



JUSTIFICATION
BEFORE
GOD
(NOT BY FAITH)



W.E. BEST

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**by
W. E. Best**

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1

INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to believe on Christ? A person who asks another to define a Biblical term is unpopular. The average person asked to explain saving faith would think the request foolish because he thinks everyone knows what simple faith is. He would explain that the athlete has faith that he will win, and a surgical patient has faith that he will recover. Buddhists, Muslims, and all religionists talk about faith. The concept that faith is simple is humanistic.

Saving faith is not simple. Saving faith must not be confused with general faith, which is found among religionists, politicians, athletes, pagans, etc. A guide who neglects to examine his route before undertaking to guide is unworthy of the title of guide. A so-called church member who says he is a believer and has not investigated the meaning of faith is not worthy of the title of believer. A person who hears from the pulpit only simple faith and practical directions is poorly informed. Both salvation and the Christian life are complex subjects. Therefore, simple terms and directions will not suffice. A concise definition of faith by arminians is that in

one sense faith is the gift of God, but it is God's gift to all who want it and are willing to use it. It is not given to all because all will not avail themselves of it. They will not all yield to the moving of the Spirit and let the regenerating power of God work within them. Contrary to this arminian definition, faith is the gift of God; everything God gives is received; and the recipient recognizes that God gave it.

God-given faith and human faith are distinct: (1) Human faith may believe an infallible Object. For instance, the devils believed God (James 2:19). Furthermore, many people during the personal ministry of our Lord who saw the miracles He performed believed, but the Lord would not commit Himself to them (John 2:23, 24). Human faith in an infallible Object is only temporary. (2) God-given faith cannot believe a fallible object in a true conversion experience (John 10:4, 5). (3) Religious faith embraces a questionable object. An example of one with religious faith embracing a questionable object is his not knowing whether Jesus Christ is dead or alive but he thinks he needs Him.

Most religionists believe justification is God's reward for a human performance of faith. Hence, they believe justification before God is on the basis of their faith. Neither faith nor works justify one before God. Exhorting a person to make a decision for Jesus Christ and be saved is erroneous. The decision is God's, not man's. Justification is not a reward for the human performance of faith. One is not justified by making a decision for Christ. If a person begins a discussion of a subject from the standpoint of logic, he must know his premise. If thinking about law, there must be a basis for argument, a basis on which reasoning proceeds. This can be considered from either logic or from law. It is a false exegesis to take a hypothetical reason and draw an absolute conclusion.

The following things may be listed under what saving faith

is not: (1) Saving faith is not a particular form of human faith. Faith in a friend and faith in God would both come under this heading. There are no atheists among the demons, because they believe there is one God and shudder at the thought (James 2:19). More than the Object of faith is included in faith. Although the demons had faith in God, the proper Object, their faith was out of the wrong source. (2) Saving faith is not blind trust—a general intention to believe whatever the church believes. (3) Saving faith is not historical—the intellectual apprehension of what is preached. This faith may be the result of education, public opinion, or curiosity in the unknown. It may be called theoretic, received in theory but void of practical effects. (4) Saving faith is not temporary. One does not believe for awhile and then cease believing. This type of faith is illustrated in Luke 8:13. (5) Saving faith is not built on miracles. The teaching that through faith one may have physical health, avoid adversities, and have riches is not Scriptural. If it were, none of the patriarchs whose names are recorded in the chapter on the excellency of faith, Hebrews 11, had faith. True faith was revealed in their endurance of much affliction (Heb. 11:33-40). Their faith did not give them physical health, enable them to avoid adversity, or give them riches. (6) Saving faith is not vain (I Cor. 2:14). Faith in a dead Christ, a peccable Christ, or in the wrong object would be vain. (7) Saving faith is not dead. (8) Saving faith is not based on feelings. Religious activity is designed to produce feelings rather than to call forth the exercise of God-given faith. This is the reason religious services are made attractive by things which can be seen. (9) Saving faith is not a prerequisite to election, justification before God, or regeneration. (10) Saving faith is not a new organ added to human nature. It is not the working of a faculty or a new sense added to the five senses we already have.

The following things show what saving faith is: (1) Saving faith is a new disposition implanted by the Holy Spirit of

regeneration which enables the recipient of grace to believe and embrace Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. (2) Saving faith belongs to the covenant of grace. (3) Saving faith is the gift of God which is the fruit of election and regeneration. (4) Saving faith is called into exercise by the effectual call. (5) Saving faith involves the mind, heart, and will. The Jewish people looked upon this as expressive of understanding, affection, and will. The heart is the seat of these things, and they must all be exercised for faith to be genuine. (6) Saving faith goes beyond the purely cognitive process of knowing and perceiving. (7) Saving faith cannot be classified with any of the ten negative things listed under what faith is not.

God is the Author of faith, Christ is the Object of faith, and works are the fruit of faith. The average professing Christian says the word “justify” means to make one righteous before God. If that is true, does a person’s faith or his works make him righteous before God? Neither faith nor works make a person righteous before God. Although God, faith, and works declare the elect to be righteous, the declarations are before different persons and for different reasons. (1) The elect are justified before God on the basis of imputed righteousness. (2) The person justified before God is justified by faith before his own consciousness. (3) The person justified before God and before his own consciousness is justified by works before others.

Justification before God is on the basis of imputed righteousness. Justification before one’s own consciousness is by imputed and imparted righteousness. The elect are justified by works before others.

2

THE AUTHOR OF SAVING FAITH

God is the Author of saving faith. Whose faith justifies the sinner before God? The Greek noun form of “faith” (*pistis*) means faith, belief, assurance, integrity, faithfulness, truthfulness, or firm conviction. It should be translated “faithfulness” with reference to the faith of God in Romans 3:3—“For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?” Verse 3 may be correctly translated, “For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the ‘faithfulness’ of God without effect?” The faithfulness “of God” (*tou theou*) is in the genitive case in this verse. The genitive case in itself is neither objective nor subjective. This is determined only by the context. The faithfulness of God is subjective, not objective. God’s faithfulness is not dependent on depraved man. Paul was addressing the Jews whose unfaithfulness did not annul God’s promise to national Israel (Rom. 11). Therefore, man’s unbelief cannot render God’s work ineffectual. Every born-again person was an unbeliever until God in regeneration gave him the ability to believe. His unbelief did not nullify God’s ordination that he believe. The absence of faith on man’s part cannot render God’s faithful-

ness unproductive. If the absence of faith on the part of anyone could render God's work unproductive, there would be no hope for anyone. That would indicate that man is controlling God.

Can God have faith? Surely God has faith. He has faith or assurance in His Son. The sinner is justified before God by God's faithfulness, by His assurance in the blood of His Son, whom He appointed, and by the faithfulness of Jesus Christ in bringing into being a righteousness that can be not only imputed but also imparted to us.

The sinner is justified in the presence of God by grace: "Being justified [present passive participle of *dikaioo*] freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth [aorist middle indicative of *pro-tithemi*, which means to design, purpose, set forth, or determine beforehand] to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Rom. 3:24, 25). "God" is the performing noun in verse 25. God purposed Christ as a propitiation through faith in His blood.

Although saving faith is inseparably connected with God's appointment to eternal life, it is neither the cause nor the instrument of Divine quickening: "...as many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48). The cause of our justification before God is the Father's purpose in grace and His faith (*pistis*—assurance) in that purpose. His assurance is revealed in the fact that He gave grace to all the elect in the eternal covenant before the beginning of time (II Tim. 1:9). How could God the Father give grace to all the elect in the eternal covenant before the beginning of time if He did not have faith in His purpose? The Father had perfect confidence in the Son's work. Therefore, He gave the elect grace in Christ before time began. What the Son did and what the Father

purposed did not fail, is not failing, and will not fail. Furthermore, the instrumental work of the Holy Spirit in applying what the Father purposed and the Son provided cannot fail. Salvation is eternal with respect to its origin, and its experience applied in time is everlasting.

From our point of view, the grace of the Father purposed salvation (II Tim. 1:9), the grace of the Son purchased salvation (II Cor. 8:9), and the grace of the Holy Spirit applies salvation (John 3:8). Conclusively, salvation is purposed, purchased, and applied apart from the recipient's assistance. The application of grace is as free as electing and purchasing grace. Grace is not free unless it is free in its application. The synergistic (cooperative) theory of regeneration is heresy. Two persons cannot cooperate unless they are equal in rank and occupy the same relative position. Therefore, God and the sinner can never work together in either the purposing, purchasing, or applying of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. How can the sinner assist God in a re-creative work? The law which governs the association of antecedents and consequents prohibits the introduction into the process of regeneration a means different in nature from the antecedent. Thus, a noncreative means cannot be associated creatively with a creative antecedent. That means a sinner cannot be associated with God in the application of salvation. God justified the elect sinner on the basis of His own faith, assurance, and confidence in the work of His Son (Rom. 8:33).

Faith is not the initial act of union with God. The first stage of union with God lies in God's decree of election. All subsequent unions, such as crucified with Christ, regeneration, and faith flow from the eternal covenant of God. God's giving us grace in Christ before the world began is election. There had to be some kind of union between God and the ones He gave to Christ in the eternal covenant (Heb. 13:20).

The necessity of faith beginning with God is portrayed in man's being dead in sin: "Wherefore [*dia*, accusative of cause, can be translated, for this reason], as by [*dia*, ablative of agency, which means through] one man sin entered into the world, and death by [*dia*, ablative of agency, which means through] sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12). Sin did not begin with Adam. It began with Lucifer, the archangel (Is. 14; Ezek. 28). Sin began in the human race in Adam. Hence, we sinned in Adam. Beginning with Romans 5:12, Paul was contrasting Adam, the representative head of all mankind, with Jesus Christ, the representative Head of those whom the Father gave to Him in the covenant of redemption. He then injected something before continuing the contrast. The last part of the verse required a parenthesis which is given in verses 13-14. In the parenthesis, the apostle showed that sin was in the world until the law of Moses, but sin is not charged to one's account when there is no law. But death reigned from Adam to Moses even over the ones not sinning in the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of the One (Jesus Christ) coming. Jesus Christ would be a representative Head of those whom the Father gave Him in the covenant of redemption. After the parenthesis, Paul returned to the contrast.

Adam entered the world upright (Eccl. 7:29). But he fell, and sin entered the human race through him. All men fell in him. Death entered through sin. Law entered to develop sin. Christ entered to pay sin's debt on behalf of the elect. Grace entered to save the elect. The elect having been regenerated and converted shall enter the kingdom.

All sinned in Adam: "For all have sinned [aorist active indicative of *hamartano*—sinned] and come short [present passive indicative of *hustereo*, which means coming short] of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). "All sinned" is past tense, and "are coming short" is present tense. This verse states that all

sinned, not that all have been made sinful. We were not made sinful because of Adam's sin or because of the sin of our parents. We all sinned in Adam as our representative head. We sinned in him because of our solidarity with him.

Since death reigned from Adam to Moses, does an act of sin or one's depraved condition cause him to die? A person dies because of his depraved nature. Christians, as well as others, die physically, regardless of the kind of life they live. How could death reign when sin is not charged to one's account when there is no law? In order to answer this question, one must distinguish sin (*hamartia*, which means sin) and offense (*paraptoma*, which means offense, trespass, or overstepping). Transgression, or offense, means to overstep a law. It is sinning against a law. But sin in this verse does not refer to an act of sin. It refers to the sin principle. Hence, everyone comes into this world with the principle of sin, or the depraved nature. This is the reason sin reigned from Adam to Moses. Death could not have reigned without the depravity with which every person is born.

Babies, as well as others, die because of the principle of sin. All are dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1-3). Hence, God does not look upon infants as innocent or sinless; "...who ever perished, being innocent..." (Job 4:7). Are all who die in infancy safe? Scripture proves that they are not: (1) Everyone except Noah and his three sons and their wives were destroyed in the flood (Gen. 7, 8). Any children in the world at that time were destroyed not because they had committed acts of sin but because of their complicity with Adam in his sin. (2) The only people who were not destroyed in Sodom and Gomorrah were Lot and his family (Gen. 18, 19). There were not ten righteous people there. All the children were destroyed with the others. (3) At the passover, the death angel slew everyone in the houses of those where blood had not been applied (Ex. 12). Infants died with the others. (4) Everyone other than

Rahab and her family in Jericho was destroyed: “And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old...And the...spies went in, and brought out Rahab, and her father, and her mother, and her brethren, and all that she had; and they brought out all her kindred, and left them without the camp of Israel. And they burnt the city with fire...” (Josh. 6:21, 23, 24). (5) During the time of Ezekiel, God destroyed all those in the city of Jerusalem who had not been marked by His messengers (Ezek. 7-9). The Lord said to the messenger clothed in linen, “Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men that sigh and that cry for all the abominations that be done in the midst thereof. And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and women: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark...” (Ezek. 9:4-6). They were slain because they were sinful. (6) At the time of the rapture, only the dead in Christ and the spiritually alive who are living will be caught up (I Thess. 4:13-17). (7) Children will not be spared in the terrible judgments that shall come upon the world during the tribulation period. Many religionists claim that children are safe until they reach the age of accountability (whatever that is), and then they are no longer safe. If that is true, what a shame that they are not either aborted or die before they reach that age. If they are safe until they reach the age of accountability, it is an act of mercy to abort one before it comes from the mother’s womb or let it die before it reaches the age of accountability. Every person’s sin took place in the past when he sinned in Adam. Conclusively, no one can prove from Scripture that all children who die in infancy go to heaven. The objector might complain that God is not just. But the objector himself is the unjust one. God is the righteous Judge. All that He does is right. He executes justice.

Paul resumed the contrast begun in Romans 5:12 in verse 15. These are the two major contrasts: (1) the offense versus the free gift (vv. 15-18) and (2) disobedience versus obedience (vv. 19-21). The origin of sin is taught in verse 12, the extent of sin is taught in verses 13-14, and the conquest of sin is taught in verses 15-21.

The contrast between the offense and the free gift goes from Adam's one act of sin that brought judgment to the many trespasses that drew forth God's mercy and grace to be given to the elect. The justification of the elect is in spite of our many trespasses. Sin may be considered as (1) a state of depravity (Rom. 5:12), and (2) transgression of the law (I John 3:4). In what sense is sin used in John 1:29?—"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." (1) Is it a state of depravity? If so, one must believe in universal redemption. This verse does not refer to all people in the world because all are not saved. (2) Does it refer to transgression of law? Did Jesus Christ die for all the sins of all men, some of the sins of all men, or all the sins of some men? Jesus Christ is not taking away all the transgressions of the law; hence, the verse does not teach the taking away of the transgressions of the law. Conclusively, John 1:29 refers to Christ's legal obligation to punish sin.

John saw the Lamb of God coming toward him. There was no offer here, and sinners were not "coming to Jesus." Christ is taking away by a perpetual act the sin of His people, the world of the elect. (Study John 1:29; 3:1-16; 4:42.) Consider briefly the reference in John 4:42. Those in Samaria who believed had previously believed because of the witness by the woman of Samaria. Therefore, their previous encounter was hearsay faith (John 4:39). Now, they were no longer believing because of the saying of the woman, but they themselves heard: "...Now we believe, not because of thy

saying: for we have heard [perfect active indicative of *akouo*, which means permanent hearing] him ourselves, and know [perfect active indicative of *oida*, which means permanent knowledge] that this [one] is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world” (John 4:42). They had hearing ears; they heard; and their hearing continued. Is Christ the Savior of every person without exception? The word “world” in this verse refers to the same people as John 1:29—the world of the elect. The one act of Adam brought judgment to the many trespasses that drew forth God’s mercy and grace to His own (Rom. 5:16). Hence, the elect are justified in spite of our many trespasses.

The sinner’s passivity in justification signifies that he was not active in his justification before God: “...through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe [present active participle of *pisteuo*, which means is believing] are justified [present passive indicative of *dikaioo* which means being justified]...” (Acts 13:38, 39). Hence, in this One, everyone believing is justified. Paul’s text in these verses states the results of justification before God. Therefore, a person cannot be justified by his faith because faith is active, and justification before God is passive. His active faith is the fruit of being justified before God. Viewed as an act, faith does not justify a person before God. There is no more reason why man’s act of faith could justify him before God than his hope or his love. Love is greater than either faith or hope. His believing is in the same sense as “...he that doeth [present active participle of *poieo* which means the one practicing] righteousness is righteous...” (I John 3:7), or “every one that doeth [everyone practicing] righteousness is born [perfect passive indicative of *gennaio*, which means has been born] of him” (I John 2:29), or “...every one that loveth [present active participle of *agapao*, which means loving] is born [perfect passive indicative of *gennaio*, which means has been born] of God, and knoweth God” (I John 4:7). Believing

does not regenerate. Therefore, the person acting is not acting in the new birth. Proof that he has been justified before God is his practicing righteousness and loving, which are in the active voice.

