

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

Vol 6 #2

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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.

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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.

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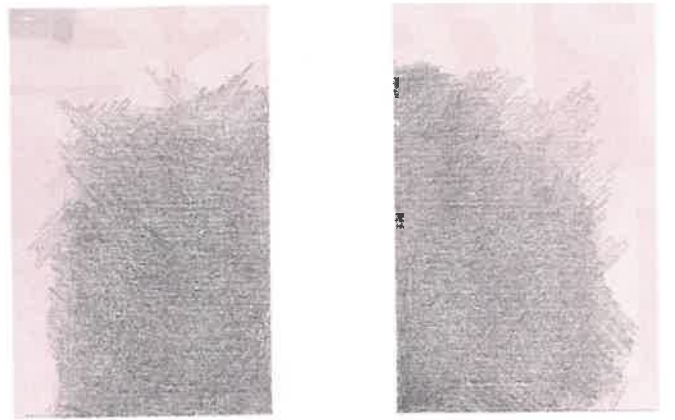
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To Contributors: Since truth is above the preferences and prejudices of any denomination, the editors welcome contributions from anyone and will judge them on their merit alone. If you wish a manuscript returned, please send a self-addressed, stamped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

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Letters

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

"Theology and Body"

Sir / I have just finished reading your latest issue, "Theology and Body" (Feb., 1977). I firmly believe that you have touched upon a very important issue in contemporary theology—that of the relation of the minister to his physical health.

Too many times in my young ministry I have seen ministers literally wear themselves down to a point of noneffectiveness with regard to their service to Christ. My most recent affiliation with this syndrome was in seminary, where students many times were deprived of physical and spiritual vitality because of mental stress.

One bright spot concerning this is soon to be happening at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, where money has been set aside strictly for the purpose of building a gymnasium as a part of the seminary facilities.

I state my appreciation again for a very fine and relevant issue.

Terry Hall
Baptist Minister
Oklahoma

Sir / I would like to recommend that you make reprints available of your excellent article by D. Weston Allen, the Christian physician, in the February, 1977, *Present Truth*. I believe that people will listen to a Christian physician. And a reprint of this article, "How Spiritual Health Is Impaired by Neglect of Physical and Mental Health," would provide an effective tool for putting across the last paragraph on page 36 concerning the healthiness of the objective gospel and the unhealthiness of subjective religion.

Robert E. Baxter
Presbyterian Minister
Kansas

Sir / Your magazine for February, 1977, contained some articles which were of great interest to me, as I have studied some of these subjects for many years. However, the statements on pages 17 and 18 about the Hebrew view of man are not in accordance with the teachings of the Bible, even though George Eldon Ladd made these statements. The Bible is the final authority on this subject.

Delmar H. Bryant
Ohio

Sir / I appreciate your magazine and particularly the article in the February, 1977,

issue on "Theology and Body." In this issue you have hit the nail on the head with effective blows to nail down the biblical truth about the whole man. I am very concerned about the ignorance of Christians in regard to the biblical view of man. We have opted for Platonism without considering the truth of Scripture.

Donald W. Spencer
Church Director of
Christian Education
Oregon

Sir / I am writing concerning the February, 1977, issue, "Theology and Body." I hope that you continue with more articles on this subject. The church is corrupted by the Greek view of the body and the nature of man.

Keep up the good work. I wish that other Christian papers would follow your example and give readers something more permanent. I sense that some of your readers are a little afraid of your bold approach to difficult points of theology. However, I judge by *what you say* and not entirely by whom you quote.

Too many are afraid to speak out of their own convictions from the objective Word of God, for they are not dependent enough on the Holy Spirit to teach them. You are helping us to stand on our own two feet and speak out for the Lord of glory.

C. William Cole
Indiana

Righteousness in Romans

Sir / *Present Truth* is doing a significant service in calling the attention of the church to that objective righteousness which is the meritorious ground of justification. This is the message of the apostle Paul, particularly in Romans. To the same end may I offer some suggestions for themes or seed thoughts for a series of sermons on justification:

1. *The Righteousness of God* (Rom. 1:16-17; 3:21-22, 26). The meaning of Romans 1:16-17 as the Holy Spirit opened it to Luther was that while no righteousness of his own was acceptable to God, there was a righteousness of God Himself which Luther could receive by faith. Since it is God-righteousness, therefore it is better than either human unrighteousness or even human righteousness. Since it is a righteousness "stripped from the back of the omnipotent Jehovah (Yahweh), it is better than the righteousness of angels.

They have only their own righteousness."

2. *Christ Is Our Righteousness* (1 Cor. 1:30). "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness" (Rom. 10:4). "May I be found in Him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God upon faith" (Phil. 3:9). "Let us fix our eyes upon Jesus, on whom our faith depends from beginning to end" (Heb. 12:2, TEV). Luther's colleague, Johann Bugenhagen, declared, "We have only one doctrine, Christ is our righteousness." John Bunyan wrote, "My righteousness is Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever." This means that we are saved by the righteousness of another: God, who became man for us men and for our salvation.

3. *Imputed Righteousness* (Rom. 4:6, 8, 11, 22-24; 2 Cor. 5:19). The word *impute* occurs half a dozen times in the King James Version of Romans 4. The Greek verb which it translates occurs eleven times in the same chapter. Luther and his followers took over the word from the Latin Vulgate. When "liberals" objected to the word, Alexander Whyte of Scotland replied, "The Holy Spirit gave the word, and the Holy Spirit uses the word." The believer is not justified by a righteousness infused into or imparted to him, but by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him and received by faith alone—while in himself he is still a sinner and, on that account, constantly penitent: *simul justus et peccator et penitens*.

4. *The Gift of Righteousness* (Rom. 5:15-19). The righteousness by which we are justified is God's gracious gift to us undeserving sinners. He gave it to us by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin (Rom. 8:3). God revealed His loving heart and wrought out for us an acceptable righteousness by His incarnation as Jesus Christ, by His perfect obedience (Rom. 5:19), and by His being made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21). This abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness means that *in Christ, God is for us*.

5. *The Righteousness of Faith*. "Not through the law but through the righteousness of faith did the promise come to Abraham" (Rom. 4:13). The gospel reveals the righteousness of God from faith unto faith, or from a way that begins in faith to one that ends in faith, for the just shall live by faith (Rom. 1:16-17, NEB).

"God shows Himself to be just when He justifies him who has faith in Jesus" (Rom. 3:26). "I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me" (Gal. 2:20). "We have put our faith in Jesus Christ that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, not by the works of the law" (Gal. 2:16).

Faith involves *knowledge*. Faith comes by hearing the message, the Word of Christ (Rom. 10:17), by which message we also receive the Spirit (Gal. 3:2), who shows the things of Christ to us.

Faith calls for our *assent* to the promises of the gospel, our Amen to God's way of saving us in Christ.

Faith is heart *trust*, our receiving and resting upon Christ and His righteousness for justification, sanctification and eternal life.

Faith issues in *obedience* (Rom. 1:5). "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Eph. 2:10).

Our faith is necessary and essential, but it is not meritorious. Christ is our merit.

William C. Robinson
California

Dr. Robinson is professor emeritus of church history at Columbia Theological Seminary.—Ed.

"What Is the Gospel?"

Sir / Geoffrey Paxton's outline of "What Is the Gospel?" (*The Australian Forum*, Topic 9) is splendid. However, some of his comments under the main headings must either stem from personal bias or misunderstanding. I hope it is the latter.

Paxton's misconception of terms commonly used among many Fundamentalist Christians comes through when he comments about "how often the children of God are bidden to 'let go and let God.'" —p. 9. He sets this into a context of the substitutionary work of Jesus in its relationship to the life lived out by the believer. It is apparent that he does not understand what Christians mean when they use this term.

Many Christians—and I am one of them—do not look to the substitutionary life of Christ for redemption. They look to His substitutionary death, when He died for their sins, in their stead. It is only as He took His perfect righteousness to the cross and there offered it in Himself that His righteousness becomes vicarious at all. He did not live a substitute life for believers. Every believer must live his own life of righteousness. But because Christ was perfect and righteous, He became the perfect Sacrifice for sin—not a Substitute for sin, but a Sacrifice. By placing Christ's perfect obedience to the law before God as a substitute for the sinful, imperfect life of a sinning believer, Christ becomes a minister of sin. If this is not antinomianism, it is perilously close to it.

Paxton presents a very limited view of God's work of grace. While seeking sincerely to exalt Christ in heaven, he succeeds in dishonoring God in His saints.

A Christ in heaven is wonderful and precious. But Christ in *me*, the hope of glory, is where the action is and where the power is now needed. That is what Paul believed too.

Mel. E. DePeal
Pastor
Ohio

Wondering

Sir / I read *Present Truth* from time to time. I read it as an incentive to think through the truths you are trying to think through. Sometimes I agree with you, but most of the time I wonder at your conclusions.

Incidentally, how often do the writers of the articles in *Present Truth* go out in the highways and byways and preach the gospel eyeball to eyeball with lost men and women? Not often, I venture, with all the time they must spend in research for the material they present in written form. You ought to try this sometime. It is a wonderful, rewarding experience. And it results in souls saved who would have otherwise never heard the gospel.

Bruce L. Button
Pastor
Oregon

Grateful

Sir / I want you to know that I am extremely grateful for the ministry of *Present Truth* magazine. It is regularly used of God in my life to keep me balanced in my meditation and study of His Word. I have especially enjoyed the Australian Forum booklets by Geoffrey Paxton. His ministry will be in my thanksgivings to the Lord for a long time to come.

I can imagine how often you must receive letters like this one, but I wonder if you realize the effectiveness and range of your ministry through *Present Truth*. You see, I am an itinerant evangelist/Bible teacher, and I often minister in charismatic circles as well as evangelical.

Even though we may not agree on every doctrinal issue, the writers in *Present Truth* have been used of God to minister to me. Through your magazine I have been exhorted, encouraged, challenged, and sometimes reproved. I thank God for every bit of it, because I can see how the Lord has used *Present Truth* to develop me into a more balanced servant of the gospel. Thank you for being used of God in my life.

Nik Ratzlaff
Evangelist
Illinois

Defrocked

Sir / As a minister of the gospel of Christ's vicarious righteousness who has recently been defrocked from the pastorate within a sect among the larger "holiness" denominations, I want to express my appreciation for the Australian Forum's ministry. My ordination credentials were taken from me for my insistence that the law of God requires perfect obedience in thought,

word and deed from birth. This is, of course, the reason that the gospel is such good news, for by faith we lay claim to the vicarious merits of Jesus. However, within the "holiness" communities such a doctrinal stance is discounted as mere theological, if not theoretical, speculation and is forced to take a back seat to pious techniques for obtaining higher experiences and greater attainments of spirituality. Therefore the preaching of the gospel becomes a threat to the official "holiness" denominational doctrines in that it exposes the imperfect perfection of "holiness" as another religious attempt of man to stand before God through the possession of individual righteousness obtained by the merit of the indwelling of Christ's Spirit.

How different is the view of the "holiness" sects from the biblical perspective as revealed in the inspired question of the prophet, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" (Isa. 53:1).

Christianity becomes meaningful as the way of life only when we can honestly acknowledge our sinnerhood and see ourselves as we truly are. Only then can the gospel reach us. And it is only then that Christian faith is free to move out of the realm of doctrinal speculation and become a genuinely living experience.

Pontius Pilate asked, "What shall I do . . . with Jesus which is called Christ?" Because of internal and external pressures he answered wrongly to his everlasting sorrow. May God keep you faithful in doing with Jesus as you have done thus far in your proclamation of Christ crucified, the power and wisdom of God. I am confident that God shall bless others, as He has me, through the furtherance and honoring of His Word by means of your ministry.

Kenneth W. Treuter
Minister
Texas

Uneasiness

Sir / Your articles are greatly appreciated. For the first time I know why I have so much uneasiness about the charismatic movement. I was sympathetic toward it at first, but after witnessing four close friends blow their spiritual brains out, I needed to know what was really happening. Your material is a great help in supplementing and often times correcting my course of study.

Kathryn E. Belton
Bible School Student
Oregon

Twisted

Sir / The doctrines you write about are very sound, but you go on to criticize Pentecostals, Catholics and charismatics. They, on the other hand, offer sound doctrines, with love for others—and love is the greatest.

The Lord has revealed to me that you read the Bible only to prove a point or win

an argument. Your explanations are twisted to suit your limited vision of God. The Lord said to love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. Despite what you think this letter reveals of me, I will with truth and honesty love and pray for you.

John Cox
Canada

Legalism and Insanity

Sir / I have recently experienced within my own ministry the legalism and insanity of a "gospel" which anchors itself in the experiences and emotions of the charismatic rather than in the incarnation, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the only Son of God. May the *real* Holy Spirit please stand up and renew His church in the present truth.

Howard Vrankin
Lutheran Pastor
Texas

Uphill Climb

Sir / Over the past year my brother has been disentangling himself from spiritual subjectivism and discovering the objective New Testament truths which raised up the Reformers. Your magazine played a significant role in his discoveries, which he also shared with me. In times past I have been troubled greatly by the charismatic, Roman and Arminian philosophies without having a firm grasp on the necessary truth to meet their challenge. Praise God for your publications, which are helping to uncover the vital facets of the Rock of Ages, which can never be shaken by Roman or Protestant subjectivism.

There are no visible churches in my community which are free from the strong tendency to preach a man-centered gospel (emphasizing grace in man rather than the work of grace outside of man, in Jesus), and I pray that God will use me to spread the knowledge of objective justification in Christ. I have lent my *Present Truth* special issues on "Sanctification" and "Justification by Faith" to two denominational ministers. So far this has resulted in some good dialogue. Nevertheless, it is such an uphill climb to struggle out of the established jargon and humanistic emphasis found in literature like *Campus Crusade* produces (and I say this without malice, since God chose me in the middle of a Campus-inspired movement).

Peter Dunstan
Canada

Tonic

Sir / I have found your magazine and special brochures a refreshing tonic in the midst of arid intellectual evangelical literature and the flood of delusive superficiality from the charismatic camp. May the Lord enable you to carry on in proclaiming, expounding and "rightly dividing" the Word of truth in love and clarity.

Tim Cripps
England

"Cover to Cover"

Sir / I usually read every issue of *Present Truth* cover to cover within a day or two after receiving it. Believe it or not, one of the more interesting features of your publication is the quantity and wide range of readers' letters that you print. It is obvious that a lot of research and painstaking care goes into the publication of your magazine; and after reading some of the issues, my only comment is, Bravo!

