expressed an existing relationship with God. It could never bring that relationship about. Outside of the covenant relationship, "obedience" to the law had no meaning and no validity whatsoever.

This is why later Judaism was a complete perversion of the revealed religion of Israel. The Jews came to think that their pious observance of the law could put God in their debt and establish their relationship with Him. They thought that this type of law-keeping would merit their acquittal on the day of judgment.

We must not react against this kind of legalism by saying that God does not judge the deeds of men or that He is not concerned with whether or not they keep His law. This would not only fly in the face of the Old Testament, but it would also contradict the New Testament—even Paul himself, who teaches that there will be a final judgment according to works (Rom. 2:6-16).

God does judge and will judge the deeds of men, but deeds are not appraised by their own phenomenological value. The question to be decided is this: Are the deeds which pass the divine scrutiny expressive of the person's relationship with God? Do they demonstrate trust, gratefulness and loyalty to the covenant? If they do, then even the human party may appeal to his righteousness for vindication at the bar of God. This explains why the same psalmist who prayed, ". . . enter not into judgment with Thy servant: for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified" (Ps. 143:2), could also pray: "The Lord shall judge the people: judge me, O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me" (Ps. 7:8). "The Lord rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath He recompensed me" (Ps. 18:20). "Therefore hath the Lord recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands in His eyesight" (Ps. 18:24).

If we have difficulty with what may appear to be a bold self-righteousness in these psalms, it is only because we have not understood the biblical realism of a righteousness which is first relational (gift), then ethical (grateful response), and finally forensic (judged as the right behavior in the eyes of the Lord). This righteousness has no degrees. A man is either righteous in God's

Israel's obedience to the law was something which sprang from her covenant relationship, and not the other way around.

The biblical concern is not whether a man or his deeds are ethically sinless but whether or not those deeds are evidence of his faith and loyalty to Jehovah.

eyes or wicked. There are no shades of gray. The concern is not whether the man or his deeds are ethically sinless but whether or not those deeds are evidence of his faith and loyalty to Jehovah. Although in the New Testament there is development and clarification of this concept of *righteousness*, throughout the Bible it is still the basic conception of a righteous man.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup>When the word *righteousness* is applied to God, it means His covenant loyalty and His activity which expresses His unswerving fidelity to the covenant. Whether God punishes or forgives His people, the righteousness of God is revealed.

As King and Judge, God's activity in judging, especially in judging the cause of His people, is often referred to by the word *righteousness* (Ps. 9:8; 50:6; Isa. 42:21; Jer. 11:20; Deut. 33:21; Ps. 99:4; 2 Chron. 12:6). While *righteousness* may very well apply to God's wrath which punishes, it is often associated with His saving acts (Isa. 51:5; 56:1; 45:8; Ps. 71:13-24).

The *righteousness* of God is related to His law. The God of the Bible is the God of law. The law is the expression of His character. Rather than being unpredictable or capricious, "He can be relied upon to act according to law."—Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 255; see entire section, pp. 253-258, for an excellent discussion on the righteousness of God and the law of God.



## CHAPTER 4

### The Relation of Righteousness and Salvation

In both the Old and the New Testament the words *righteousness* and *salvation* are placed in the closest relationship. Here are a few examples:

My righteousness is near; My salvation is gone forth.  
—Isa. 51:5.

For He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and an helmet of salvation.—Isa. 59:17.

. . . My salvation is near to come, and My righteousness to be revealed.—Isa. 56:1.

. . . the gospel . . . is . . . salvation. . . . For in it the righteousness of God is revealed . . . "He who through faith is righteous shall live [have salvation]."—Rom. 1:16-17, RSV.

. . . that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.—Rom. 5:21.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.—Rom. 10:10.

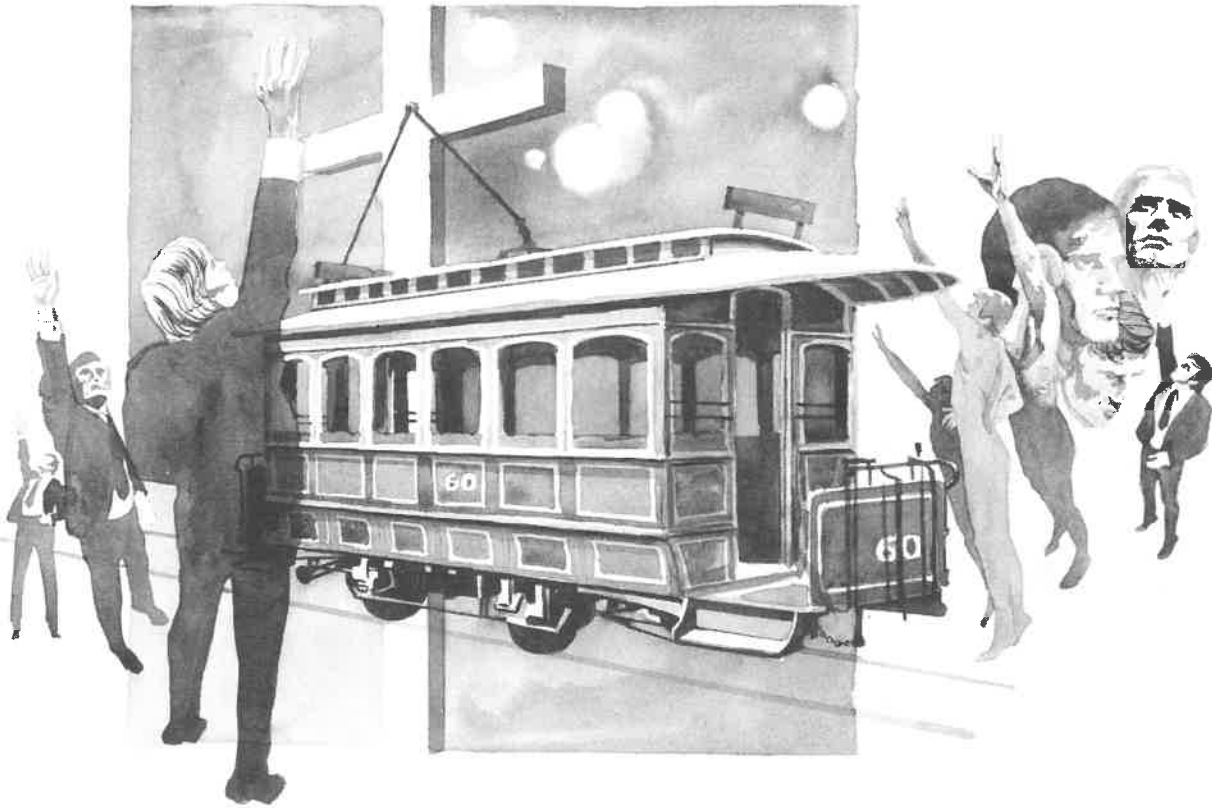
It must be obvious that any teaching about salvation which is not related to righteousness does not do justice to the biblical teaching.