3

THE OBJECT OF SAVING FAITH

The righteousness of God is through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ who is the object of saving faith. The context of Romans 3:22—“Even the righteousness of God which is by [*dia*, which means through] faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe [present active participle of *pisteuo*, which means believing]: for there is no difference”—proves the faith of Jesus Christ is subjective. The verse may be translated, “Even the righteousness of God through faith of Jesus Christ unto all believing.” An analogy to the righteousness of God being through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ in Paul’s terminology is, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek” (Rom. 1:16). The gospel being the power of God “unto salvation” proves the gospel does not come to mankind in general to inform them of a new objective state of affairs. It invades the elect in the same manner as the righteousness of God through the faithfulness of Jesus Christ invades the elect (Rom. 3:22).

Reconciliation, God's absolute sovereignty, the sonship of Jesus Christ, and the sinner are discussed in II Corinthians 5:18-6:2. Reconciliation begins with the offended, not with the offender. The word "Father" does not occur in II Corinthians 5:21, but the sovereignty of God the Father is understood. God the Father made His Son the representative of sin. God's justice is seen in His making His Son the representative of sin on behalf of sinners chosen in Christ. He made His soul an offering for sin (Is. 53:10). He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son (John 3:16). Grace is connected with the Father in the statement "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (v. 21). Conclusively, when you think about the Father you see sovereignty, justice, and grace.

The purity of Christ is revealed in His having known no sin. Here is His impeccability. The suffering of the Son is seen in His being made a representative of sin. In order to be made a representative of sin, He suffered on behalf of sinners at Calvary. The merit of His sacrificial suffering at Calvary is that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

Those chosen by God in Christ were sinners. Jesus Christ was made the representative of sin for sinners. This deliverance, which is implied but not stated in verse 21, is from the penalty and guilt of sin. The delivered are in a state of righteousness because we have become the righteousness of God in Christ.

The One having reconciled us to Himself is where reconciliation begins. The principle of reconciliation begins with God, not with the sinner. This principle is illustrated in the two men who went to the altar to worship (Matt. 5:23, 24). One had been offended by the other. Before the offender could worship, he must leave his gift, go away from the altar, and be reconciled to the offended.

Everyone for whom reconciliation was accomplished was reconciled before God when Jesus Christ died on behalf of the elect at Calvary. When we were still helpless, at the appointed time Christ died for the godless (Rom. 5:6). God is demonstrating His love to us because while we were still sinners Christ died on our behalf (Rom. 5:8). These verses have described Christ's death and those in whose place He stood at Calvary. Therefore, having been justified (aorist passive participle of *dikaioo*) now by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him (Rom. 5:9). Since being enemies we were reconciled (aorist passive indicative of *katallasso*) to God through the death of His Son proves that reconciliation began with the offended, not with the offender. The tense of the verb in II Corinthians 5:18 proves that objective reconciliation is a finished work. It is not continuously wrought by God. Having been reconciled (aorist passive participle of *katallasso*), we shall be saved (future passive indicative of *sodzo*) by (*en*, instrumental of agency) His life. Hence, going from the aorist passive participle to the future passive indicative verb proves that having been reconciled to God guarantees that we shall be saved by His life (Rom. 5:10).

Reconciliation is effected by redemption: "that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (I Pet. 3:18). The redemption by Jesus Christ that was necessary to render satisfaction to the moral nature of God must now satisfy the quickened witness of the heart of every recipient of grace. Regeneration and all its benefits find their moral basis and justification in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. His finished work satisfied the nature of God, and it satisfies the principle of life within every child of God. The atoning work of Jesus Christ preserves peace in the Godhead, making it possible for God to reconcile sinners to Himself. It makes the quickened sinner to be at peace with God (Rom. 5:1).

God is reconciled to the sinner in the sense of making it possible for the holy God to look with favor upon sinful mankind. The removal of God's wrath does not oppose but proves His immutability. Reconciliation effects no change in God, but it does change the administration of His government. His law regards with approbation those against whom it was formerly hostile. The change is with the relation between those for whom Christ died and the Judge of all. God always acts according to His unchanging righteousness. That attribute enables Him not to change His relative attitude toward those who are changed by grace. It would not allow Him to look with favor on the ungodly until they were changed by His grace. Therefore, the change in God's relation toward those who are changed by His grace proves His immutability. With God, reconciliation does not mean His change of heart from an angry to a friendly disposition. Conversely, it refers to an effect which has followed from that proper and full satisfaction which Christ offered to the violated law and offended justice of God.

Christian reconciliation has two sides—objective and subjective. God must be reconciled to man, and man must be reconciled to God (Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:20, 21; Heb. 2:17; Matt. 5:24; Rom. 5:9-11; 11:15; II Cor. 5:18-21; I Pet. 3:18). (1) The satisfaction of God's holy law is objective reconciliation. It is a reconciliation by which God has reconciled man to Himself. God has laid aside His holy anger against sin and the sinner and has received the redeemed sinner into His favor. (2) Subjective reconciliation is the operation of the Holy Spirit in removing the sinner's enmity against God. It is subordinate to objective reconciliation. Objective reconciliation makes subjective reconciliation a reality. Mere subjective reconciliation would be psychological, and all would be based on feeling. Assurance comes not from feeling but from knowing that God's nature has been satisfied and that He looks with favor on the redeemed.

Objective Reconciliation

The Father's appointing His Son to execute His purpose, fulfill His prophecies, and redeem His elect at His appointed time by coming and dying on behalf of sinners is the foundation of objective reconciliation. (1) His Son is the One who knew no sin. He who knew no sin was appointed to be the representative of sin on behalf of the sinners whom God gave to Christ in the covenant of redemption. (2) The Son of God became the Son of man in order that the chosen sons of men might become the sons of God. (3) Jesus Christ took our misery in order for us to take His glory. (4) The eternal Son was born of a woman in order for the elect to be born of God. (5) Christ suffered the effects of our sins so that we could experience the effects of His righteousness, which He provided for us at Calvary. (6) Christ was made the representative of our sins by imputation, not by impartation, so that the elect could be assured of being made righteous by the imputation and the impartation of His righteousness. (7) Christ Jesus was appointed to die for the elect in order for us to become the righteousness of God in Him. This righteousness, even when perfected in eternity, will not be identical with God's unalterable character, but it will be the completion of what Jesus Christ provided at Calvary.

It is a fact that all, including the elect, are enemies of Christ until the elect are regenerated by the Spirit of God. In God's all seeing eye, all the elect were enemies when He chose us in Christ. Objective reconciliation presupposes an alienation which has been satisfied by the death of Jesus Christ at Calvary (Rom. 5:9-10). The reconciliation took place in the past when Jesus Christ died on behalf of those the Father gave to Him.

Objective reconciliation is the propitiation of Jesus Christ by which He satisfied Divine justice and enabled the righteous God to look with favor upon the sinner. Divine justice

was satisfied when Jesus Christ shed His blood and not when an individual is regenerated. Subjective reconciliation is possible only by objective reconciliation. Since men are at enmity against God, reconciliation cannot occur until a work of grace changes an individual's heart and his attitude toward God is transformed. Reconciliation does not refer to putting away subjective enmity from the heart of the sinner said to be reconciled but to obliterating the alienation of that one.

There is no reconciliation separate from propitiation. Propitiation presupposes the holy displeasure of God; therefore, it is Godward. The purpose of propitiation is to remove God's displeasure. Hence, the death of Jesus Christ propitiated the holy anger of God, rendering Him propitious to those for whom Jesus Christ died. Propitiation does not constrain God to love sinners: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (I John 4:10). It does not change God's wrath to love. Conversely, it is the provision of God's eternal unchanging love through the propitiation of Divine wrath. God's love fulfills its purpose in harmony with and not at the expense of holiness. To say a wrathful God is made a loving God by propitiation is false, but to say the God of wrath is the God of love is true. Propitiation is not the cause but the result of God's eternal love.

Propitiation presupposes wrath, and reconciliation presupposes the anger and alienation implied in reconciliation. Alienation is twofold—man against God and God against man: "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Is. 59:2). God does not hear sinners, and they do not hear Him (John 9:31). God's alienation from man was removed by Christ's propitiation. Objective reconciliation secures every person for whom Christ died.

Although the New Testament does not in so many words say that God is reconciled to man, the principle is there. God's displeasure against mankind and not man's enmity against God comes into the foreground in Biblical reconciliation. Whether reconciliation is viewed as action or result, God's alienation is in the forefront. The key to the understanding of the doctrine of reconciliation is that it begins with the offended and not with the offender. The sinner has offended God and cannot come to Him. God looks with displeasure on all sinners. Their only approach to Him is in the Person of Jesus Christ who satisfied Divine justice. Man has no more part in his reconciliation than in his faith or his justification. He is only the recipient of reconciliation (Rom. 5:11). Reconciliation is the work of grace. God's attitude toward the elect has been changed by the propitiation of Jesus Christ. Hence, God who is offended is reconciled. That is objective reconciliation.

Contrary to the common interpretation of Romans 5:8-11, attention is drawn not to subjective but to objective reconciliation. If that portion of Scripture taught subjective reconciliation, it would have to read, "For if when we were enemies, we laid aside our enmity against God through the death of His Son, how much more having laid aside our enmity, shall we be saved by his life." This is not the teaching. Paul addressed those who were already reconciled. Action and result are both of God. Reconciliation is finished. It was wrought once for all by the death of Jesus Christ. Objective reconciliation is a historical fact. It was perfected by Jesus Christ. Subjective reconciliation is effected by the Holy Spirit in regeneration when He removes the sinner's enmity against God. The statement "reconciled to God by the death of his Son" of Romans 5:10 is parallel with "being now justified by his blood" of verse 9. The language is identical. Both are forensic terms. As eternal justification is accomplished outside an individual by God, reconciliation came to pass in the objective sphere of Divine action.

Subjective Reconciliation

Objective reconciliation guarantees the subjective reconciliation of the elect in time. Reconciliation is a wonderful truth, but it is greatly misunderstood. Its misunderstanding is evidenced in a popular work on systematic theology which states that there is a reconciliation which of itself reconciles no one but which is the basis for the reconciliation of any and all who will believe. The idea that there is a reconciliation which of itself reconciles no one is erroneous. That is like saying the redemptive work of Jesus Christ did not really redeem anyone. No one is reconciled to God when he believes. Every chosen person was reconciled to God when Jesus Christ died at Calvary, and his reconciliation, which was objective before the Father at Calvary, guarantees his subjective reconciliation in time. Moreover, subjective reconciliation assures us of future salvation: "...we shall be saved by his life" (Rom. 5:10). Not only this but we are presently rejoicing in God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:11). Each step toward eternity increases our rejoicing.

The incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ were essential to the subjective reconciliation of the elect in time, their Christian living, and their assurance of future resurrection. The Lord Jesus Christ became incarnate. There was a personal union of Deity and humanity in the Word made flesh (John 1:14). He was holy and separate from sin. Nevertheless, the life He lived among the sons of men could not atone for sin. Union of the Divine and human nature of Jesus Christ alone does not remove the barrier of alienation. God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to condemn sin in the flesh (Rom. 8:2, 3; II Cor. 5:21). The incarnation was necessary to effect the redemption of the elect. Jesus Christ assumed a human nature in which He could taste death and come forth victorious through death. He was put to death in the flesh but quickened by the spirit (I Pet. 3:18). Redemption

was necessary to carry out the purpose of the incarnation. Jesus Christ took upon Himself the likeness of human nature not to set an example but to become the Redeemer of the elect.

The Lord Jesus Christ arose from the dead. Calvary marked the completion of the redemption of God's elect no more than justification by blood completed their justification. Christ's death on the cross did provide a remedy for sin, but the remedy left results which needed further remedy. The resurrection set its seal to the incarnation and atonement and completed both from Christ's standpoint (Rom. 1:3, 4). Christ's resurrection was the proof of the Father's acceptance of His atoning work at Calvary. The death of Jesus Christ atoned for the elect, and His resurrection justified them.

Christ's death was no interruption of His continuing life. The Lord's statement "because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19) was made before His death. Hence, He declared that His death on the cross would not interrupt His continuing life. He had already predicted His death when He said, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:11), "...I lay down my life for the sheep" (v. 15), and "...I have power to lay it down..." (v. 18). He also spoke of His death when He said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12:24). It was necessary for Jesus Christ to come into the world and go to the cross of Calvary, to die, and to be raised out from among the dead before there could be any life for the elect. When Jesus Christ said, "Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19), He was speaking of resurrection life. This is in view of His death and resurrection.

The Lord's affirmation "because I live" of John 14:19 must be viewed as resurrection life. As a Divine Person, the Lord Jesus possesses independent, infinite, immutable, eternal life.

Therefore, in Him is life, and there will ever be life (John 1:4). All life proceeds from this independent fountain of life, Jesus Christ Himself. Through this life, all life is sustained. By this life, life shall be perfected. Not until Christ's death on the cross and His resurrection out from among the dead could His life be displayed to the elect.

Jesus Christ lives. He was dead, but He is alive forevermore (Rev. 1:18). His past death points to resurrection life. The death of Jesus Christ is the fountain of life for the people of God. "I am he that liveth" is a title belonging exclusively to God. "I am alive forevermore" means Christ's life shall experience no interruption or cessation. His having the keys of death and hell manifests His supremacy over hell and death. He has the authority of death.

Who raised Christ from the dead? The Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—was active in His resurrection. The Father made Christ's soul an offering for sin (Is. 53:10). Jesus Christ voluntarily laid down His life (John 10:17, 18). He offered Himself through His eternal spirit to obtain eternal redemption for the elect (Heb. 9:14). The Father raised Jesus Christ from the dead (Acts 2:23, 24). The Son took His life again (John 10:17, 18). The Spirit raised Him from the dead (Rom. 8:11).

For what purpose was Jesus Christ raised? He was raised to prove the Father's acceptance of His sacrifice, to guarantee the actual justification of the elect, and to guarantee the resurrection of their bodies. There is more in Christ's resurrection than a stamp of approval on His death: (1) The regenerated died with Him on the cross (Rom. 6:1-10). They live with Him in His resurrection. Christians have been raised up and made to sit with Christ in the heavenlies (Eph. 2:6). Since they are risen with Christ, they should set their affection on things above (Col. 3:1-3). The death of believers with

Christ did not occur when they were regenerated by the power of the Spirit or when they were converted but when Jesus Christ died on the cross. They died in Christ and have been raised in Him. (2) The regenerated do not live by Christ's death but by the life that flows to them through the redemptive work of Christ. Jesus Christ is not dead. He died once, but He now lives at the Father's right hand. Because He lives, His own live in Him. (3) The emphasis is not on death in Christ's sacrificial death but on His giving life through means of death. (4) The emphasis is on the living Christ and the living believer, not on a dead Christ and the dead sinner. (5) The cross breaks the power of sin, and the resurrection opens the power of God to those for whom Christ died (Rom. 1:4). (6) Redemption was more than paying a penalty, dismissing from suffering, and escaping from hell. It was also God's way of providing life that the ungodly might live now and later in His favor. If paying a penalty, dismissing from suffering, and escaping the punishment of hell alone were accomplished through Christ's death and resurrection, a dead sacrifice would suffice. Those were accomplished by Christ's death, but His life consummates redemption. The believer lives by the power of the resurrected Christ who lives within him.

God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself (II Cor. 5:19). Universalists think that the world that Jesus Christ is reconciling to Himself includes all mankind. But the next statement in this verse restricts the word "world" (*kosmos*) to God's chosen ones by the words "their" and "them" which refer to the elect. When we were reconciled before God, our trespasses were not counted against us because Jesus Christ paid for them in full. He did not pay for all the sins of all men. Hence, the text proves the number is restricted.

The extent of Christ's dying for all is understood in the light of all for whom Christ died. Christ did not purchase universal redemption: "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the

Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep” (John 10:15). Christ’s death is our death. Those who died legally with Christ at Calvary die practically to sin subsequent to their regeneration. Therefore, death to sin and the life of grace have the same source. Those who died and those who live are the same persons. The reason they are living is because Christ died for them, and they died with Christ in His death. The atonement is limited by all soteriologists. All views, or systems, of soteriology limit either the extent or the value of the atonement.

Jesus Christ did not die for everybody without exception, rendering Himself unable to save all for whom He died. This would limit the value of the atonement. Those who limit the value make salvation a gamble. They advocate that God wants to save all, but they will not let Him. Hence, God would not know how many He will be able to save because He would not know how many will let Him save them. That is limiting the value of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Limiting the extent of Christ’s redemptive work is Biblical. Everyone for whom Christ died will be brought into the ark of safety. God does not fail in what He purposed. John Owen questioned, “Did Jesus Christ die for all the sins of all men, or did Jesus Christ die for some of the sins of all men, or did Jesus Christ die for all the sins of some men?” Those who have a view of soteriology that says He died for all sins except one, which is unbelief, reveal that they believe He did not die for all. Jesus Christ died for all the sins of some, those whom the Father gave to the Son in the covenant of redemption.