Although I am Pentecostal, I enjoy being stimulated and made to think. I agree wholeheartedly with you that we are to preach the objective, historic gospel and not our own experiences. But I hasten to add that the preaching of the gospel leads the believing hearers into a blessed and wonderful experience with the risen Christ. May God bless you always.

Michael Fitzpatrick
New York

Theological Ax-grinding

Sir / I first heard of your magazine through a friend who recommended you for good biblical teaching. Although he was right to a point (your "New Testament Eschatology" and "Covenant" issues were mostly excellent), I, after reading several issues, have concluded that you are more concerned with grinding your theological ax than with restoring New Testament Christianity in this generation. It is regrettable that you must sit in your ivory tower and take potshots at other Christians. You slander people who have experienced the grace of God, been taught by the Spirit, labored diligently for the gospel, and worked redemptively in the lives of thousands of people. (Incidentally, what, besides your magazine, have *you* done?) They harbored no ulterior motive but the love of Christ in their hearts, so that others could realize the full glory of knowing Christ. But you are causing division in the Body.

If you really had good biblical exposition, you would be concerned about the whole counsel of God, which can only be obtained by thorough, systematic exposition through the various books of the Bible. If you were to do this, you would find yourself addressing such issues as fellowship, ethics, the needs of the poor, racism, and other matters on which Jesus gave clear teaching. But you have fallen into the rut of quoting theologians and excerpting scriptures to buttress your positions. Personally, I find your incessant tirades on the cleavage between external and internal grace to be unedifying and contrary to the spirit of the New Testament. Jesus and the apostles were concerned with weightier things than the separation of sanctification from justification. Indeed, the doubt and uncertainty you created in my mind, the clever argument you have used to attack my freedom in Christ, were recently cleared up by a reading of the Gospel of John, which makes your protestations appear laughable.

I thank you for challenging me to re-think my Christian life in the light of a sys-

tem of teaching to which I had not previously been exposed. I am not too concerned about theological arguments, but you came in on a level which called into question the premises on which I have built my life. While I have not adopted your viewpoint, I have had my theological basis for living subjected to a housecleaning. But now I consider you to have finished serving your purpose in that regard. Thank you for your concern.

Lawrence Kells
Massachusetts

Sharp Focus

Sir / My reading of *Present Truth* for about three years has brought into the sharpest focus ever the essential nature of justification by faith. This emphasis is fully verified by Paul's words, "For no other foundation can any one lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 3:11, RSV).

After reading without much discrimination any religious or devotional material that came my way, *Present Truth* articles and editorial comments have done wonders to clarify my spiritual outlook. I am deeply grateful for this help in sharpening my critical faculties. Truly *Present Truth* might well be every Christian's reference for sound theology. Only a few have the mental attributes, time and disposition to become scholars, to collect a library of theological books, or to study the Bible in the original languages. Everybody who can read, though, could profit by studying these carefully written and lucid expositions of basic Christian doctrine.

I experience a spiritual energizing just by turning to the Bible and reading the references so many of your articles supply. It may take longer this way to read an article, but the rewards are incalculable. The living truth that God wants to reveal to the seeker comes through with startling clarity, almost like a person long hospitalized coming out into the open out-of-doors and seeing everything at first with overwhelming sharpness. I hope that this analogy strikes home, for some of us have spent time in spiritual sick wards, and it is wonderful to be out in God's great open spaces again!

Donald E. Kohlstaedt
Washington

Drifting

Sir / My wife and I have been drifting in and out of various neo-evangelical teachings for the past three years. We believe that your sound interpretation of the Reformed doctrine of justification by faith in light of all Scripture has greatly erased the dismay and confusion in our minds caused by lack of agreement and misinterpretation of this doctrine by many modern-liberal neo-evangelicals today.

Garrett P. Johnson
Virginia

Editorial Introduction

We make no apologies for returning directly to the theme of justification by faith, which is the only real reason for the existence of this magazine. Here, as Luther often said, is the central Christian article, which builds, defends and preserves the Christian church. If it is lost, all is lost.

On every hand old and new (but mostly old) errors lift their head and threaten to rob us of the truth which the Reformers called the chief jewel of Christianity. We cannot learn this article too well, and unless we constantly sharpen the sword of truth, there is good reason to believe that its edge will become dulled.

It is often implied that a strong affirmation of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ will take the teeth out of the moral imperatives. Nothing is further from the truth. It was Rome's claim that the Reformers' doctrine was subversive to sanctification, but this was Rome's most fundamental error.

In the light of the foregoing we reprint an essay by Dr. Immanuel Stockmeyer which was presented in 1863 and published in *The Foundations of Our Faith* (London: Strahan and Co., 1863).

Also, we include a short article by Thomas Chalmers on "Justification and Holiness."

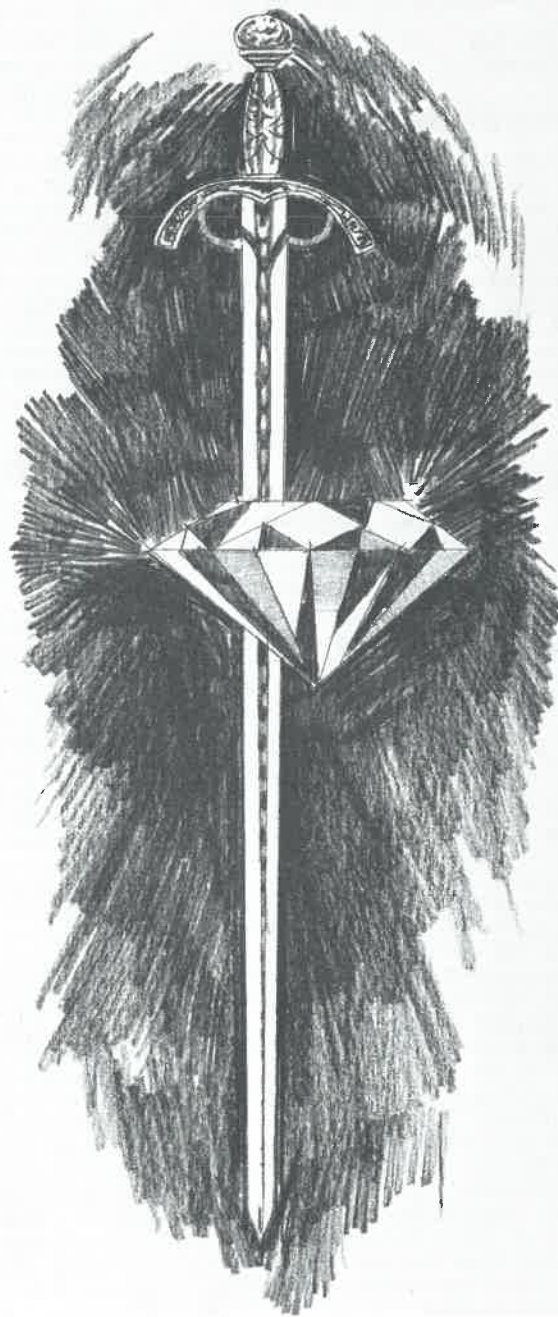
Dr. William C. Robinson has written an excellent summary of Dr. Witherspoon's pamphlet on the connection between the doctrine of justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ and holiness of life. We consider that in this summary Dr. Robinson gives us the essence of Christian life and experience.

Someone sent us an article called "The True Ground of Peace." Some of our readers may be able to identify the author for us. Spurgeon preached in a similar vein on occasion. For the present we will publish it anonymously. It is a refreshing change from a lot of harping on man's acts of faith and surrender in such a way that these proper human acts run competition with Jesus.

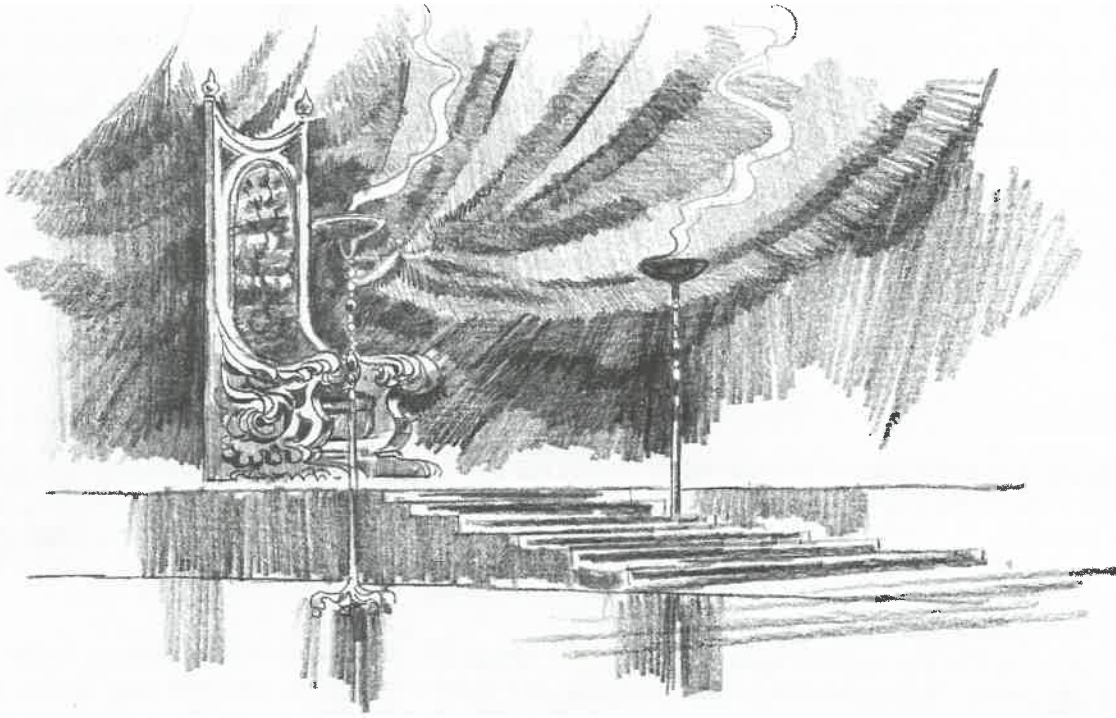
Altogether, we think that there needs to be more talking, singing, praying, witnessing and celebrating about the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ. If we did this, we would see more faith, surrender, repentance and holiness.

Come, let us reason together.

R.D.B.



There needs to be more talking, singing, praying, witnessing and celebrating about the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ.



The Son of Man and Imputed Righteousness

Graeme Goldsworthy

In the Gospels there are numerous occasions on which Jesus refers to Himself as the "Son of man." The title in itself means nothing more than *human being*. In the Hebrew or Aramaic idiom it is a simple alternative to *man* (see Ps. 8:4). But it is clear that the New Testament has particularized the term and given it a specific meaning which relates to the "Son of man" vision in Daniel 7. Jesus as the Son of man is thus designated as truly human (in a general way) and also as *the Man* with all the meaning that the vision of Daniel carries.

Because of the apocalyptic nature of Daniel 7 and the futuristic references that Jesus makes to its fulfillment ("you shall see the Son of man coming with the clouds"), it is all too easy to see the special significance of the Son of man only in relation to the second coming of Jesus and to divorce the second coming from the gospel core of New Testament teaching. To do this is to misunderstand both the Old Testament roots and the New Testament application of the "Son of man" theme.

Scripture quotations are from the Revised Standard Version.

Man: The Ideal

The biblical doctrine of (the son of) man begins at the creation, where we find a special dignity given to humans. Man is created in God's image and given dominion over the rest of creation (Gen. 1:26). Theologians differ about how far the image of God is interpreted by the statements of man's dominion. For the moment the important thing is the hierarchy in all that exists: God—man—animals and the inanimate.

Man's place in this hierarchy is seen first in his relationship to God. Man is the highest in the created order and bears a unique relationship to the Creator which is expressed in the benign rule that God exercises over him. Adam and Eve in the garden kingdom are subject to the sovereign word of God. Second, in relationship to the created order, man has a ruling role expressed in the naming of the beasts and in the tending of the garden.

This ideal hierarchy of the kingdom of God is expressed in Psalm 8:

... what is man that Thou art mindful of him,
and the son of man that Thou dost care for him?

Yet Thou hast made him little less than God,
and dost crown him with glory and honor.
Thou hast given him dominion over the works of Thy hands;
Thou hast put all things under his feet . . . (Ps. 8:4-6).

This ruling function of man is never lost sight of even in the fallen world. Every endeavor of man to conquer the universe, whether it be in space flight or on the earth, is an expression of his efforts to exercise dominion.

Man: The Reality

The ideal of Genesis 1:26 and Psalm 8 is thwarted by the existence of sin. In Genesis 3 we learn how man sought to upset the hierarchy by putting himself above God. His rebellious desire to dethrone God involves him further in an illegitimate grasp for dominion over his fellow man—something that was never given him by God. The judgment of God in the ejection from the Edenic kingdom is accompanied by a curse on creation so that man's dominion over it is severely and continuously challenged (Gen. 3:17-19).

Man outside the kingdom of God (Eden) is man challenged by the beasts and by his environment. The animals are no longer docile and submissive but hostile towards man and predatory. This challenge by beast against man symbolizes the whole realm of godlessness and evil. It is thus a simple step to the use of the beasts as figures of evil and persecution of the godly. For example, Psalm 22, a lament of a righteous man under persecution, begins with the well-known cry:

My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?

Later the psalmist says:

Many bulls encompass me,
strong bulls of Bashan surround me;
they open wide their mouths at me,
like a ravening and roaring lion (vss. 12-13).

And again:

Yea, dogs are round about me;
a company of evildoers encircle me . . . (vs. 16).

Deliver my soul from the sword,
my life from the power of the dog!
Save me from the mouth of the lion,
my afflicted soul from the horns of the wild oxen! (vss. 20-21).

It is clear from other parts of this psalm that these "beasts" are evil men (e.g., vss. 6-8, 16-18).

Restoring the Dominion

When God made His covenant with Abraham, He promised to restore the rightful hierarchy and to put man back in the kingdom of which Eden was the original expression. The Abrahamic covenant promised that there would be a people of God in the place prepared for them and under God's ruling word. This new Eden, a land flowing with milk and honey, is revealed under the form of Canaan. Notice the familiar ring about the blessings and curses of the covenant:

And if you obey the voice of the Lord your God . . . blessed shall be . . . the fruit of your beasts, the increase of your cattle, and the young of your flock . . . But if you will not obey . . . cursed shall be the fruit of your body, and the fruit of your ground, the increase of your cattle . . . The Lord will cause you to be defeated before your enemies . . . And your dead body shall be food for all birds of the air, and for the beasts of the earth . . . (Deut. 28:1, 4, 15, 18, 25-26).

The program of salvation revealed to Israel is structured upon the Edenic situation and shows the goal of God's mighty acts to be the restoration of a people to the kingdom.