#### The Meaning of Salvation

We have already discussed the meaning of *righteousness* in Scripture. Now let us see what is embraced in the word *salvation*.

There is no doubt that Christians have often held a very Grecianized view of salvation. It is a hyper-spiritualized idea about saving a part of man—"the ghost within the machine." In the light of the Old Testament background it would have to be said that this reflects a very truncated view of both man and his salvation.

We need to go back to God's prototype kingdom in Eden. The simple hierarchical order is God, man and the created order. Man is made "a living soul." This "living soul" is not a part of man, much less "a ghost in the machine"; but as the Hebrew means, it is a *living*,



*breathing creature.* That which constitutes man a creature of great worth is not inherent properties or some indestructible part of his nature but the simple fact that he has, by divine election (gift), a special relationship to God. It is this relationship which invests man with special value. His great value is relational, not ontological. Outside of this relation to God, man is only dust. He does not have life in himself as an inalienable right. Life is derivative. Man is not even made to operate on a battery principle but on a trolley-car principle—to have life and power only by continual connection with the Source of life and power.

This relationship (covenant) with God invested man with great dignity and honor. He was God's representative, appointed to exercise dominion over the created order (Gen. 1:28-29; Ps. 8:3-8). Man was righteous in that all his relationships were right. He was subject to God's rule, while the created order in turn was subject to man's rule.

Then came the fall. Sin disrupted man's relationship with God. When man was no longer subject to God's authority, the created order was no longer subject to man's authority. Many of the beasts became dangerous and vicious, while the earth itself was cursed to bring forth thorns and thistles (Gen. 3:18). Just as an ideal environment once mirrored man's ideal relationships, so now a disordered environment reflected man's dis-

ordered relationships.

In the covenant which God made with the nation of Israel, we see again God's ideal kingdom shadowed forth. Here again was a picture of God's intention—a people of His choosing, under His rule and in the land (or place) of His choosing. We say "shadowed forth" because it was impossible for God's ideal to be realized through sinful Israel. Instead of ruling as God's representative on earth, Israel was often ruled by enemy powers. The curse was very much in evidence by such things as deadly serpents, ravaging beasts and barren deserts.

The message of the prophets was twofold. On the one hand, it was their mournful task to pronounce judgments and curses on Israel for breaking the covenant. With a severed relationship with God, Israel could not expect to exercise her dominion but to experience destruction and desolation at the hand of marauding armies, invading caterpillars, locusts or wild beasts. On the other hand, the prophets dreamed of a better day (Jer. 31:26). The day was coming when God would arise and accomplish His saving act. The prophets often used the imagery of an ideal land of Canaan or Eden itself to describe the salvation which God would bring. There would be a new covenant (relationship) with God; and as part and parcel of this salvation, all right relationships would be restored. Infants would play on the hole of asps, and little children would lead the beasts which



are now dangerous and vicious. The deserts would blossom, and instead of yielding briars and burrs, they would be clothed in the verdure of Eden. Israel would dwell safely without threat of invading armies. Death itself would be overcome.

And in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And He will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it.

And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.—Isa. 25:6-9.

For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy. And I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people: and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying.—Isa. 65:17-19.

And they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them. They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat: for as the days of a tree are the days of My people, and Mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their

hands. They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them. And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear. The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, saith the Lord.—Isa. 65:21-25.

In these passages of Scripture, salvation does not mean a super-spiritualized inner salvation of man's incorporeal nature. Much less does it mean a flight of the soul from the inferior material world. All this is foreign to the Hebrew Scriptures. God made the whole man "a living soul," and what God loves and saves is this whole animated, breathing creature along with his whole environment. Salvation means a restoration of man to a right relationship with God, with his fellows and with the whole created order.

The New Testament does not abandon this "materialistic" Hebrew view of salvation and opt instead for a "spiritualized" Grecian salvation. The Christian message of the resurrection is "materialistic" and Hebraic. Salvation is just as concrete and real in the New Testament as in the Old Testament. The last two chapters of John's Apocalypse take up the message of the Old Testament prophets and put their vision of salvation into a very realistic panorama of the new heavens and the new earth. There is also the New Jerusalem city, complete with river and tree of life.

## Salvation means a restoration of man to a right relationship with God, with his fellows and with the whole created order.

