A young green seedling with two heart-shaped leaves growing out of dark brown soil. The seedling is positioned centrally, with its stem emerging from the soil and its two leaves spreading outwards. The soil is dark and textured, with some small roots visible. The background is a soft, out-of-focus brown.

Justification by Faith

F. T. Wright

Source:

The Messenger of Living Righteousness
November, December 1971,
January & February, May 1972

Cover:

New Life in the Soil
pxhere.com

Fred T. Wright,

Fonts:

Liberation Sans Narrow
Linux Biolinum
Linux Libertine
Miama Nueva



April 2023
practicaprophetica.com
srac.info

Contents

Foreword

| | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. What is Justification?..... | 1 |
| <i>The Lord Sees Not As Man Sees.....</i> | <i>1</i> |
| <i>On Being Made Righteous.....</i> | <i>4</i> |
| <i>The Power of Justification.....</i> | <i>7</i> |
| 2. Believing the Word..... | 12 |
| <i>God is Truth.....</i> | <i>14</i> |
| <i>The Most Unacceptable Point.....</i> | <i>16</i> |
| <i>The Word of God.....</i> | <i>19</i> |
| 3. Being Made Perfect..... | 23 |
| <i>First the Tree, Then the Fruit.....</i> | <i>23</i> |
| <i>Healing by Preaching.....</i> | <i>25</i> |
| <i>By the Sheep Market.....</i> | <i>26</i> |
| <i>For Our Learning.....</i> | <i>28</i> |
| <i>The Promise of God.....</i> | <i>30</i> |
| <i>Who is Made Whole?.....</i> | <i>31</i> |
| 4. Two Works in Justification..... | 34 |
| <i>The Devil's Counterfeit.....</i> | <i>35</i> |
| <i>Past Emphasis on Creative Work.....</i> | <i>36</i> |
| <i>Past Record and Present Condition.....</i> | <i>38</i> |
| <i>The Question of Sequence.....</i> | <i>40</i> |
| <i>Accounted as Though.....</i> | <i>41</i> |

Foreword

THIS series of articles that appeared in *The Messenger of Living Righteousness* in 1971-1972, were later published, with a lot of additions and restructuring, as the booklet: *Justified! by Faith*, in 1975. A reformatted PDF version of this later booklet is available on the our website: [Justified! by Faith](#).

These earlier articles are smaller in scope, and include a few comments that were not put into the later booklet. In most cases, the later booklet is recommended as being more complete, and better written.

However, I'm releasing these earlier studies for the interest of those who might like to read everything that was written on the subject.

Frank Zimmerman
practicaprophetica.com

1. What is Justification?

The Messenger of Living Righteousness, November 1971

HERE is a subject which today is very much in the forefront of theological thinking. There has been a decided shift in emphasis and interest from the purely doctrinal themes of the Sabbath and the second coming of Christ to the question of just what justification by faith is. On every hand authors are writing about it and preachers are preaching about it. As a result, many are convinced that they have the truth on this subject.

Yet there is no universal agreement among these writers and preachers on what it really means to be justified. There are some who go so far as to say that a man is justified before he even repents and before the Holy Spirit even does anything in the individual at all. On the other side there is the more generally held view that Christ has lived a just life in the place of the believer, to whose credit that life is put.

In each of these and all the shades in between there is undeniably some truth, sufficient in the case of some minds to satisfy their need for a doctrine on justification. There is grave danger in this, for no one should be satisfied with a superficial work. That is the fault of the foolish virgins who find themselves outside the door when the roll is finally called. Let us then make a very real effort to find and set out a balanced, comprehensive, accurate and adequate understanding of just what justification is and just what it does for the believer.

The Lord Sees Not As Man Sees

The common understanding of justification is as follows: a person in penitence goes to the Saviour, confesses the evil deeds which he has done, asks to be forgiven for the guilt of those actions and, as he believes, is then forgiven for the actions of sin, and is then justified. There is hardly a more dangerous view than this which could be held, for justification is certainly much more than this.

The great mistake is that we have been thinking of heavenly things in terms of earthly things. We have been measuring heaven's justification by man's justification in earthly courts of law. True, there are certain similarities, and if the illustration is used with care, it can be done so with great profit; but earthly courts are limited in what they can see of the man under trial, whereas the heavenly court is unlimited. The similarity lies in the fact that both courts will judge, to either condemn or justify the man, *according to what each court can see*.

The earthly court of law cannot read the heart, the motives or the intentions of the person who stands before it. It can only see what he has done. Therefore, the only question before a court of law down here upon this earth, concerns whether the person on trial did or did not do the deed. If it is proved that he did do it, then he is condemned. And if it is proved that he did not do it, then he is justified and set free. In other words his justification is his title to freedom.

But the eye of God sees far more than the deeds done by the body. He sees right down to the inner thoughts, feelings, motives and impulses.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 424:

Paul dwelt especially upon the far-reaching claims of God's law. He showed how it extends to the deep secrets of man's moral nature, and throws a flood of light upon that which has been concealed from the sight and knowledge of men. What the hands may do or the tongue may utter,—what the outer life reveals,—but imperfectly shows man's moral character. The law searches his thoughts, motives, and purposes. The dark passions that lie hidden from the sight of men, the jealousy, hatred, lust, and ambition, the evil deeds meditated upon in the dark recesses of the soul, yet never executed for want of opportunity,—all these God's law condemns.

Exactly as the earthly court justifies or condemns according to what it sees, so does the court of heaven justify or condemn according to what it sees. It sees what we are. If it sees that we in

ourselves are evil and unrighteous in very nature, it condemns us as such, while on the other hand if it sees that we have been made righteous by the living power of God, then that court will declare us to be righteous and sets us free from condemnation. Thus justification is our title to freedom, the ultimate home of which is heaven.

God could not give the title of admission to a man who was still sinful in himself. Should He do that, then He would condemn His own action in putting Lucifer and then Adam and Eve out of the original Paradise because they had become sinful in themselves. Why could they not have just been forgiven and retained there? This is a valid question.

If men expect to have the title to heaven on the basis of forgiveness only,—as men understand forgiveness,—then why did our first parents have to lose their title to heaven when the simple matter of forgiveness could have retained it for them? The fact is that the whole experience had rendered them unfit, in themselves, for the society of heaven, which unfitness could only be removed by the long process of recreation and re-education in this sinful world.

Steps to Christ, p. 62:

The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been, just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first parents: perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness. If eternal life were granted on any condition short of this, then the happiness of the whole universe would be imperiled. The way would be open for sin, with all its train of woe and misery, to be immortalized.

This makes it plain that God is more concerned with *what we are* than with what we do. This is not to suggest that He overlooks what we do, for by no means is this true. But He well understands that while we remain what we are, as being evil in very nature, then as surely will we have no hope of doing good. He is

concerned that the problem be stopped at its very root and at its very source.

Therefore, if justification is our title to heaven, it has to be a title which is adequate and safe. The plain truth taught consistently through the Scriptures is that justification means more than merely being accounted righteous.

On Being Made Righteous

Let us then examine the Scripture evidences which show what a man must be, before he can have justification. If a man has legal forgiveness only, if that were possible, then by no means is he justified, for while acquittal from the guilt of the act may satisfy the demands of an earthly court, it will by no means satisfy the demands of the court of heaven.

Romans 5

¹ Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

The justified person has peace with God. To *have* is to *possess*, or to hold as one's very own. To have this peace, one must at the same time have justification, while to be without justification would mean that one would also be without the peace with God.