Observe the connective “for” (*gar*) which is frequently used in II Corinthians 5:1-14, but a different connective (*hoste*) is used in verses 16 and 17. This conjunction expresses consequence or result. Paul said that we have recognized a man according to the flesh; on the contrary, we no longer know Him according to the flesh. Jesus Christ was a minister

under the old covenant; but since Calvary, He is the Reconciler (Rom. 15:8). Paul was not driving a wedge in verse 16 between the Jesus of history and the Christ of faith.

Jesus Christ is the Reconciler, and anyone in Him is a new creation. The word for “new” (v. 17) is from *kainos*, which is something new in quality. The other Greek word for “new” is *neos*, which refers to something new in reference to time. The old has become obsolete, and something superior has succeeded it. Every believer is a new creation, but something brought about this newness. Former things passed away, and all things have become new. Many erroneously interpret this to mean that old things have passed away from one who is regenerated and all things have become new to him. In the first place, old things have not passed away in the regenerated person. Paul proved that in Romans 7 by relating his struggle with himself after his conversion. Old thoughts and desires do not pass away. Furthermore, all things do not become new. They will not become new until they are made new in the kingdom.

The teaching that former things have passed away and all things have become new does not refer to the time of an individual’s salvation. The verb translated “are become” is a perfect active indicative of *ginomai*, showing that they have become new and remain in a continual state of newness. The teaching is that all the former things under the Levitical system—the Mosaic economy—concerning the ceremonial aspect of the law have come to an end. The former things that passed away were the ancient ways of viewing the Messiah, the Christ. Although the new heavens and the new earth are future to us, we do have new ways of viewing Jesus Christ. They are the permanent ways set forth in the New Testament. All things have become new and are now in a permanent state of newness. This is the teaching of the Hebrew Epistle concerning the “better things.” Jesus Christ is the substance of

which all those former things were but shadows. This is what brought about newness of life which one experiences in Jesus Christ.

A great change had taken place in God's economy. The things of the new covenant are superior to the former things (Heb. 8). Hence, this ties in with no longer knowing Christ after the flesh. Paul did not teach that old desires and propensities are completely taken away in the new birth. That teaching is a misrepresentation of this text. Christ alone could say the ruler of this age is coming, and he has nothing in me. Paul was saved from the guilt, penalty, and reigning power of sin, but he was not saved from evil thoughts, wicked desires, and worldly lusts. Nevertheless, Paul was an overcomer by the grace of God within him.

Reconciliation is subjectively understood. There can be no change without a foundation. The foundation is (1) imputed righteousness and (2) imparted righteousness. It takes more than imputed righteousness for this change from hatred for God to reverence for Him. The imputed righteousness before God on the basis of the finished work of Jesus Christ guarantees imparted righteousness. Righteousness is imparted when the Holy Spirit imparts the finished work of Jesus Christ to the heart of the elect in regeneration. But it was imputed before it was imparted. Imputed righteousness is objective, and imparted righteousness is subjective.

The imputation of the sins of the elect to Christ and the imputation of His righteousness to us differ. The imputation of Christ's righteousness to us took place when Jesus Christ paid for our sins. This guarantees the impartation of the righteousness of Christ to the elect when the Holy Spirit regenerates them. Hence, there is a very important distinction between imputation and the impartation of Christ's righteousness to God's chosen ones.

The following truths concerning imputation are important: (1) The imputation of Adam's sin to all men rests upon a different kind of union from that upon which the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the elect rests. All men were in Adam when he disobeyed, but all men were not in Jesus Christ when He obeyed (Rom. 5:15-19). All men fell in Adam; some men are redeemed by Christ. Union with Adam is natural—physical. Union in Christ is supernatural—spiritual. Union in Adam is universal; union in Christ is particular. (2) The imputation of Adam's sin to all men and the imputation of the sins of the elect to Christ cannot be the same. We were involved in Adam's sin, but Christ was not involved in our sins. Depravity did not touch Jesus Christ. (3) The imputation of Adam's sin to us and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the elect cannot be the same. Original sin is imputed to us because of our representative solidarity with Adam (Rom. 5:12), and it was imparted to us when we came into existence. Hence, the imputation and the impartation of Adam's sin differ. Its imputation is the legal aspect, but its impartation is the actual aspect.

Christ's righteousness was imputed to all the elect when Jesus Christ died. It is imparted to each of them at the time God regenerates him. Since God's judgement has come upon man because of what he is, what he has done, and what he has not done, Jesus Christ represented the elect in each of these. If Jesus Christ could but did not sin, He could not have represented the elect in what we are, what we have done, and what we have not done. The only way Jesus Christ could become a representative of the sins of God's chosen was in knowing no sin.

God justifies the elect on the basis of imputed righteousness. That righteousness is before Divine justice. God's justification of the elect on the basis of imputed righteousness is objective righteousness. It is the perfect work of Jesus Christ

outside the believer. Faith justifies the elect on the basis of imparted righteousness which occurred in his regeneration before he was conscious of it. Hence, he understands, receives, and keeps the objective faith which flowed through his subjective faith. He has assurance and confidence in the finished work of Christ. Since Divine justice is satisfied, he is satisfied.

Imputation is the judicial ground for either the infliction of penalty or the bestowal of grace. The imputation of the believer's sin to Jesus Christ is judicial; whereas, the imputation of original sin to men was real. Jesus Christ never became involved with man's depraved nature. He did no sin (I Pet. 2:22). In Him is no sin (I John 3:5). He knew no sin (II Cor. 5:21). The sins of the elect were not antecedently Christ's. The sins of the elect became Christ's imputatively. The virtues of Jesus Christ were absolute. They were not comparatives. His holiness did not arise from the absence of temptation. It is positive virtue. Jesus Christ was not guilty. Guilt is personal and incapable of transference to Jesus Christ. No one who is not personally guilty is a transgressor. If Christ had been guilty in any sense, He deserved to die; and His death could have no merit. He was treated as though He were guilty because He willed to stand in the place of the guilty and pay their penalty.

The imputation of Christ's righteousness does not make the believer as holy as Christ. The precise thing meant is, that which is imputed becomes the judicial basis for the bestowal of God's grace. The elect were actually justified in the mind of God when Jesus Christ died for them. Imputed justification becomes the foundation for imparted righteousness in sanctification.

The word judicial means the legal way to decide or determine a matter. Hence, on the basis of Christ's obedience, the

elect have earned for them a righteousness qualifying them for heaven. Christ's obedience alone provided righteousness for the elect.

Without righteously settling the question of the sins of the elect on the cross, Jesus Christ could not righteously plead their cause on the throne. Pleading for forgiveness without first suffering for the offense would be asking God the Father to pass by sin without judging it. That is impossible. Sin must be judged in either the individual or the Person of Jesus Christ. Sin that has been judged in Jesus Christ will not be judged in His children. There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ (Rom. 8:1).

The peace that was made by the blood of the cross is accomplished: "And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled [aorist active indicative of *apokatallasso*]" (Col. 1:20, 21). Reconciliation, which is effective through the blood of Christ's cross, is not limited to men. It extends to the whole order of creation which has been affected by sin. Paul did not say all men but all "things." Not only sinful men but also the created order that was made subject to vanity because of sin will share in the fruit of Christ's redemptive work (Rom. 8:20, 21).

The statement "things in earth, or things in heaven" of Colossians 1:20 should be contrasted with "things under the earth" of Philippians 2:10. "Things under the earth" was omitted from the Colossian reference. Paul was emphasizing the sovereignty of Jesus Christ in the Philippian reference. The time will come when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess the Lordship of Christ, including those in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. People who have died

in their sins were the persons referred to in the Philippian reference. The apostle was discussing reconciliation instead of Christ's sovereignty in the Colossian reference. The statement "things under the earth" was omitted because individuals who have died in their sins will never be reconciled to God.

4

THE NECESSITY OF SAVING FAITH

The necessity of saving faith is revealed in that human character is basically corrupt (Rom. 3:9-12), depraved man is inwardly corrupt (vv. 13, 14), and depraved man is outwardly corrupt (vv. 15-18). Verses of Scripture were drawn from the Mosaic legislation and the prophets to bring fourteen horrible indictments against every person who comes into the world. Paul presented his argument from the viewpoint of a court scene: (1) the accused—all are under sin, (2) the Judge—God, (3) the jury—the deeds of the law, (4) the charge—fourteen violations, (5) the prosecuting attorney—the law, (6) the defense—rested by saying every mouth is stopped, and (7) the verdict—guilty before God.

Human depravity is universal. It includes Jews and Gentiles. Social, cultural, educational, and financial advantages are only veneers which are removed, and all men stand alike before God: “For all have sinned, and come [present passive indicative of *hustereo*, which means coming] short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). Depraved man continually comes short of God’s glory. The verdict that all are under sin is

pronounced in verse 9. The character of the verdict is that it is “sin.” The dominion of the verdict is that all are “under” sin. The extent of the verdict is that “all” are under sin.

The meaning of depravity is explained in Romans 3:10-12. (1) Every person is naturally unrighteous (v. 10). Everything that proceeds from an unrighteous person corrupts. (2) Every person is naturally without spiritual understanding (v. 11). The apostle did not indicate that an individual cannot generally understand the various sciences of the world. He was not talking about imbecility. However, man is incapable of understanding the five basic sciences of the Bible—theology, anthropology, soteriology, ecclesiology, and eschatology. He lacks spiritual understanding (I Cor. 2:14). (3) No man naturally seeks God (v. 11). Mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, have gone out of the way (Rom. 3:12; Is. 53:6; Rom. 1:19-21). (4) Natural man is unprofitable (v. 12). An example of man’s unprofitableness was portrayed in Onesimus, Philemon’s servant (Philem. 11). A natural man does not and cannot do good (v. 12). Improper motives may prompt him to social benevolence, but he does nothing for God’s glory.

The depraved individual is inwardly corrupt (Rom. 3:13, 14). His throat is likened to a grave containing the unsealed remains of the dead. His tongue may charm, but it is deceitful. Beneath his tongue and lips is a sac of poison likened to a poisonous serpent. The unsaved person’s mouth is full of cursing and bitterness (v. 14). Its fullness signifies that there is room for nothing else. Poison is manifested in the areas of vocabulary, literature, politics, and religion. The influence of an unsaved person continues to spread, like waves caused by a thrown rock in a placid lake, until it reaches the shore of eternity.

The depraved person is outwardly corrupt (Rom. 3:15-18). His feet are swift to shed blood. Murders have continued since

Cain murdered Abel, and they will continue until Jesus Christ comes as King and demonstrates His victory.

Destruction and misery are in the ways of the unsaved (v. 16). Destruction is objective, and misery is subjective. Destruction is the desire that is manifested by misery that exists within the hearts of the unsaved. Their ways are made known by their evil actions. The plural word “ways” should be contrasted with Jesus Christ who is “the way” (John 14:6). The ways of the unredeemed are opposite from peace which is found only in the way. They know no peace, and they have no reverential fear of God (Is. 48:22).

The word “law” of Romans 3:19 must be understood not in the restricted sense of the Mosaic legislation. It involves the whole Old Testament Scriptures (v. 21). The Old Testament was regarded by the apostles to have two major divisions—the law and the prophets. The function of the law is to impart the knowledge of sin, not to justify (Rom. 3:20). In this verse, the word “law” is used in the sense of the Mosaic legislation. Offense in one point renders an individual guilty of offending in the whole moral law. The word is used a third way in verse 27. There, it is used in the sense of the principle of faith.

Those under the law include both Jews and Gentiles. The preposition “under” (*en*, locative of sphere, which means in the sphere of) of Romans 3:19 means in the sphere of the law, whereas in Romans 6:14, “under” (*hupo*, accusative of measure, which means under) is used as the antithesis of under grace. The Gentiles were not outside the sphere of judgment which was pronounced in the Old Testament. The Old and New Testaments proclaim that all mankind stand before God as sinners. Although the Gentiles were not included in the Mosaic legislation, by nature they observed some of the things contained in the law (Rom. 2:14). “All the world”

includes both Jews and Gentiles; however, the emphasis is not that the Gentiles are included but that the Jews are nonexempt from the condemnation discussed.

The realm in which the guilty are condemned is “before God” (Rom. 3:19). A person may be condemned before men and not condemned before God. One who is in Jesus Christ is not condemned before God.

No one is unrelated to the law, which pronounces all men condemned. The justified person is given standing before the law. The penalty has been paid for him, and the law does not demand further payment. God’s law cannot be disconnected from Himself. God and His law are righteous. God can justify an unjust sinner only on the basis of the satisfaction of His Divine law. He cannot act unjustly or without regard for the principles of law. The law demands death as the penalty for sin, and Jesus Christ paid that penalty when He died in the stead of the elect sinner.

God is the lawgiver. If one could imagine that all the laws found in statute books were incarnate in one judge, he could get a small glimpse of the laws of God incarnate in God. Unlike man-made laws, God’s law is holy, just, and good (Rom. 7:12). A human judge must not condemn the just and justify the wicked (Deut. 25:1; I Kings 8:52; Ex. 23:7). He would act unjustly to pronounce a convicted criminal not guilty. He has no authority to tell the criminal that he forgives him and that the offender should go and refrain from committing the same crime. He would be acting arbitrarily, contrary to the laws of the land. God does not act in contradiction to, but in harmony with His, law.

Divine law differs from human law; consequently, Christians should beware of the plausible and distinguish things that differ. Human analogies do not always illustrate Biblical

principles. They often lead astray. For example, a man may be forgiven of his crime by the person against whom the crime was committed. However, the criminal is not cleared in the eyes of the law. On the other hand, a criminal may be convicted of his crime and imprisoned. He pays his debt to society, but that does not indicate that he has been forgiven by the person against whom the crime was committed. The sinner differs in that he is guilty, and Jesus Christ died in his place. Sin is antagonistic against the very nature of God. Individuals must answer to Him for every sin committed.

Sinners are lawbreakers. Sin must be punished because it is sin, and justice must punish sin because it is justice. Since sin is on the sinner, justice must punish both sin and the sinner. However, if sin is imputed to Jesus Christ, justice must strike through sin and the Person bearing it. Once justice strikes, it exhausts itself and can never strike again. The Lord Jesus Christ is the infinite sacrifice for the persons and sin of God's elect. Punishment for God's chosen ones exhausted itself on Christ; therefore, the elect are set free. The righteous character of God is declared in God's satisfaction in His Son. Therefore, the holy God can declare an unjust person just and remain just in the declaration.

Faith does not make the law void (Rom. 3:30, 31). A finished painting does not destroy the artist's vision but verifies it, and a completed building does not disannul its plans but substantiates them. The Lord Jesus Christ did not destroy the Lamb. He was the Lamb. The law was established by the execution of its penalty, not by relieving the lawbreaker. The penalty must be paid by either Jesus Christ or the lawbreaker himself.

The satisfaction of God's Divine nature was necessary that He might look favorably upon sinful mankind. That which satisfies God involves His holy character. His holiness pro-

hibits His looking in mercy on the ungodly. His holy law must be satisfied before His mercy and love can operate to declare the ungodly just before that law. The Lord Jesus Christ died to satisfy Divine justice. Satisfaction is not a Biblical word used with reference to Christ's death, but the truth intended by that word is everywhere ascribed to the death of Jesus Christ. Satisfaction is a word borrowed from the law, and it refers to full compensation of the creditor from the debtor. The debtor is man, and the debt is sin. Death is required to make satisfaction for that debt. The obligation by which the debtor is bound is the holy law of God. God, the Creditor, requires satisfaction from sinful man, because He is the offended Person. The ransom paid by Jesus Christ has come between the holy God and unholy man (Rom. 3:25). Divine satisfaction must precede personal peace with God. The debtor's peace is the natural consequence of knowing the Creditor is satisfied. The only way to have peace below is to know that the sin question has been settled above.

Christ's redemptive work balanced the books of God, restored moral equilibrium, and paid back to God all that of which sin robbed Him. Christ's deity gave Him the capacity to minister to the Divine nature, and His humanity enabled Him to offer Himself as the Substitute for His chosen ones. United Divine and human natures constituted the Divine Person—the God-Man. Both natures are revealed in His "...being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (I Pet. 3:18). He was put to death in the flesh because God absolutely considered cannot die. Jesus Christ alone could say, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again..." (John 10:17, 18).