If one is like Marcion and dismisses the Apocalypse as being “too Jewish,” what about Romans 8? Is it any less Jewish? Here Paul speaks of adoption, justification, election and glory. These are all Jewish hopes. The inheritance of Romans 8 is just as “materialistic” as is the message of Revelation 20-22. Says Paul:

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.—Rom. 8:19-25, RSV.

The New Testament, of course, differs from the Old Testament in one very important respect. It proclaims that in Jesus Christ the new age has arrived and the new creation is already a reality. The events of the last day have already been effected in Him. This means that we may already possess salvation—God’s eschatological blessings—by faith. But we must emphasize that the present possession of salvation is only by faith. Its empirical realization is still future. In one important sense we are not saved yet and will not be saved until the last day (see Heb. 9:28; 1 Peter 1:3-13). This is why the New Testament talks about “the hope of salvation” (1 Thess. 5:8). Even though it transcends the possibility of adequate description, this salvation is tangible and as real as the body in which we live and the earth on which we walk. The inheritance of God’s people (salvation) is not yet in actual possession. It is reserved in heaven (1 Peter 1:3-5) and is possessed in the now only by faith. “. . . faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1).

## Salvation is just as concrete and real in the New Testament as in the Old Testament.

In many New Testament passages *eternal life* or *life* is used as a synonym for *salvation* (Rom. 1:16-17; 5:18, 21; 6:23; Matt. 19:17-25). It is both a present possession (by faith) and a future hope.

### The Condition of Salvation

The relation between *righteousness* and *salvation* (life) may now be simply stated. Righteousness is the prerequisite or the condition of salvation. Man cannot be saved apart from the possession of righteousness. Salvation is based on righteousness.

## Righteousness is the prerequisite or the condition of salvation.

The recurring premise of the Old Testament is that the righteous will live and the wicked will die:

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.

But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right, [and] . . . hath walked in My statutes, and hath kept My judgments, to deal truly; he is just, he shall surely live, saith the Lord God. . . .

When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die. Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive.—Ezek. 18:4-5, 9, 26-27.

Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in Thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not. He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.—Ps. 15.

Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times.—Ps. 106:3.

If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land: but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.—Isa. 1:19-20.

In the light of these and many other scriptures, we may at least appreciate the Jew’s passionate quest for a righteousness which would win a favorable verdict of Israel’s Judge, especially on the final day.



We must not suppose that the New Testament presents another condition of salvation. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus reiterated the Old Testament demand for righteousness. He declared, "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:20). Jesus' argument with the Pharisees was not that they taught that righteousness was a prerequisite to enter the kingdom of the age to come. Nor was it because the Pharisees made the standard too high. The real problem was that they (like all legalists) had compromised the standard to their own level. They even taught that a man would be saved if his good deeds outweighed his bad ones—as if fifty-one percent honesty could stand before a God of perfect and infinite justice. According to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, a righteousness which consists in perfect obedience to the law of God—to a degree that the Pharisees had never dreamed of, i.e., compliance in their secret desires and intents of the heart—is the condition for entering the kingdom of heaven.

In Jesus' confrontation with the rich young ruler, we see that entering the kingdom, receiving eternal life, entering into life and being saved are all the same thing. And what is the condition of salvation unto life eternal? Righteousness which consists in conformity to the law of God!

**According to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, a righteousness which consists in perfect obedience to the law of God is the condition for entering the kingdom of heaven.**

And, behold, one came and said unto Him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And He said unto him, Why callest thou Me good? there is none good but One, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto Him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto Him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

Then said Jesus unto His disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to



enter into the kingdom of God. When His disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?—Matt. 19:16-25.

Paul reiterates the same message in the book of Romans—yes, the book of Romans. In Romans 1:17 he introduces his theme by telling us that the one who is righteous (by faith) shall live (RSV). Let us forget about the “by faith” rider for the moment. The righteous, and none but the righteous, shall live. In Romans 2 the apostle drives this message home:

. . . [God] will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life: but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile. . . . (for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified . . . ) in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.—Rom. 2:6-10, 13, 16.

Paul is certainly reflecting the Old Testament here. Righteousness boils down to law-fulfillment. Shrenk comments, “The *dikaïos* [righteous] is the one who as doer of the Law will be declared righteous by divine sentence.”—*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. 2, p. 190. As surely as sin leads to death, even so does righteousness lead to life (Rom. 5:21). Only those who can satisfy the divine tribunal with a righteousness which meets its standard will be justified and receive the verdict of life. Righteousness, therefore, is the condition of salvation.<sup>6</sup>

Before we run off too prematurely and talk about salvation by grace, let us first see that the Old Testament passion for righteousness is not diminished or watered down in the New Testament. A salvation which does not honor the demand for righteousness can neither glorify God nor appease the sinner’s conscience. God is not only committed to saving people, but He is committed to saving them *justly*. We dare not surrender this biblical insight. If the church teaches a salvation which is not based on righteousness, such a “salvation” can only be “another gospel” which has disastrous ethical consequences. A “gospel” which does not uphold and honor the law can only produce people who, on a concrete level, know very little of what it

means to live in a right relationship to God, to men and to the created order.<sup>7</sup>

Listen to what both Luther and Calvin said on this point. First Luther: “. . . 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*, American ed. (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press; St. Louis: Concordia, 1955- ), Vol. 31, p. 348. Now Calvin: “For the Lord promises nothing except to perfect keepers of His law. . . .”—John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Bk. 3, chap. 17, sec. 1.

Only the right preaching of God’s law with its valid demand for righteousness will make people sensible of their helplessness and prepare them to understand and appreciate the gospel. If man stands under a broken covenant (broken fellowship with God), his law-keeping has no meaning or value with God, because the only conduct which can be called *righteousness* is that which expresses a right relationship with God. Outside of that covenant fellowship all human conduct is no better than glittering sin. It can contribute absolutely nothing toward establishing a right relationship with God.