One cannot have peace with God and at the same time have enmity against God. It must be the one or the other. What is the enmity and what is the peace? Are these things simply mental attitudes toward God or are they something deeper than this? If enmity against God is simply a mental attitude toward God, then the man who had made his choice for God, even though the sinfulness itself remained within him, could claim to have peace with God and therefore could claim to be justified.

Let us suppose that a man has been afflicted with the sin of pride, which has developed over the years under the force of temptation, both in outward actions and inner power. The time comes when the law of God reveals to him the evil of this thing and, under the influence of the convicting, persuading power of

the Holy Spirit, he comes to the place where he hates this sinful thing which is in him. With his intellectual mind he is serving the law of God and has a love for God so far as the mental attitude is concerned; but does this man have real peace with God; the peace which is a witness that he is justified? That he does not is shown by the words of God through Paul:

Romans 8

⁷ The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

Notice that the text does not say that the carnal mind *is at enmity* against God, but that *it is enmity* against God. Nor is this all. It then goes on to tell us that this is a totally unalterable situation, for this carnal mind cannot be made to serve God at all any more than light and darkness can ever be reconciled.

⁷ The carnal mind...is not subject to the law of God, *neither indeed can be*.

Now while it is true that the intellectual mind of man can be changed to the place where it becomes subject to the law of God, the carnal mind¹ cannot be changed to the place where it will submit itself to be ruled, controlled or disciplined. This is impossible.

It is as impossible for the carnal mind to do this as it is for the thorn bush to produce figs or the wolf to have the mild nature of the lamb. For the thorn bush to produce figs it would have to cease entirely from being a thorn bush and become a fig tree before it could ever produce a single fig. In that case, it would not, in any sense of the word, be a thorn bush anymore, but would now have become in actual fact a fig tree.

While this argument underlines the fact that a thorn bush cannot ever be subject to the law of fig production, some might draw

¹ The "carnal mind" is another name describing the law of sin and death which is in our members, which is the old man of sin, the evil sin master, or the fruit of the marriage with the old husband Satan.

the conclusion that therefore the Lord would solve the problem of the carnal mind by changing it into a divine mind. But no gardener in history has ever called upon God to assist him in the art of fig growing by calling upon Him to actually change the growing thorn bushes into fig trees. Never! Instead the old tree is removed right out of the place where it is, and a new tree is put into its place.

Likewise, the God of heaven does not change the carnal mind into a divine mind. Not at all. The Lord by His power takes out the old altogether and replaces it with the new, so that the new life, which is the very life or mind of Christ, takes the place of the mind of Satan, which is the carnal mind. Now, the life of Christ is the peace of Christ, and it is impossible to have peace with God if we have anything less than the actual life of Christ in the soul.

To be justified means that we have peace with God which is to have the life of Christ in the soul *in the place of* the old mind of Satan which was there before. Our text tells us that one cannot be justified while the old life remains. This then means that to be justified means more than to be merely *accounted righteous*. It means that we must be *made righteous*.

This truth is further borne out in the following statements:

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 112-113:

John 3

³ Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

He may conjecture and imagine, but without the eye of faith he cannot see the treasure. Christ gave His life to secure for us this inestimable treasure; but *without regeneration* through faith in His blood, *there is no remission* of sins, no treasure for any perishing soul.

Regeneration is the creation of a new life in the soul, by the creative power of God. This new life can only come in after the old life has been taken away, and it therefore involves the removing of the carnal mind, which is the enmity against God.

Now this statement tells us just what we have been learning from *Romans* 5:1 and *Romans* 8:7, that in order to have justification we must have an actual work of regeneration in the soul. If there has been no regeneration then there has been no remission of sins; in fact there is no treasure for any perishing soul whatsoever. Everyone should be able to see that if a man does not have the remission of sins, then he certainly does not have forgiveness, and as certainly, he does not have justification.

The Power of Justification

God's justification and God's forgiveness are inseparable: they are two words which describe the same thing. The average professed child of God, who thinks of forgiveness as being only a judicial act, clearing the guilt of past sins, has never really understood the meaning and power in God's forgiveness. It is much more than a judicial act; it involves the actual cleansing away of the root cause of the sin from the very nature of man and the replacing of it with a new life altogether.

Steps to Christ, p. 40:

Harmony with God, likeness to Him—what can you do to obtain it? It is peace that you need—Heaven's forgiveness and peace and love in the soul.

It is not an accident that the wording of this statement is as it is. One would expect that the first part of this statement should have read,

“Harmony with God, likeness to Him—what can you do to obtain *them*?”

But it does not say this. It says,

“...what can you do to obtain *it*?”

Harmony with God means peace with God, which, as we have learned, is to be justified. Now, this statement makes it clear that harmony with God and likeness to Him are not two separate and

distinct things, but they are only one, necessitating the use of the singular pronoun, “it,” to cover the use of the two different words.

“Likeness to God” is certainly not achieved by having a mental attitude which has lost its love for sin and has set the will to obey the Lord. “Likeness to God” means that the very nature of the individual has been recreated into the likeness of God, just as it was in the first creation. This recreation affects the spiritual nature, not the physical flesh and blood body of the man. It is in the spiritual nature that the life of God is placed in the man.

Now in the next sentence we have these words which are also very wonderful. It says that what we need is...

Steps to Christ, p. 40:

...Heaven’s forgiveness and peace and love in the soul.

There is no comma after forgiveness to separate it from the other two things. We have no difficulty seeing that peace and love are to be in the soul of the man. But here are mentioned three things which we need to have in the soul, and forgiveness is one of them. Meditate upon this thought,

“Heaven’s forgiveness *in the soul*.”

If it had read,

“Heaven’s forgiveness *for the soul*,”

—or even,

“Heaven’s forgiveness *toward the soul*,”

—it would have expressed things in the way in which they are usually understood by the average professed child of God. But it did not say either.

To have Heaven’s forgiveness is to have Heaven’s justification. They are one and the same thing. We can read this statement then as saying, that what we need is:

“Heaven’s *justification* in the soul.”

As long as we think of forgiveness and justification as being a judicial declaration of pardon on the part of God, whereby we obtain, as some teach, only a standing but not a state of perfection; as long as we think of pardon as something apart from regeneration or cleansing; then we can never understand the expression,

“Heaven’s forgiveness in the soul.”

But when Heaven’s forgiveness,—or justification,—is understood to be what is set forth in this following statement, then we can easily understand how it is that it is not merely for, or toward, the soul, but actually in the soul.

Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 114:

But forgiveness has a broader meaning than many suppose. When God gives the promise that He will “abundantly pardon,” He adds, as if the meaning of that promise exceeded all that we could comprehend:

Isaiah 55

⁸ My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord.

⁹ For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

God’s forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness *for* sin, but reclaiming *from* sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true concept of forgiveness when he prayed,

Psalms 51

¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

And again he says,

Psalms 103

¹² As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

Here is a statement which deserves a great deal of thoughtful, prayerful study. The statement that David had the true concept of forgiveness when he prayed for a clean heart, infers that there is

a true and a false concept of forgiveness. The common understanding or concept is that it is only a judicial act whereby He sets us free from condemnation. But this is stated to be the wrong concept, whereas that concept which sees God's forgiveness, which is God's justification, as being *the outflow of redeeming love which transforms the soul*, is the only true concept of the case.

When God declares a man to be just, it means more than just a spoken declaration. God's word is creative. Just as God...

Psalm 33

⁹ ...spoke and it was done; [and] He commanded and it stood fast,

—in the first creation, so again His declaration of justification is the flowing forth of His creative power into a man so that he is created anew. Nothing less than this is God's justification. Whenever God speaks the declaration that a man is just, that declaration is the outflowing of His creative power into the soul of that man. Unless a man has received into himself the recreating power of God to expel the sinfulness which is his condemnation, and replace it with the life of Christ, which is his justification, then he is not justified.