God's people:	Adam	Israel
God's place:	Eden	Land of Canaan
God's rule:	Demand for obedience	Demand for obedience in the Sinaitic covenant

God demanded that His new Adamic race, Israel, should be perfect. Only perfection would do if Israel was to be the true representative of man who came from the Eden kingdom bearing the image of God (Lev. 19:2; cf. Matt. 5:48). But Israel was incapable of fulfilling the law, which demanded perfection—a fact that brought the re-enactment of the curses of Genesis 3 in the exile of Israel.

Alongside the ugly fact of Israel's sin was the marvelous word of hope given by the prophets—a promise of restoration which expressed the unchanging purpose of God to bring a people to Himself, to restore man to his rightful dominion. Sometimes the prophets spoke of Israel's restoration as the renewal of Eden with a cessation of the beasts' challenge to man's dominion:

The wolf shall dwell with the Lamb,
and the leopard shall lie down with the kid,
and the calf and the lion and the fatling together,
and a little child shall lead them . . . (Isa. 11:6-9).

For the Lord will comfort Zion;
He will comfort all her waste places,
and will make her wilderness like Eden,
her desert like the garden of the Lord . . . (Isa. 51:3; cf. Ezek. 36:35).



The Son of Man

Against this background of the theme of man's dominion we can now look at the great vision of Daniel 7. Here we see four beasts representing godless empires of sinful men. Dominion is found among the godless (vs. 6), but it is soon removed as the throne of God is set up in demonstration of divine sovereignty (vss. 6, 9). When dominion is removed from the beasts (vs. 12), a human figure appears in the clouds of heaven to be presented before God (vs. 13), and the dominion is given to this Son of man forever (vs. 14). The interpretation is made that the kings of the earth shall not have dominion, for this is to be given to the saints (vss. 15-18, 27).

Here is a reversal of the curse of the fall which involves the restoration of dominion to a godly people in terms of the original hierarchy of Genesis 1:26. The Son of man (Aramaic: *bar enash*; Hebrew: *ben adam*—son of Adam) is the One who fulfills both the ideal of the original Adam and of Israel as the chosen people of God. If Israel failed to achieve this ideal in her history,

where is the other Adam to be found? The New Testament tells us where: in the true Son of man, Jesus Christ. Jesus is both the true Israel and the true Adam (for both have the same significance). He alone is the true "people of God," fulfilling all righteousness.

God's people:	Adam	Israel	Jesus
God's place:	Eden	Canaan	Kingdom of God
God's rule:	Demand for obedience		Obedience given by Jesus

Not only is Jesus specifically referred to as Son of man on the Daniel 7 pattern, but He is also shown to be the One who fulfills the ideals of Adam and the true Israel.

Not only is Jesus specifically referred to as Son of man on the Daniel 7 pattern, but He is also shown to be the One who fulfills the ideals of Adam and the true Israel. So, for example, Luke records the baptism of Jesus when He is identified with the human race but dignifies Him with the unique declaration that He is the human Son of God who pleases the Father. Luke immediately follows with the genealogy which links Jesus to Adam, the "son of God" (Luke 3:21-38). Then this God-pleasing Son of Adam is tempted in the wilderness (Luke 4:1-13). Each rebuttal of Satan involves Scripture drawn from the section of Deuteronomy which deals with Israel's temptation and fall in the wilderness. The implication is clear: where old Israel (the successor of Adam) failed, the Son of man succeeded.

Look also at Mark's account of the temptation (Mark 1:12-13). After His baptism Jesus is tempted in the wilderness, "and He was with the wild beasts." Mark implies that Jesus overcame Satan and that He was at peace with the wild beasts. That is, where the first Adam failed when tempted and was challenged by the beasts, the last Adam overcame and restored man's dominion over nature.

Much more could be said about the "Son of Man" theology in the New Testament. Let it suffice to refer to Peter's Pentecost sermon, where the subject is the Man who was attested by God and who, after His death, was raised and exalted at the right hand of God (Acts 2:22-24, 32-36). Rather than the eternal Second Person of the Trinity returning to His rightful glory, we see here the last Adam who has demonstrated a perfect righteousness and who is exalted because He is the true Man, the one true Man since Adam fell. Dominion has been restored to man in this Son of Adam.

Now the Son of man reigns in heaven, and His coming with the clouds of heaven will be to bring about the final subjection of all things. Meanwhile, the believer is said to be "in Christ." This typically Pauline phrase describes the identification of the believer with the Son of man, who is the head of a new race of men. Everything that can be said about the exalted Christ can be said about the believer. The believer is crucified, he is dead and buried, and he has been raised and exalted—and all this *in Christ*.

Since to be *in Christ* describes the status we have through faith rather than the reality we perceive with our senses, we note that everything we have or are before God is *in Christ*—that is, it belongs to Him. Our status as sons of Adam, whereby we fulfill the ideal of Genesis 1:26, is achieved only on the basis of the achievement of the "last Adam." Why does Paul call Him the "last Adam?" (1 Cor. 15:45). Because there can be no other Adams. We cannot be Adams on our own. Christ alone is Adam, and that is why we must be *in Christ*.

It is vital for us to understand that since no believer can say that crucifixion, resurrection, and exaltation to heaven is his actual experience, the description of him

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The biblical teaching of the Son of man in both the Old and New Testaments points to the fact that the righteousness which makes us members of the people of God is wholly outside of us.

in these terms is a declaration of a status. To be *in Christ* does not mean a mystical fusion of the believer's being with Christ's being, but it is the giving of the status of a son of man in the eyes of God. So Paul says, ". . . if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation . . ." (2 Cor. 5:17). In the light of the "Son of man" theology, we see that Paul is here talking primarily about our status as members of the new Adamic society. The new creation is in Christ, not in us. Therefore it does not signify something like the new birth or other change in us. The change is in our status and not our state. Let us hasten to add that this is *not* to deny the reality or necessity of the new birth, but it is only to deny that this passage refers to the new birth.

We conclude that the biblical teaching of the Son of man in both the Old and New Testaments points to the fact that the righteousness which makes us members of the people of God is wholly outside of us. It is *in Christ*. It is His and His alone. The true dominion is exercised by the reigning Christ, and to be in Christ is to reign with Him.



The True Ground of Peace

Any who are strangers to peace, settled peace with God, would do well to read the writings of these Christians on this subject. They give no uncertain sound. "The doubts and fears" which have so long harassed and perplexed even the most godly among the denominations have not entirely passed away, though of late years many Christians have been more clear and certain than formerly. Many of the most illustrious names in past ages might be given as having been frequently troubled all through their life as to their pardon and acceptance. Real peace was unknown.

But peace with God is the heritage of all His children—as the legacy left by Christ to His disciples. "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." It was in the midst of this world with all its trials and conflicts that He gave them His own peace—the peace which He Himself had with the Father as He walked in this world. But why is it that so few enjoy this character of peace with the Father as He did? It is ours! He left it to us! No reason can be given but unbelief. We cannot enjoy a blessing before we believe it. And He meant us to enjoy it in this world, and in spite of it, as He did. He is also our peace in heaven, so that is perfect in the light as well as in the world.

Peace with God is the heritage of all His children—as the legacy left by Christ to His disciples.

Ponder the following quotations on this all-important question, and the reader must judge of the teaching:

"Our peace is not merely a thing of enjoyment within us, but it is Christ outside of us: For He is our peace—a most wonderful expression. And if souls only rested on this, would there be anxiety as to fulness of peace? It is my own fault entirely if I do not rest in and enjoy it. But even so; am I to doubt that Christ is my peace? I am dishonoring Him if I do. If I had a surety whose riches could not fail, why should I doubt my standing or credit? It depends neither on my wealth nor on my poverty. All turns on the resources of Him who has become responsible for me. So it is with Christ. He is our peace, and there can be no possibility of failure in Him. Where the heart confides in this, what is the ef-

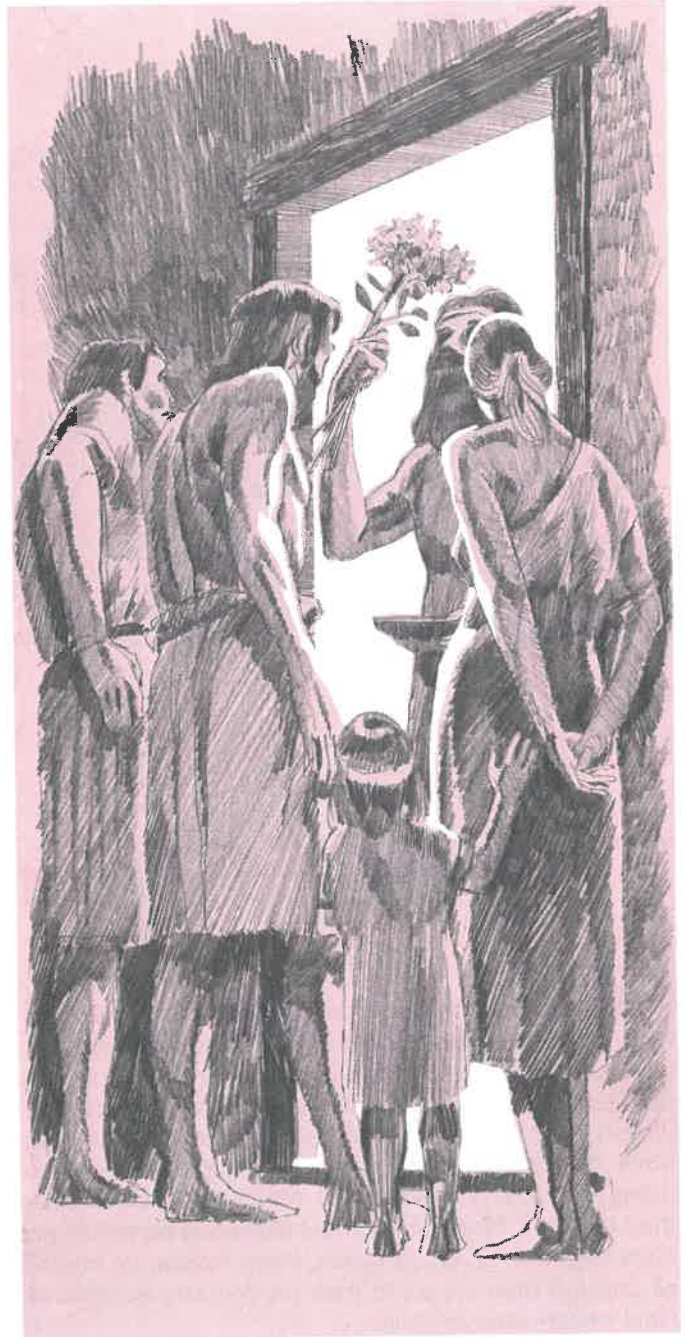
Our peace is not merely a thing of enjoyment within us, but it is Christ outside of us.

fect? Then we rest and enjoy peace. But I must begin with believing it. The Lord in His grace does give His people betimes transports of joy; but joy may fluctuate. Peace is, or should be, a permanent thing that the Christian is entitled to have always; and this because Christ is our peace."

"It is most needful to be simple and clear as to what constitutes the ground of a sinner's peace in the presence of God. So many things have been mixed up with the finished work of Christ that souls are plunged into darkness and uncertainty as to their acceptance. They do not see the absolutely settled character of redemption through the blood of Christ in its application to themselves. They seem not to be aware that full forgiveness of sins rests upon the simple fact that a full atonement has been offered, a fact attested in the view of all created intelligence by the resurrection of the sinner's Surety from the dead. They know that there is no other way of being saved but by the blood of the cross; but the devils know this, yet it avails them nought. What is so much needed is to know that *we are saved*. The Israelite in Egypt not merely knew that there was safety in the blood; he knew that *he was safe*. And why safe? Was it because of anything that he had done or felt or thought? By no means; but because God had said, 'When I see the blood I will pass over you.' He rested upon God's testimony. He believed what God said because God said it. 'He set to his seal that God was true.'

"And observe, my reader, it was not upon his own thoughts and feelings or experiences respecting the blood that the Israelite rested. This would have been a poor, sandy foundation to rest upon. His thoughts and feelings might be deep or they might be shallow; but deep or shallow, they had nothing to do with the ground of his peace. It was not said, 'When *you* see the blood and value it as you ought, I will pass over you.' This would have been sufficient to plunge him in dark despair about himself inasmuch as it was quite impossible that the human mind could ever sufficiently appreciate the precious blood of the Lamb. What gave peace was the fact that Jehovah's eye rested upon the blood and that He knew its worth. This tranquillized the heart. The blood was outside and the Israelite inside, so that he could not possibly see it; but God saw it, and that was enough.

"The application of this to the question of a sinner's peace is very plain. The Lord Jesus Christ, having shed His precious blood as a perfect atonement for sin, has taken it into the presence of God and sprinkled it there; and God's testimony assures the believing sinner that



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everything is settled on his behalf—settled, not by his estimate of the blood, but by the blood itself which God estimates so highly, that, because of it, without a single jot or tittle added thereto, He can righteously forgive all sin and accept the sinner as perfectly righteous in Christ. How can anyone ever enjoy settled peace if his peace depends upon his estimate of the blood? Impossible! The loftiest estimate which the human mind can form of the blood must fall infinitely short of its divine preciousness; and, therefore, if our peace were to depend upon our valuing it as we ought, we could no more enjoy settled peace than if we were seeking it by 'works of law.' There must either be a sufficient ground of peace in the blood *alone* or we can never have peace. To mix

We are apt to regard the fruits of the Spirit in us, rather than the work of Christ for us, as the foundation of peace.



up our estimate with it is to upset the entire fabric of Christianity just as effectually as if we were to conduct the sinner to the foot of Mount Sinai and put him under a covenant of works. Either Christ's atoning sacrifice is sufficient or it is not. If it is sufficient, why those doubts and fears? The words of our *lips* profess that the work is finished; but the doubts and fears of the *heart* declare that it is not. Everyone who doubts his full and everlasting forgiveness denies, so far as he is concerned, the completeness of the sacrifice of Christ.

"But there are very many who would shrink from the idea of deliberately and avowedly calling in question the efficacy of the blood of Christ who, nevertheless, have not settled peace. Such persons profess to be quite assured of the sufficiency of the blood if only *they* were sure of an interest therein—if *only* they had the right kind of faith. There are many precious souls in this unhappy condition. They are occupied with their interest and their faith instead of with Christ's blood and God's word. In other words, they are looking in at self instead of out at Christ. This is not faith; and, as a consequence, they have not peace. An Israelite within the blood-stained lintel could teach such souls a most seasonable lesson. He was not saved by his interest in or his thoughts about the blood, but simply by the blood. No doubt he had a blessed interest in it; and he would have his thoughts likewise; but then God did not say, 'When I see your interest in the blood I will pass over you.' Oh, no! The blood in all its solitary dignity and divine efficacy was set before Israel; and had they attempted to place even a morsel of unleavened bread beside the blood as a ground of security, they would have made Jehovah a liar and denied the sufficiency of His remedy.