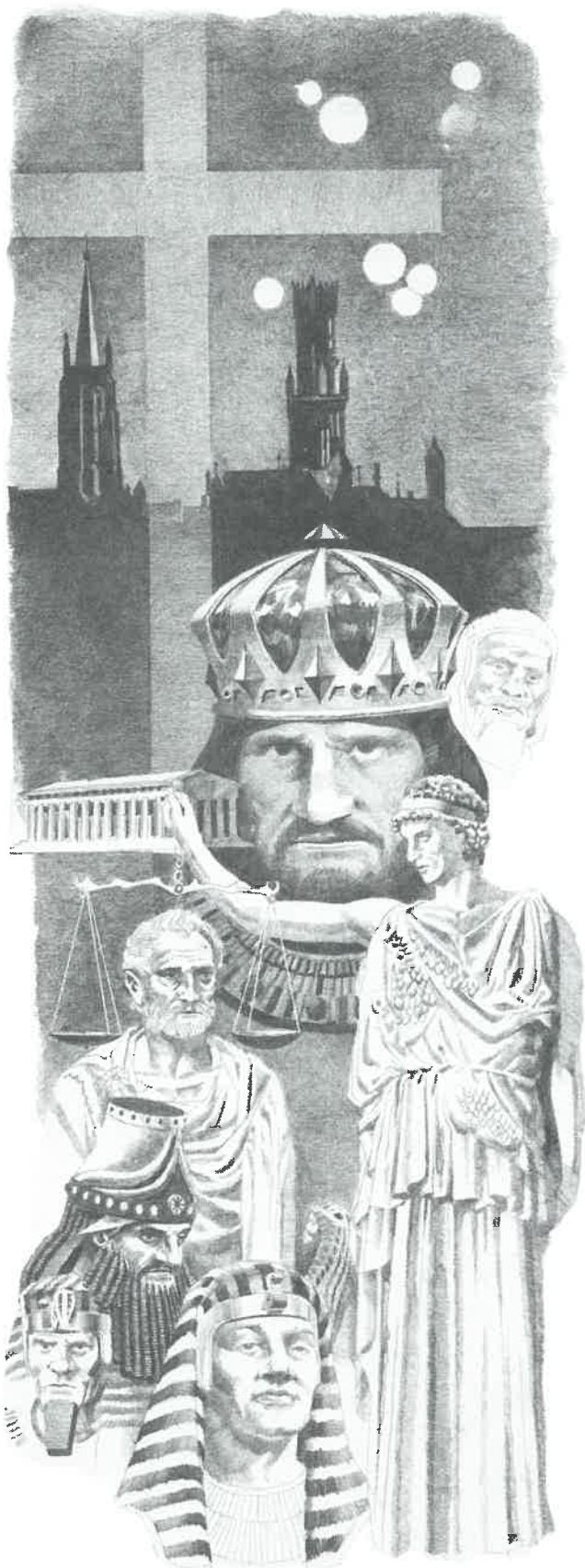
The right preaching of the law will not induce people to try to climb up to heaven by law-fulfillment. It will convince them that they have forfeited all claim on God. Outside of a right relationship with Him the law can only work wrath and be used by sin to subject man to sin’s utter enslavement (Rom. 4:15; 7:8; 1 Cor. 15:56). The law is a good thing, but to use it in the wrong way is an appalling mistake.

(To be continued)

<sup>7</sup>Ziesler (*The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul*) thinks that in the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith it is difficult to find a road from forensic justification to ethics. We would like to suggest that most of this difficulty disappears if *righteousness* is clearly taught as a condition of salvation. A way of salvation which honors the law will produce believers who honor the law in genuine righteousness of life.

Only those who can satisfy the divine tribunal with a righteousness which meets its standard will be justified and receive the verdict of life.

<sup>6</sup>N. H. Snaith declares, “The fact of the matter is that God does not require righteousness at all, in any shape or shadow, as a condition of salvation.”—N. H. Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament* (New York: Schocken Books, 1964), p. 164. But Bultmann, perhaps surprisingly for some, comes to the defense of the “old” faith at this point. He says, “Strictly speaking, [in Paul’s theology] righteousness is the condition of receiving salvation or ‘life.’”—Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1970), Vol. 2, p. 270.



# Christ, Our Wisdom

Graeme Goldsworthy

## Israel's Wisdom and Its Fulfillment in Christ

### Wisdom in the New Testament

The word *wisdom* in the Bible is a technical term whose meaning we easily take for granted. The problem arises when we define biblical terms on the basis of our own human experience and use of language rather than on the basis of the biblical description of reality. Wisdom is an elusive enough idea when we try to pin it down in terms of the human activity of thinking and the appraisal of man in relationship to experience in the world. But such a humanistic stance makes it impossible to understand the whole biblical picture of wisdom—particularly when, on the one hand, Christ is described as our wisdom and yet, on the other hand, a contrast is made between human and divine wisdom.

Paul speaks of wisdom in several ways. First, he asserts that God made Christ to be our wisdom (1 Cor. 1:30). Then he says that Christ is God's wisdom, thus showing that *wisdom* is synonymous with *gospel*.

... we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.—1 Cor. 1:23-24.

But we impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God, which God decreed before the ages for our glorification.—1 Cor. 2:7.

First Corinthians 1-2 provides a discourse on wisdom in two forms: the wisdom of the world, which is God-denying; and the wisdom of God in the gospel. There is a clear distinction between Christian and pagan (Greek) thinking, yet it is a distinction which does not deny an area of continuity. After all, the pagan is speaking about the same reality as does the Christian when he talks about man and the world about him. The differences occur when the pagan misperceives the nature of man and the world because he does not see them in relation to the self-revealing and sovereign Creator-God.