How many professed Christians there must be in this world who have fondly imagined that they are justified in the sight of God, without being able to find any evidence that the sin for which they have asked forgiveness, has actually been taken out of and away from them. Such individuals are the unfortunate victims of a deception from which they must be delivered before it is fatally and eternally too late.

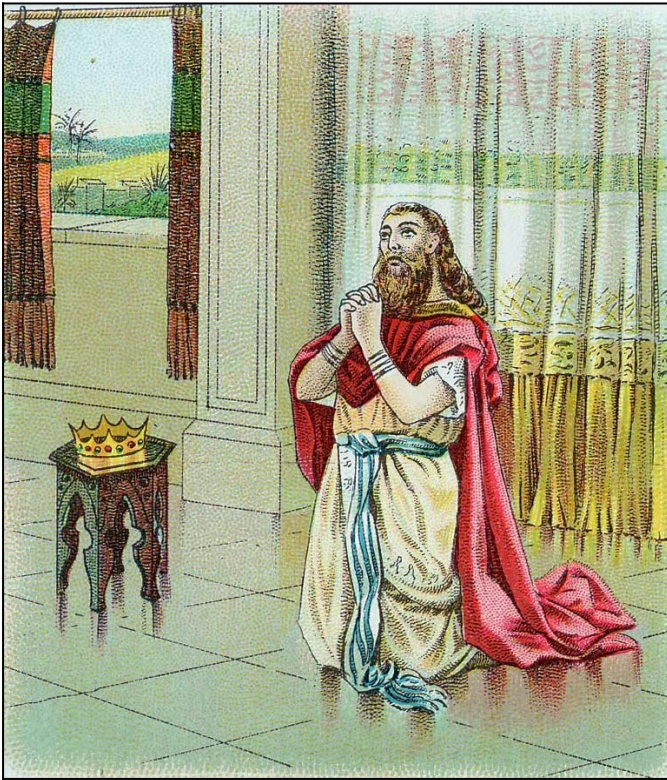
Our first purpose has been to establish what justification actually is, before going on to study how it is obtained. We should know, now and forever, that:

Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 114:

God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but

reclaiming from sin. It is *the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart.*

We want to go on to look at what Christ has done for us, and what the individual must do, in order to obtain and maintain that precious gift.



Psalm 32 - David's Confession and Forgiveness
(Vintage Bible Cards)

2. Believing the Word

The Messenger of Living Righteousness, December 1971

THUS far this study has established that justification is not merely a judicial freeing from condemnation, but it is the actual deliverance from the sinful condition itself, and replacing it with the gift of a new life in the place of the old. The Lord declares a man just because that man *is just* in actual fact.

While this is entirely reasonable, logical and above all, scriptural, yet it runs completely counter the commonly held concept of justification by faith, wherein great dependence and trust is placed in what is termed the *imputed righteousness* of Christ.

In this concept the suppliant still retains the actual condition of sinfulness, but because he has accepted Christ as his Saviour, the robe of Christ's righteousness is given him as a covering over his sins, so that when the Father looks upon the sinful one, he sees not the man's sins but only the righteousness of Christ. This teaching proposes that the sinner has a standing of righteousness though he lacks the actual state of it. The latter, we are told by such theologians, is not obtainable until some future date. In some cases, this future date is declared to be at the final atonement, though more generally it is believed that this will be at the actual second coming of Christ.

We have neither the interest nor the space to attack the individuals who are teaching these things. Our concern is with the truth by the which error is exposed. By the examination of the error that is taught, we can oftentimes the better see and understand the truth and thus escape from the error when it is presented to us as the truth. Thus in quoting the following statement, we do so without any malice toward the writer but only to provide an excellent illustration of this kind of teaching as a subject for our study of what is right and what is wrong.

Although the Spirit leads men to Christ, and creates faith and repentance in the heart of those who respond to His drawing,

man is not justified by the Spirit. He is not justified on account of his faith, his condition, nor anything that the Spirit has given him. Further the Spirit has no authority to cleanse or sanctify the soul until *after* God has justified the believer in Jesus.

A believer is not justified by reason of anything that God has wrought within him, He must look to something wholly without namely to the blood of Jesus Christ applied in the heavenly sanctuary. This is the truth of justification by *imputed* righteousness. God does not pronounce a man just because he is just, but because Christ and Christ alone is just. He does not pronounce him righteous because He sees righteousness wrought in him by the Holy Spirit, but because He sees righteousness in Christ his Substitute. Justification is not a declaration of what is in fact in a believer, but is a declaration of what is a fact in Christ. And it could never be a declaration of what is a fact in the believer.²

Even as one reads these words through, while it can be recognized as being an excellent example of the popular view of justification by faith and of the imputed righteousness of Christ, one can see how totally and completely different they are from the plain statements quoted in our first chapter, wherein we are told that justification is...

Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 114:

...the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart.

The writer quoted above declares that a man is not justified by the Holy Spirit, who has no authority to do anything in the believer until after he has been pronounced just by the Father. Consistent with this statement is that which follows, which says that God does not pronounce a man just because he is just, and the time will never be when this will be so. This is to maintain that when a man has been declared just by the Father in heaven, that he is still, within himself, exactly what he was before he was declared to be just.

² From a printed report of a sermon by John Brinsmead, February 1971, published by the *International Health Institute*. Emphasis original.

God is Truth

Jesus spoke out and plainly warned us that Satan is a liar and the father of all lies and liars.

John 8

⁴⁴ When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

It is the work of the arch deceiver to clothe the Father in his own evil attributes and he constantly works to make it appear that the Father is the liar. Nowhere does the great deceiver work more effectively at this art than in the field of religion, making all too many oft-times well meaning men become his unwitting spokesmen in this battle.

Consider how that the above theology actually presents before us the picture of an untruthful God.

God does not pronounce a man just because he is just....He does not pronounce him righteous because He sees righteousness wrought in him....Justification is not a declaration of what is a fact in the believer...and it could never be a declaration of what is a fact in the believer.

This is to say that God is prepared to declare a man to be something which he is not. Is that being truthful? Is that strict honesty and integrity? It most assuredly is not and our God is not that kind of God.

God is the truth and He speaks the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Therefore if the Lord of Heaven declares that a certain man is just or righteous then you may be assured that the man is just and righteous.

This doctrine which so clearly casts God in the role of a liar, is also one which makes God altogether one as ourselves.

Psalms 50

²¹ These things have you done, and I kept silence; you thought that I was altogether such a one as yourself: but I will reprove you, and set them in order before your eyes.

It is the way of men to call things as being other than what they are. Day by day man covers up the evil of his heart, presenting to the world, as far as he is able, a picture of himself as being the very model of uprightness and integrity, while underneath he is filled with mischief and evil of every kind, unless he has been delivered from the power of sin by God's justification.

See how the modern devotees of fashion adorn their bodies and their faces, knowing that the lack of the true beauty of inner worth must be covered up with the superficial beauty of exterior ornamentation. In all this, the effort is to convey to the world a picture of things as they would like them to be, but what in fact they are not. It is for this reason that the following of fashion is a sin, for it is the living of a lie.

It is for Christians to seek the inner beauty, the beauty of that character provided by God's justification in the soul. This is the message contained in the words of:

1 Peter 3

³ Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

⁴ But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

Not only is this effort to make things appear as they are not, the doctrine of men in the realm of fashion and day by day demeanor, but it is also the way in the world of selling and of buying.