"We are ever prone to look at something in or connected with ourselves as necessary in order to make up, with the blood of Christ, the groundwork of our peace. There is a sad lack of clearness and soundness on this vital point, as is evident from the doubts and fears with which so many of the people of God are afflicted. We are apt to regard the fruits of the Spirit *in* us, rather than the work of Christ *for* us, as the foundation of peace. The Holy Ghost is not said to be our peace, but Christ is. God did not send preaching peace by the Holy Ghost, but by Jesus Christ. (Compare Acts 10:36; Eph. 2:14, 17; Col. 1:20). My reader cannot be too simple in his apprehension of this important distinction. It is the blood of Christ which gives peace, imparts perfect justification, divine righteousness, purges the conscience, brings us into the holiest of all, justifies God in receiving the believing soul, and constitutes our title to all the joys, the dignities and the glories of heaven. (See Rom. 3:24-26; 5:9; Eph. 2:13-18; Col. 1:20-22; Heb. 9:14; 10:19; 1 Peter 1:19; 2:24; 1 John 1:7; Rev. 7:14-17.)"



The Righteousness of Christ

Robert D. Brinsmead

There are two elements blended together in God's redemptive act in Christ. These elements are *righteousness* and *blood*. Paul not only ascribes salvation to the blood of Christ but also to the righteousness of Christ. In Romans 3:22 he tells us that *righteousness* is "unto all and upon all them that believe." ". . . David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth *righteousness* without works . . ." (Rom. 4:6). In Romans 5:18-19 Paul says that this is "the righteousness of One" or "the obedience of One." The apostle Peter calls it "the righteousness of . . . Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:1).

The gospel is about Jesus Christ (Rom 1:3)—His righteousness and blood. If Christ is our Sun, then half of this Sun's luster is dimmed when we fail to rivet our attention on the grand theme of the righteousness of Jesus.

Like many of the great words in the Bible, "righteousness" is a covenantal word.

The Covenant and Christ's Righteousness

Like many of the great words in the Bible, *righteousness* is a covenantal word. God and man are related by a covenantal union. When one acts as a true covenant partner, he is said to be righteous.

God is said to be righteous because all His acts are true to His covenant oath. Whether He punishes or forgives, He is always true to His covenant. As a covenant partner, He is absolutely dependable.

As a covenant partner, man is required to image God. Righteousness is the most fundamental covenant demand. The Ten Commandments are the stipulations which rest upon the human partner (Ex. 34:27-28; Deut. 4:13). When man is true to his covenant obligations, he is said to be righteous. "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).

From the human standpoint righteousness is obedience to the law of God (the covenant stipulations), just as sin is transgression of the law (1 John 3:4). Says Calvin:

The law of God contains perfect righteousness . . . We therefore willingly confess that perfect obedience to the law is righteousness, and that the keeping of each commandment is a part of righteousness; provided that in the remaining parts the whole sum of righteousness is contained.—John Calvin, *Institutes*, Bk. 3, chap. 17, sec. 7.

. . . righteousness consists in the observance of the law.—*Ibid.*, Bk. 2, chap. 17, sec. 5.

In the New Testament, righteousness or perfect obedience to the law remains the valid demand of God. When the young ruler asked Jesus, "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Jesus replied, "Keep the commandments"—and He quoted the very words (stipulations) of the covenant (Matt. 19:16-19).

Paul does not launch into his message of God's grace in his epistle to the Romans by declaring that God has relented on His demand for righteousness. Indeed, the apostle arraigns both Jew and Gentile before the judgment bar of God and shows that God is absolutely uncompromising in His demand for a righteous life:

But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things. And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who 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 there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of



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the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;) in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel (Rom. 2:2-16).

These words of Paul remind us of what is said in the fifteenth Psalm:

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.

We may summarize the point by saying that God requires of man a holy life. The justice of God's judgment seat requires exact and perfect obedience to the divine law. Man cannot be saved unless that law be fulfilled—every jot and tittle of it.

Says Calvin, "The Lord promises nothing except to perfect keepers of His law," and then, to underline the human predicament, he adds, "and no one of that kind is to be found."—Calvin, *op. cit.*, Bk. 3, chap. 17, sec. 1. This is where God stepped in by providing for us a Surety (Heb. 7:22) in Jesus Christ. His righteousness consists in His perfect obedience to His Father's law in our room and on our behalf. Not only by His blood (which atones for our offenses) but by His righteousness He reconciles us to God and presents us in the sight of divine justice as if we had kept the law.

The Old Testament and Christ's Righteousness

Through Isaiah, God speaks to His Messiah, saying:

I the Lord have called Thee in righteousness, and will hold Thine hand, and will keep Thee, and give Thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles . . ." (Isa. 42:6; see also Isa. 49:8).

What does this scripture mean when it says that Christ is given "for a covenant of the people?" God had entered into covenant with His people, but they failed Him. They broke the stipulations. Although God kept renewing His covenant, the partnership always broke down because "it was weak through the flesh." God looked for a faithful covenant partner and found Him in Jesus Christ. God accepts Him on behalf of His people. Christ's righteousness is accepted in the place of their failure. In this faithful Servant the people can be treated as those who have fulfilled all their covenant stipulations.

The Old Testament bears pointed testimony to the righteousness of Christ. In Isaiah 40 to 66 He is presented to us as a Servant of Yahweh. He is so closely identified with His people that He is Israel personified. He suffers for Israel's sins as if they were His own (Isa. 53), and Israel is rewarded for His righteous life as if it were her own (Isa. 49:8; 45:24-25).

Says the prophet, ". . . He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth" (Isa. 53:9; cf. Rom. 3:10-18). God calls Him "My righteous Servant" (Isa. 53:11).

Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; Mine Elect, in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My Spirit upon Him: He shall

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Christ's righteousness consists in His perfect obedience to His Father's law in our room and on our behalf.

bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till He have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for His law (Isa. 42:1-4).

This righteous Servant is pleasing to God in all things. He loves righteousness and hates iniquity. Therefore He receives God's Spirit without measure (Heb. 1:9). In Him is blended the meekness of perfect lowliness and humility and the strength of indomitable courage and fortitude.

His righteousness is further described in the words of the prophet:

The Lord God hath given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth Mine ear to hear as the learned.

The Lord God hath opened Mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and spitting.

For the Lord God will help Me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set My face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed (Isa. 50:4-7).

Behold, My Servant shall deal prudently, He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high (Isa. 52:13).

In Isaiah 11 Christ is depicted as the righteous Branch "out of the stem of Jesse."

. . . and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the



Lord; and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears: but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins (Isa. 11:2-5).

Here are "the seven spirits of God"—the fullness and perfection of the Godhead which were manifested in Jesus Christ (see Col. 2:9).

Jeremiah also prophesies of Christ as "a righteous Branch." In context the Lord complains about the shepherds of Israel who scatter and destroy the flock. But the Lord says that He will raise up a faithful Shepherd and by Him save His people:

Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS (Jer. 23: 5-6).

A parallel passage in Jeremiah 33:16 says:

In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The Lord our righteousness.

Israel is saved because she takes His name, "The Lord our righteousness." It is because of God's covenant faithfulness in giving Christ to be Israel's righteousness that Isaiah declares:

Surely, shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength: even to Him shall men come; and all that are incensed against Him shall be ashamed. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory (Isa. 45:24-25).

To summarize: the servant life of Christ constitutes His righteousness. Here was a life without guile, without violence, without rebelliousness; but it was a life full of God's Spirit, a life of humility, patient trust in God, zeal for God's glory, perfect submission to God's will, and unflinching courage to finish the work which God gave Him to do.

The New Testament and Christ's Righteousness

The apostles present Jesus as the fulfillment of the Isaianic servant who goes about "doing good." Jesus comes to be baptized in order "to fulfil all righteousness" (Matt. 3:15). At His baptism a voice from heaven declares, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17; this obviously refers us back to Isa. 42:1).

As Israel was called out of Egypt and tested in the wilderness, so Christ also is called out of Egypt (Matt. 2:15) and tested in the wilderness (Matt. 4:1-11). Whereas Israel murmured against God and broke her covenant vow, Christ passes over the same ground as God's new Israel. He is the righteous Servant who keeps covenant with God.

When Christ dies on the cross, Luke records that the centurion cries, "Certainly this was a righteous Man" (Luke 23:47). Even the dying thief is constrained to declare, ". . . this man hath done nothing amiss" (Luke 23:41). Before His death the demons were often forced to confess, "I know Thee who Thou art; the Holy One of God" (Luke 4:34).

John presents Jesus as the One whose meat it is to do the Father's will. Christ declares, "I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me" (John 5:30). Even in the face of going into that place of outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (tasting death for every man), He still submits: ". . . not My will, but Thine be done" (Luke 22:42). As God's faithful Servant, He continues until He can say, "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do" (John 17:4).

The writer to the Hebrews says:

For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin . . . Who in the days of His flesh, when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death, and was heard in that He feared; though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him . . . (Heb. 4:15; 5:7-9).

One of the most glorious New Testament testimonies to the righteousness of Christ is found in Philippians 2:5-9:

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also

hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name. . . .

The expression "obedient unto death" literally reads "obedient until death." The whole course of Christ's condescension and humble obedience is here portrayed. It takes in the total span of Christ's life from the manger to the cross. He went lower and lower in the path of humiliation until there was no lower place for Him to go.

The life of this obedient, suffering Servant is what Paul calls "the righteousness of One" and "the obedience of One" (Rom. 5:18-19). Because Romans 5:18 is sometimes translated "one act of righteousness," some contend that Paul is referring only to Christ's act of dying on the cross. But we should remember that God's redemptive act in Christ was more than a few hours in duration. It took thirty-three years. Cranfield is no doubt right when he compares this passage with Philippians 2:8 and says, "The term covers His whole life, not just His passion and death."—*The International Critical Commentary, Romans* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark), p. 289. Obedience is a living thing, a quality of life. Christ's life of obedience to the perfect will of God is "the righteousness of Christ." As the second or last Adam and as the new Israel or King of Israel, His righteousness consisted in fulfilling the stipulations of the covenant in the most trying circumstances.

The Saving Properties of Christ's Righteousness

". . . a Man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest . . ." (Isa. 32:2). This is because in Jesus Christ the sinner may find what the law of God demands—a life of perfect righteousness. But it is proper to inquire, "Why does the righteousness of Jesus Christ have saving properties?" There are two reasons:

1. It was a vicarious righteousness. Christ's life of obedience was not lived for Himself. As Lawgiver, He owed no obedience to the law. Obedience is the obligation of the creature, not the Creator. But Christ voluntarily assumed our obligation so that in our stead He could do for us that which we could not do for ourselves.

In Jesus Christ the sinner may find what the law of God demands—a life of perfect righteousness.

... 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).

As Bunyan so beautifully put it, for thirty-three years Christ wove a garment of perfect righteousness to be given away. He needed no such righteousness for Himself, for from eternity He was the righteous One.

2. Christ's righteousness was not only vicarious (lived for us), but it was of infinite value. No mere creature sinlessness could suffice to save a multitude of sinners. If there are righteous men like Noah, Job and Daniel in the land, their righteousness will not suffice to save anyone else (see Ezek. 14:20).

As we have seen, the righteousness of Christ was lived out in the flesh-and-blood reality of His earthly life. But He was the God-man. The Person who rendered this obedience for us was a divine and infinite Person. His Person gave value to His work. He was filled with "all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). In Philippians 2:5-8 the apostle clearly shows us that His was an infinite humility. His obedience was so glorious that it merited all honor and eternal blessedness (see Phil. 2:9-10; Ps. 24).

When God gave us Jesus to be our righteousness, He gave us an infinite treasure. The life which we have in God's Son is much greater than the sinless life which was forfeited by Adam's transgression. The righteousness of Jesus has infinite value with God.

In order that Christ could bequeath this life of infinite righteousness to us (a righteousness that would merit us all blessedness and eternal glory), He had to lay it down. Perhaps God's act of clothing the nakedness of Adam and Eve was an illustration of this. Before these sinners could be covered, a beast had to yield its life so that they could wear its skin. Death made the skins available, but it was the life of the animal which produced the coat.

Christ's life was so great that it was able to swallow up death and triumph over it. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Rom. 5:10). Our righteousness is the life of Christ, and this righteousness is where we need it most—at the right hand of God.

The Communication of Christ's Righteousness

It was God's grace which provided this righteousness for us. Hence it is called "the righteousness of God" (Rom. 1:17; 3:21; 10:3; Phil. 3:9). Christ lived it. So it is called "the righteousness of . . . Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:1). The gospel declares its saving properties.

So it is what we might appropriately call "gospel righteousness." In the preaching of the gospel the Holy Spirit is present to create faith in this righteousness. Hence it is called "the righteousness of faith" (Rom. 1:17; 3:22; 4:11; 9:30; Phil. 3:9).

The righteousness of faith is not a quality seen by us or felt by us. It is not to be confused with the Spirit's work of regeneration and sanctification in our hearts. The righteousness which is of faith is nothing but the righteous deeds of incarnate God. It is called "the righteousness of faith" because faith embraces it, saying, "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. . . . Therefore, everything that Christ has is ours, graciously bestowed on us unworthy men out of God's sheer mercy, although we have rather deserved wrath and condemnation, and hell also. . . . This is an infinite righteousness and one that swallows up all sins in a moment, for it is impossible that sin should exist in Christ. On the contrary, he who trusts in Christ exists in Christ; he is one with Christ, having the same righteousness as He."—Martin Luther, *Luther's Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 349-358.

This righteousness of Christ which justifies and saves the believing sinner unto life eternal always remains with and in the Person of Christ.

... the righteousness is still "in Him"; not "in us," even then when we are made partakers of the benefit of it, even as the wing and feathers still abide in the hen when the chickens are covered, kept, and warmed thereby.—John Bunyan, *Justification by an Imputed Righteousness* (Swengel, Penn.: Reiner Publications).