James says that God imparts wisdom to those who ask in faith (James 1:5-6), and this faith-condition strongly suggests wisdom's relationship to the gospel.

Scripture quotations are from the Revised Standard Version.

## The scribes and wise men of Israel sought to understand wisdom and to possess it, but Jesus spoke with authority as the Source of wisdom.

Furthermore, James characterizes this wisdom that comes from above (James 3:15-18) in a way very similar to Paul's description of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). Beyond this, we note that the New Testament has in excess of fifty references to *wisdom (sophia)* as well as about twenty uses of the adjective *wise (sophos)*. In many instances wisdom is the property of Jesus (e.g., Matt. 12:42; 13:54; Mark 6:2; Luke 2:40, 52) or of His followers (e.g., Luke 21:15; Acts 6:3, 10). In the context of the gospel we see the wisdom of men set against the wisdom of God (e.g., 1 Cor. 1:17, 19, 21-22; 2:5-6, 13; 3:19; 2 Cor. 1:12; James 3:15).

*Wisdom (sophia)* is not distinct to the New Testament but stems from the wide use of the term in the Old Testament (*hokhmah*). Not only do direct references to the wisdom of Joseph (Acts 7:10), Moses (Acts 7:22) and Solomon (Matt. 12:42) link the wisdom ideas of the two Testaments, but much of the teaching of Jesus is couched in the well-worn forms developed by the wisdom teachers of the Old Testament. Jesus used parables, aphorisms and proverbs in a way that was long established in Israel through the wisdom movement and the traditions of the scribes. But He did so in a way that drew attention to a remarkable distinction between Himself and the scribes. The scribes and wise men of Israel sought to understand wisdom and to possess it, but Jesus spoke with authority as the Source of wisdom. After He applied the classic wisdom contrast between the wise man and the foolish man to conclude the great Sermon on the Mount, the crowds were astonished, for He taught as One who had authority and not as the scribes (Matt. 7:28-29).

### Israel's Wisdom

The background to Israel's wisdom lies in two directions: the revelation of God, and the common human activity in all cultures of seeking to know the meaning of reality by perceiving order in the complexities of man's existence. To understand what the word *wisdom* embraces, we need to see it in as wide a context as possible. Furthermore, the Bible drives us to this wider perspective as it describes Solomon as the one who gave the greatest impetus to a wisdom movement.

It is at this point that a major theological problem emerges. Solomon receives wisdom from God in order to be able to rule his kingdom well. His activity as a

wise man is then related, not in judicial or political terms, but in terms of natural history! (1 Kings 4:33). Furthermore, its universal—that is, its non-Israelite—flavor is accentuated by comparison between Solomon's wisdom and that of other cultures (1 Kings 4:30-31). The literary forms mentioned in 1 Kings 4:32 remind us of the book of Proverbs, which contains a great deal of material that hardly relates in any direct way to Israel's specific covenantal religion and salvation history.

When the Queen of Sheba—a pagan—visits Solomon to ply him with difficult questions, she is left breathless by his answers and by the material splendor of his kingdom, all of which is seen in the context of wisdom. This reinforces the impression that wisdom is concerned in a very concrete way with life in this world as the real existence with which we have to do.

In fact, we discover that the Babylonians and the Egyptians both developed literary expressions of wisdom very similar to those later found in Israel. The Egyptians' wisdom is especially interesting in view of their relationship to Israel through Moses and others. Also, it is generally conceded that the wisdom of the Egyptian sage, Amen-em-ope, provides the basis for Proverbs 22:17-23, 11. Important to Egyptian wisdom is the concept of *ma'at*, which is variously translated as *truth, righteousness, justice* or *order*. So strong are the similarities with Israel's wisdom, which also uses the ideas of truth and righteousness in the context of world order, that some scholars propose that righteousness must be extended beyond the ethical concept to embrace cosmic order (e.g., H. H. Schmid, *Gerechtigkeit als Weltordnung* [Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1968]).

When we turn to Israel's wisdom to inquire about its origins and development, we find that we must distinguish at least three aspects, which do not necessarily coincide at all points.

1. The Hebrew word *hokhmah (wisdom)* is used alongside a number of words (e.g., *discernment, discretion, prudence, knowledge*, etc.) to express a way of thinking which includes the ability to understand the nature of things and events, to perceive and take advantage of the order or lawfulness of the universe which is obscured by complexity.

2. Wisdom applies to an institutional development which, in Egypt at least, was associated with the education of an elite nobility for office. The evidence is not so strong for such schools in Israel, but there were men, known as wise men, who had a distinct office of counsel in the Israelite establishment. Later the scribes appear to have succeeded as the wise men of Israel, whose task it was, among other things, to teach.

3. Wisdom refers to the distinctive literary productions (Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes and some psalms) which deal with a broad spectrum of concerns within the ambit of the wisdom way of thinking. Job and Ecclesiastes are difficult to classify as far as literary form

is concerned, but Proverbs reveals two basic forms not at all distinct to Israel. First, there is the *instruction* (e.g., Prov. 1:8-19; 2:1-19), which betrays an educational process of a formal kind, involving teacher and pupils. Second, there is the *proverb*, which seems to stem more from the folk-wisdom of the people that was accumulated over the centuries and passed down by oral tradition until collected and committed to a written form.

Recognizing these distinct ways in which the wisdom idea is used, we find that a precise definition of *wisdom* is well-nigh impossible. The problem is compounded by different emphases that emerge in wisdom thought. Gerhard von Rad proposed three main areas of wisdom: empirical, theological and skeptical (G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology* [Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1965]).