Consider the car salesman who is not as honest as he might be. He takes in a car which he has traded on a better model. The trade is filled with rust, the paint is in bad condition, there are defects in the frame and in general terms the car is in a bad way. To restore it to really good condition is going to cost him far more money than it would be worthwhile to spend on the old vehicle, so what does he do? He puts putty in the rust holes, runs a new coat of paint over the whole thing, sets it up in the yard along

with the other cars, and advertises it as a sound, original, low mileage motor car.

A buyer comes along to whom the salesman makes his lying declaration, which the buyer believes because he cannot see the real condition of the car for the shiny coat of beautiful paint which covers the rottenness underneath. In our hearts we give to this kind of salesman a very low rating indeed and do not consider him to be a man of integrity or worth whatsoever. When we find such a man, then forever after we are careful to avoid him in all business transactions, and to warn all of our friends of the kind of man he is. In time, he becomes so well known that no one will trust him at all.

It is bad enough when men practice such things upon their fellow men, but it is far worse when men seek to bring God down to the place where they make Him to be just such a one as themselves. See how this false theology on justification by faith, which we are considering, would have us believe that Jesus is no better than the car salesman who covers up the rottenness with the coat of paint so that the examiner cannot see the real condition beneath. So they have Christ covering up the rottenness of the unrighteous with the beautiful coat of His own righteousness, so that the Father as He examines the case, cannot see the real person underneath, but only the cover over the top. Then just as the examiner of the car declares that it is good, so the Father declares that which is unjust and unrighteous to be actually righteous.

We can praise God that He is *not* that kind of God, that He is not a liar, so that when He pronounces a man is justified or righteous, then be assured that the man is justified and righteous in actual fact. It is not make believe, for God speaks the truth and the truth only.

The Most Unacceptable Point

And yet, it is a fact that the most objectionable and unacceptable point about the message of living righteously as upheld in our publications, so far as the established theologies of the day are

concerned, is this thought that a man is actually made by the power of God into a righteous person within himself.

Usually, it is quite difficult to get across to the minds of such people this truth for they use so many of the same expressions, without meaning the same thing by those expressions.

They will assure one that there has to be a change of heart at conversion, that we must be born again, that we must be new creatures, and that Christ dwells in the heart by faith.

Some will even agree that there must be a change of heart in order for one to be justified, but when the matter is probed, then they are quick to assert that we are not actually made into new creations but that we have all this in Christ but never in ourselves. In ourselves, they strongly and emphatically affirm, we are still sinful and unholy, but the presence of Christ in us moment by moment holds the evil in subjugation, while it, like a coiled spring held under tension, is momentarily ready to spring back with speed and power, the very instant in which we let go our hold upon Christ.

Such a state of things is to continue, they believe, clear down until the second advent of Christ, when these vile bodies will be changed and then, and then only, will the evil be taken out of and away from us forever. This is the timeline held by the majority, though as mentioned previously, there are those who believe the sin remains only until the final atonement. To describe such theologies, such catch phrases as these are used,

“Sin remains, but it does not reign,”

—and,

“The believer has a standing of perfection but not a state of perfection during this earthly life.”

The first of these is taken from Wesley it is true, and Wesley was a very great man of God it is equally true, but we cannot be-

lieve that he meant by these words, what those who quote him mean.³ Furthermore we are told that:

Selected Messages, vol. 1, p. 402:

Although these great men were used as instruments for God, they were not faultless. They were erring men and made great mistakes. We should seek to imitate their virtues, but we should not make them our criterion.

Why is it that the men of religion of this our day persist in believing that in the Christian sin remains, and that a man is not actually and literally a new creature in himself, (though certainly not of himself,) when the Word of God so plainly states over and over again, that the Lord destroys the old sin nature and actually reproduces himself within the believer, that the Lord makes us into new creatures?

It can only be that men are not prepared to believe God. They are not prepared to believe that God literally and actually means just what He says and nothing less than what He says. It is in short to be possessed of a heart of unbelief.

This may seem strange to some for they will point with astonishment to their belief in the doctrines of the Word, to their faith in the death of Christ upon the cross of Calvary, to their zeal and their good works, and so on, as sure evidence that they are very

³ Editor's note: The phrase, "Sin remains, but it does not reign," is at best a paraphrase of something John Wesley wrote. He did not write those exact words. The paraphrase is therefore open to conjecture and speculation. In such a case, it is better to rely on the Bible, since John Wesley is not here to explain his actual thought.

One author quotes this paragraph from Wesley, as the original. Wesley was dealing with a line someone wrote him which said, "Sin cannot in any kind or degree exist, where it does not reign." His answer was:

"Absolutely contrary this to all experience, all scripture, all common sense. Resentment of an affront is sin, it is disconformity to the law of love. This has existed in me a thousand times. Yet it did not, and does not reign." John Wesley, *Sermons on Several Occasions*, I, p. 125.

In this case, he may well have been referring to the weakness of the sinful flesh, which makes inner temptation a reality. But even Jesus took this kind of weakness when He took upon himself our nature.

much a people of faith. But it does not alter the fact that they do not really believe the word of God, and the Bible describes this not merely as a heart of unbelief but as...

Hebrews 3

¹² ...an evil heart of unbelief.

O! How we long that the eyes of all such may be opened to see the promises as they are and to accept them as they are, not something far short of the fullness and the reality of them. Let each Reader pray that the Lord will open his eyes to see. The Lord will hear for He has promised to give the precious eyesalve so desperately needed by every professed child of God today.

The Word of God

Let us now for a short while read again some of the plain words of Scripture and the Spirit of Prophecy to see just what the Lord has said that He will do. Then let us believe it and accept it just as it is written.

It must be stressed that within the limited space available here, it will not be possible to quote all that might be quoted, but we do ask that each reader shall look in each quote for the specific promise on the part of God that He will actually and literally re-make the individual himself. As each statement is quoted ask yourself the question,

“Who is the one who is created, or made, or changed as the case may be?”

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁷ If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new.

Now does this Scripture tell us that Christ is the new creature who dwells in the person moment by moment while the man himself is unchanged, or does the text actually say that the man himself is the new creature? The words are plain and cannot be

misunderstood provided we are prepared to take them just as they read.

In commenting upon this verse, the Spirit of Prophecy only serves to emphasize this same meaning, this fact that it is the man himself who is remade into a new creation, a creation which being of God, is pronounced by God as being something good, and not evil.

The Acts of the Apostles, p. 476:

Through the power of Christ men and women have broken the chains of sinful habit. They have renounced selfishness. The profane have become reverent, the drunken sober, the profligate pure. Souls that have borne the likeness of Satan have become transformed into the image of God. This change is in itself the miracle of miracles. A change wrought by the Word, it is one of the deepest mysteries of the Word. We cannot understand it; we can only believe, as declared by the Scriptures, it is "Christ in you, the hope of glory."

The entire language of this paragraph is one describing the actual change which has taken place within the man who had been a sinner, so that he has become transformed into the image of God.

This paragraph contains not even the slightest suggestion that the believer has simply put on a reverent attitude while the indwelling power of Christ suppresses and keeps under control the old disposition of irreverence, nor does it suggest that the drunkard remains a drunkard at heart, nor the profligate at heart while they function in a Christian way. This is not the message of this paragraph. The message is that these people have become reverent, they have become sober and they have become pure. Are we going to turn about and say in the light of such plain words,

"Yes but this only means in heart, it does not mean it in actual fact, because we know that the Christian is still impure in his very nature."