5

THE SEAT OF SAVING FAITH

The seat of saving faith is the heart of the regenerated person. Justification of the elect in the presence of God is the foundation for justification by faith. Faith is not substituted for or accepted in the place of righteousness before God. Faith and righteousness must be distinguished. Faith is the act of the person who has been made righteous in the righteousness of Christ. It is the fruit of imparted righteousness. Righteousness is what Christ purchased for the elect (Rom. 5:17-19). Identifying faith with righteousness makes many passages of Scripture unintelligible. Righteousness is connected with faith, but to identify it as faith destroys the various meanings of some Greek prepositions used in connection with faith: “by faith” (*ek pisteos*) (Rom. 1:17), “through faith” (*ek pisteos*) (Rom. 3:30), “by faith” (*dia pisteos*) (Phil. 3:9), and “by faith” (*dia pisteos*) (Gal. 2:16). On the other hand, faith is through the righteousness of God. (1) Faith is brought about by the impartation of righteousness. (2) Faith is the means of embracing and understanding. (3) Faith and its fruits are imperfect, but the righteousness of God is perfect. A person is declared righteous before God not on the basis of his im-

perfect faith but on the foundation of the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ. (4) Faith, while directed to the righteousness of Christ, is not the righteousness of Christ. (5) Faith is a righteous act, but it is not a perfect act. One can never be declared righteous before God by an imperfect act.

Paul spoke of the faith of God's elect (Titus 1:1), but he also said that all men have not faith (II Thess. 3:2). Those who have the faith of God's elect are those who were ordained to eternal life (Acts 13:48). Those who were thus ordained to eternal life are shut up to the faith that shall be revealed (Gal. 3:23). God who has disclosed Himself objectively in history in His Son and in His written word will enlighten the elect subjectively in order that we may apprehend His self-disclosure experientially. Everyone who has been given faith in regeneration is shut up to the faith that is revealed, Jesus Christ Himself. Much of that which is called faith is nothing more than an advantageous quality of the soul without any respect to the reality or unreality of its professed object.

Having been declared righteous by the sovereign God, justifying righteousness is revealed through faith. This is the fruit of regeneration, and the results are now unfolded. The justifying act of God is followed in time by an appropriating act of faith on the part of the one who has been justified before Divine justice. Justifying faith before the human consciousness is not passive but active. The individual participates in the act. It is manifested first by coming to Christ. Every person the Father gave to the Son will come to Him, and not one will be lost (John 6:37). It is believing on Christ (Acts 16:31). It is committing oneself to Christ.

Faith and justification differ in nature. Righteousness is the ground of acceptance before God, and faith is simply the instrument of embracing and resting in the righteousness of God. Since justification is a sentence that passed in the mind

of God from eternity and passed on Jesus Christ in the covenant, faith is not first. It is not the efficient cause because God and not faith justifies. The moving cause is the free grace of God. The substance of justification is Jesus Christ. The relation of faith to justifying righteousness in no way indicates that faith itself is that righteousness. Faith is the experience of the individual appropriating what the Father has declared. The Father's declaration, not the believer's faith, gives the believer assurance.

Regeneration is inseparable from its effects, one of which is faith. Without regeneration none can savingly believe in Jesus Christ. Moreover, the regenerated cannot do other than believe in Jesus Christ because the objective message flows through the subjective faith that was given him in regeneration, and he experiences conversion. Regeneration is the act of God. Subjective faith is the act of the regenerated person in the power of the Holy Spirit. The good ground hearer in the parable of the sower illustrates subjective faith. He heard the word, understood (Matt. 13:23), received (Mark 4:20), and kept it (Luke 8:15). That is the Biblical definition of subjective faith, the principle of faith, which God gives in regeneration.

One cannot believe he is justified until he has been justified. He cannot reason himself into justification. That is the reason objective faith must flow through subjective faith. The testimony of objective truth to the finished work of Jesus Christ gives basis to one's confidence and assurance.

Faith Out Of The Ability To Hear

God-given faith does not come through hearing God's word. Faith is the fruit of regeneration. The general consensus of opinion about the teaching of Romans 10:17 is that faith comes by hearing the word of God. The following arguments

from John 3:18 have been given to substantiate that opinion: (1) This verse says that without faith one is condemned. (2) How can one be spiritually alive and condemned at the same time? (3) By what means does one become a son of God? (Gal. 3:26). (4) Does not faith in conjunction with the Holy Spirit bring a sinner from darkness to light? (5) Is not a sinner required to hear the gospel, be quickened unto life by the Holy Spirit, repent, and believe the gospel of Christ in order for him to be a living regenerated son of God? (6) Is not anyone less than this a mutated being who is spiritually alive but who is yet condemned and not a son of God? (7) What shall the “time lapse” people do with Ephesians 1:13? Note how one event flows Biblically into the other without lapse or hesitation. They trusted after they heard the gospel. Upon hearing the gospel, they believed. After they believed, they were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

In contrast to these seven arguments, a person must first be quickened by God before he has faith. The only way Romans 10:17 can be understood is to look at it in the light of its context. Chapters 9-11 concern Israel. Paul dealt with the absolute sovereignty of God in salvation (9:1-29). He then discussed righteousness out of Christ versus righteousness out of the law (9:30-10:8). Next, he declared that imparted righteousness is revealed in conversion (10:9-21).

In his discussion of righteousness out of Christ in contrast to righteousness out of the law, Paul showed that through self-effort Israel had not attained righteousness out of the law. They sought righteousness by works rather than out of the faithful One. Paul quoted Isaiah 28:16 to show the reason for some believing and others not believing. “Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.” The Lord Jesus is the massive living Rock. He became a stone of stumbling over

whom the self-righteous Pharisees stumbled. They had a zeal for God, but their zeal was not according to knowledge. They went about to establish their own righteousness out of the law; and they would not be submissive to the righteousness out of the faithful One, Jesus Christ, who is the goal of righteousness to all believing.

The Jews, like all others, were without excuse. God's not choosing an individual does not leave that person without excuse. Every person is a responsible being. God is not the author of one's depravity. Man is the author of his own depravity. Many, like the Jews, are guilty of seeking righteousness out of the law. Institutions are filled with self-righteous people who are seeking spirituality on a human level. They profess to be Christians, but they deny that Jesus Christ is impeccable and say that He could be tempted. The religious world talks about the baby Jesus. They deal with everything on a human level; hence, their "salvation" is humanistic. Christ did not lay aside His attributes when He assumed a human nature. He went as far as He could to meet you and me to become our Mediator, but He lifts us out of the humanistic concept. Those who worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

Paul could identify with the religious Jews because he had been one among them. Therefore, he expressed the desire of his heart and his prayer on behalf of them for their salvation. He was not discussing regeneration. He desired to have a part in the salvation of the remnant of the present time (Rom. 11:5). Thus, he was not praying contrary to the will of God. God will not answer a prayer unless it is according to His will (I John 5:14). God had promised that the nation of Israel would be saved, but that was beyond Paul's time (Rom. 11:25, 26). That does not mean all the Jews. Many of them are dead, and many of them are dying. But God promised to save a certain number, and He discussed that number in Revelation

7. It can be said that Paul's desire and prayer was for the elect Jews.

God does not promise to save anyone because someone prays for him. A man once said he had been praying for an individual for a long period of time and finally the Lord regenerated that person in answer to his prayer. An instructed Christian told him that his faith should be strengthened from that experience so that he would pray for the whole world. Moreover, he would be selfish to limit his prayer to one person. The instructed Christian was showing him that God regenerates no one because we pray for him. Nevertheless, we do pray that if it is God's will that He will grant that we might have a part in the salvation of His elect by presenting the gospel to them when the Holy Spirit has quickened them. That is praying in the will of God. God's sovereignty is no barrier to prayer. It does not limit our concern. Paul had concern for those whom God had promised to save.

The religious Jews were forsaking the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah. They were so enamored with their own doings and were so zealous for their humanistic ideas that they left the righteousness of God and were going about establishing their own form of righteousness. They would not subject themselves to the righteousness that is out of the faithfulness of Jesus Christ who has become the goal of righteousness to all believing ones.

The Jews had a zeal for God, but it was not according to knowledge. They were ignorant of the righteousness of God—Jesus Christ. They crucified Jesus Christ because of their ignorance of His Person and Work. Their ignorance led them to try to establish their own righteousness, and they would not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. Religious institutions are filled with the same kind of people. Jesus Christ has been made unto the elect the righteousness

of God. Christ is the goal of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. He is the end of the ceremonial law. All the shadows pointed to the Substance—Jesus Christ. He is also the end of the judicial aspect of the law. He suffered the penalty of the law. Therefore, the Christian has Jesus Christ who was made unto him righteousness. Christ is the Object of his God-given faith.

Righteousness out of the law speaks terror. Offense in one point makes one guilty of breaking the whole law (James 2:10). Every time one looks at the law, he sees that he has come short of keeping it. Jesus Christ alone has kept it to the letter. No one can keep it because his flesh is weak (Rom. 8:2, 3). Righteousness out of the law shows that the offender will be judged: “For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them” (Gal. 3:10).

Paul was amplifying the latter part of Romans 9 when he said the man practicing the righteousness out of the law will live in its sphere (Rom. 10:5). That man is a legalist. Righteousness out of the law is in contrast to righteousness out of faith (v. 6). Righteousness out of the law and righteousness out of the finished work of Christ are opposite, but there is no difference between righteousness out of the law and righteousness out of man’s faith, or righteousness out of baptism. One is justified before God by the righteousness of Jesus Christ which has been imputed to his account. This is not faith righteousness but righteousness out of the faithfulness of Jesus Christ. Since Christ is the Object of faith, the regenerating Spirit directs the quickened person to Jesus Christ. Christ vicariously fulfilled all the requirements of the law for the elect by both precept and penalty. In contrast with the righteousness out of the law that brings terror, the righteousness out of the faithfulness of Christ gives peace and forbids us to fear damnation.

Paul declared that imparted righteousness is revealed in conversion (Rom. 10:9-21). Conversion enables the regenerated person to confess with his mouth the Lord Jesus, believe in his heart that God has raised Him from the dead, and be saved. Since conversion and not regeneration is under discussion here, subjunctive mood verbs are used in verse 9 for confessing the Lord Jesus with the mouth and believing in the heart that God has raised Him from the dead. A third class condition particle (*ean*) is used with the subjunctive mood verbs “confess” (aorist active subjunctive of *omologeō*, which means may confess) and “believe” (aorist active subjunctive of *pisteuō*, which means may believe) to denote that man has a part in his conversion, but not in his regeneration.

Man’s confessing and believing is made possible because righteousness has already been imputed to him and imparted in him: “For with the heart [*kardia*] man believeth unto [*eis*, the ablative of cause, which means because of] righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto [*eis*, ablative of cause, which means because of] salvation” (v. 10). With the heart one believes because of righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses because of his salvation. The same thing is true with reference to baptism. One is baptized because he has repented (Acts 2:38). John the Baptist baptized people because they had repented (Matt 3:11).

When the apostle spoke of believing with the heart, he was not talking about the organ that pumps blood but about the seat of the inner man, the seat of the Holy Spirit. The seat of the inner man is in contrast with what the man says. There is no value in confessing someone unknown to oneself. Confession and faith are both Christian acts. A sinner cannot believe in Jesus Christ, and he cannot produce a Christian life. Hence, the subject of faith righteousness is not here. If faith itself is the righteousness, how could it be called the righteousness of God? Is a person justified before God by his faith? Christ is

made unto us righteousness (I Cor. 1:30). God has made Christ “to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (II Cor. 5:21).

Paul was talking about heart faith and not mental assent when he spoke of believing with the heart. The regenerated heart, in contrast to the mouth, is the seat of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, heart faith is more than mental assent. It includes heart and mouth, faith and confession, and righteousness and salvation. Most church members assume that winning the lost and winning souls are synonymous terms. When they talk about winning the lost, they refer to bringing them to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. No one can lead a lost person from darkness to light. But he who wins souls is wise. A soul is won by giving an already regenerated person the truth by which he can be converted by leading him out of error into truth.

Salvation from man’s perspective is that he confesses because he is saved. He is saved because he has called on the Lord. He calls on the Lord because he has believed. He believes because he has heard. He has heard because a preacher preached the gospel to him. The preacher preached because he was sent by God. From God’s perspective, the reverse is true. God sends the preacher; the preacher preaches; the person who has been given a hearing ear hears; having heard, he believes; having believed, he calls on the Lord; calling on the Lord, he is saved; and he confesses he is saved.

When studied as a unit, Romans 10:12-17 will show that hearing the word results from one having been given the ability to hear. Christ must be revealed through the gospel before one can experience faith. The ability to hear produces faith.

Paul drew from Isaiah’s experience in Isaiah 53:1 to show

that the reason all have not obeyed the gospel is because they did not believe his preaching (Rom. 10:16). They did not have ears capable of hearing because the Holy Spirit had not circumcised—quicken—their ears to hear. Hearing a message does not produce faith. It takes the regenerating Spirit of God to quicken a person. It takes life to produce the ability to hear. Faith does not produce life, but life produces faith.

The Greek noun *akoe* can mean either the ability to hear or the message heard. Context alone will determine its meaning. In verse 16, the word “report” is *akoe* which can be translated “preaching”—“who believed our preaching?” In verse 17, *akoe* is used two times: (1) Consequently, faith is by means of (*ek*, ablative of means) the ability to hear (*akoes*, ablative feminine singular of *akoe*), and (2) the message heard (*akoe*, nominative feminine singular) is by means of (*dia*, ablative of means) a declaration (*hrematos*, ablative neuter singular of *hrema*, a word, saying, declaration, or speech) concerning Christ. When one takes the time to study the noun *akoe* in Mark 7:35, John 12:38, Acts 17:20, I Corinthians 12:17, Galatians 3:2 and 5, Hebrews 5:11, and II Peter 2:8, he will have no difficulty understanding Romans 10:17.

Where does faith come from? Does it come from hearing the message preached, or does it come from the ability to hear? Faith comes from the ability to hear. It has no reference to the message heard. Consequently, faith comes from the ability to hear, and this ability to hear comes from regeneration. If one does not have the ability to hear, how can he have faith? The message heard is by means of a declaration concerning Christ who is the righteousness of God. Faith is called into exercise because of the ability to hear. The ability to believe is because of the ability to hear. Therefore, faith is called into exercise by means of the ability to hear, and the message heard is by means of a message concerning Christ. Preaching alone will not produce faith.

Faith does not point to itself. Faith which is the gift of God is the fruit of regeneration. Faith which comes from the ability to hear points us to Jesus Christ who is our Righteousness. That which points us to righteousness cannot be the righteousness. Hence, faith is the fruit of imparted righteousness. Righteousness does not consist of either confession or faith. The righteousness which Paul set in contrast to the righteousness out of the law that brought terror to him brought conviction and a conversion experience to him. The righteousness of Christ gives peace. Righteousness is Christ's by performance. He lived a righteous life and died on the cross paying the penalty that righteousness demands. Righteousness is the Father's by donation. It is ours through impartation by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit imparted that righteousness to us because it had already been legally imputed to our account before God.

Hearing is necessary to believing. But this hearing is more than having the organ for hearing. There are ears to hear, but they do not hear. There are eyes to see, but they do not see. God is the Author of both the seeing eye and the hearing ear. Although Israel had heard the message, they did not understand (v. 19). Israel's disobedience was punished by God's turning to the Gentiles. Isaiah said God was found by the ones who sought Him not. No one seeks God until he has been quickened. No one tries to find the Lord until the Lord first finds him.

The Message Of Reconciliation

The message of reconciliation has been entrusted to God's people. The necessity of its proclamation in order that the elected regenerated person might know he has been justified was emphasized in Paul's message to the Corinthian Christians (II Cor. 5:11-17).

Continually having the fear of the Lord, Paul said, “We persuade [present active indicative of *peitho*, which means persuade, appeal to, or convince] men.” He did not coerce or compel by force. Persuasion and coercion differ. Coercion is without any regard for a person’s desire. Persuasion is by teaching and appealing from the Scriptures, giving the exhortations God has given us to give. No one should be intimidated to do something for which he has no desire.

Paul was continuing to have problems with the Corinthians’ acceptance of him. Therefore, he reminded them that he was manifest to God, and he trusted that he was also manifested to their consciences. The apostle had already commended himself to them; hence, he would not do so again (v. 12). But he was giving them an opportunity to boast on his behalf in order that they might have a reply with reference to the ones boasting in appearance and not in practice. He was talking about the legalizers who had come in and caused disturbance in the Corinthian church. Paul was neither boasting nor seeking praise from the Corinthians. No man using this language is seeking self-praise. One seeking self-praise tells people what they want to hear.

Paul’s personal defense included distinction between appearance and heart. He was not talking about externals but about the heart. The heart reveals what one is within himself. Paul had no confidence in and made no display of externals, such as schools of the prophets, associations with influential people from whom he could get letters of recommendation, etc. He was not concerned about man’s recommendation. He had his letter of recommendation from God—the truth that had been committed to him. His life was his recommendation to the people.