Empirical wisdom is seen in the mass of proverbs which make no reference to God, to His revealed character and will or to His deeds in salvation. In isolation, these proverbs seem to express a nonreligious view of life and the world. Such wisdom seems difficult to fit in with the explicitly revealed knowledge of reality that comes principally in the framework of the covenant and Israel's salvation history. Any overlap that this empirical wisdom has with revealed law appears at the level of common sense.

Theological wisdom is a term sometimes used to refer to that wisdom which is understood more as a divine gift and revelation than as a purely empirical activity. There is a danger of overstressing the distinctions in this regard, and the relationship between the emphasis on revelation and on empirical knowledge must be carefully observed. Solomon was granted wisdom as a divine gift, yet his activity as a sage was empirical (1 Kings 4:29-33). Furthermore, the largest concentration of empirical wisdom—the book of Proverbs—is peppered with theological statements and, most significantly, is contained within the theological framework: the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

It is clear that there is a wide range in wisdom expressions—from the simple empirical observations couched in proverbial form to the complex examinations of human existence within a theological framework. The question we must answer is how this wide range of expression relates to the dominating framework of covenant theology and salvation history.

## The Teaching of Wisdom

The problem of wisdom teaching is that it operates in the area of creation rather than covenant and salvation. So long as we accept the view that theology consists in the recital of God's acts in history, this difficulty remains. Thus G. E. Wright says:

In any attempt to outline a discussion of Biblical faith it is the wisdom literature which offers the chief difficulty

## Wisdom teaching operates in the area of creation rather than covenant and salvation.

because it does not fit into the type of faith exhibited in the historical and prophetic literatures.—G. E. Wright, *God Who Acts* (London: SCM Press, 1952), p. 103.

Gerhard von Rad gives a superb analysis of wisdom but is only able to regard it as part of Israel's response to the theology proper of salvation history (von Rad, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1).

But biblical theology does not thus divide the concern for creation and the concern for salvation. Even von Rad has recognized that Israel sees her salvation as another creation (see Isa. 43:1; 65:17-25; cf. 2 Cor. 5:17; 2 Peter 3:13). There are many places in the Old Testament where the final day of salvation is described, not in terms of a return to Israel, but of a return to Eden (e.g., Isa. 11:6-9; 51:3; Ezek. 36:35). We cannot ignore so prominent a theme as the tree of life which was denied the sinning Adam in Eden (Gen. 3:22) but which is found through wisdom (Prov. 3:18; 11:30) and is the goal of salvation (Ezek. 47:12; cf. Rev. 22:2; 2:7).

Indeed, this is not surprising when we reflect on the way reality is depicted in the Bible. Reality consists of God and the created order. Creation in turn consists of man, who is made in the image of God, and of all the rest of animate and inanimate creation over which man exercises dominion. These three aspects—God, man and the world—are all perfectly related before the fall. This proper relationship is integral to the concept of life, so that when the relationship is fractured in the fall, the result is called death.

Every understanding of salvation must penetrate behind the immediate terminology of salvation history—covenant, Israel, kingdom of God, etc.—to the basic reality underlying it all. Salvation involves the re-establishment of man into his proper relationship with all reality. Leaving aside for the moment the question of the way salvation is achieved through the ages, we recognize that salvation involves man, the created order and God—all brought into proper relationship.

Two errors contribute to the difficulty of getting the wisdom material into focus with the rest of the Bible. The first error is to see salvation in a Hellenistic, pagan framework as the rescuing of the immortal soul from bondage to sinful flesh and matter. The soul of man is not open to empirical investigation, and so it is difficult to see how the empirical and materialistic wisdom material relates to the soul. The second error is to think of salvation exclusively in terms of one or other of the strata of biblical revelation which relate to salvation history. Old Testament wisdom has very little specific refer-

ence to the covenant and salvation history, and the biblical emphasis on Israel (or the new Israel) may seem to be wide of the thrust of wisdom.

The three aspects of reality—God, man, the world—are clearly the three aspects of the kingdom of God—God's rule, God's people, God's place—which can be discerned at every level of revelation of the kingdom (see G. Goldsworthy, "The Kingdom of God and the Old Testament," *Present Truth*, Feb., 1976, pp. 16-23). If wisdom speaks to God, man and the world, and salvation history speaks to God's rule over God's people in God's place, then there is no essential difference in the subject matter. Let us now briefly relate wisdom to these terms.

**1. Wisdom Is God-affirming.** As we gain the broader perspective of wisdom, we see that empirical wisdom affirms God as much as does theological wisdom. But some wisdom is explicitly God-affirming in the sense that it designates the nature of the relationship of God to the world and to man. The book of Job is a mighty exposition of God's sovereignty at work in the world of human experience. Many proverbs give direct expression to man before God, thus explicating the wisdom theme of the fear of the Lord. It is a fundamental error to regard theological wisdom as the result of a development and sophistication of an older and earthier empirical wisdom. It is true that some of the wisdom of the inter-Testamental period takes a fairly clear direction in developing certain theological themes such as the identification of wisdom and the law of God. But there is no evidence that Israel's early wisdom was ever purely empirical or that it was seen to belong to a different thought-world from that of Israel's covenant existence before God.

**2. Wisdom Is Man-affirming.** In no sense may we misrepresent the seriousness of sin and of man's fall. Reformation theology has always stood firm in the confession of man's total inability to will or to do anything that counts for righteousness before God. But the doctrine of the total inability of man must be placed alongside the doctrine of the total responsibility of man. The image of God is not totally obliterated in fallen man, and fallen man in a fallen world remains responsible to God. Wisdom affirms the responsible freedom that man has, not in the Arminian sense of freedom of the will in an autonomous being, but in the sense that man remains a thinking, reasoning, decision-making being.