This is to make the Word of God of none effect. It is the out-speaking of the evil heart of unbelief. Like unto the words of the above statement are those of this:

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 163:

As the sinner, drawn by the power of Christ, approaches the uplifted cross, and prostrates himself before it, there is a new creation. A new heart is given him. He becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. Holiness finds that it has nothing more to require.

The Desire of Ages, p. 391:

God will make the most precious revelations to His hungering, thirsting people. They will find that Christ is a personal Saviour. As they feed upon His Word, they find that it is spirit and life. The word destroys the natural, earthly nature, and imparts a new life in Christ Jesus.

The Holy Spirit comes to the soul as a Comforter. By the transforming agency of His grace, the image of God is reproduced in His disciple; he becomes a new creature. Love takes the place of hatred, and the heart receives the divine similitude.

Could anyone ask for a more clear and powerful statement than this one? Note how it clearly states that the Word of God which is the power of God, destroys the old nature so natural to the human being, and imparts the new life in the place of the old. The word, "destroy," can never mean to subjugate. To subjugate means to bring under control even though the original power is still living, but to destroy means more even than to kill, for it means to obliterate it entirely and completely.

But this is not all. Then the Saviour reproduces himself in the believer, by which we understand that the believer becomes a reproduction of the Saviour himself.

There are those who seem to think that Christ personally dwells in the believer, who is himself actually the same person still, though he is not able to function in a sinful way while Christ is there within. But Christ as a Person is high above in the sanctu-

ary in heaven and it would not be possible for him to come and literally dwell in the life of each and every believer. It must not be forgotten that Christ took His humanity to heaven and will retain it for eternity, for when God gave Christ to this world, He truly and actually gave Him. It was not a loan, but a gift. Therefore Christ is forever to be a divine human being.

But what the Saviour does do through the creative power of the Holy Spirit is to reproduce himself in each and every believer so that we do become in literal fact, new creations. This is spoken not in reference to the old flesh and blood body, which is not recreated until the second coming of Jesus, but to the actual character of the person which is the subject of the creation in the new birth experience.

So far we have but touched on the verse,

2 Corinthians 5

¹⁷ If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature,...

Every reference we have found on this verse tells the same story of the actual changing of the individual himself. It does not speak of any vicarious kind of experience but only of an actual and literal experience itself. May the Lord help us to see the full truth and beauty of the Word of God, which means just what it says and nothing less than what it says. When the Lord declares a man to be just or to be righteous, then the Lord does not lie—that man is just and that man is righteous.

In the next chapter we shall explore still further in the word of God to see the great and wonderful truth of the actual recreation of the life of Christ in the believer.

3. Being Made Perfect

The Messenger of Living Righteousness, January & February 1972

ONE object of this series of studies on justification by faith is to show the sharp distinction between that theological thinking which has God declaring a man to be just when he is still in a sinful condition, and the truth which shows that the Lord can and will only declare a man to be truly just when he is in the actual condition of a justified man.

Inasmuch as the law of God requires much more than the laws of the land possibly can, in that the law of God is not concerned only with what a man does, but with what a man is, the justification as declared by God is not merely a standing of perfection, but an actual state of perfection.

First the Tree, Then the Fruit

These points were made clear in the preceding studies on the matter and it was then observed that there is no teaching more objectionable to the theological thinking of the churches in general than the idea that a man actually becomes a new creation in himself. Yet this is the teaching of the Word of God in verity and in fact. It has to be that way for it is the simple truth that:

Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 128:

You must be good before you can do good.

Now every church body will earnestly teach that all must do good and will appeal to the hearer with all the power at their command to turn from the doing of evil to the performance of good deeds. The curious thing is that the very ones who thus exhort to good works deny the possibility of a person actually being good, holy, and righteous in himself, though the Word of God so distinctly declares that no one can possibly do good unless they first of all be good in themselves.

It is to be emphasized that this is not to say that anyone can become good in themselves of themselves. This is an utter impossibility.

Jeremiah 13

²³ Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots?

Job 14

⁴ Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.

We all know that the Ethiopian has no hope in the world of changing the color of his skin. True, he may daub it over with powder or paint, but underneath the color of the skin it is quite unchanged. Likewise the leopard has no hope of changing the spots on his skin. They are there forever. As surely as this is so then just so surely can no one bring cleanness out of uncleanness. It cannot be done. Not even God will bring cleanness out of uncleanness for to attempt to do so would be to attempt to break the very laws upon which the stability and eternal security of the universe is dependent.

But while we cannot change our hearts and make ourselves holy, this is not to say that it cannot be done at all. We cannot do it, but God can; and what is more, He has also promised to actually do it for us. If God promises that He will do this then He will do it, and it is the witness of an evil heart of unbelief when we refuse to believe in the truth and the fact of it.

We closed the last chapter with the perusal of a series of texts and statements to show that the believer is actually made in himself to be a new creation, a righteous person, a clean vessel. We also stated that the texts and statements considered so far were but in connection with the one Bible reference from *2 Corinthians* 5:17, and that in this chapter we would continue the study of further references to still further emphasize the point that the Bible actually states that the believer is made in himself to be a new creature. This we shall now proceed to do.

Healing by Preaching

We are to understand just what God promises to do and then we are to believe that He will do exactly what He has promised and, believing that, we are to ask for and to actually receive it. Then let men come with every kind of specious argument and theory. To them our answer can only be,

“I know what God promised to do for me and in me. I came and in simple faith I gave myself to Him to do that work. I know He has done it, and that is all that I am concerned about in the matter.”

This is the only position that the believing child of God can take in a matter like this and, in this position of faith, there is invincibility while ever we hold to it.

A fine lesson which is recorded for the express purpose of teaching us this truth, is found in Christ’s ministry of healing in the restoration of the paralytic at Bethesda. In fact every act of healing on the part of Christ, is a lesson in the work of spiritual grace in the soul of man. What Jesus did for the physically sick, He likewise does for the spiritually sick as well.

The story is found in *John* 5:1-16. The location of the story is the pool by the sheep market named Bethesda. Beside this pool lay a man who had been impotent or paralyzed for thirty eight years. Every attempt on his part to secure recovery of his physical powers only met with repeated failure until he had come to the place where he had abandoned himself to the now certain fate of an early death.

It was then that Jesus came to him and asked him if he desired to be made whole. The man supposed that Jesus was offering to help him into the pool the next time it should be troubled and so confessed the complete hopelessness of his situation, thus fully acknowledging the futility of attempting to gain recovery by the methods which he had tried so far.

That confession being obtained so that the man showed he was freed from that wrong course of action, then he was prepared to be pointed to and offered the one and only true way of deliverance which was through the healing and saving power of Jesus the Creator.

As Jesus then spoke the word of command, the man grasped it by faith and acting upon the word he received healing. He stood upon his feet and walked away from that spot, whole and sound in body and in limb, It was a marvelous act of healing which transformed that man from one state of being into another in just one moment of time.

By the Sheep Market

Now that man was delivered, not only from a sad physical condition, but also from a very wrong theology at the same time. This symbolically is revealed in the fact that he left that place which expressly is stated as being “by the sheep market.”

A sheep market is of course the place where sheep are bought and sold, and, inasmuch as the children of God are likened to sheep, a moment’s thought will quickly reveal as to why in connection with this story it is expressly mentioned that the pool of Bethesda was by the sheep market. It did not have to say that. It could have mentioned some other geographical feature of identification but it expressly and particularly mentioned that it was by the sheep market.