Paul’s enemies were legalizers who boasted in appearance. They boasted that they could get letters of recommendation

from the Sanhedrin. They recognized Christ only as the seed of David (Rom. 1:3, 4), but they neither saw nor laid hold of Christ's resurrection which put Him in a higher relationship than David with the eternal covenant of God's grace. They did not see Him as the One who by the power of the Holy Spirit had been raised out from among the dead. They rejected that, and they even crucified this One whom they acknowledged as the seed of David. They did not know that Jesus Christ had become a minister of the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises to the fathers (Rom. 15:8). Jesus Christ was not only the minister of reconciliation, but He is also the Reconciler.

Paul's godly zeal was being misrepresented by his enemies. Where there is godly fear there is automatically a godly zeal for the things of God. The Lord Jesus manifested zeal for the place of worship when He drove the money changers from the temple (John 2:17; Ps. 69:9). The zeal of God's house consumed Him. He physically chased them out of God's house. Some abuses in the local church today may be reformed by appeal to the people, but sometimes there are abuses that cannot be brought into a right position before God by appeal. Then, drastic means must be used. Other abuses can be changed only by a righteous soul acting by Divine authority. Paul manifested zeal before Festus, and Festus accused him of being out of his mind (Acts 26:24). Paul's enemies in Corinth misrepresented his zeal and accused him of being out of his mind. But he told the Corinthians that whether he was beside himself it was to God and whether he was sober it was for their cause (II Cor. 5:13).

Paul did not act from appearance but from the heart. The love of Christ controlled him (vv. 14, 15). These two verses, which are very controversial, must be studied together. Most people believe that this teaches universal redemption—Christ died for everybody. Paul purposed to show in verses 14 and

15 how the elect are constrained to live for Christ and not for themselves. (1) If the statement “then were all dead” refers to being dead in sin, how can those who are dead in sin live for Christ? What kind of reasoning would say that Christ died for all who were dead in sins? Those who live would live for themselves. (2) Recipients of grace feel the constraining influences of Christ’s dying for them. This constrains them to die to sin and live for Christ.

The message of reconciliation has been committed to God’s people (II Cor. 5:18). Power is not in the message itself. Power is in the message only as it is brought to the heart of an individual by the Holy Spirit. Messengers are entrusted servants of Christ, and we are willing to endure all things for the elect’s sake that the elect might experience subjective reconciliation when a work of grace has been wrought in their hearts (I Thess. 1:3-10). The “all things” of II Corinthians 5:18 includes (1) imparting, (2) outworking, and (3) completing of objective reconciliation. Every Christian has been entrusted with God’s message, and he is a representative on behalf of Jesus Christ. God appeals through us. Therefore, when one gives the truth of God, God is appealing through the truth given.

The command to be reconciled to God is addressed to those who have been objectively reconciled (II Cor. 5:20). A person has no part in objective reconciliation, but he does have a part in understanding subjective reconciliation. Reconciliation comes as an act of understanding. By a person’s act of faith, he apprehends the message and accepts it. But there is a continual reconciling work going on. Every time a Christian sins, his fellowship with God is broken. He has offended God; hence, he must be reconciled. Conclusively, this ministry of reconciliation continues throughout our lives on the earth.

Servants are called for the purpose of effecting experiential

reconciliation in the lives of those who have been regenerated. The command to be reconciled is an aorist passive imperative of the Greek word *katallasso*. There is a difference between the passive voice in reference to one being born of God and the passive voice as it is used of one who has been commanded by another, to whom the ministry of reconciliation has been given, to be reconciled to God. There are three kinds of passive voice. One is called the direct agent, the second is the intermediate agent, and the third is the impersonal agent. The person God regenerates was dead in trespasses and sins. He was passive to spiritual things; therefore, God acted upon him. But the person who begs the regenerate to be reconciled to God is the intermediate agent. He speaks in behalf of Jesus Christ. Therefore, he tells the one who has already been quickened by God to be reconciled. He gives the truth that the regenerated person may know what he is in Jesus Christ. The word of God is the impersonal agent.

There are two focal points in II Corinthians 5:21: (1) the incarnation explains Christ's sinlessness, and (2) the crucifixion was on behalf of all the elect. Jesus Christ paid for all the sins of all the elect of all time. Hence, His death was also retroactive to include the Old Testament saints. God was in Christ doing the legal work at Calvary. The Holy Spirit applies what Jesus Christ accomplished, and He is in the elect doing the practical work.

How wonderful and awesome that God has committed the ministry of reconciliation to those to whom He has imputed and imparted His righteousness. Working together, those who have been made righteous in Christ's righteousness appeal to the regenerate not to receive the grace of God in vain but to be reconciled to God (II Cor. 6:1, 2). The only persons who will hear are those in whom God has done a work of grace.

There was no life in the bones to which Ezekiel preached

(Ezek. 37). Preaching may organize, but it cannot give life. After the bones were organized—brought together and flesh came upon them—they were still minus life, but Ezekiel continued preaching to them. Preaching may reform, but it cannot regenerate. A multitude may come together in a football stadium; a preacher may preach to them; but that is only indicative of organizational effort. Preaching may create excitement, but that is no proof of life. There may be noise and shaking without power (Ezek. 37:7). Large gatherings do not necessarily prove the presence of the Holy Spirit. Multitudes come together, but there is no breath or power in them separate from the Spirit in regeneration. An individual may have theology without salvation, knowledge without service, faith without works, organization without animation, ceremonial worship without devotion, and profession without possession, but there is no Spirit in him.

God commanded Ezekiel to preach to dry, unburied bones. They represented not bodies but dead souls. Free grace must be preached to dead souls. The Person and Work of Jesus Christ must be proclaimed to them. The manner and matter of preaching is given. The manner was by command. Ezekiel preached to dry bones, and God commands preachers to preach repentance and faith to dead souls. The preacher's authority is the truth of God's word (Ezek. 37:4). He exhorts his audience to hear the word of the Lord, even though they cannot hear and understand apart from the Spirit of God. However, the preacher does not know who the Spirit will enable to hear and understand. The preacher must do as he is commanded and leave the results to the Spirit of God (Ezek. 37:9). The spirit alone can quicken hearts, open deaf ears, and give sight to blind eyes.

Ezekiel saw death but preached life. He saw ruin but preached remedy. Although these conditions are prevalent, the preacher preaches life in Jesus Christ (Ezek. 37:11-14,

22-28). Ezekiel addressed the Spirit of God in verse 9. The Holy Spirit, depicted by breath and wind in Ezekiel's vision, will be to national Israel what He is now to the individual Christian. The man of God appeals to the Spirit of God to open hearts, recognizing the Spirit's sovereignty. He does not depend on his oratorical ability or the methods of men to regenerate those he addresses. In connection with Jesus Christ, the Spirit is breath (John 20:22). In regard to man, He is the breath of life. He speaks life to the individual God gave to Christ in the covenant of redemption. The preacher cannot control the Spirit. He is completely dependent on Him. He preaches the word and then looks to the Holy Spirit to apply the proclaimed message. Knowledge of the sovereignty of the Spirit does not prevent the preacher from doing what he is commanded.

Reception Of The Message Of Reconciliation

The person who has been justified by God before Divine justice will be justified by faith before his own consciousness (Rom. 5:1, 2). This justification is not before God. The faith of Romans 5:1 is on the basis of having been justified, but now we are justified before our own consciousness. This is the result of imparted righteousness; whereas, the former is on the basis of imputed righteousness. We could never be justified by faith apart from imparted righteousness. The righteousness wrought out by Jesus Christ on the cross was imparted to the elect person in regeneration, which is the act of the Holy Spirit. Having been made new creatures in Christ Jesus, we are justified by faith before our consciousness on the basis of imparted righteousness.

The use of the word "therefore" (*oun*) in Romans 5:1 shows that Paul was giving the conclusion of his arguments concerning righteousness, imputation, justification, and faith. He

had used Abraham as an example of the life of faith. Therefore, on the basis of what Paul had given on the subject discussed in Romans 4, “...being justified [aorist passive participle of *dikaioo*, which means having been justified] by [*ek*, ablative of means, which means by means of] faith, we have [present active indicative of *echo*] peace with God through [*dia*, ablative of agency] our Lord Jesus Christ: By [*dia*, ablative of agency, which means through] whom also we have [perfect active indicative of *echo*, which means permanently have] access by faith into this grace wherein [in which] we stand [perfect active indicative of *histemi*, which means permanently stand], and rejoice in [*epi*, dative of reference, which means upon the basis of] hope of the glory of God” (Rom. 5:1, 2).

Having been justified we have peace. The basic meaning of the word “justify” (*dikaioo*) is to declare. The aorist tense here denotes a once for all justification. It is a completed act that is looked upon as being finished before the believer’s consciousness. Having been declared righteous by the sovereign God, justifying righteousness is revealed through faith. The justifying act of God is followed by an appropriating act of faith, which is the fruit of regeneration. Faith, which is the gift of God, is the experience of justification that results in a life of faith.

Justifying faith before the human consciousness is not passive. It is active. However, in his justification before God, the sinner is passive. God’s act initiated his action. His justification is manifested by the regenerated person’s faith. He is commanded to believe, but righteousness and justification before God are not commands. Justifying faith is not faith in one’s faith, but it is faith in Christ before our consciousness. The righteousness of God and the justification by God are understood by faith because it comes out of faith which is the gift of God. The one with God-given faith comes directly to

Jesus Christ, abides in Christ, and finds His promise to be true.

There is controversy over the preposition “by” (*ek*), which is used in connection with faith (Rom. 5:1). Some believe it is the ablative of source. They claim that we are justified out of our faith. If it were source, it would be, having been justified out of the source of faith. On the contrary, it is the ablative of means. One is justified by means of the faith God gave him when He regenerated him. Conclusively, faith is not the ground but the instrument used before one’s own consciousness. The Roman Christians were already justified before God on the basis of the imputed righteousness of Christ on behalf of the elect.

A critical study of the word for “we have” (*echo*) of verse 1 will show that it is questioned by many who believe the word is spelled with the Greek character omega rather than omicron. If it were, the verb would be a present active subjunctive. There is a difference between the indicative and the subjunctive moods. The indicative mood is factual, and the subjunctive mood is the first step away from reality. The peace that the justified have is not peace that we may have, but it is peace that we have because of justification having already taken place. We are presently having peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ through whom we also have permanent access by faith into this grace upon which we permanently stand and rejoice in hope.

Through Jesus Christ we have permanent access into this grace upon which we have permanent standing. A companion passage is Ephesians 2:18—“For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” In Christ, we have boldness and access by the faith of Him (Eph. 3:12). The Spirit of Christ—Spirit of regeneration—is the Introducer. Access comes from the introduction. The regenerate person

is introduced. The grace given involves both imputed and imparted righteousness. Standing is our permanent position in Christ.

Wrapped up in the perfect tense—completed action in past time with continuing results—of the verb—“we have” of Romans 5:2, we have present and permanent position and eternal benefits. The past, present, and future are portrayed in Romans 5:1-3. Having been justified is past. We are having access as we are having peace is present. The fruition of hope, which is the glory of God, is future.

The doctrinal truths considered in the first two verses work in our lives (v. 3). Therefore, we glory in tribulation. The Greek word for tribulation is dative plural of *thlipsis*, which means tribulation, trouble, distress, persecution, or hard circumstances. Tribulations produce perseverance, and perseverance produces character. We can boast in tribulation, permanently “knowing” (perfect active participle of *oida*, which signifies permanent knowledge) that tribulation produces perseverance. The word “patience” (from *hupomone*) can be translated perseverance. Genuinely saved people will endure to the end. They will not go out from us because they are of us. Perseverance is not in order to be saved, but it is a manifestation of salvation. The Greek word for “experience” (*dokime*) can also be translated “character” (v. 4). Christian character is developed in the life of every Christian. The absence of it indicates that one has no grace. Christian character produces hope, and this hope is not disappointing (v. 5) because it has Jesus Christ as its foundation.

6

THE FRUIT OF SAVING FAITH

The person who has been justified before God and before his own consciousness lives a life of faith. The things he does, do not justify him before God. His life of faith is the fruit of God's already having declared him just. Justification by works follows the transition from spiritual death to spiritual life.

Life Of Faith Preceded By Quickening

Paul in his instruction to Titus commanded him to remind those to whom he ministered that they had been cleansed in regeneration. Therefore, they should be concerned about good works (Titus 3:1-11). Continually reminding saints of the things about which they are acquainted is an important part of the ministry. Christians need frequent reminders because we are so forgetful and neglectful. Therefore, we must never become intoxicated with fragments of Scripture. Any person who majors on just portions of Scripture without considering the whole is a heretic. Such intoxication causes

blindness to the whole of Scripture. Christians love all the word of God. Those who become intoxicated with fragments will never have a clear understanding of the truths of God. Many who read and study the Scriptures have enthusiasm for certain things; but in their fervor, they lose their balance for lack of grace.

Seven qualities of a good citizen are presented in Titus 3:1-2—(1) Be subject to rulers and authorities. (2) Be obedient. (3) Be ready to every good work. (4) Be peaceable. (5) Do not be brawlers. (6) Be considerate. (7) Show humility. The evil actions of men are displayed in Titus 3:3. This is the factual portrayal of every person born in the world. Every recipient of grace has been dug from this pit and raised from this dunghill (Is. 51:1; I Sam. 2:8).

The same connective, “but,” (*de*) is used in Titus 3:4 and in Ephesians 2:4 to show the contrast between what we were by nature and what we are by God’s grace. Both Epistles show the transition from death to life and the justification by works before men which, follows. Both emphasize the positive and negative sides of the Christian’s walk of practical holiness. A positive attitude based on Biblical principles will cause the child of God to take a negative stand toward that which is contrary to revealed truth.

Quickening by the Spirit of God precedes good works. Having been saved by grace, we are enabled to live the Christian life. “Having been saved by grace” is the correct translation of “...by grace ye are saved [perfect passive participle of *sodzo*]” (Eph. 2:5). The apostle Paul spoke of a particular grace: “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8). In the Greek text, a definite article (*te*) precedes the word “grace” (dative of *charis*, which means grace, kindness, mercy, good will, favor, undeserved favor, etc.). There is no indefinite

article in the Greek; therefore the definite article is included for a purpose. The presence of the Greek article calls attention not to general kindness, mercy, good will, favor, etc., but to a particular grace. Paul was telling the Ephesian saints, you are the ones having been saved through (*dia*, ablative of means) faith (ablative of *pistis*, which means faith, trust) and this (*touto*) not (*ouk*) out of (*ek*, ablative of source) you; it is the gift of God.

The word for “saved” in Ephesians 2:8 is a perfect passive participle of *sodzo*. In any Greek tense other than the aorist, which is point action past time, the writer always mentions details. Hence, the details are included in Ephesians 2:8. The act of God was not only complete but also perfect. This is the reason for the use of the perfect passive participle. Salvation is actual and progressive, and it will be final. The Christian can say, having been saved, I am being saved, and I will be saved. This can also be worded, “Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us” (II Cor. 1:10). We have been delivered from the guilt and penalty of sin. We are presently being delivered from the power of sin by the indwelling grace of God. We shall be delivered from the presence of sin when we are glorified. The child of God is positionally sanctified, and his progressive sanctification will continue until he is glorified. Believers are presently possessors of completed past salvation in the present. The salvation completed in the past has present continuing results. We are presently enjoying it. Glorification will be the consummation of God’s completed salvation in the elect in the future. Both “you are” and “the ones having been saved” must be connected in the translation. The Greek construction gives us what is called a paraphrastic perfect. The Greek word for “you are” (present active indicative of *eimi*) adds a durative force to the present aspect of one’s salvation.

Both “grace” and “faith” are God’s gifts. They are feminine gender in the Greek text. Both “this” and “gift” are neuter gender in the Greek text. The “gift” (*doron*) is the antecedent of the pronoun “this” (*touto*) because both grace and faith constitute God’s gift in salvation which is not out of you. Hence, the gift is not out of you, and the faith is not out of you. God gives both. Salvation—in the sense of being born of God—is not by grace and faith, that is, grace being God’s part and faith being our part.

We believe through grace (Acts 18:27). One does not believe and then get God’s grace. Out of God’s unmerited favor one is enabled to believe. Grace reigns in planning the salvation of the elect in the execution of the plan and in the consummation of the plan. Therefore, it is of God all the way. How can a person without faith exercise that which he does not have? The person who says “I do” to the exhortation to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved may have believed the message that he heard with his human faith. The exhorter may then seek to assure him that everything is all right. But his believing may be only a human faith and not faith which is the gift of God. This is not believing through grace. A decision does not mean one’s decision has saved him.