Just as total depravity does not mean that God has allowed the sinner to become as corrupt as he can possibly be (rather, that corruption infects his total being), so wisdom in its empirical form shows that God has not permitted total noetic corruption in the sense that the sinner's thinking is as corrupt as it could possibly be. In the mercy of God, such is the remnant of the image of God in man that, although all his thinking is affected

by sin, he is still able to use his reason to respond to the world around him. One does not have to be a Christian to understand the empirical relationships which are given expression in much of the wisdom literature.

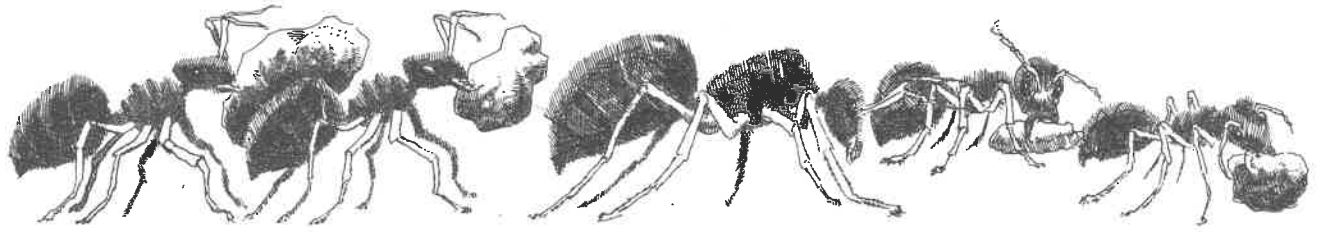
Human intellectual endeavor in science and the humanities is not totally invalid even when it is not theistic. Yet human corruption affects all of it until it is brought into full subjection to the sovereignty of God. Wisdom affirms the intellectual, cultural and social adventures of man as that creation-subduing task which belongs to the image of God in man. But it also points up the inadequacy of a wisdom divorced from God, for man and his world are only a part of reality.

Thus, when wisdom looks at the characteristics of the wise and the foolish man, at the lessons to be learned from nature, or at the desirable results produced by wise or righteous behavior, it gives expression to the realization that man is called upon to be responsibly human in seeking to subdue all things through understanding of the basic world order that exists behind the bewildering complexities of existence. The truly wise man is the godly man who knows that reality is God's ruling relationship to man and creation.

Wisdom is one of the surest antidotes for the enervating error of the hyper-Calvinism which undercuts man's responsibility for the sake of God's sovereignty. Wisdom is also the remedy for a kind of hyper-Calvinism which infects many evangelicals in the area of guidance and Christian behavior. The super-spiritual "leave it to the Lord" approach—as much as the charismatic claims to immediate revelation through the Spirit—is often an abdication of human responsibility to use one's brains in the process of arriving at the best course of action. In no way do we denigrate the place of prayer, and we certainly believe in the absolute sovereignty of God. But these truths must not become the spiritual cloak of irresponsible laziness.

**3. Wisdom Is World-affirming.** Let us reflect on the general biblical perspective of the created order. God made the material universe in the beginning and pronounced it good. When man fell into sin, the universe was also subjected to a fall on account of man and, like man, awaits a redemption from that fall. However much we spiritualize the new creation or the new heavens and the new earth of the New Testament hope, there are no grounds at all for asserting that there is no continuity between this present creation and the new creation. The bodily resurrection of Jesus reinforces the fact that, whether we think it a good idea or not, God made man for bodily existence in a material universe, and we are stuck with a form of universe for eternity.

Of course, it is only the pagan Hellenistic mind-set toward matter that could describe us as being "stuck" with it! Never doubting for a moment the radical transformation of all things, including our bodies, that the resurrection will bring, we nevertheless are inescapably



tioned to a created environment—a “world.”

In contrast with the biblical view is the Greek view that matter, including our bodies, is evil and that our destiny lies in the final escape of our immortal souls into a timeless and matterless eternity. But Hebrew wisdom is a sure antidote for Greek world-denying thought. Wisdom recognizes the place of the material world in the whole of reality. Though fallen, the world has its intrinsic value as God’s world. Man is distinct but not separate from this world, and thus he may learn much about himself and about the meaning of his existence by observing and understanding the world. When the wise man says, “Go to the ant, O sluggard . . .” (Prov. 6:6), he expresses this unity which we have with creation—a unity that says something about our existence. But when he says, “As a door turns on its hinges, so does a sluggard on his bed” (Prov. 26:14), he speaks of the need for man to recognize his uniqueness in creation so that he does not become fused with the inanimate. To be a sluggard is to be world-denying and man-denying.

To sum up this very brief survey: Wisdom recognizes that in God’s world there is order. For man to be properly related to reality, to his fellow man, to the creation and to God, he must fit into this order; he must acknowledge it and master it. Wisdom thus describes the nature of reality in a manner that is distinctive and yet which overlaps the way that this same reality is portrayed in salvation history.

## Wisdom and Law

Wisdom deals with the lawfulness of reality but is not itself to be confused with the law. The apodictic (categorical) law in the Old Testament expresses universal imperatives as “Thou shalt” or “Thou shalt not.” The casuistic law (“if . . . then . . .”) shows how the absolute moral law applies in concrete situations and prescribes the action to be taken by those charged with the responsibility of executing judgment. Many Christians read the book of Proverbs as if the multitude of proverbial sentences contained in it were, in the same manner as law, timeless abstractions complementing the law of Moses. Wisdom thus becomes a kind of Pharisaic development of law which sets out explicit guidance for a large number of circumstances in life.