The whole idea that an angel came down and troubled the pool as the signal that the very first person in thereafter would experience healing, was absolutely a false theology by which the people had been deceived. That such a theology should exist in the very heart of Judaism, that is in Jerusalem itself where stood the temple of God, is a sad reflection on the ministry of that day who had such wonderful power over the minds of the people.

It is quite certain that the ministry did nothing to expose it and, when one truly understands the nature of the doctrines they

taught, then it is clearly seen that this was but the product of their teaching. They were responsible for it. The result was that the poor people were sold like sheep to the slaughter by this deception.

The Scriptures themselves made no comment as to whether it was the work of God or the doctrine of the devil. We are left to draw our own conclusions. Such conclusions should be so self evident that there was obviously no need for the Bible to declare on the matter for every principle involved in this supposed system of healing is at variance with the gospel itself.

The gospel shows complete impartiality for the weak and the strong, the poor and the weak. This supposed way of healing favored the strongest and the least needy only. They could, and were the first into the pool leaving the really sick and needy with never a chance of making it. Thus was fostered selfishness and self interest. We know that the Lord would not be involved in any such system the fruit of which was sinfulness at its worst, for selfishness and self-seeking are the very root and heart of all sin.

Yet the people had been sold to sin like so many poor sheep without a true and loving shepherd. They believed this lie, and the man whom Jesus healed had believed it, or he would never have been there by the pool. His effort to get into that pool by his own strength and by the help of his fellows illustrates the efforts of men everywhere to find healing of soul by their own efforts and the help of their fellows, through a theology of justification in which God is not to be truly found at all.

Such modern theologies of justification in which there is no salvation at all, are the product of the teaching of the modern ministry. By this the sheep are sold to the slaughter and from this theology men and women need to be rescued as was the man at the pool of Bethesda.

It is to be noted that until he was rescued from his faith in that false teaching he was to be found in a place by the sheep market, but when he had been delivered from that thinking and had dis-

covered the real truth of deliverance, he was no more to be found by the sheep market at all. He was no longer sold. He had been redeemed.

For Our Learning

We shall of course miss the whole essential point of this story if we fail to see that it was recorded expressly to teach us how we may be delivered from spiritual bondage and enslavement. In other words this is a practical lesson on justification by faith. This is stated for us in just so many words here:

Steps to Christ, p. 50-51:

From the simple Bible account of how Jesus healed the sick, we may learn something about how to believe in Him for the forgiveness of sins. Let us turn to the story of the paralytic at Bethesda.

Then follows the description of this man and of his deliverance from that condition. After that come these words,

In like manner you are a sinner.

If then the healing of that man is a lesson for us in the way in which we are to believe for the healing of the soul, then whatever happened to that man in his problem physically is the lesson as to what is to happen to us spiritually. This we shall see as being clearly borne out in the comments in *Steps to Christ*.

It is at once apparent that the sick man could not do the things he desired so much to do, because of the actual state of being in which he found himself, and in which Jesus found him there at the pool. That man was sick and he was helpless. That is what, in himself, he actually was.

Now when Jesus came to him and spoke the creative word, that man rose up and walked. How did he do it? Did he do it vicariously by a power that was outside of himself? Did Jesus stoop down and by adding His strength to what little the man might have had, haul him to an upright position and then literally carry him along?

For that man to have walked while he remained in the same condition in which he was before Jesus came to him, that is how it would have to have been done. But it was not done that way. Jesus never so much as laid a finger upon that man.

Instead He, by His mighty power, changed that man's state of being completely. That man who had been so sick for so long, and helpless for just so long, was now no longer sick, and was no longer helpless. By the health and strength and power which were now in him, he was able to rise and walk like any other normal person.

These are the simple facts of the story and no one can honestly deny that this is the picture of things as they actually were. No one would say that the man had not been actually changed from sickness to health, from weakness to strength, from helplessness to ability, for the simple incontrovertible fact is that he was.

Now if it is to be different from this in the work of spiritual healing, then there is not the least point in this story being given as an illustration of justification. We have seen that the clear picture given in the illustration is that the man was actually made able in himself, though certainly not of himself. Now we shall I see that the same work is to be done in us spiritually for the very same reasons.

Steps to Christ, p. 51:

In like manner you are a sinner.

Just as that man was sick and helpless so we are sin-sick and helpless. What is more, we are as powerless to actually change ourselves as was the Ethiopian to change his skin, or the leopard to change his spots, or the man at the pool to get up and walk.

Yet if we are going to do the works of righteousness, then first of all we have to be changed in very nature within. We have to cease to be spiritually sick, and have to actually become well and able *in ourselves*, though, and let us say it just once again, never *of ourselves*.

The Promise of God

It is here that in the depth of our helplessness there comes to us the promise of God. Let us read what it says and believe it just as it reads.

Steps to Christ, p. 51:

You cannot atone for your past sins; you cannot change your heart and make yourself holy.

Now note the exact wording of the last part of that statement. It says,

“You cannot...make yourself holy.”

Now it does not say that you cannot be made holy, but only that you cannot do it yourself. These are simple English words which no one should have the least difficulty in understanding at all. “To make,” means to produce something which is not already there. It does not mean merely to reckon that it is there, or to consider or account that it is there, but to actually bring it into being there. This statement then says that not one of us can bring ourselves into a holy state of being.

Then let us see what God will do about it. Does He say that He has worked out a way by which we can have heaven without having this state of holiness? He certainly does not! Instead the word states,

Steps to Christ, p. 51:

But God promises to do all this for you through Christ.

The two words, “all this,” refer back to the statements made in the previous sentence. Let us ask ourselves as to exactly what they refer and then we shall know exactly what God promises to do for us. They refer back to the two things we cannot do for ourselves, namely:

1. Atoning for our sins, and
2. Making ourselves holy.

We cannot do this but God promises to do it for us. Let the full simple force of that promise sink into our minds. God promises to make us holy.

This is not saying that He will merely reckon us to be holy, or grant to us a standing of holiness, but that He will make us holy. Just as Christ made the sick man whole, well and able, so God will make us to be holy.

Well what do we do about it?

Steps to Christ, p. 51:

You believe that promise.

Why cannot we just do that? The Lord has spoken and He has promised that He will make me holy. It is not necessary for me to go into a great lot of detailed and involved theological arguments as to whether this can or cannot be so, because the Lord has promised to do it, and that is all that I need to know, for if He has made a promise like that, then all that I have to do is to believe this and receive it, by fulfilling the conditions required for its reception.

Those conditions as listed in this same paragraph are to confess my sins and give myself to God. I set my will to serve Him. Then just as surely as this is done, God will fulfill His word to me.

Steps to Christ, p. 51:

If you believe the promise,—believe that you are forgiven and cleansed,—God supplies the fact; *you are made whole*, just as Christ gave the paralytic power to walk when the man believed that he was healed. It is so if you believe it.

Who is Made Whole?

Remember that in our study of justification we are searching out the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy references which show that the Lord does actually make a man within himself to be different in very nature from what he was before this transformation took place. That being so we are looking at the evidence in the statements before us and we see that these words are written,

...you are made whole.

Ask the simple question,

“What is this wholeness spoken of here? Is it something merely reckoned to us, yet kept apart from us so that we are in the same condition after this has been done for us as we were before it was done?”

Nothing in the sense of the words used to describe the work to be done even suggests that it is a vicarious work but only an actual work in the soul. This is made clear by asking the question as to who is made whole.

“Is it Christ who is made whole? Is it someone else beside the suppliant?”

No! It is the individual himself who is made whole. There are those who object to this on the grounds that such a person would become self-sufficient in himself and would no longer be in any need of Christ's grace to be with him and in him from day to day. This argument for so many is sufficient to discount all the words written in the word of God and to make of none effect the clear promise of God that He will make you holy.