Again Bunyan says:

The righteousness by which we stand just before God from the curse was performed by the person of Christ. . . . This righteousness is inherent only in Him.—*Ibid.*

Indeed this is one of the greatest mysteries in the world—namely, that a righteousness that resides with a person in heaven should justify me, a sinner, on earth.—*Ibid.*

Once we grasp that the saving righteousness of Jesus consists in the works and deeds of Jesus which were performed for us 2,000 years ago, it becomes plain why Paul teaches that the righteousness which is of faith is imputed (see Rom. 4). Says Buchanan:

This righteousness,—being the merit of a work, and not a mere quality of character,—may become ours by being imputed to us, but cannot be communicated by being infused; and must ever continue to belong primarily and, in one important respect, exclusively to Him by Whom alone that work was accomplished. . . . The merit of one may be reckoned, or put down to the account of another; but how

can the merit of any work be infused, as a personal property, as holiness may unquestionably be?—James Buchanan, *The Doctrine of Justification*, pp. 334-335.

There is, through the work of the Holy Spirit, an impartation of "essential righteousness"—that is, the attributes of God's character. The believer thereby becomes progressively more and more like Christ in character. Yet this inwrought holiness must not be confused with "the righteousness of faith." Paul can exhort believers to perfect holiness in the fear of God (2 Cor. 7:1), but nowhere does he exhort them to perfect the righteousness which is theirs by faith. This righteousness is already infinitely perfect. It is a garment already woven and ready to be worn by all who will submit to it.

The Benefits of Christ's Righteousness

Since Christ lived for His people a life of positive righteousness as well as died to atone for their sins, this means that God's justification of the believer includes more than pardon for past offenses. While the blood of Christ washes away the stain of all guilt, the righteousness of Christ clothes the believer with the righteousness which the law demands. Justification is not clearing away the past so that the believer can go on and provide his own life for acceptance with God. The holy life of the believer never becomes the central preoccupation where Christ's righteousness is given its proper place. The believer sees that just as his old life has been buried with Christ, so his real life is now in Christ at God's right hand (Col. 3:1-4). This is the abundant life (John 10:10), the infinite treasure of the Christian. Where his treasure is, there is his heart also.

The holy life which the believer lives on earth is but the first fruits and the down payment of his inheritance (Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:13-14). This is not that abundant life

of which the Christian can lawfully boast. In his earthly life, even in its best state, he will never find fulfillment and satisfaction but will rather confess with Paul, "O wretched man that I am!" (Rom. 7:24). The Christian's real life, therefore, is outside of himself, and his consolation is always what Another is on his behalf in the presence of God.

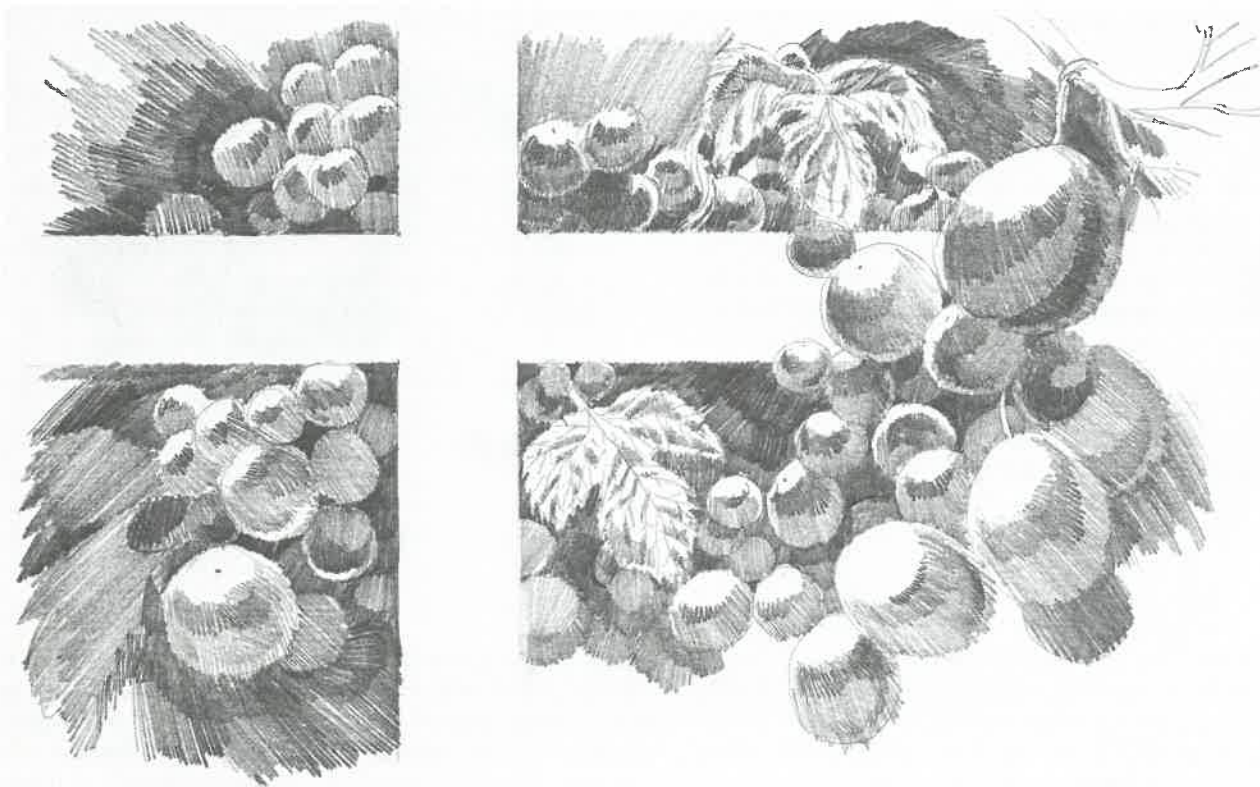
Yet this righteousness which is by faith alone determines the nature of the holy life of the believer in the here and now. We have seen that Christ's righteousness consists in His perfect obedience to the commandments of God (covenant stipulations) on behalf of those who believe on Him. The Son of God was not sent to put the law aside. He did not die so that its holy requirement could be cast aside as nothing. The righteousness of Christ was the highest honor that could be paid to the divine law. In the life of Jesus Christ the law received much more honor than if Adam and all his posterity had kept it. The law (the covenant stipulations) had to be fulfilled, every jot and tittle of it; otherwise there would be no hope of justification for any sinner.

When the believing sinner sees that Christ put His own life on the line to honor and uphold God's law, he will not think that it is a light matter to sin and trample on God's holy commandments. While the law points him to Christ as His only righteousness to meet its claims, Christ's righteousness points him back to the law as the expression of Christian duty. In the light of the gospel, God's commandments are not grievous (1 John 5:3).

The good news that Christ kept the law for us is not an encouragement to antinomianism. Rightly understood, it is the end of antinomianism.

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).





The Doctrine of Justification by Faith and Holiness

Immanuel Stockmeyer

The subject that is now to occupy us, the doctrine of justification by faith, is, in a dogmatic point of view, based upon the foregoing Lectures, more especially those that treated respectively of Sin and of the Atonement. We are now, however, about to consider this subject from the *moral* point of view. For, apart from the dogmatic objections which have been already combated, this doctrine has often been objected to in the supposed interests of morality. Now it is a doctrine which, in the New Testament, appears with especial prominence in the epistles of St. Paul, and which, at the time of the Reformation, constituted the fundamental point of difference between Protestantism and Catholicism. To prove this latter assertion, we have only to review a few passages of Protestant Confessions of faith. First, we will take the Basle Confession of the year 1534: "We

Reprinted from *The Foundations of Our Faith* (London: Strahan and Co., 1863), pp. 201-220.

acknowledge the remission of sins by faith in Jesus Christ the crucified. And although this faith be continually practised, proved, and confirmed by works of love, yet we attribute justification and satisfaction for our sins not to these works which are the fruits of faith, but only to our true reliance on and faith in the blood-shedding of the Lamb of God. For we freely acknowledge that in Christ, who is our justification, sanctification, redemption, way, truth, wisdom, and life, all things are given to us. Hence the good works of believers do not expiate their sins, but are done solely out of gratitude to God the Lord for his great benefits to usward in Christ." The Heidelberg Confession also gives a most striking and hearty popular expression to this doctrine. Here is the answer to the sixtieth question, as to the mode of justification before God: "Only by true faith in Jesus Christ, whereby, although my conscience accuses me of having grievously transgressed all God's commandments, and

never having kept one, as well as of being continually inclined to all that is evil, yet God, without any merit of mine, of pure grace, bestows on me, imputes to me, the perfect satisfaction, justification, and sanctification of Christ, as fully as though I had never committed any sin, and had myself rendered the obedience Christ rendered in my stead, if only I will accept all these benefits with a believing heart." As to the teaching of the Lutheran Church on this point, I only need to recall the fourth article of the Augsburg Confession: "*On justification.*—Further, be it enjoined, that we are unable to attain to forgiveness of sin or righteousness before God through any merits, works, or expiation of our own, but that we obtain forgiveness and are counted righteous before him through grace by faith, and for the sake of Christ, we believing that Christ has suffered for us, and that on that account our sins are forgiven, and righteousness and eternal life bestowed on us. For this faith, God will look upon, and reckon to us, as righteousness, as St. Paul says to the Romans (chap iii. 4)."

In direct opposition to this Protestant testimony, we will only here adduce on the side of Catholicism, the twelfth canon of the sixth session of the Council of Trent. "If any man shall say that justifying faith is nothing else than trust in the Divine mercy which forgives the sinner for the sake of Christ, or that it is by this trust alone that man is justified—let him be accursed."

This Protestant doctrine it was which, at the time of the Reformation, not only formed a fundamental difference, but, at the manifold negotiations to which it led, was the chief hindrance to a reunion of both Confessions. It was vehemently attacked from a moral point of view, not merely by its Romish opponents, but by many who, in other respects, were inclined to Protestantism; and we may safely assert that numbers who were violent against the night of error and abuse in the Church of Rome, and who highly estimated the merits of Luther, yet in relation to this doctrine, which was in fact the essential point at issue, remained—perhaps without suspecting it—very good Catholics all the time. Now men are perfectly justified in applying the standard of morality to an article of faith, and it ought to be acknowledged a step in the right direction when any doctrine, which cannot legitimize itself both by its own moral character and its influence on mankind, awakens suspicion. Only we must be careful to draw our moral standard not from a superficial survey, but a profound search into the real moral needs of our nature.

The attacks which have been made in the interests of morality upon the doctrine in question, may be reduced to two questions—1. Is it not in itself an immoral idea that God should, on account of a man's faith, pronounce him to be righteous, when in point of fact he is not so? 2. Would not such an imputed righteousness as this necessarily destroy all moral effort?

This charge of immorality naturally suggests to us an easy, practical refutation; for as Christians, we cannot



admit that Pauline Christianity, and as Protestants, we cannot admit that the Reformation, rests upon an immoral basis. Neither has the doctrine called in question, whether as exemplified in Paul, or in the champions of the Reformation—a Luther, a Melancthon, a Calvin, etc.—or in the social history of Protestantism generally, had practically any immoral tendency. However, we will not allow this train of thought to interfere with the examination of the doctrine, but rather encourage us to carry it on very carefully, and to enter more deeply into the question, before we allow ourselves to come to a decision.

It is evident that, within our present limits, we cannot set before you an account of all the controversies to which our doctrine gave rise, or a special defence of all that has been said on *this* side, and a special contradiction of all brought forward on *that*. This would lead us into a web of occasionally most subtle distinctions. The conflict has been actively renewed within the last thirty years by the appearance of a very spirited and learned work of the Catholic theologian Mohler; and in defence of the Protestant doctrine, several have taken up the pen who certainly cannot be reproached with a narrow orthodoxy: I may instance Marheineke, and the recently deceased Professor Baur of Tubingen. A closer examination of the controversy shows how in the Protestant camp, in the heat of argument and opposition, several maxims, expressions, and illustrations have been employed, which certainly betray a rather one-sided, strained, and harsh spirit, and must therefore be sometimes qualified; as, for instance, when the Lutheran Nicolaus of Amsdorf undertakes to prove that the proposition, "Good works are injurious to salvation," is a true and a Christian one. On the other side, we observe how those Catholics who feel anxious to grasp the deeper

meaning of the doctrines of their church, and to defend them by scientific weapons, have unconsciously drawn nearer in many respects to Protestant views. But all these points we must at present leave untouched, confining ourselves to the thorough examination of the true Protestant doctrine, and seeking to justify it from the charges made against its morality.

The Justification of the Ungodly

I. First, then, "According to the Protestant doctrine," say some, "a righteousness external to man—alien to him, is imputed to him; he is declared righteous by God without actually being so. This is an untrue and immoral principle." Here we must set out by reminding our opponents that it is necessary for them to understand the idea of this reckoning, or imputing, in the sense that we hold it. In this, as in all cases where divine actions are represented by expressions borrowed from human life, it is essential to make allowance for the inadequacy inherent in these expressions. Thus this reckoning or imputing of which we speak, is not an external affair, as in the business of daily life, when a discharge is written out and given and reckoned to B., because A. has undertaken to be a surety for him, whether as to work to be done or payment to be made. This is, indeed, a purely external matter to B., however closely it may affect him, affect him even while he knows nothing of it. Not so, however, is it with Christ's representation of humanity. Here we are not treating of a certain amount of virtue, of good works which have got to be done, it matters not by whom, and Christ has done them; or, again, of a certain amount of punishment which has got to be endured, it matters not by whom, and Christ has endured it. Most assuredly we are to entertain no such lifeless conception of Christ's representative righteousness, and of the active and passive obedience he has rendered. Rather Christ's holy life and holy works on the one side; his holy sufferings and holy death on the other,—constitute that work of redemption and expiation, which brings about a decided reaction against sin and its consequences; atones at once for the sins of mankind, and is to mankind both a new origin of life—whence Christ is called the second Adam,—and a new condition of life—mankind having now through Christ fellowship with God.

But at the same time, every man is not, as a matter of course, without anything further, a sharer in this new life; faith in Christ is the necessary condition to its attainment. By faith, however, as has already in these Lectures been frequently observed, in connexion with different subjects, and from different points of view,—by faith we are by no means to understand a theoretical process, which only affects the human intellect; but rather, a specially practical relative position; the energetic laying hold by man of that grace of God which was by

Christ realized in humanity, and is now in Christ offered to humanity; or, more briefly, it is the energetic laying hold of Christ himself; and consequently, it is a process which affects spiritual life in its very core, a process by which the man is implanted or incorporated into Christ, and thus has, by fellowship with him, a share in that reaction brought about by Christ against the sin and guilt of humanity.