Since faith is God’s gift to us in our being made alive with Christ, it cannot be said that sinners must exercise faith in order to have faith. The grace of God, which is unmerited favor, cannot stand with man’s faith or anything in man. Therefore, being born of God precedes faith. “Whosoever [everyone] believeth [believing, present active participle of *pisteuo*] that Jesus is the Christ is born [has been born, perfect passive participle of *gennaō*] of God...” (I John 5:1). His having been born of God is completed action in past time with continuing results. Therefore, he is continuing to believe, and he will always believe. He will never do anything but believe. God does not start something which He is unable to bring to

completion (Phil. 1:6). It is of God in its beginning, continuation, and consummation. Everyone believing that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God. He does not believe in order to be born of God.

Salvation before God is not out of works in order that no one may boast (Eph. 2:9). Religionists boast of their accomplishments, but they have nothing of which to boast. However, Christians boast of what the Lord has done, is doing, and will do. We praise the Lord who enables, not the person enabled. Of Him we are a product having been created in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:10). This is an explanation of the two preceding verses. The first part of verse 10 proves that the salvation of verse 8 is neither out of man nor out of his works. Dead sinners are incapable of any spiritual movement. A person dead in trespasses and sins cannot make a move in the direction of God because he lacks the ability. He is living physically but is spiritually dead. Therefore, he must be made alive, thus enabling him to move in the direction of God. Anyone who moves in the direction of God moves by the power of the Holy Spirit of regeneration working in him, and he lives in conformity with good works. Hence, a creative work of the sovereign God is the sinner's only hope.

Language similar to that in Ephesians 2:10 occurs in I Corinthians 1:18-31. God has chosen for Himself the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, and low things of the world and things having been despised, etc., in order that no flesh should glory in His presence. All glorying should be in the Lord. We are God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus for the purpose of (*epi*, dative of reference) good works (Eph. 2:10). Good works follow having been created in Christ Jesus. There can never be a good work until one has become a new creature in Jesus Christ. A person has been made a new creature in order that he may walk in good works. Walking in

the Scriptures is living the Christian life. The person born from above lives in conformity with good works.

What God has done by grace for us is recorded in Titus 3:5-7. The history of salvation is recorded beginning with verse 5. Salvation is like a stream flowing through the ages reaching an elect person here and another there. This stream has its origin in eternity where no mind can penetrate and no human tongue can bring information apart from what God has given. It is sufficient and complete. No person can tell us about it, but we have the message given to us by the Holy Spirit through men of God. Therefore, what we know about this salvation came directly from God through the Holy Spirit and through His apostles and prophets. Since salvation owes everything to grace, God did not save us by deeds in religious duties. Grace is the source of salvation (Eph. 2:5).

Regeneration is the preparation of the elect for salvation. No person by his own intellect can find salvation. This was demonstrated by the Athenians who were worshipping the unknown god (Acts 17). Faith is the reception of this salvation (Acts 16:31). Baptism is the confession of this salvation (I Pet. 3:21). Works are the manifestation of this salvation (James 2:18). Christ's life, the living Christ who lives in the recipients of grace, is the support of this salvation (Rom. 5:10). Trials are the proof of this salvation (I Pet. 1:7). Hope is the prospect and consummation of this salvation (Rom. 8:24).

God has saved us not by the works of religious rites but by the cleansing of regeneration. As a Hebrew of the Hebrews, Paul had performed many religious rites, but none of them made any contribution to his being quickened by the Spirit of God. Regeneration is not the preparation of the sinner for the impartation of life. It is the impartation of life. Being born from above and being saved are two different things. We must

distinguish regeneration from embracing Jesus Christ in a salvation experience. The latter, which is conversion, is the fruit of the former. The former is the act of the sovereign Spirit on the passive sinner. The sinner makes no contribution to his new birth. Conversion—being saved—is the result of the regenerated sinner’s repentance and faith. Regeneration enables the quickened sinner to repent and believe. Therefore, the believing of John 3:14-16 is the result of having been born of the Spirit (John 3:8). Without being born of the Spirit, there would be no believing.

Man must repent and believe in order to be saved, not to be born again. Everyone who repents and believes will be saved. Repentance and faith are acts of men through God’s enablement. The natural man cannot repent and believe in order to be saved. If the natural man could repent and believe, he would not be depraved. Religionists deny depravity when they say an individual by his faith can repent and believe. They deny the spiritual inability of the sinner. This is humanism which is so prevalent among denominations today. We condemn secular humanism, but secular humanism is not as heinous as religious humanism. Thinking one can be influenced to spirituality by another is unscriptural. The natural man cannot repent and believe. Liberals, modernists, arminians, and humanists are all in the same category. They all believe there is a spark in man which only needs to be fanned. However, regeneration is God’s giving man the ability to do spiritually what he was unable to do naturally. Repentance and faith are the evidences, not the cause, of regeneration. Preparatory grace contributes nothing to the origin of life, like the origin of seed that is sown in the ground has no connection with the cultivation of the soil. The immediate agency of the Holy Spirit is the efficient cause of regeneration.

The word “regeneration” (*paliggenesia*) is used only twice

in the New Testament (Titus 3:5; Matt. 19:28). The noun *paliggenesia* means birth or regeneration, and it can mean the new age, as in Matthew 19:28. It is used to designate the new birth of an individual in Titus 3:5. The verb *gennaō*, which is used frequently in the New Testament, means to father or give birth to. There are other uses of *gennaō*, but they do not relate to our subject. This verb means a male or a female bringing forth a child that has been conceived or the father's producing the seed for conception. It is used throughout the genealogy of Jesus Christ to refer to man's ability to propagate (Matt. 1:1-14). Hence, it can refer to both, but that makes no difference in the new birth because the sinner is totally dependent on the action of the sovereign Spirit of God. Physically, we were not begotten by our father's production of the seed for our conception because we decided to be begotten. Our physical birth was not our decision. We were a nonentity. Furthermore, a child is physically totally dependent on the mother to be brought forth. Being brought forth is not dependent on the will of the one brought forth. Likewise, our being born from above is totally dependent on the Holy Spirit not only to produce the seed but also to bring us forth in birth.

The Greek word for "renewal" (*anakainosis*, which means renewal, renovation, or complete change for the better), like the one for regeneration, is used only twice in the New Testament (Titus 3:5; Rom. 12:2). There is an initial act of renewal, but there is also a process of renewing. In Titus 3:5, the subject is the work of God in the new birth preparing us for good works. Hence, this verse records the starting point of renewal. The process of renewing is recorded in Romans 12:2.

Paul was appealing to the Roman brethren through the mercies of God that they would present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God which was their reasonable service (Rom. 12:1). This is performed by the exercise

of the mind. They should not be conformed to this age but be transformed by the renewing of the mind so that they might prove what is the will of God, that which is good and acceptable and perfect: “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Rom. 12:2). The Greek verb for “be ye transformed” is an imperative. Therefore, Christians are commanded to be transformed by the renewing of our minds that we might prove by our own experience that which pleases God.

Jesus Christ was a dying sacrifice which makes our living sacrifice a reality. We are responsible to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, to be continually dying to the things of the world, and living to the glory of God. We have not only the inward power, but we also have motivation in sanctification and glorification. We present our bodies to the indwelling Spirit of God. Our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit resides within us. We have been bought with a price; therefore, we should glorify God in our bodies (I Cor. 3:16, 17; 6:19, 20). We are not to be drunk with wine wherein is excess, but we are to be filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18). As we yield to the already indwelling Spirit we are filled.

The dedication of the body (Rom. 12:2) is an act, but the renewing of the mind is a process. The happiest person in the world is a Christian who is surrendered to the Lord and is continually renewing himself through the study and meditation of Scripture and yielding himself to the Holy Spirit. He is going on in the process of renewing his mind in order that by his actions he proves to himself what is the will of God. Renewing strikes at stagnation. It is also a safeguard against sinning. Observe that the organism of the mind, the memory, the perception, the judgment, etc., is in operation. The mind does not change in regeneration. The Christian's IQ remains the same as before. A great change has occurred, but the Holy

Spirit who inhabits the mind and governs it is God Himself. That is the difference. Hence, the ruling and motivating power functions on a different class of subjects. The things with which the regenerated person was formerly pleased and to which he yielded his thoughts and actions are not gone, but the indwelling Holy Spirit alters the entire inner mechanism to be pleased with the will of God and to think on and do spiritual things. The Holy Spirit has been poured upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior (Titus 3:6).

The climax to what God has done for us in His preparing us for good works is that having been justified by the grace of that One we may become heirs according to the expectation of life eternal (Titus 3:7). Paul told Titus that the word is faithful, and he wanted him to confidently affirm these things he had been discussing in order that the ones having believed God may be concerned to maintain good works (Titus 3:8). These things are profitable to men. What are good works? There are many misconceptions of good works. Some classify social services as good works. Others will resort to conformation to this age in order to reach people for “Jesus.” But good works are restricted to what the Scripture classifies as good works. The apostle commanded the Roman Christians to stop continually conforming to this age. We must not copy the behavior and customs of this age. People who make a profession of faith and continue doing what they previously did prove they do not have the grace of God. We are not entitled to take a broader view than Scripture describes as a good work. Whatever is not of faith is sin (Rom. 14:23). Upon the authority of God’s word, anything that is not in harmony with Scripture, no matter what it appears to be doing, is not a good work. This includes parachurch organizations, schools, dramas, concerts, gymnasiums, movies, Christmas festivities, etc. The church’s only mission is to teach and spread the word of God by the means God has appointed. Only in this manner are works good and profitable to men.

The question may be raised, is there any underlying principle involved here? If good works are not limited to the Scriptures, then we should be consistent and take the broad view and embrace all sorts of human inventions. Human inventions are human inventions, whether they are Roman Catholic, protestant, or nonprotestant. Who is God, and who is man? Persons who create certain principles or add to what God has ordained put themselves on an equal with the sovereign God of the universe. “Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him?” (Is. 40:13). Anyone who adds to God’s word becomes His instructor, and anyone who alters God’s word becomes His counselor. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (II Tim. 3:16, 17).

After Paul had related the positive side of Christian works of which he desired Titus to remind his hearers, he mentioned the negative side (Titus 3:9-11). Christians should shun foolish controversies, genealogies, contentions, strife, and legal strife for they are unprofitable. They should reject after a second warning one who creates faction, having known that such a man has been perverted. One who creates faction is perverted. Knowledge of the truth of God is necessary to detect those who create factions. The church that does not practice positive and negative works is not doing what God commands.

Life Of Faith Begun

The life of faith is exemplified in Abraham. Some verses of Scripture appear to some to say that Abraham’s faith was reckoned as righteousness upon which the patriarch was justified. If faith were the ground of Abraham’s justification, Scripture would necessarily read, “On account of Abraham’s

faith, he was justified.” A consideration of Romans 4:3, 5, 9, and 22, Galatians 3:6, and James 2:23 will prove that Scripture never uses such terms as “on account of faith” or “because of faith.” Contrary to the teaching that Abraham’s faith justified him before God, these Scriptures prove that they refer to a life of faith. The person who has been given the principle of faith does exercise that principle, but the ability to exercise it does not justify him before God. If it did, one would be justified by what he could do rather than what the Lord has done for him.

Abraham’s first act of faith is recorded in Genesis 12:1 and is quoted in Acts 7:2-3 and Hebrews 11:8. “Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee” (Gen. 12:1). This was prior to his name change.

The only way to understand Abraham’s life of faith is to begin by considering his first act of faith. Abraham, being called, obeyed to go forth into a place which he was destined to receive for an inheritance, and he went forth not understanding where he was going (Heb. 11:8). To read and understand Abraham and his life of faith one would begin with the latter part of Genesis 11 and especially with the first verses of chapter 12. Stephen gave a brief history of this in Acts 7:2-8. God appeared to Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia before he dwelt in Charran. He told Abraham to get out of Ur of the Chaldes and away from his kindred and come to a land He would show him.

“By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went” (Heb. 11:8). Abraham’s faith began with God calling him. The word “called” is a present passive participle of *kaleo*, and it means

“being called.” God’s call of Abraham was effectual. There was nothing general about this call. This call does not come sooner or later to every man. If it did, it would not be effectual to every man. The call to Abraham effected obedience in him. The Bible distinguishes between general and particular calls. The general call is to go forth and preach the gospel to all nations; but in the particular call, the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. The effectual call gives God His rightful place as the prime mover in the work of grace. If man were the prime mover, there would be no work of grace.

In Hebrews 11:8, the present passive participle *kaloumenos*, “being called,” speaks of action going on at the same time of the action of the leading verb, and the leading verb is “obeyed.” By faith, Abraham being called obeyed. He did not wait and pray about it. He did not say he would have to think it through; he was not sure yet; or he wanted to be positive. This could continue for months and years. When God has given faith to a person, that individual will respond to God’s call, and he will act immediately on truth. While Abraham was being called he obeyed. Therefore, his obedience was immediate. He heard the call because he had an ear to hear. He knew God was dealing with him. He did not question God. He knew what he should do, and he did it. Saul of Tarsus responded in the same manner after God came into his heart and life. Immediately he was baptized, and immediately he began proclaiming that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Acts 9:18, 20—“immediately” and “straightway” are translations of the same Greek adverb, *eutheos*). The kind of faith exhibited by Abraham and Paul is rare today.

Abraham obeyed at the time he was being called. The Greek word for “obeyed” is aorist active indicative of *hupakouo*. The same word is used in Romans 6:17—“But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was

delivered you.” It is a compound word, the stem of which (*akouo*) means “to hear,” and the prepositional prefix (*hupo*) means “under” or “subordinate.” The word also means “to listen attentively.” Both Abraham and Paul knew they were in subordination to Jesus Christ. One to whom God has given faith hears and recognizes truth when he hears it proclaimed, and he immediately responds. He then continues obeying truth throughout life.

Abraham obeyed to go out into a place which he “should after” (aorist imperfect indicative of *mello*, which means must, be going, be about, intend, or be destined) receive. “Destined” is the better word here. Abraham was destined to receive the place God promised him. He was predestined to do what God had planned for him. By faith Abraham being called obeyed to go forth into a place which he was destined to receive. The patriarch went out not understanding where he was going. The word used here for “knowing” in the Greek can be translated either “understanding” or “knowing.” Abraham acted like a blind man following his faithful and skillful guide. He walked by faith, not by sight. When God commands us to do something, we should obey and not worry about circumstances.

Abraham was destined to receive an inheritance; therefore, Hebrews 11:8-19 refers not only to Abraham’s posterity but also to him individually. The very place where he would sojourn would be the place he was destined to receive as his inheritance. His offering Isaac and receiving him alive was a symbol of Christ’s resurrection, signifying that the fulfillment of the promise would not occur until after the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The greatest test of Abraham’s faith was when he offered up Isaac. Although he did not kill Isaac, he obeyed God. The sacrifice was accomplished in Abraham’s will before God stayed his hand. He had taken into account that God was able to raise his son from the dead. Hence, he

received him back in type. Abraham's temporary sojourn in the land of promise must not be equated with the covenant of promise. The only thing Abraham acquired before Christ's kingdom will be established was a burying place. But Abraham looked for something beyond a burying place. Although Abraham went to Canaan, from the perspective of time, he has not yet come into possession of his inheritance. Nevertheless, he obeyed without reasoning, questioning, arguing, delaying, or objecting.

By faith Abraham lived in the land of promise (v. 9). He was as a foreigner living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the fellow heirs of the same promise. Christians are in the world, but we are not of it. This is not our homeland. We are aliens just walking through. The world does not know us and is unconcerned about our welfare. They love their own.

Abraham looked (imperfect middle indicative of *ekdechomai*, which means wait for, wait, expect, or look forward to) for a city (v. 10). This patriarch was obediently living the life of faith expecting a city having the foundations whose architect and builder is God. Likewise, Christians should be obediently living the life of faith expecting the city that will come down from God out of heaven, the new Jerusalem, when all things will be new.

By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive seed (v. 11). The words "to conceive seed" are debated among men. Many Greek scholars say this must apply to the male, not to the female because the offspring in Scripture is always referred to as the seed of the man, except in the case of Christ. The preposition *eis* is in the accusative case, and the noun *katabolen* (conception) is also in the accusative case. The noun *sperma* is in the genitive case. Does the seed refer to the seed of man or does it refer to the ability of woman to receive the seed and produce posterity? The answer is that Sarah was

given power to receive seed and begin a posterity for Abraham in answer to the promise God had given to Abraham, and her conception was even beyond the time for childbearing. She regarded the One having promised faithful. Hence she, like her husband, was living a life of faith. She had laughed when she was told she would have a child, but she was ninety years of age and past the age of childbearing. Nevertheless, God gave her power to receive seed and start a posterity for her husband. Thus, there came into being many seed from one as good as dead, as the stars of the heavens in multitude and as the sand beside the seashore, innumerable.