The answer to the above objection is two-fold:

1. No argument which can be formulated can change the clear and plain promise of God that He will make us to be holy.

That is the word of God to me and to you and to every other person who can believe that what the Lord says, He means and will do. No amount of quibbling or argument can change that in the least degree.

2. In the second case it is foolish to suggest that once a person has been set free by Christ that he has no more need of Christ.

This is like saying that once a woman has married a man, that as soon as the wedding ceremony is over she has no more need of

him. She needs him every day and all the way through the rest of her life. So too the man or the woman who has been made holy in heart certainly needs Christ day by day for without His strength and guidance, we would go astray and fall under the masterful temptations of the enemy.

The whole message then of this story as a God-given illustration of what Jesus will do for the soul held in the grip of the sickness of sin, is that the person himself in heart, though certainly not at this time in the flesh, becomes a holy being in himself. Thus being made holy, he is able to do the deeds of righteousness and truth.

Every true believer can then be established on the truth that when the Lord justifies a man, He does not in any sense of the word declare an unclean man to be just or clean. God speaks the truth, and we should have no fear in believing that the true believer is a new creation in the most real sense of the word.

May the Lord give to us the faith to believe it and to live it.

4. Two Works in Justification

The Messenger of Living Righteousness, May 1972

IN THE three previous chapters of this study, the effort has been to spell out in the clearest possible terms the great fact that a man is justified only when he has been brought into an actual condition of being righteous.

The objective has been to show that the commonly held view, that justification is merely the imputation of the righteousness of another, even the righteousness of Christ to our account, while we still remain exactly as we were, is a misleading and unsatisfactory doctrine of justification.

As such this doctrine cannot bring salvation and eventually eternal life, but rather will leave the individual who believes and follows this misleading and unsatisfactory doctrine in the grip of sin within, and thus into eternal condemnation.

Yet, as has been shown, the scriptures are very strong on the fact that justification is not...

Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 114:

...merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed,

Psalms 51

¹⁰ Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

And again he says,

Psalms 103

¹² As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

The time has come in this study to note that justification is not a single work but rather a two-fold work. The dual character of that work is expressed in a single sentence from the statement quoted above which reads:

Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 114:

It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin.

This then is what is involved in justification. Therefore to teach anything less than this as justification, is to fail to teach justification as it actually and really is, to be guilty of setting forth a doctrine inadequate to meet the desperate needs of the sinning soul.

Justification in the whole and not in the part of it, is that which the Lord has provided for our salvation. We can surely know that if we have but the part of it and not the whole of it, then we do not have all that is needed to effect our salvation. This is a thought well worth our most prayerful and serious consideration.

The Devil's Counterfeit

That which makes it necessary to give this the most thoughtful and prayerful consideration is the fact that the devil's counterfeits are of a nature wherein he presents the truth in part only, but never in its balanced fullness. For instance:

- He teaches that we must keep holy the Sabbath day but omits to specify the seventh day as the day to be observed.
- He is prepared to teach that Christ came in flesh, but never that He came in *the flesh*,—the same flesh and blood as the children.
- Likewise he is well prepared to teach that justification is forgiveness for sin but never that it is also deliverance from the nature of sin as well.

By this means he makes it appear that he is presenting a Bible doctrine, a Christ-centered truth, when in actual fact it is a deception of the devil, which, being only a half truth, is a lie altogether, serving to take all those who believe it right down into the pit of death and destruction.

With these facts before us then, it is just as important for this study to present the one side of the work of justification as it is for it to present the other.

Thus far the emphasis has been upon that aspect in which justification is the cleansing from the sinfulness within the heart of the person so that he receives the divine mind in the place of the carnal mind which was there previously.

Let the study now be to show how that this truth does not eclipse or replace the great and wonderful truth that justification is the forgiveness for all the sins of the past so that the sinner can be accepted before God as though he had never sinned at all.

It is necessary to emphasize at this point that nothing which we shall discover in regard to the wonderful substitution of the righteousness of Christ for the sinful life of the repentant, can lessen the truth that justification is the cleansing work of grace whereby a person is brought into an actual state of righteousness in himself though certainly not of himself.

There are two works in justification and neither one of them alone brings a man to the point where he is justified. Only when both works have been done for him can it be said that he is justified.

The devil is well aware of this fact and inasmuch as he desires to obscure this complete and total work, while at the same time making it appear that he has the true doctrine of justification, he seizes upon one or the other of the two works and makes that the complete work. The result is that those who accept this deception are short changed and in the judgment will be found wanting unto eternal death.

Only those who come with the full and the complete doctrine of justification will be found holy and righteous in the judgment and fit to pass its searching scrutiny.

Past Emphasis on Creative Work

Some may be quick then to point out that in the past we have not held the full teaching on this subject, because we have emphasized the fact that justification is the act of making a man righteous in himself, and therefore the message has not been of the

Lord. But this would be an incorrect stand to take because, while it is true that there has been an emphasis on the second part of the work of justification, namely the work of changing the actual nature of man, this does not mean that we have not been aware of the other aspect of the work, believed in it and experienced the saving power of it.

While it is true that the first work of justification, namely that of placing the righteousness of Jesus Christ to our account in the place of the sins of the past, has not been spelled out with the balanced clarity with which it will be presented in this chapter, the understanding was there all the time.

The reason as to why the other side was the more earnestly presented is because it was the side which could not be seen by the majority and therefore needed to be placed before them. If in so doing the impression has been given that the other was neither seen nor understood or worse still, denied, then this study will serve to set the record very straight and to restore full and complete balance and harmony to the message of justification.

Careful consideration of the need of the sinner makes it very clear that to make a man holy would never be sufficient alone to justify him, just as surely as to forgive him the sins of the past would not alone make him to be justified. To see and to understand this is but to consider in their turn, the two situations just mentioned.

That a man must be made to be holy and righteous in himself in order to be justified has already been clearly proved in the earlier chapters of this series. It was pointed out that the Lord justifies a man not merely on the basis of what that man has done but on the basis of what he is. The work of God's justification can never be equated with the justification offered in a court of law, because, whereas the eye of man cannot see beyond the deed done, the Lord can and does read the very heart of the person.

A number of clear Bible and Spirit of Prophecy statements were tendered to support this position, so that it is very clear that in

order for a man to be justified, he has to be actually transformed in nature. But if this was the only work done for him, then he still would not be justified for very good reasons.

Past Record and Present Condition

Those reasons are as follows. When a man comes to God to apply for justification through the merits of Jesus, he has a twofold problem.

1. In the first case he has chalked up an enormous debt of sin as a result of the evil deeds of all his past years. The longer he has lived, the worse this situation is.
2. In addition to this, he has a sinful and an evil condition in himself, and while ever he retains that, he can never be just before God.

Now the sinful debt of the past has to be paid; it has to be accounted for. It cannot just be brushed aside and swept under the carpet. Man does not, and never can, have a life in which is the power to pay that debt, not even the very least part of it at all. It is absolutely beyond him to do that. Therefore to make the man righteous so that nothing but good deeds come forth from his life, is still going to leave that debt unpaid.

Even though that man was as righteous as he could ever be, and even though he lived for a million years during which time he never sinned at all, not one single deed of all that time could ever be used to pay the tiniest particle of that great debt he owes to the law of God. Nothing, absolutely nothing that he could do, would ever release him from the condemnation of the past.