Thus are the believer's personal sins and guilt now atoned for by Christ, and he stands in that fellowship with the divine life which Christ has restored in humanity. Luther, in his famous treatise on the liberty of a Christian, has treated this truth in a most profound manner, mystically if you will, but mystically in the best sense of the word, mystically in so far as he was discussing the tenderest and intimate *mystery* of godliness. These are his words: "Faith unites the soul with Christ as a bride to the bridegroom. From which union it follows, as St. Paul says (Eph. v. 20), that Christ and the soul become one body; and also that they have their possessions, their mischances, and all things in common, that which is Christ's belonging to the believing soul, that which is the soul's belonging to Christ. If Christ has all holiness and blessedness, these belong to the soul. If the soul has all unrighteousness and sin, these belong to Christ. Here then we see a glad exchange and emulation. Because Christ is God and man, who never sinned, and his holiness unconquerable, eternal, and almighty, he, through the bridal ring, which is faith, appropriates the sins of the believing soul as his own, as though they had been committed by him, and thus the sins must needs be swallowed up and drowned in him. For his unconquerable holiness is too strong for any or all sin. Thus the soul is purified from all sin through its dowry; that is, on account of its faith, and not only goes perfectly free, but is endowed with the righteousness of its bridegroom, Christ."

Thus it appears that to the believer the righteousness of Christ is no more an external and foreign thing that can only be arbitrarily imputed to him; but rather it is something appropriated by him, essentially his own, by reason, if I may so speak, of the solidarity which has been brought about between himself and Christ. The believer has no longer a separate existence, but lives henceforth in fellowship with Christ, as a member incorporated in him, and accordingly he is looked upon by God, not as what he is in and by himself, but as what

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he is in that relation to Christ which faith has occasioned.

And further, it follows that faith cannot possibly be indifferent to morality, as is presumed by that often repeated charge: "Very convenient indeed! no matter how a man thinks and feels and lives, he believes, and therefore is declared righteous." On the contrary, faith in its energetic laying hold of Christ and his righteousness, is a spiritual action of a positively moral character. "Faith," says Luther, in his preface to the Epistle to the Romans, "is a living, well-considered reliance on God's grace, so sure and certain that I could die for it a thousand times."

Again, the Heidelberg Catechism calls faith "a hearty trust, worked in us by the Holy Spirit, through the gospel." Now, if according to Protestant doctrine it is the Holy Ghost who produces faith in men, and without whom they never could attain to it (as Paul himself had already declared, "No man can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. xii. 3), it is equally true that it is the human spirit in which he works, and whose energies he sets in motion, and it is the human will to which he imparts this decided direction towards Christ, so that faith can in no sense be a purely passive relation, but rather a condition of the highest activity. Only it behoves our Protestant doctrine vigorously to guard against faith itself having a certain kind of merit attributed to it, as though, as the subjective condition and indwelling quality of a man, it made that man so well pleasing in the eyes of God, that *therefore* God counted him to be righteous, in which case man would indeed have a righteousness in himself, that is, in his faith. Whereas the believer has *no* righteousness in himself, but only in Christ, his faith being but the means whereby he appropriates to himself Christ and his righteousness. It is against this mistaken estimation of faith that the Heidelberg Catechism expressly guards when it follows up the 60th question, the answer to which we have already given, by the following words: "Wherefore sayest thou, that thou art justified by faith only?" and replies to them, "Not because I, on account of the worthiness of my faith, am well pleasing to God; for the satisfaction, justification, and sanctification of Christ are my only righteousness before God, and I do nothing by my faith, but receive these and make them my own."



Faith cannot possibly be indifferent to morality.

Faith in its energetic laying hold of Christ and his righteousness, is a spiritual action of a positively moral character.

Faith Is Inseparable from Repentance

But the moral character of faith will appear still more distinctly, if we consider how inseparable faith is from the negative moment—*Repentance*; repentance in the biblical sense, which nowhere means expiation of guilt by punishment, but change of mind with regard to sin; a condemning of sin, not merely in a general way, but a condemning of a man's own personal sin, which takes the form of regret; of a sorrowful consciousness both of individual sinful actions, in thought, word, and deed, and of the sinful nature from which these actions have proceeded; of a sorrowful consciousness, too, of personal inability to make up for past evil, or even to shake off all connexion with evil in the future; of a sorrowful consciousness, in short, of how hateful sin is in the eyes of the holy God, and how it separates a man from him. A consciousness this, whose intensity in no way depends upon the relative greatness or uncommon nature of these individual sins, but upon the depth of the moral feeling and the measure of susceptibility to the contrast between a holy God and sinful man. But still less here than with regard to faith, should there be any idea entertained of merit, as though a man's repentance were in some sense his righteousness. Rather, repentance is that painful sense and acknowledgment of utter want of any righteousness whatever of a man's own, which drives him to seek a righteousness external to himself, and is consequently the preparatory condition of that faith which finds it in Christ.

These observations indeed contain the peculiar features of the Protestant doctrine of justification, but still we have not as yet brought them out with sufficient prominence. That men become righteous and are saved by the merits of Christ, and that faith is necessary to the appropriation of these, both Churches concur in affirming. The difference between them first makes itself apparent in their conception of the *process* of appropriation, in their definition of what justification is in itself, and how man attains to it. According to Catholic theology, justification is not a *declaring*, but a *making* of the sinner righteous, *i.e.*, through the merits of the holy sufferings of Christ the Holy Spirit pours the love of God into the heart of man; man becomes inwardly renewed, and can and will now keep the law of God, and do such good works as are conformable thereto. All this together, they hold, constitutes justification. "In justification itself," says the Council of Trent, in the seventh chapter of the sixth session, "man receives through Christ, in whom he is engrafted, together with forgiveness of sins, faith, hope, and love." At first sight this view may not seem to differ very essentially from the Protestant; but if we look at it closely, we shall perceive how much here the moment of pardon, of forgiveness of sins, is pushed into the background, justification being confounded with what we distinguish

The moral character of faith will appear still more distinctly, if we consider how inseparable faith is from the negative moment—*Repentance*.

as sanctification,—never, therefore, coming to an end, but understood as a subjective process which goes on throughout life, for the justified, as the tenth chapter of the same Session expressly declares, are ever more and more justified. The Protestant doctrine, on the contrary, distinguishes justification as an independent moment, from the sanctification which is its immediate consequence; justification itself, according to this doctrine, consisting in God declaring man righteous, *i.e.*, judicially absolved from all guilt, so that from that time forth, man may be fully conscious of being reconciled to God, assured of his pardon, and in the enjoyment of his peace; and, further, if with this experience in his heart he should immediately die, he would be certain of dying saved, and of escaping judgment; and all this, not on the ground of any worthiness whatever of his own, as though his righteousness were in himself; but for the sake of Christ, with whom he is so incorporated by faith, that he no longer lives in himself but in Christ, and thus is no more viewed by God as existing independently, but as connected with Christ, as a member of the spiritual body of which Christ is the head.

Paul and Luther

It is possible, indeed, that at the first glance this Catholic doctrine may appear the more comprehensible and clear of the two to what one calls man's common sense; but still the closer examination to which our deeper religious and moral wants invite us, will reveal truth on the side of the Protestant. Let us make this evident by reverting to the experience of the two men in whom this doctrine of justification by faith appears

The Protestant doctrine distinguishes justification as an independent moment, from the sanctification which is its immediate consequence.



to be equally embodied: to that of the apostle Paul, who first defined it in all its distinctness, and of Luther, who not only made it the principle of his own Christian life, but of his whole work of Reformation. When Paul, after the appearance of the Lord to him on his way to Damascus, underwent a three days' mental conflict, his bodily eyes being sealed, but the eyes of his understanding opened to recognise the whole of his former life as mistaken,—spent in unbelief and resistance to that God whom by his bloody persecuting zeal he had thought to serve,—*pardon* was already bestowed upon him, he being baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. He, on his side, brought nothing to insure it, except sorrow for his past life and faith in Christ; he was only conscious, as far as he was himself concerned, of being laden with guilt, and of seeking righteousness in Christ, and yet he could thenceforth feel certified of God's grace, for the sake of that Jesus whom he had

persecuted. While his repentance could discover nothing in himself but wrath-deserving unrighteousness, he already knew by experience what it was to be found in Christ, and to have for righteousness *that* which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith (Phil. iii. 9); for his being in Christ was owing to faith alone. This was his justification, an independent act of divine mercy, which was antecedent to the new life he was now entering upon, and the origin and the source of all that followed. This consciousness of justifying grace, laid hold of only through faith in Christ, is henceforth the key-note of his whole life, and sounds throughout all his epistles; this his conviction once for all and for ever, that man is justified without the works of the law,—justified by faith.

Let us now glance at the spiritual history of the reformer, Martin Luther. He is living in his cell at Erfurth, a pious monk, in the best sense of the word.



He keeps the rules of his Order with conscientious strictness, and he does this not with the hypocritical intent to make up as it were to God, by outward observances and mortifications, for neglect of far more important moral duties; no, he is seeking in earnest to please God and make his peace with him; and, according to the belief of the age, he considers this monastic life, with all its privations, the most certain way of attaining that end; asceticism is to be to him a means of sanctification and subjugation of all evil tendencies. This course, however, in no way leads him to peace with God; on the contrary, he becomes only more strongly convinced of the wide gulf between his sinful nature and the divine, and he sinks into profound anxiety and gloom. Nothing comforts him but a speech of an old brother monk, who reminds him that the Christian creed contains the words, "I believe in the remission of sins." The significance of this remission of sins, as an independent moment, already dawns upon his mind, and his office of doctor of the Holy Scriptures giving him an opportunity of thoroughly studying the epistles of St. Paul, he soon enjoys the full light of truth and consolation. In them he finds laid down as a fact,—experimentally verified and most clearly impressed on the writer's consciousness,—the mode of man's justification and attainment of spiritual peace. His own experience assents to the declaration of the apostle, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. v. 1). Henceforth this is for him essentially the gospel of salvation. This certainty of being forgiven by God, not on account of any righteousness of his own, not because of the measure of love and holiness to which he had already attained; but

looking away altogether from his own moral condition (so little satisfying in his own eyes, so much less so, therefore, in the eyes of a Holy God), and looking to Christ alone, and being bold to say, "Whatever Christ has is mine, because I am his through faith;" this certainty it was which gave him that cheerful heroic strength in which he triumphantly waged war not only against all hindrances to his own personal sanctification, but against the Papal power so dominant in his time. The energy with which he was inspired by the thought, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" rested on this justifying faith. He knew it experimentally, as "the living, deliberate, reliance on God's grace, so certain that I would die for it a thousand times."

These two examples strikingly illustrate the importance of justification considered according to our Protestant doctrine as an independent act of grace. The greater the truth and intensity of the moral sense in any man, the more aware will he be of the difference between the ever-sinful and utterly imperfect creature, and the holy God, and therefore the more compelled to seek for righteousness not in his own imperfections, but in the perfections of Christ. And again, the very possibility of loving God from the heart, and because of this love striving after holiness with that freedom and joy which constitute the very essence of love—in other words, all truly moral efforts at self-improvement,—must be based upon a justification not dependent upon the measure of sanctification already attained, but independently bestowed on us as the very condition of this sanctification. For so long as I am not certain that God has pardoned me, that I have peace with him, that the sins that still so easily beset me form no wall of partition between me and my God, so long I am unable to love him with all my heart. It is the experience of the love of God as having freely forgiven me a sinner, for Christ's sake, that first calls out in me free, pure, active, and influential reciprocal love. Now this happy certainty of being forgiven is the very point at which the Catholic Church takes especial umbrage. The Council of Trent, in the ninth chapter of the sixth Session expressly states:—"Every man by reason of his own weakness and defects, must be in fear and anxiety about his state of grace, nor can any one know with infallible certainty of faith that he has received forgiveness of God."

Union Without Fusion

II. This leads us to our second question, which is this:—Will justification by faith—in other words, the certainty of being forgiven and declared righteous by God through faith in Christ's merits,—will this actually have sanctification for its result? Will it not rather paralyse moral effort, man being satisfied with immunity from God's judgment, and not careful or desirous to strive after progressive sanctification?



This question may be very simply answered, if only we bear in mind that Protestantism invariably insists upon justification being dependent upon faith, and understands faith as placing us in living relation to Christ. He then only is justified who is virtually related to Christ, and when this is the case, it is wholly inconceivable that a man should remain as he is, that he should not become sanctified. For Christ, through his Spirit, lives in all the living members of the Church, which is his spiritual body, and the effect of this life is their sanctification.

That this inseparable connexion between justification and sanctification may be clearly and distinctly represented without identifying or confusing the two, or in any way encroaching upon the Protestant doctrine of justification as an independent moment, Calvin has shown us in the third book of his Institutes. Thus, in the eleventh chapter, and sixth paragraph, he says, "As Christ himself cannot be divided, so these two, justification and sanctification, which we receive together from him, are alike indivisible. For whom God receives into his favour, to them he also gives the Spirit of adoption, by which power they are transformed into his image. But should we, because the heat of the sun is inseparable from its light, speak of the earth being warmed by its light, and lighted by its warmth? This comparison is well adapted to illustrate the subject, the sun both by its heat making the earth fruitful, and lighting it by its rays; here then we see a reciprocal and inseparable connexion, but still reason forbids our attributing the peculiar nature of one of these processes

Love to God and Christ, which governs the souls of the justified, is the principle of all moral life.

to the other."

How closely connected justification and sanctification are, how the last is the necessary consequence of the first, shines out brightly from the testimony of St. Paul to the facts of his personal experience. "If any man be in Christ"—that is, be by faith placed in that relation to Christ to which we owe justification—"he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new!" (2 Cor. v. 17). Now this renewal is not to be thought of as taking place at once, but the decisive beginning of it synchronizes with the being engrafted into Christ, and progresses continually in sanctification. The ruling motive in the souls of those who are justified by the death of Christ is the love first shown by the Lord himself, and now felt for him. "The love of Christ constraineth us," writes the apostle; "because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. v. 14, 15). This love to God and Christ, which governs the souls of the justified, is the principle of all moral life.

He only is justified who is virtually related to Christ, and when this is the case, it is wholly inconceivable that a man should remain as he is, that he should not become sanctified.