All the patriarchs died in faith not having received the promise (v. 13). Conclusively, their being in Canaan was not the conclusion of the promise. There is something else. The patriarchs lived their lives looking for the fulfillment of the promise. They confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. They desired a permanent settlement found only in the eternal city. If they were thinking of Mesopotamia, the country they had left, they had opportunity to return (v. 15). Their minds were not on where they had been but where they were going. They lived a life of faith and obedience with their eyes set on the eternal city of God.

Continually Living The Live Of Faith

Many acts of faith follow the first act of faith. This was true in the life of Abraham. Based on his faith that God would make his seed as the dust of the earth and God's command to arise and walk through the land, Abraham obeyed (Gen. 13:16-18). Based on his faith, he obeyed God and fought and won a battle with Chedorlaomer (Gen. 14:13-24). After his victory over Chedorlaomer, Abraham's assurance was renewed, and his faith was strengthened (Gen. 15:1). In response, Abraham believed God, and it was put to his account because of righteousness. Hence, Abraham exhibited many

acts of faith prior to Genesis 15:6, which was quoted by Paul in Romans 4:3—“For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted [aorist passive indicative of *logidzomai*, which means reckoned, counted, put to the account of, calculate, estimate, consider, etc.] unto him for [*eis*, accusative of cause, which means because of] righteousness.” The fifth verse of Romans 4 makes a statement similar to that of verse 3—“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for [*eis*, accusative of cause, which means because of] righteousness.” The same is true of verse 9—“...faith was reckoned [put to his account] to Abraham for [*eis*, accusative of cause, which means because of] righteousness,” and of verse 22—“...it was imputed to him [put to his account] for [*eis*, accusative of cause, which means because of] righteousness.”

Abraham had already been justified before God and before his own conscience; hence, his justification was manifested by his life of faith. The righteousness of Romans 4:3 and 5 is faith-righteousness: “For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith” (Rom. 4:13). Distinction must be made between faith-righteousness and Christ-righteousness. The elect are not justified on the basis of faith-righteousness but on the basis of the righteousness of Christ imputed to them. There can be no faith-righteousness antecedent to either imputed or imparted righteousness. The latter are the cause of the former. Faith-righteousness makes no contribution to the righteousness of God that justifies. Furthermore, it can do nothing subsequent to imputed and imparted righteousness to assist in the justification of the sinner, because the justified sinner can do nothing to help obtain what he already has. Justification is by the righteousness of One and not the righteousness of two.

God-given faith is not emotion but devotion, which leads

to a devoted life. This faith is not passive. It is active. One not only comes to Christ, but he also continues coming to Christ (I Pet. 2:4). He not only believes, but he also continues believing (I John 5:1). Abraham's faith of committal was followed by many acts of faith.

Neither Paul nor James looked at the verb "believed" (aorist active indicative of *pisteuo*) in Romans 4:3 and James 2:23 with the emphasis on either the beginning or the consummation of the action. Both writers looked at the action of the life as a whole. This is consistent with the texts and the contexts. Paul was quoting from Genesis 15:6, which occurred before Abraham was justified by works in offering up his son Isaac upon the altar (Gen. 22). Abraham offered up his son several years after he exercised faith to believe God would give him a son (Gen.15:5, 6). James used the same statement to speak of Abraham offering up his son. This statement is also quoted in Galatians 3:6. Considering all the passages together, one concludes that they refer to the life of faith. Abraham's whole life, after he had been called by God, was lived in faith. Paul's testimony of Philippians 3:8-9 harmonizes with his example of Abraham: "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." The faith expressed by Paul embraced the objective righteousness of Jesus Christ and lived in constant renewal as he reflected on God's grace. By faith he was able to adapt to whatever circumstances occurred.

The quotation of Genesis 15:6 in Galatians 3:6 also refers to Abraham's life of faith. Jesus Christ had been "set forth" (aorist passive indicative of *prographo*) having been crucified

(perfect passive participle of *stauroo*) among the Galatians (Gal. 3:1). The Galatians had nothing to do with Christ having been set forth crucified. That was the work of God. Therefore, Paul was surprised and indignant at their lack of understanding. He called them “foolish” (from *anoetos*, which means unwise or not understanding). This is the reason the legalizers were causing a disturbance among them. The Galatians were lacking in perception. They had begun in the Spirit. Did they think they could be made perfect by the energy of the flesh? Had they suffered many things for Christ in vain? The apostle was not discussing their salvation but their justification before men by their works. Hence, he used the illustration of Abraham’s life of faith (Gal. 3:6).

The quotation of Genesis 15:6 in James 2:23 was to show that the regenerated person is justified before men by his works. James was teaching that the person who has the gift of faith will manifest it by his works.

Life demonstrates its invisible existence by visible fruit. “What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say [present active subjunctive of *lego*, which means may say] he hath faith and have not works? can [that] faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say [aorist active subjunctive of *lego*, which means may say] unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?” (James 2:14-16). Can fruitless faith save? Since faith without works is “dead” (from *nekros*, which means lifeless, useless, ineffective, fruitless, or dead), it cannot save (James 2:17). There is no such thing as fruitless God-given faith. The life principle of a tree cannot be seen except as the tree grows its foliage and fruit. The physical life principle itself cannot be seen. It is invisible except as it is manifested by movement, hearing, and talking. Eternal life is invisible except as it is made manifest by what

a person does, what he says, and when he bears fruit.

The person justified by works has already been justified before God and justified by his faith before himself. What profit is there if anyone is saying he has faith and has not works? Can such faith save him? Faith justifies the regenerated person. Works also justify him, but they justify him before others and at the same time justify his faith. This signifies that doctrine calls for practice. Doctrine is only the beginning; fruitfulness follows. While Abraham was being called he obeyed, and his life was a life of fruitfulness. James was stressing the truth that where good works are absent faith is lacking. Dead faith is without works, and dead works are without faith.

Anyone can say he has faith, but that kind of faith cannot save him. James illustrated that kind of faith by saying, if a brother or sister who is destitute of the necessities is merely told to go in health, warm yourself, and feed yourself, the person speaking thus does not demonstrate that he has faith. Many take this out of context and teach that the church is to feed and clothe the needy of the world. However, James was not proclaiming a social gospel. He was demonstrating what true faith will do for a brother or sister within the local assembly. The church does have a vital role in taking care of widows and persons in need within the local congregation. Christians can be in distress. Paul spoke of his being deprived of the necessities of life, being hungry, poorly clothed, and maltreated. Nevertheless, he never begged.

There are less than ten references in all of Scripture on the subject of begging, but none of them refer to a child of God. The record of the blind men in John 9 and Mark 10 refers to the time of their unregenerate state. When God saves a begging person, he ceases to be a beggar. The Psalmist verified this truth: "I have been young, and now am old; yet

have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread” (Ps. 37:25). God’s seed never beg no matter how hungry they may become. Persecution was such in the early days of the church that many Christians were in great need; hence, they sold their possessions and placed the resources in a common pool to help those in need. This is what James was talking about. Christians are willing to help those in the local assembly who are not in a position to help themselves.

The idea that the church is commissioned to feed, educate, and reform the world is not Biblical. God’s people have always been referred to as a little flock. Can you imagine a little flock feeding, educating, and reforming the whole world? Instead of being called to do these things, the church has been called to carry the message that God has committed to her trust in order that she might reach with the gospel those God is regenerating that they might be saved. This is the mission of the church.

Faith is dead if it does not perform good works (James 2:17). God-given faith does not remain alone. There may be only a minimal amount of fruit, but the person with God-given faith will produce some fruit. This is proved by the parable of the sower (Matt. 13). Doctrine calls for practice. The person who does not practice the truth to which he has been exposed has not had his heart opened to hear.

God opened Lydia’s heart so that “she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul” (Acts 16:14). Lydia, a dealer of purple cloth or dye in the city of Thyatira, was worshipping God. At this point in time she may be classified with Cornelius who also worshipped God. He was a devout man, feared God, was generous with his money, and prayed to God (Acts 10:1-3). He did all these before Peter was sent to proclaim the message whereby he was converted. He had already been regenerated and prepared for the hearing of the

truth. Lydia was worshipping God because she had already been regenerated. When the Lord opened her heart to hear, she followed the Lord in baptism.

The baptism of Lydia's household, or family, is misrepresented by many to teach household salvation, even including infants. Infants cannot believe, and they cannot willingly submit to baptism. Although some infants may have been present in the instances of Lydia, the Philippian jailer, Cornelius, Crispus, and Stephanas, regeneration by the Spirit of God and faith in conversion precede baptism. The households mentioned in the New Testament are the households of Lydia (Acts 16:15), the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:30-34), Cornelius (Acts 10:24, 44), Crispus (Acts 18:8-10), and Stephanas (I Cor. 1:16). None of these offer any proof of infant baptism, or covenant theology. In each case, faith preceded baptism.

The Philippian jailer was guarding Paul and Silas in the prison when God sent an earthquake to release His servants. The jailer was terrified, knowing that some great power had intervened. He brought the two prisoners outside and asked what was necessary for him to be doing to be saved. They replied, believe in the Lord Jesus and you and your family shall be saved. The Greek word for "house" (*oikos*) can mean house, home, family, household, nation, people, etc. The word "family" fits the context in this instance (Acts 16:31). Paul and Silas spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all the ones dwelling in his house. The jailer and his family were baptized immediately. He brought Paul and Silas into his house and set a table before them and rejoiced greatly having believed in God with his whole household, or family. Where can you get infant baptism out of that? Can babies believe?

In the case of Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, he, with all his house, and many of the Corinthians were hearing,

were active in believing, and were submitting to baptism (Acts 18:8-10). The imperfect tense is used for both believing and submitting to baptism.

The regenerated person possesses the spirit of faith (II Cor. 4:13). The spirit of faith can and will act. Faith does not bestow reality where there is none. The average person believes that by his faith salvation becomes a reality. If this were true, salvation would be out of one's faith, which is contrary to the teaching of the Scripture. Subjective faith, God's gift to the person He has regenerated, is only the channel through which objective faith flows. Subjective faith alone does not save. If it did, everyone who claims to have faith, regardless of what kind of faith it is, would be saved. Saving faith sees Christ who is invisible: "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (I Pet. 1:8). Although He is not seen with the physical eye, the person born from above loves Him because the love of God has been poured out in his heart by the Holy Spirit.

Objective faith concerning the Person and Work of Jesus Christ gives subjective faith assurance, power, and victory: "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost [Spirit]" (I Thess. 1:4-6). Assurance does not come from activity or from listening to music but from the word of God. Everyone believing that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God, loves God, keeps His commandments, and overcomes the world (I John 5:1-4). The victory that overcomes the world is our faith. Such faith is anchored in Jesus Christ who makes hope a reality.

Since works are the fruit of faith, the Christian shows his faith by bearing fruit: “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them” (Matt. 7:20). Where there is no spiritual fruit there is no faith. One is justified by works before men. Abraham was justified before men by his works when he offered his son Isaac on the altar. The purpose of works is to manifest faith. Men see that Abraham’s faith was working with his works and by the works faith was completed (James 2:22-23). Here is the true definition of Romans 4:3, which is questioned by many. Abraham is an example of living faith. The life of faith he was living justified him before men. This is not talking about his first act of faith. Like Paul’s reference to Genesis 15:6 in Romans 4:3, 5, 9, 11, and 22, James referred to the same verse: “And the scripture was fulfilled [aorist passive indicative of *pleroo*, which means fulfilled, completed, or fully realized] which saith Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for [*eis*, accusative of cause, which means because of] righteousness [accusative of *dikaios*, which means a state or quality of one who is righteous]: and he was called the Friend of God” (James 2:23). The Scripture that was fully realized was Genesis 15:6. Abraham believed God; it was put to his account because of righteousness; and righteousness refers to a state or quality of one who is in a right relationship with God. In other words, Abraham was not justified before God by his faith. A study in chronology will reveal that some forty years of history had passed between Abraham’s first act of faith (Gen. 12:1) and the record concerning his life of faith (Gen. 15:6). God’s favor flowed to Abraham through his God-given faith.

To emphasize that justification by works is before men, James said, “Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only” (2:24). He added the illustration of Rahab the prostitute being justified by her life of faith before men when she received the messengers and sent them out another way (v. 25). Rahab the prostitute was no longer a

prostitute. God has some from all walks of life, and He can do what He pleases with His own. God had already done something for her. The spies were sent to spy out Jericho. God had already pronounced judgment upon Jericho. They were spies to Jericho, but they were messengers of God sent with God's message to Rahab. A regenerated person never despises God's truth or His ordained means for the proclamation of truth. Rahab was in accord with the judgment God had passed upon the people of Jericho. The pronouncement of judgment on the people of Jericho reminds us of the judgment God has passed upon the people of the world. One cannot be among the people of God without violating allegiance to what goes on in the country or world in which he lives. The messengers had just been sent; hence Rahab was not well-informed. Therefore, she did things she would not have done later. Every Christian will admit he did things when he was a babe in Christ steeped in spiritual ignorance that he would not think of doing now.

Rahab justified her faith before men: (1) Her faith was of God; hence, she was in a position to receive the messengers who were also spies (Josh. 2). (2) She confessed her faith when she said, "...our hearts did melt..." (Josh. 2:9-11). (3) She lied about the spies, which manifested that her faith was not perfect. Her lying, like David's adultery, is not for imitation or justification of ourselves in sinning. Unlike most Christians, God does not hide the sins of His family. He displays all the imperfections of His family for the world to see. (4) Her faith was the evidence of love. It was a faith that works by love (Gal. 5:6). The messengers came in the front door, but she sent them out a different way. (5) She was rewarded (Josh. 6). Her family was spared. A greater reward was the inclusion of her name in the genealogy of our Lord. Regardless of those through whom the human nature of Christ would come, He was protected from all sin. Her name is also inscribed in the chapter on the excellency of faith (Heb.

11:31). What a reward to have her name inscribed upon the imperishable scroll of Holy Scripture!

James repeated that faith without works is dead for emphasis: “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (James 2:26). Dead faith is without works, and dead works are without faith. In the trials of the life of faith, actions and works are blemished. Abraham and Rahab lied; Moses disobeyed by smiting the rock twice; Peter denied the Lord; etc. God forgives the evil in our good actions and works. We must look at the overall life of faith of every Christian. Every Christian, like Abraham, Rahab, and others, will demonstrate his faith by his works.

In conclusion, the following are some established Biblical facts concerning justification: (1) God’s justification of the elect is on the basis of imputed righteousness (Rom. 8:30, 33). This is before Divine justice. God’s declaration of righteousness on the ground of imputed righteousness must not be confused with imparted righteousness. Justification, like election, is before faith unto faith. Abraham had been justified prior to Paul’s reference to his faith in Romans 4:3. (2) Justification by faith is on the foundation of imparted righteousness (Rom. 5:1). This is before the consciousness of the one justified by God. Therefore, Abraham had been justified before God prior to his justification by faith. (3) Justification by works is on the basis of imparted righteousness (James 2:20-25). This is before men.

God, faith, and works all declare the elect righteous. But the declarations are before different persons and for different reasons. God’s justification before divine justice on the basis of imputed righteousness does not actually make the elect sinners righteous. In fact, we did not even exist. Hence, God could declare Abraham justified when the patriarch was both nonexistent and ungodly in himself. Faith’s justification of

regenerated sinners on the basis of imparted righteousness does not cleanse them from the guilt and condemnation of sin. It is simply a declaration to their own consciousness of sins forgiven by both imputed and imparted righteousness. They were already new creatures in Christ; therefore, their faith did not compliment God's work of quickening them. Work's justification on the ground of imparted righteousness does not give a person standing before God. He already has that standing. This has to do with his condition. Although work's justification does not give one standing before God, it does justify him before men.

7

THE PROTECTING SHIELD OF SAVING FAITH

Doctrine merges into walk, and walk merges into warfare. Doctrine is of no value unless it merges into walking worthy of Him who has called us by His grace. The Epistle to the Ephesians goes from doctrine in the first part of the Epistle to the walk of the believer in the middle part, and concludes with warfare in the closing verses of chapter 6. This Epistle of such spiritual elevation and magnitude descends into a battlefield for its conclusion. Jesus Christ won positional victory for us at Calvary. But recipients of that victory are expected, by the grace and power of God, to take the full armor of God and win conditional victory. The realization that God's power is engaged in defense of His own enables believers to fight the good fight of faith (I Tim. 6:12).

Brethren are exhorted to "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand..." (Eph. 6:11). The saints go from the inward principle of grace to the external exercise of that principle. Since Jesus Christ has already won positional victory for His own in His death at Calvary, it is now our responsibility by the inward principle of grace to take the

shield of faith and win for ourselves conditional victory.