But wisdom must not be treated as law. Certainly it expresses the truth about the same reality as does the law, but it does so in a different way. Law is concerned with the “what” of our response to reality; wisdom is just as much concerned with the “how.” That is, wisdom has to do with not only what sort of behavior we exhibit but with how we arrive at a correct understanding of things so that we may seek to behave aright in any given situation. The nature of a proverb is such that if it is treated as a timeless, abstract law, it will prove true in some circumstances but will produce a disaster in others. Part of being wise is understanding to what specific situation a given proverb may be applied. When we understand this characteristic of the proverb, we can see how two proverbs can give exactly opposite counsel (e.g., Prov. 26:4-5).

Given this distinction between law and wisdom (while always recognizing the unity between them), we gain a better feeling for the relationship of Job to Proverbs. The book of Proverbs places great emphasis on the wise or good behavior leading to a good result and on folly leading to evil. This appears to amount to a doctrine of direct and inexorable retribution in our lives. It is only by treating such proverbial wisdom as abstract law that one can arrive at the “logical” conclusion that misfortune is always the result of sin and that happiness is the result of goodness. Such was the error of Job’s friends, and some theologians have referred to this as the crisis of wisdom (e.g., H. H. Schmid, *Wesen und Geschichte der Weisheit* [Topelmann, 1966]). Job’s friends sought to abstract proverbial wisdom out of the concrete situations of origin and to turn the particular case into the general rule. To them the logic was clear and irrefutable: Job stood condemned.

But wisdom does not allow itself to be cast into such a mechanical form. It is guidance for life in that it attunes our thinking to the nature of reality. The concrete situations behind every individual wisdom saying may never be repeated in our experience, but they point to the complex relationships in reality which are affecting each and every one of us continually.

## The Christology of Wisdom

The gospel fulfills all the expectations of the Old Testament. In short, it proclaims that reality as it has been partially revealed in the Old Testament is now

perfectly revealed in Christ. Jesus Christ is true God and true man. His manhood is not a partial one of spirit or mind, but it is a complete bodily existence of man. Insofar as Jesus' existence is material, it is one with the created order, and the Person of Christ may be seen to embrace all reality—God, man and the world.

It is unfortunate that in popular thought Christology is almost exclusively conceived of in terms of the doing of Christ—especially His dying for sins. Let us be clear that Jesus could only do what He did by being what He was. Of course, if we think of the gospel as “Jesus in my heart,” we have a bodiless indwelling Spirit, and we are bound sooner or later to think of salvation merely as the saving of our immortal souls. But Jesus was true God and true man in perfect relationship. In His incarnate Being all reality was perfectly related. When Paul says that God is the source of our life in Christ Jesus (1 Cor. 1:30), he reminds us that life is *in Christ* outside of us. Whatever Adam lost at the fall is restored *in Christ*. Life in Eden was the right relationship to all reality. Wisdom sees the tree of life as the perfect world order. (Prov. 3:13-20; 6:23; 11:19, 30; 14:27; 15:4). Jesus declares that He is that life (John 14:6). We have already seen that this life is not simply eternal soul-existence but life in relationship with all reality. Life can be viewed from different perspectives—wisdom, salvation history, the Christian life. But whichever way we look at it, it is there for us now in Christ, “whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness and sanctification and redemption” (1 Cor. 1:30).

From the point of view of Christian existence, wisdom has a twofold application:

1. It is the possession of the believer in Christ. As righteousness is imputed to the believer, so wisdom is also imputed, for wisdom and righteousness are ulti-

mately synonymous. If Christ is our wisdom, we possess it before God in Christ, not in ourselves; and we possess it by faith. Another way of putting this is that the Person of Jesus Christ, now exalted on high, embraces within Himself all reality perfectly related and that this is so *for us*.

2. There is the experiential and noetic wisdom. This wisdom bears the same relationship to imputed wisdom as sanctification does to justification: it is the fruit of our perfect standing in Christ. A significant aspect of this noetic wisdom is the conforming of our thinking to the truth about reality as seen in the Person of Christ. That all reality is perfectly related in Christ is true, but it is the place of Christology to designate how reality relates. The Christological definition of the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 451) is a vital dogmatic aid at this point. Chalcedon recognized that the two natures of Christ—God and man—relate as union without fusion, maintaining a distinction without separation. Wisdom affirms God, man and the world. This “trinity” of reality reflects a structure which bears the same kind of relationships as we find in the Person of Christ and in the triune Godhead. The wise man recognizes the integrity of each aspect of reality, neither fusing them nor separating them.

Armed with this perspective, the Christian is in a position to step boldly into the world, seeking to be responsibly human in his relationships to his fellow man, to the world and to God. By this means the gospel is lifted out of the private spiritual haze of an “in my heart” Christianity and brought into the light of day to speak to us about the world, science, art, history, politics and every other field of human concern. Thus may we appreciate the purpose of God “which He set forth in Christ as a plan for the fulness of time, to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth” (Eph. 1:9-10).

**CHANGE  
OF  
ADDRESS**

**Moving?**

Please send your CHANGE OF ADDRESS four weeks in advance. Be sure to include both your old and new addresses. Type or print *clearly*. Mail to the following *Present Truth* address nearest you:

P.O. Box 1311, Fallbrook, California 92028, U.S.A.  
P.O. Box 333, Tweed Heads, N.S.W. 2485, Australia

**Old Address**

**New Address**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Old Address \_\_\_\_\_

New Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**PRESENT TRUTH**  
Post Office Box 1311  
Fallbrook, California 92028  
U.S.A.