Therefore, justification can never be the work only of making a man righteous, for such a work does not remove the condemnation of the past, but only changes the condition or state of being of the present. It follows then that while I condemnation remains, then a person certainly is not justified because one cannot have condemnation and justification at the same time. Either a person is justified or he is condemned. This remains true even though

some areas of condemnation have been removed, for if one is an offender in one point of the law then he is guilty of all.⁴

If a man was to be changed in nature so that his condition was that of a just man, he would be still under condemnation and therefore unjustified because the debt of his past sins was still upon him. It could not be any other way. These facts confirm that there are two works of justification, namely:

1. Dealing with the debt of the past, and then
2. Dealing with the condition of the present.

Having examined then the solution for the sinful condition, let us turn to the solution for the debt of the past. We have considered the false theology, held by the majority, that a man is justified simply by being forgiven for the sins of the past, without there being any actual change in the nature of the man at all. According to this theory, any changes which may be effected come afterwards, as a result of justification, but never as the work of justification.

Here then is the sinner who, as has been mentioned before, comes with the dual problem of a history of sin, and a sinful condition. If justification were alone the substitution of the righteousness of Christ for his sinfulness so that the debt was paid, then that man could come and receive such an imputation to his account without being actually changed in himself. The situation then would be that the debt of the past would all have been paid without his having any change of nature whatsoever.

It is true that one area of condemnation would have been removed, but there would still remain the area of condemnation because he is still sinful in himself. Not until that is also taken care of would that man be in a true condition of justification. Nothing less than the carrying through of both works of grace will give to a man the status of justification: the substitution of the righteous-

⁴ **James 2** ¹⁰ For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

ness of Christ for all the guilt of the past, and the changing of the life within the man. No truth could be more sound or clear than this.

The Question of Sequence

Having established the fact that there are two distinct works of grace needed in order to bring a man into a condition of justification in the sight of God, it is natural for us to think of these as taking place in a sequence whereby one follows the other. But this is human thinking. Neither of these works of grace follows the other. They occur simultaneously. This is clearly proved by the following evidences.

Christ's Object Lessons, p. 112-113:

John 3

³ Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

He may conjecture and imagine, but without the eye of faith he cannot see the treasure. Christ gave His life to secure for us this inestimable treasure; but without regeneration through faith in His blood, there is no remission of sins, no treasure for any perishing soul.

The plain clear message of this verse is that it is impossible for us to receive the remission of sins or any other treasure for the perishing soul, without regeneration through His blood. Regeneration is the transformation of nature whereby a man is lifted out of a condition of unrighteousness into a condition of righteousness in himself. It is the second work of justification mentioned above.

Remission of sins on the other hand, is the taking away of all the evil of the past, and the putting to our account instead the perfect righteousness of Christ. Here we are clearly told that we cannot have the latter, which is remission, except we have the former, which is regeneration.

Likewise the reverse situation would also be true for it would be impossible to have regeneration except there was the remitting of the sins of the past.

So then if we cannot have the one without the other, and the other without the one, then they must both come together in the same instance of time. In that very moment when the Lord places the whole of His righteousness to our account to cover the sins of the past, which of course include the unknown sins not yet seen by and confessed by us, He also sheds His love abroad in our hearts as a cleansing, regenerating power to restore us to His likeness. Then and only then do we have justification and peace with God.

This is a truth too vital to be missed for those who fail to find justification in the wonderful fullness of it, will likewise fail to find eternal life.

Accounted as Though

Here are three wonderful words of truth which have been a most serious stumbling block to so many preventing them from seeing and believing in the full truth of justification. They appear in such statements as the following.

Romans 4

³ For what says the Scripture? Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

Selected Messages, vol. 1, p. 367:

The law demands righteousness, and this the sinner owes to the law; but he is incapable of rendering it. The only way in which he can attain to righteousness is through faith. By faith he can bring to God the merits of Christ, and the Lord places the obedience of His Son to the sinners account. Christ's righteousness is accepted in place of man's failure, and God receives, pardons, justifies, the repentant, believing soul, treats him as though he were righteous, and loves him as He loves His Son. This is how faith is accounted righteousness; and the pardoned soul goes on from grace to grace, from light to greater light.

All too many of those who read these words build their entire understanding of justification by faith on the words “accounted,” “as though he were righteous.” Undeniably the words “as though” indicate that it is speaking about something which is reckoned to be so, even though it is not actually so. Equally undeniably this is true so far as a certain aspect of the case is concerned, and can never be anything else but true.

The mistake made by so many is to carry these words into an area where they have no application thereby denying the great truth of the work of transformation in the soul at the moment of his being justified. Those words apply, not to the actual condition of the person as he is at the moment he is justified, but to his condition prior to his justification. As long as eternity lasts nothing can change the fact that up till justification the individual lived a sinful life, both so far as his state and his actions were concerned. That fact can never be changed. Never!

Right up until the point of justification, in the books of record in heaven he is accounted as being under condemnation as a sinful person because that is exactly what he is. Now if that man is to be saved then something must be done about this account, for he can never pass the judgment with such a record against him. What is to be done?

- Is he to go back to his birth and start all over again, this time living a perfect life? No! That would be impossible under the present existing order of things.
- Can the whole of his past be forgotten and overlooked? Again that cannot be done!
- Can he pay the debt himself? Again the answer is an unequivocal no!

There is only one way and it is that Jesus takes the debt upon himself and so places all His righteousness to our records, that we receive a credit account as though we had never sinned at all. This provision reaches not only to the actual sins of the past, but

takes care also of the unknown sins as yet not seen and confessed at the point of justification.

What a wonderful and gracious provision this is for our salvation that Jesus would take all that sinfulness from the past and place His righteousness in its place. Equally wonderful though is the fact that He does not stop there, but in the selfsame instant of time, He takes away the old evil nature which has dominated us so long and replaces it with the living presence of His own divine nature.

Note how clearly the great and wonderful truth of this is expressed in the following words:

Steps to Christ, p. 62:

If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Saviour, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accounted before God just as if you had not sinned. *More than this*, Christ changes the heart.

How necessary then, that we both understand and experience the dual nature of the work of justification. To hold and to believe the one or the other of these two aspects without holding and believing both is to have a false and counterfeit doctrine which will not bring salvation and eternal life to us.

Yet the record of this age is that the vast majority do fail to see the dual aspects of the work of justification. How truly penned were the following words:

The Review and Herald, September 3, 1889

There is not one in one hundred who understands for himself the Bible truth of this subject [justification by faith] that is so necessary to our present and eternal welfare. When light begins to shine to make clear the plan of redemption to our people, the enemy works with all diligence that the light may be shut away from the hearts of men. If we come to the word of God with a teachable, humble, spirit, the rubbish of error will be swept away, and gems of truth, long hidden from our eyes will be discovered.

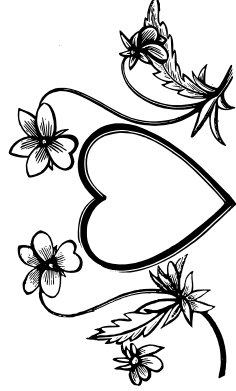
THE TWO WORKS INVOLVED IN JUSTIFICATION

TO BE JUSTIFIED



Firstly, the whole of the guilt of our past lives must be taken care of. The only way in which this can be done is for Christ to take upon himself the burden of this guilt and to give us His righteousness in its place. Then we can stand before God as if we had not sinned.

AND



Secondly, the other source of condemnation must also be removed, namely the carnal mind, the stony heart, the old man, the old sin master. Christ does this by taking away the old nature and giving us His righteous life in its place, so that we are made righteous.

ONLY WHEN BOTH ARE DONE, CAN A MAN BE SAID TO BE JUSTIFIED