Again, we are not to think of this subject as though the Christian, in his own person, had a repugnance to all that was holy and good, to virtue and good works of every kind, but yet, out of personal love to God and Christ, was enabled to make the effort, and do good. Rather are goodness and holiness God's essential nature. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all" (1 John i. 5). To love God signifies, therefore, to love the source and sum of all goodness; and to love Christ signifies to love the most perfect revelation of this goodness in the form of human life. By means of this love is that prophecy fulfilled (Jer. xxxi. 31-34) which promises a new covenant between God and his people, consisting of his law put into their inward parts, and written in their minds. And according to the epistle to the Galatians, as soon as we are engrafted through faith into Christ, we receive the Holy Spirit, and he is a powerful, vital impulse within us, his fruit being "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: *against such there is no law.*"

Thus, through the Spirit of God as ruling motive and vital principle, if we surrender ourselves to him, and follow him, and in his strength overcome the impulses of the flesh, we are placed in a position, and enabled to lead a life, which is in conformity with the law: the expression of the Divine will concerning us. Thus far the apostle Paul. And now let us hear how Luther in his Introduction to the Epistle to the Romans, lays down man's moral renewal as the inevitable consequence of true and justifying faith. "Faith," he says, "is not the mere human delusion and dream that some hold it to be. And hence, when they see no improvement of life, nor good works following therefrom, and yet hear a great deal said about faith, they fall into error, and declare that faith is not sufficient, that a man must have works also in order to be holy and saved. Whereas this is only a hearing the gospel and being struck by it, and calling up thoughts by their own strength, and exclaiming, I

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believe. Now, this being but a human idea and imagination, which never stirs the ground of the heart, it has no influence, and no improvement follows thereupon. But *Faith* is a divine work in us, that changes us, and begets us anew, and kills the old Adam, and makes us different in heart and spirit, mind and strength, and brings the Holy Spirit with it. Oh! it is a living, creative, active, mighty thing this faith, to which it would be impossible not to bring forth good works continually! It does not inquire whether there are any good works to be done; before the question can be put, it has done, and ever is doing them. He who does not do these good works is an unbelieving man, who may indeed keep groping and peering about faith and good works, but knows neither what faith is, nor what good works really are, however much he may chatter about them both." And again, "Therefore (that is, by reason of his faith) the man is without constraint of any kind, ready and delighted to do good to any one, to serve any one, to suffer anything for the love and to the praise of God, who has shown him so great mercy. For it is impossible to separate good works from faith, as impossible as to separate from flame its burning and shining properties. Therefore, beware of thine own false thoughts, and of useless chatters, who pretend to be very wise in deciding as to faith and good works, and are all the while great fools. Pray to God to work faith within thee, else thou wilt remain eternally without it, think or do what thou wilt or canst."

According to these statements we may reduce the whole of the previous argument to this alternative: Either a man is really justified by true faith, and then sanctification and good works will inevitably ensue; or sanctification and good works do not ensue, therefore there has been no true faith, and so no justification.

What, in such a case as this, a man may still call his faith, is something to which Paul positively denies the honour of such an appellation altogether, while James calls it a dead faith, a form which may indeed retain the sharply-cut features impressed on it by doctrine, but which is only a pale, cold, lifeless thing. It is—if such a name be to be given to it in any sense—a faith which, because it is dead, is perfectly powerless, and as it cannot morally renew man, so it cannot procure him justification either, because it can in no way bring him into living relation to Christ.

No Creature Merit

If enough has already been said to refute the charge of often paralysing and impeding moral effort brought against this our doctrine of justification by faith, it still remains that we call attention to two points which prove how, on the contrary, it is this very principle that guarantees to moral effort its purity and earnestness. One of these points relates to the undeniable amount remaining, even in the regenerate, of fleshly lusts or inclination to sin. The Catholic doctrine, which makes justification dependent not upon faith, and the righteousness of Christ imputed and granted thereto, but on the actual condition of the man himself, is consequently constrained to assert of these lusts (*concupiscentia*) that they are not in themselves sinful, or objects of divine displeasure. According to this doctrine, they are allowed to remain in man that he may struggle against them, and the apostle Paul designates them as sinful only because they are derived from and incite to sin. But they only become positive sin by the concurrence with

them of the human will.—*Trid. Sess. v., Decr. 5.* But how, we ask, can that which is derived from sin and incites to sin, and which is not external to the man, but internal in him, how can that be otherwise than itself sin, and therefore displeasing to God? Again, how are we to draw such a hair-breadth line of demarcation between lust and will? If a man feels conscious of some intensely ardent desire, even if it be never shaped by a formal act of the will into a bad resolve or purpose, still, must not the will be in a measure influenced and implicated? Where does the domain of mere desire end, and that of the will begin? How easy, how almost unavoidable, the temptation to draw the line of distinction in our own favour, and to set down many lesser sins of the will to the score of mere lust or inclination! Whereas, according to Protestant principles, the regenerate man, although waging the genuine warfare of the Spirit against the flesh, and advancing in sanctification, yet owes his justification, in God's sight, neither to his individual conduct nor character, but to that relation to Christ into which he has been brought by faith, and owing to which Christ's perfect righteousness is imputed to him. The more pure and earnest therefore, the more *ideal* (to use a modern expression) can he now be in the work of sanctification set before him. His aim is not merely to prevent the will from formally coinciding with the evil desire, but to kill that very desire. He sorrows for and regrets not only every actual sin of thought, deed, or word, into which he falls, and which must deeply grieve him as being symptomatic of a relapse into his old disease; but every rising of a sinful desire excites in him sorrow and repentance, as symptomatic of that diseased nature that still cleaves to him, as something that must be in him most especially displeasing to God, and he feels himself so much the more bound to cling with all his energy to Christ, who of God is made to us both righteousness and sanctification.

The second point touches the merit of good works. We need here only to contrast the two doctrines to see on which side the essential nature of morality—unselfish love in all its purity and profundity—is best guarded. According to the Catholic doctrine, no doubt, all good that the regenerate soul is able to do, is in so far the gift of grace that it can only be done in the power of the Holy Ghost, which God has bestowed for Christ's sake. But by means of this gift (so Catholics teach), a man is able to do such good works as satisfy the divine law as regards this life, and, in the true sense of the word, *deserve* increase of grace, eternal life, and increase of heavenly glory. And from this ground there has sprung the doctrine of supererogatory merits, which, although not formally sanctioned by the Catholic Church, has still less been repudiated by her, but, on the contrary, practically acknowledged by the system of indulgences. This doctrine implies (so are Catholics taught) that they who not only do what the divine law requires, but who also follow the so-called evangelical counsels, more par-



ticularly as to voluntary poverty, celibacy, penances, etc., performing so many of these good works that the Church canonizes them, that is, enrolls them among the saints, —that these have deserved more grace than they need for themselves, and therefore these works of supererogation, united with the equally supererogatory merits of Christ, form a fund, a treasury of merit, out of which the Church has the power of drawing indulgences, that is, of remitting to her members the penances or fasts, or temporal obligations of any kind, that would otherwise be necessary. This sketch of the Catholic doctrine will at once convince you how dubious it is in general, and also how it degrades the true nature of vital and inward morality, to suppose that there can be any merit in man in the sight of a holy God. If the doctrine of creature merit before a God who is absolutely almighty, and to whose love and mercy we owe all we have, if the idea that *He* can be indebted in any way to us, be wholly untenable, still more hopeless must the case seem when we remember that he is a *holy* God, in whose sight our best works are impure and imperfect.

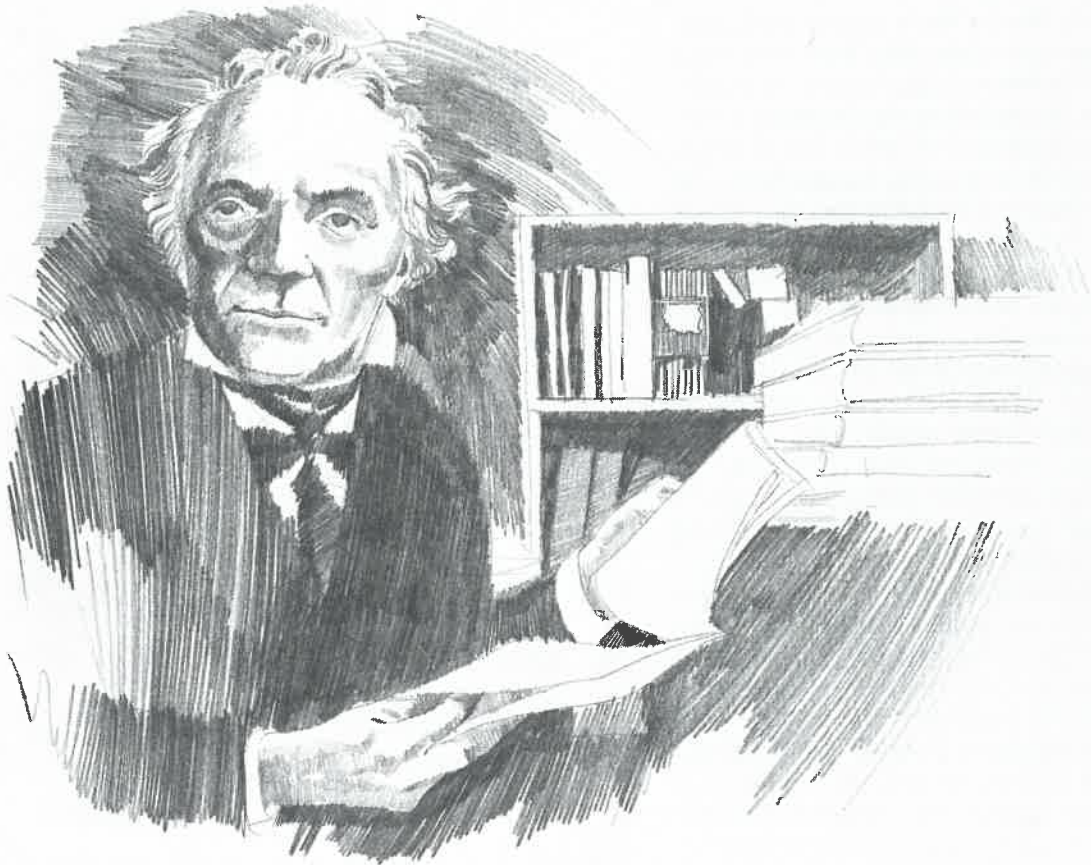
Nor, again, does our individual character ever reach such conformity with the divine law, *i.e.*, the *holy* law of God, as to empower us to say that we have deserved eternal life and heavenly happiness. To acknowledge this in sincerity and humility, to confess the imperfection and sinfulness of all they do and are, and thus to be morally correct and just in their estimate of themselves, is rendered imperative by conscience upon all who are justified by faith. While building confidently upon Christ and his perfect righteousness, they disclaim all merit of their own in the sight of God. The good works they do are done not to *merit* eternal life, but out of thankful love to God who has *given* them eternal life in Christ. And while they gratefully allow that the Holy Scriptures do indeed promise a reward to good works, they look upon this reward not as a right or a thing deserved, but only as a happy result or consequence. If they persevere in faith and holiness to the end, the consequence will indeed be their blessedness in eternity; but this does not imply that they have deserved eternal blessedness. If in this life they grow in grace, and thus in peace and true happiness, they see in this no merit of their own, they only exclaim with the apostle: "Being made free from sin, and become servants to God, we have our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." And if they experience the joy of seeing that their labour is not in vain in the Lord, but that what they do the Lord maketh it to prosper, they neither speak nor think of merit of their own, but give praise to God, who has used such imperfect instruments and feeble efforts to accomplish his gracious ends. Thus the Heidelberg Catechism answers the question, "Have then our good works no merit, since God rewards them in this life and that to come?" by the simple truthful words, "This reward is not of merit but of grace." Or to put the same thought into modern language, we may

While building confidently upon Christ and his perfect righteousness, the justified disclaim all merit of their own in the sight of God.

The doctrine of justification by faith alone truly and completely satisfies not only the requirements of deep and logical reasoning, but more especially the deeper moral need of reconciliation with God, and renewal in his image.

say that, according to the Protestant conception, The reward of good works is the consequence of the grace shown on the one side, conditioned by the consequence of Faith on the other side.

I have thus endeavoured to answer both questions brought before us by our subject, and now that I have come to an end, I see too plainly how little exhaustive my treatment of it has been. God grant that I may at least have succeeded in some measure in making you feel how this doctrine of justification by faith alone truly and completely satisfies not only the requirements of deep and logical reasoning, but more especially the deeper moral need of reconciliation with God, and renewal in his image. If I have so succeeded, I may confidently close this lecture by the entreaty that, as we all have cause to hold fast the precious privileges of various kinds conferred on us by the Reformation, so from henceforth this doctrine of justification by faith may be cherished by us as having been the very life-blood of that Reformation, and as being, in its practical application, the chief jewel of our evangelical Church.



Justification and Holiness

A Letter by Thomas Chalmers

"I feel, my dear Miss Collier, that the righteousness of Christ unmixed with baser materials, untempered with strange mortar, unvitiated by human pretensions of any sort, is the solid resting-place on which a man is to lay his acceptance before God, and that there is no other; that to attempt a composition between grace and works is to spoil both, and is to deal a blow both to the character of God and to the cause of practical holiness. This is my firm conviction; but I trust you understand that it may be a firm conviction without being a bright and rapture-giving perception. I know that it should enrapture me—that it should throw

To attempt a composition between grace and works is to spoil both, and is to deal a blow both to the character of God and to the cause of practical holiness.

me into the transports of gratitude—that it should make me feel as a man in all the triumphs of confident anticipation, but I have occasional visitations of darkness and dulness and spiritual lethargy, and then, like Rutherford, I would like to believe in the dark—to keep

Written in 1818 when Chalmers was 38. *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Thomas Chalmers*, William Hanna (1850), Vol. 2, pp. 183-185.

Not till a man makes himself wholly over to the Redeemer for acceptance will he make himself wholly over to Him for sanctification.

my hold in the midst of all my darkness and all my misgivings—to humble myself because of my cold insensibility, but still to trust determinedly, to trust in the name and righteousness of my Lord.