Doctrine merges into the Christian walk which immediately encounters struggling with the forces of evil. Christians do not wrestle against flesh and blood but “against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Eph. 6:12). Principalities are authorities. Powers refer to Satan who has names of great power. He is called a strong man (Luke 11:21). He is called the roaring lion (I Pet. 5:8). He leads sinners captive at his will (II Tim. 2:26). However, this power is derived and limited (John 19:11). Hence, Satan cannot do what he will and shall not do what he can. Rulers of darkness are in Satan’s empire, but his empire is restricted by time. Satan is already judged, convicted, and condemned, but his execution is stayed until the consummation of all things. The child of God also fights against spiritual wickedness, or forces of wickedness.

The expressions “stand,” “withstand,” and “stand therefore” of Ephesians 6:11, 13, and 14 portray the Christian’s attitude toward sin. Standing of verse 11 is resisting, throwing back. This is opposite to passivity. Withstanding is an aggressive move against the enemy. Standing, therefore, is standing orderly in the place where God has chosen you to be.

The armor is for the Christian in this life. The robe is for him in the life to come. The armor is a defensive weapon, but the Lord does not leave us with only the defensive weapon. He has provided the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit. The sword is an offensive weapon. The armor is never to be used to cover sin but as a defense against sin. The Christian is provided with both defensive and offensive weapons.

The shield of faith which the Christian must take in faith

is faith in God alone and taking Him at His word. He is exhorted to use the shield of faith, and he is assured that all the missiles of the evil one shall be stopped when the shield of faith is correctly used.

Christians are exhorted to use the shield of faith, “above all,” in addition to all the rest of the armor. Paul was not intimating that faith is more important than the other graces. Faith is not more important than love. God gave the gift of faith, the capacity to believe, in regeneration; but He also shed His love abroad in the heart.

The shield of faith is the armor of the armor, the protection of all the other parts of the armor mentioned within the context. The Christian is born a warrior. He is destined to be assaulted. His duty is to attack. The shield of faith is his defense against assault. The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, is the weapon for attack. The Christian life is both offensive and defensive. The sword of the Spirit is more than owning a Bible, having an adequate library, a mere tape ministry, attending worship service, and hearing a preacher. The child of God is responsible to take the things he has heard and make them his by studying the word of God.

The shield of faith absorbs the blow of the fiery darts. A shield entirely covered the warrior and all the armor he had put on. As the shield enveloped the entire man, faith envelops the entire Christian. It protects the whole man. The Lord is the shield of His people: “For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield” (Ps. 5:12). “The LORD is my strength and my shield...” (Ps. 28:7). “Our soul waiteth for the LORD: he is our help and our shield” (Ps. 33:20).

Like a shield, faith receives the blows meant for the child of God. This shield which the Christian must take is not carnal

but a spiritual piece of warfare. The shield of faith is all of one piece. It is not made up of faith in God, faith in oneself, faith in the brethren, faith in the church, or faith in this or that, but this shield is of God's forging. The shield which is of one piece should be kept before one's person and moved about to protect the attacked parts. There are gaps between the many pieces of armor where the fiery darts may penetrate; therefore, the shield is to protect the armor. Although the shield was made of metal, wood, or various materials, it always had a covering of leather which not only stopped the dart from piercing the armor but also quenched the fire on the dart.

Faith defends the child of God in the exercise of his graces. The soldier under the protection of the shield performs his duty, notwithstanding all the shots made against him. When faith fails, every grace is put to riot: (1) Courage is turned into cowardice. This was seen in the life of Abraham when he lied about his wife and by Peter when he denied Jesus Christ in the presence of the damsel. (2) Self-control is turned into self-indulgence. This was revealed in the life of Noah when he made wine and drank thereof and was drunk, and in the life of David when he committed murder and adultery. (3) Brotherly kindness is turned into contention and strife. This was demonstrated by the Corinthian church where sects and parties arose. None of the graces in the Christian are safe unless it is under the protection of the shield of faith. There is an art to handling the shield of faith. It must be used against Satan's attack on the mind, sentimentality, and persuasion to walk by sight rather than by faith.

The nature of the Christian's enemy is revealed in the evil one. The word "wicked" of Ephesians 6:16 should be translated "evil one." The unity of the evil is taught here. Every reproach against a child of God is from the Devil. Some of the fiery darts the Devil will hurl at the child of God and the quenching power of the shield of faith as it claims the prom-

ises of God and puts them into exercise are listed: (1) Satan will say, "Some day you will fall by my dart. Sooner or later I will get you." Faith answers, "He who has begun a good work in me will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:6), and no weapon that is formed against me shall prosper (Is. 54:17)." (2) Satan will say, "You cannot stand against me because you are weak." Faith answers, "My strength is made perfect in weakness (II Cor. 12:9)." (3) Satan will say, "Your sins have caused God to cast you off. You are not a Christian." Faith will answer, "God has promised He will never leave me nor forsake me (Heb. 13:5)." (4) The Devil will say, "There was nothing in you good enough for God to choose you." Faith will answer, "God has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, and things which are not to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence (I Cor. 1:27-29)." (5) Satan will say, "Some have suffered shipwreck. Do you think you can continue without having the same experience?" Faith answers, "I am capable of distinguishing genuine faith from false faith. I am kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time (I Pet. 1:5)." (6) Satan will say, "Faith grows from faith to faith, but I have not seen any growth in your life." Faith will answer, "Do not expect fruit every day or month of my life. The fruit tree does not bear fruit perpetually. There is the winter season, spring, and fall, but there is also the summer for fruitbearing. You are looking at me in only one point of my life, but at the end of my life there will be a manifestation of growth because faith grows (II Thess. 1:3)." (7) The Devil will say, "True faith never fails, but I have seen your faith fail many times." Faith will answer, "The strongest faith will limp a little when it is tried. David's faith was tried, and he limped when he thought he would perish by the hand of Saul. Satan, the fact that you are throwing that fiery dart at me proves that my faith is genuine. The Lord sifts me as wheat, but He has prayed for

me that my faith will not fail, and Christ's prayer shall never go unanswered (John 11:42).”

THE CONSUMMATION OF SAVING FAITH

It is wonderful that God provided salvation for the elect, but it would not be wonderful if He failed to apply that salvation. It is wonderful that God has given us precious promises, but it would not be wonderful if He did not fulfill them. It is wonderful that Christ began a good work in us, but it would not be wonderful if He failed to complete what He began. Jesus Christ did not die in vain. He will consummate our faith.

Rejoicing is upon the basis of hope in Christ through whom we have permanent access by faith into this grace in which we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. We groan within ourselves expectantly awaiting the redemption of our bodies. In hope we were saved, but hope being seen is not hope. Why does a man continue to hope for what he sees? But we hope for that which we do not see; hence, we eagerly expect its fruition (Rom. 8:23-25). We expect that blessed hope, looking for the Savior (Titus 2:13). We do not look for events but for the Savior. Hope is the expectation of something excellent but not yet experienced. It refers to the com-

pletion of what is excellent, righteous to its highest degree. The personal unmediated presence of Jesus Christ, not things or circumstances, is the object of this hope. The eternal kingdom is the conclusion of this hope. Hope is not disappointing because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. Having been justified, we are experiencing peace, access, permanent standing, and hope that looks into the future.

No person can have the hope described in Romans 8:24 apart from saving faith: “For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?” Such verses as I Peter 1:3-9, I John 3:2 and Philippians 3:20-21 should be considered in connection with this text of Scripture. The preposition “by” used in connection with “hope” of Romans 8:24 should be translated “in.” “In hope” refers to the fact that the salvation bestowed in the past and presently possessed is characterized by hope. The context of this verse includes verses 18-25, which teach present suffering and future glory. Paul reckoned that present suffering is not worthy to be compared with future glory (Rom. 8:18).

As to the future, we rejoice in hope of the coming kingdom. There is a spiritually legal boasting in hope of the glory of God. Assurance is native to the character of salvation. It is the foundation to Christian joy or Christian boasting. It is the essence of our hope in God. Hope is not to wish or blindly expect something. It is the perseverance of faith which is the gift of God. Paul prayed that the enlightened Ephesians might know the hope of God’s calling, the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and the exceeding greatness of His power to us who believe (Eph. 1:16-19). Our hope looks not only to the future but it also has a present sanctifying effect in the life of every true believer: “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable” (I Cor. 15:19).

The Christian hope is future and present. The believer's hope of the glory of God in His kingdom enables him to glory in present tribulations. It does not make him ashamed because the love of God has been shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Spirit. The word "glory" (from *doxa*) sometimes denotes the splendor with which God clothes Himself. Sometimes it refers to the sublime display of the attributes of God, and sometimes it points to the combined display of the perfection of the Godhead. The latter is the meaning of the word in Romans 5:2. The display of that glory is reserved for the future when Jesus Christ will establish His kingdom, and the glory of God shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea. Present hope concerns the things that befall Christians while we are in the world. During that time, we wait for the coming of Jesus Christ, or for our death when we will be transformed into His likeness. Present hope enables us to rejoice in tribulation. It is not blind expectation but perseverance in faith.

The gift of the Holy Spirit is the reason hope is secure (Rom. 5:5). The love of God shed abroad in the heart refers to God's love for the believer and not the believers love for God. That love is shed abroad in the believer's heart by the Holy Spirit. It is a completed transaction. God's love is not naturally revealed to man. Since God is love, the beams of His love always shine even though clouds of sin obscure its rays.

God is the source of love, and hope is the inevitable result of that love. The Holy Spirit is the means by whom God's love comes and abides in the heart of man. Therefore, hope does not make one ashamed. Hope without foundation brings shame. The person who merely thinks his faith is the ground of righteousness will be ultimately brought to shame. Conversely, one who has been justified by faith looks outside of himself and rests in the righteousness of God.

The hope of Romans 8:24-25 is the hope gained through progressive sanctification. Paul had learned that perfect satisfaction awaits the redemption of the body. It cannot be attained in this life. The Psalmist declared, "...I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness" (Ps. 17:15). The New Testament companion passage is I John 3:2-3—"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." Any attempt to claim for the present life elements which belong to consummated perfection, whether in the individual or the collective spheres, are only symptoms of that impatience which would disrupt Divine order. The hope of the child of God is built upon the foundation of Biblical truth and will never disappoint him. This is the time of suffering, and the time to come is the time for glory without suffering.

The creature awaits the future glory of the children of God (Rom. 8:19-21). This is their "earnest expectation." The two words "earnest expectation" come from one Greek word which is made up of three different Greek words. The first part of this Greek word is a preposition, and it means "from afar." The middle part means "one who is stretching his neck looking out." The last part means "to wait for." The creature looks from afar with his neck stretched out, waiting for deliverance. The entire creation, which is under the judgment of God, is crying for deliverance. How much more do the suffering children of God cry out for deliverance. Creation will not be delivered from the bondage of corruption until the people for whom Christ died are delivered.

The creature awaiting deliverance cannot be the angels, because they are not subject to vanity and the bondage of corruption. Satan and the demons are eliminated, because they will never experience deliverance. The Devil knows that

our deliverance and the deliverance of creation means his eternal damnation from the presence of God. Believers are not included, because they are distinguished from creation. Paul was saying that creation is looking for deliverance, and the children of God by redemption should also be looking for deliverance. Mankind in general must be excluded, because it cannot be said that mankind is subject to vanity. To say the creature is mankind would contradict Romans 5:12. Unbelievers are excluded, because such expectations do not characterize unbelievers. They are not looking forward to the day of deliverance. Conclusively, Romans 8:19-21 must be restricted to nonrational creation.

Creation groans as it awaits deliverance, and those who have the firstfruits of the Spirit also groan as they await deliverance. We have the earnest, the down payment, assuring us that the transaction will be completed. The Holy Spirit within us is the earnest. His indwelling guarantees us that what God has begun in us will be brought to perfection. Consummated perfection is our hope. This is the meaning of “saved in hope” (Rom. 8:24).

Revelation is not needed to make us conscious of our present sufferings. Experience fails to make us know the glory which is yet to come. A Christian knows when he suffers, but it takes the revelation of the mind of God to make him conscious of what he will experience in the future. Therefore, the calculation of the future glory outweighs all our present sufferings.

Man has but three days in his span of life—yesterday, today, and tomorrow. Yesterday is gone. It cannot be redeemed. Mistakes of the past cannot be redeemed. Today is here, and we must live in the today, redeeming the time (Eph. 5:15, 16). Tomorrow is coming. The God of yesterday plus His grace today gives hope for tomorrow. We were justified

yesterday by the grace of God. We are being sanctified today by God's grace. We will be perfected and glorified tomorrow by the grace of God. Groaning over yesterday's mistakes will affect today and the rewards of tomorrow. We must buy up the time because our realization of the hope of consummated perfection will be tomorrow.

The Christian never finds his today to be a time of rest, but he is possessed with one incomparable advantage—his hope will never make him ashamed (Rom. 5:1-5). This hope renders duty delightful. It enlightens darkness. It alleviates sorrow and teaches contentment. Like the helmet of salvation, this hope guards the head in the day of battle. Like the anchor of the soul of Hebrews 6:18-20, it holds and secures in the day of storm. This hope, like a pleasing companion, travels with us throughout our wilderness journey (Heb. 6:1-11). What is hope? Hope is a pleasing expectation of something good. The object of this hope is Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13). The consummation of this hope is the eternal kingdom of the Savior.

Faith, hope, and love are the essential elements of Christian character: "But now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (I Cor. 13:13 NASB). These three elements are vitally connected. They are all found within the context of Romans 5:1-5. Christians live by faith, walk by faith, stand by faith, persevere by faith, fight by faith, conquer by faith, and triumph by faith. Faith precedes hope and is hope's foundation.

Hope enables the believer to expect, idealize, foresee, and anticipate; and it inspires him. Hope is well-rounded. It is based on the past with the covenants as its foundation. It is presently confirmed by Jesus Christ. It is future in that it looks through the eye of faith to Christ's second advent for its realization. Hope anticipates the fulfillment of what faith expects.

Faith holds on to what is. Hope leaps out to what shall be. Faith sees; hope foresees. Faith realizes; hope idealizes. Faith inspects; hope expects. Faith is quiet in possession; hope trembles in awe with expectation. Faith is the believer's logic; hope is his rhetoric. Faith's object is the Divine *logos*—the infallible promise of God; hope's object is the Person promised. Faith looks to the word of the Promised; hope looks to the Promiser of the word.

Faith abides because it is the substance of things hoped for. It is God's gift. Hope abides because it anticipates the fulfillment of what faith embraces. Love abides because it is the very nature of the new life. Faith is inreaching. Hope is outlooking. Love is inbeing. By faith, the believer stands; by hope, he soars; and by love, he is. Faith assures him. Hope inspires him. Love is the Christian at his best.

Love is greater than faith and hope because it is necessary for both. Love abides because it is the nature of the new life. Love is greater because of its age. It can say, before faith and hope I am. Love is also greater in strength: "...love is strong as death..." (Song of Sol. 8:6). "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). Love is greater than faith and hope by reason of its dignity. Faith and hope are receptive in their character, but love is communicative.

Love is greater than faith and hope because faith and hope will be made useless. They will reach their fruition in the presence of Jesus Christ, but love will continue throughout eternity.

CONCLUSION

The following questions will enable the sincere person to examine his faith in order to determine whether his faith is God-given:

1. Is faith the gift of God?
2. Is faith given before the new birth, or is it given in the act of Divine quickening?
3. Is faith given by God in order for the guilty sinner to assist God in the new birth?
4. Does the passive sinner exercise faith in his being born of God?
5. Does faith operate through grace?
6. Were the elect involved with Christ in His work?
7. Is God-given faith called to action by the gospel?

8. Can either an act of faith or a life of faith justify a person before God?
9. Is man's faith a subjective quality that satisfies God?
10. Does it take man's act of faith in time to validate God's act of justification before time?
11. Does man choose to believe in God?
12. Can natural faith be counted to a person for righteousness?
13. Does faith-righteousness precede either imputed or imparted righteousness?
14. Is there a difference between faith-righteousness and Jesus Christ who became to us righteousness?
15. Can it be said that faith-righteousness is unto all and on all of those believing?
16. Is the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the elect real, or judicial?
17. Does grace reign through faith-righteousness, or through the righteousness of God?
18. Is the purpose of faith the realization of righteousness?
19. Is God's righteousness imparted in the new birth?
20. Is faith the instrument of imparted righteousness?
21. Can faith-righteousness be substituted for the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ in the justification of a

sinner before God?

22. What is the difference between mediate and immediate imputation?
23. Was Adam's sin that was imputed to us real, or judicial?
24. Was the imputation of our sins to Christ real?
25. Was Christ's righteousness that was imputed to us real?

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