“I think that holiness is looked upon by some evangelical writers in rather a lame and inadequate point of view. They value it chiefly as an evidence of justifying faith. They are right in saying that it gives no title

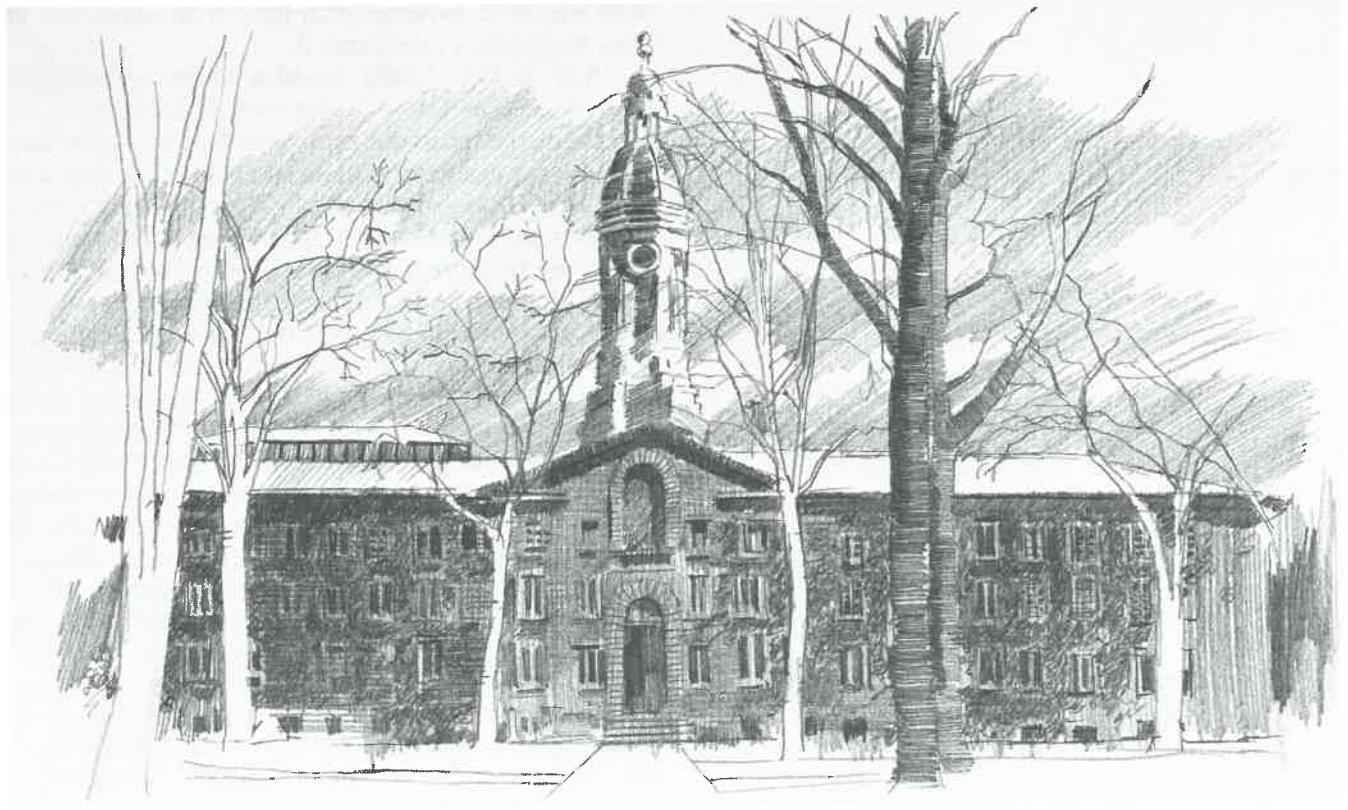
Holiness forms part, and an effective part, of salvation.

to God's favour, but they are wrong in saying that its chief use is to ascertain that title, or to make that title clear to him who possesses it.

“It is, in fact, chiefly valuable on *its own account*. It forms part, and an effective part, of salvation. It may be considered as an entrance upon heaven. Christ came to give us a justifying righteousness, and He also came to make us holy—not chiefly for the purpose of evidencing here our possession of a justifying righteousness—not for so temporary an object as this, but for the purpose of forming and fitting us for a blessed eternity.

“If the only inducement to a new acquirement of holiness was that it made our title clearer and multiplied our evidences, this does not appear so direct or powerful an inducement as when we are told that holiness is, in fact, the happiness of heaven, and then do we understand how every new accession of it adds to our treasure in heaven, and how, by approximating us to the lost image of God, it, in fact, is helping onwards the great and ultimate object to which our justification may be considered only as a means and a preliminary. Was holiness prosecuted for no other object than to clear up our title to the happiness of heaven, then the whole of the prosecution is animated by a selfish principle. Let holiness be prosecuted as that which constitutes the very element of heaven, and without which we could not breathe in it, then we have the most powerful, direct, and intelligible argument that can be conceived for the acquirement of a character not to work out a meritorious cause of salvation, but to work out an indispensable requisite for heaven—not to found a title, for that through the great Head by whom we hold has been already done, but to complete a preparation without which I do not say a man has no right to see God, but without which there is no possibility that a man can see God. I trust that I am the better of Hervey. I like to see a clear and vigorous line of demarcation drawn around the ground of our acceptance with God. I like to see it cleared from all the rubbish of human knowledge and human pollution. I like to see the firm and unmixed plea of the Lord my righteousness held out to sinners in all its power to encourage them to come to the Lawgiver; and not till a man submits to Christ as his alone righteousness will he repair to Him as his only strength; not till he make himself wholly over to the Redeemer for acceptance will he make himself wholly over to Him for sanctification; not till he put away all confidence from himself, and put all his joy in the Lord Jesus, will he serve God in the spirit; for whether do we receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?

“Do pray for me, that I may have more light, more comfort, more steadfastness in my Christian walk. Oh that we had more of the power of it in our hearts, and that God would vouchsafe a measure of light and of strength from His sanctuary! How humbling it is to all learning when a man is made to know that his doctrine has outrun his experience!”



John Witherspoon on Justification

William C. Robinson

John Witherspoon, the leader of the evangelicals in the Kirk of Scotland, was called in 1768 to the presidency of the College of New Jersey and pastorate of the church in Princeton. In his first commencement address the president insisted that religion without learning produces fanaticism, while learning without religion breeds skepticism. His work moved the infant college forward toward becoming Princeton University. Thus he set the example for the American four-year colleges of liberal arts and imparted to them Reid's philosophy of common-sense realism.

As a minister, Witherspoon was for a quarter of a century the leading "presence" in American Presbyterianism. He reorganized the church into a General Assembly and wrote for her constitution a series of Preliminary Principles which changed the daughter of an established church—the Kirk of Scotland—into a free church. The

actions of this denomination for a quarter of a century were largely the product of Witherspoon's heart and hand.

Witherspoon's first sermon as pastor of the Princeton Church, and later at the opening of the first American General Assembly, was based on 1 Corinthians 3:6: "Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but only God gives the increase." The message was that the success of the gospel is wholly of God.

As the cause of American independence developed, Witherspoon became its leading advocate in New Jersey, doing for that colony what the Adamses did for Massachusetts. In recognition of his great service in changing it from a Tory to a patriot colony, the state of New Jersey declared 1975 the John Witherspoon year:

In tribute to this man of God, patriot, educator and signer of the Declaration of Independence, and to encourage a return to God, patriotism, fidelity in government, true education and the spirit of 1776.

Dr. William C. Robinson is professor emeritus of church history at Columbia Theological Seminary.

Witherspoon was the only minister to sign the Declaration of Independence.

Before he left Paisley, Scotland, for America, Witherspoon had become the most popular preacher in Britain. His solid sermons attracted full congregations. He was moderator of his synod in 1759. Aberdeen University conferred upon him the doctorate. He declined calls to Dundee, Dublin and Rotterdam.

One cause of Witherspoon's popularity with the evangelicals on both sides of the Atlantic was his able defense of the Reformation doctrine of justification by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ. When this doctrine was charged with loosening the obligation to the practice of Christian living, John Witherspoon replied:

On the contrary, the belief and acceptance of justification by the grace of God through the imputed righteousness of Christ makes men greater lovers of purity and holiness and fills them with a greater abhorrence of sin.

Experience shows that those who deny their own righteousness and hope for justification through Christ are the most tender and fearful of sinning and are the most holy in their lives. "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. 6:1-2). The grace of God in the gospel of Christ destroys the power of sin and removes the inclination to it. As the grace of God in the gospel is received and applied, so is sin mortified in the heart.

Using Scriptural language drawn chiefly from Romans, Witherspoon thus describes justification:

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God; therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight. But we are justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation, through faith, in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.

Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Moreover, the law entered that the offense might abound; but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound; that as sin reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Every intelligent creature is under an unchangeable and inalienable obligation to perfectly obey the whole law of God. Yet all men are children of polluted parents, alienated in heart from God, transgressors of His holy law, inexcusable in this transgression, and therefore exposed to the consequences of God's displeasure. And it is not agreeable to His wisdom, holiness and justice to forgive without atonement or satis-

Those who deny their own righteousness and hope for justification through Christ are the most tender and fearful of sinning and are the most holy in their lives.

The grace of God in the gospel of Christ destroys the power of sin and removes the inclination to it.

As the grace of God in the gospel is received and applied, so is sin mortified in the heart.

faction. Therefore He raised up a Saviour, Jesus Christ, who as a second Adam perfectly fulfilled the whole law and offered Himself on the cross as a sacrifice in sinful man's stead. This His righteousness is imputed to them as the sole foundation of their justification in the sight of a holy God and of their reception into His favor. The means of their being interested in this salvation is a deep humiliation of mind, a confession of guilt and wickedness, and a denial of themselves and acceptance of peace and pardon through Jesus Christ. They have neither contributed to the procuring of this nor can they contribute to the continuance thereof by their own merit. But they can only expect the renovation of their natures, to be inclined and enabled to keep the commandments of God, as the work of the Spirit and a part of the purchase of their redemption.

In support of this biblical truth Witherspoon presented solid arguments:

1. One who expects justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ has the strongest convictions of *the obligation of the holy law of God* upon every reasonable creature. What Christ did for the salvation of sinners magnifies the law of God. He obeyed its precepts and endured its penalty.

2. He who believes in Christ and expects justification by His imputed righteousness must have the deepest and strongest *sense of the evil of sin* in itself. Even though God is the God of love, He does not forgive sin without an atonement. The greatness of the price, "the precious blood of Christ," shows God's abhorrence of sin. The dignity and glory of the Redeemer, along with the greatness and the severity of His suffering, testify to the heinousness of sin.

In order for God to save sinners, sin had to be expiated, even though God's own Son was the sacrificial Victim. Therefore the condemnation of sin was as truly in view as the salvation of sinners.

3. He who expects justification only through the imputation of the righteousness of Christ has the most awful view of *the danger of sin*. He sees not only the obligation and purity of the law but also the severity of the sanctions of that law—that is, the fear of the wrath and vengeance of God on account of sin. Those who flee to the propitiation of Christ for deliverance and rescue still believe that every sin deserves the

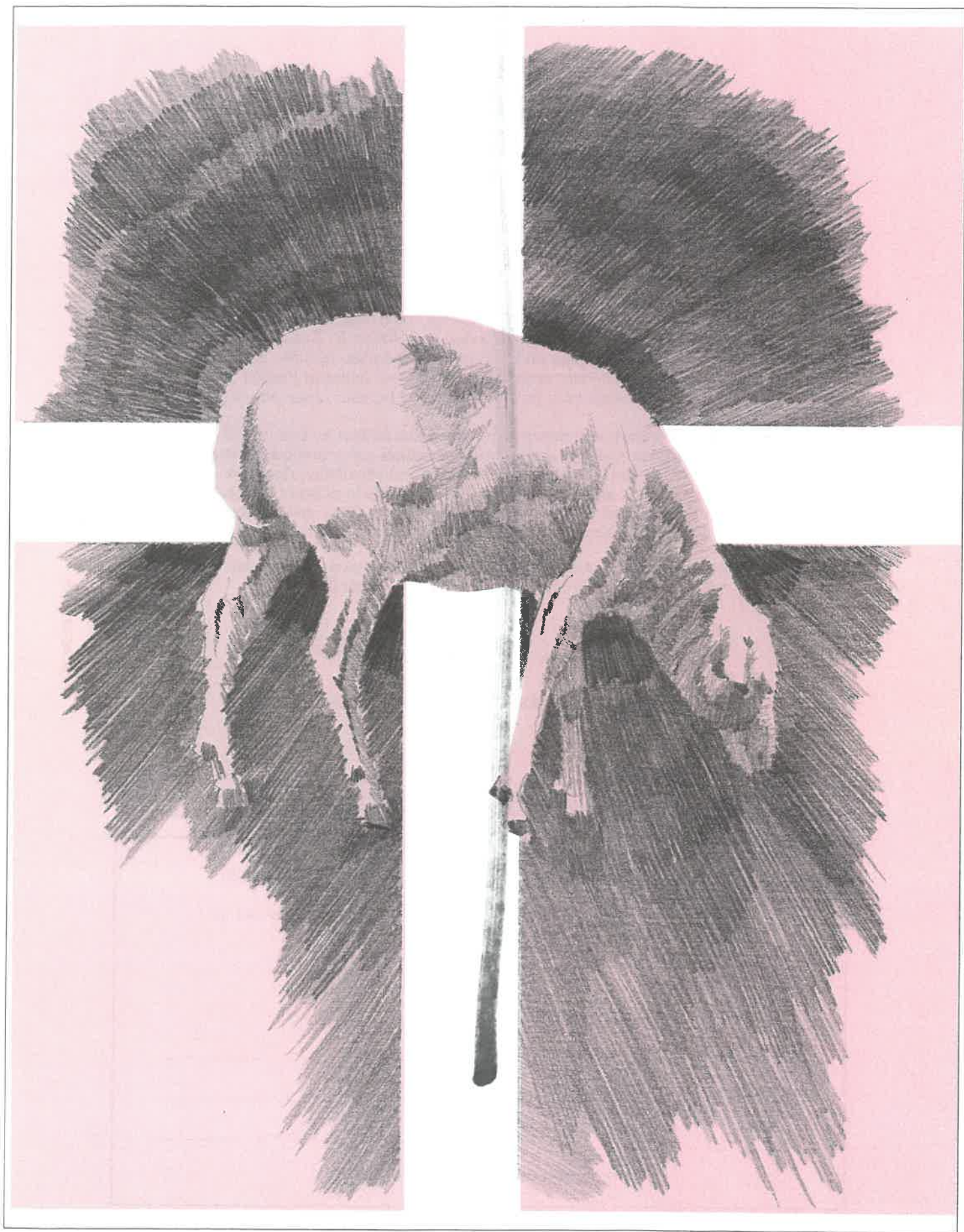
wrath and curse of God both in this life and in the one to come.

4. Those who expect justification by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ have the highest sense of *the purity and holiness of the divine nature* and therefore the necessity of purity to fit them for His presence and enjoyment. Worshipers of God seek to be like Him. Even when God is inclined to mercy, the experience of mercy is obstructed until justice is satisfied as His Son stands in our place. Thus His mediation shows the purity of the divine nature.

God's way of justifying sinners, as a way that first of all justifies God, vindicates His righteousness as truly as it expresses His grace.

5. One who accepts the promises of God for justification by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ has the strongest motives for *gratitude and thankfulness* to God for His so great salvation. These motives lead to pure and holy lives.

6. Those who expect to be justified by the imputed righteousness of Christ must be possessed of a supreme and superlative *love to God* which is not only the source and principle but the very sum and substance, nay, the perfection of holiness. His love for us begets our love for Him. We love because He first loved us. And the supreme love of God is what is meant by holiness.



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