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In this Issue.

Precursory Considerations to an Explanation of Justification ☞ Cartwright on Murray ☞ Singing the Name of Jesus ☞ August 2001 Mission Trip to Myanmar

by Richard Bacon



It may seem a strange thing that we would place as much emphasis as we do on the Protestant doctrine of Justification by Faith Alone (*sola fide*). But the simple fact is that we live in a day in which many ersatz Evangelicals either redefine the doctrine or ignore it altogether. The church seems to swing to and fro like a pendulum from antinomianism on the one hand to legalism and works-righteousness on the other.

The words of our confession are quite clear on the matter: "Those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely justifieth; not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous: not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone...."

The Evangelical Arminian has an altogether different view of justification by faith alone. For him, his faith stands in the place of strict obedience. Faith is not perfect obedience, but the believer is accepted by God *as though* he had obeyed perfectly. Faith makes up the deficit, so to speak. For many Evangelicals today, the believer's faith justifies or contributes to his justification as surely as a perfect obedience would justify him before God.

The consistent or self-conscious Arminian makes faith a condition of justification *not* as the instrument by which the believer trusts *Christ alone*, but as that which God sees and rewards as though the believer had obeyed God perfectly. That is a synergistic gospel and is therefore a false gospel. It is the gospel of the Judaizers of the first century; it is the gospel of John Wesley; and sadly it is the gospel of many today who claim to be Reformed.

We present the opening of Owen's book-length treatise on *Justification By Faith* in order to help clear the theological air and hopefully to stimulate the appetite of some of our readers to look at Owen's book in more detail. It is not an easy read – but it deals with the matters of spiritual life and death.

Following the Owen article is a review by H. M. Cartwright of a recent booklet against exclusive psalmody, an article showing that the psalm singer can indeed sing the name of Jesus, and a Missions report from last August's trip to Myanmar. ☞



Precursory Considerations to an Explanation of the Doctrine of Justification Part One.

From “General Considerations, Previously Necessary Unto The Explanation Of The Doctrine Of Justification,” *Works*, vol. 5.

By John Owen



hat we may treat of the doctrine of justification usefully unto its proper ends, which are the glory of God in Christ, with the peace and furtherance of the obedience of believers, some things are previously to be considered, which we must have respect unto in the whole process of our discourse. And, among others that might be insisted on to the same purpose, these that ensue are not to be omitted:

1. The first inquiry in this matter, in a way of duty, is after the proper relief of the conscience of a sinner pressed and perplexed with a sense of the guilt of sin. For justification is the way and means whereby such a person does obtain acceptance before God, with a right and title unto a heavenly inheritance. And nothing is pleadable in this cause but what a man would speak unto his own conscience in that state, or unto the conscience of another, when he is anxious under that inquiry. Wherefore, the person under consideration (that is, who is to be justified) is one who, in himself, is ἀσεβῆ, Romans 4:5, — “ungodly;” and thereon ὑπόδικος τῷ Θεῷ chap. 3:19, — “guilty before God;” that is, obnoxious, subject, liable, τῷ δικαίωματι τοῦ Θεοῦ chap. 1:32, — to the righteous sentential judgment of God, that “he who committeth sin,” who is any way guilty of it, is “worthy of death.” Hereupon such a person finds himself κατάραν, Galatians 3:10, — under “the curse,” and “the wrath of God” therein abiding on him,” John 3:18, 36. In this condition he is ἀναπολόγητος— without plea, without excuse, by any thing in and from himself, for his own relief; his “mouth is stopped,” Romans 3:19. For he is, in the judgment of God,

declared in the Scripture, συγκεκλεισμένος ἀμαρτίαν, Galatians 3:22, — every way “shut up under sin” and all the consequents of it. Many evils in this condition are men subject unto, which may be reduced unto those two of our first parents, wherein they were represented. For, first, they thought foolishly to hide themselves from God; and then, more foolishly, would have charged him as the cause of their sin. And such, naturally, are the thoughts of men under their convictions. But whoever is the subject of the justification inquired after, is, by various means, brought into his apprehensions who cried, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

2. With respect unto this state and condition of men, or men in this state and condition, the inquiry is, “What that is upon the account whereof God pardons all their sins, receives them into his favor, declares or pronounces them righteous and acquitted from all guilt, removes the curse, and turns away all his wrath from them, giving them right and title unto a blessed, immortality or life eternal?” This is that alone wherein the consciences of sinners in this estate are concerned. Nor do they inquire after any thing, but what they may have to oppose unto or answer the justice of God in the commands and curse of the law, and what they may retake themselves unto for the obtaining of acceptance with him unto life and salvation. That the apostle does thus, and no otherwise, state this whole matter, and, in an answer unto this inquiry, declare the nature of justification and all the causes of it, in the third and fourth chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, and elsewhere, shall be afterwards declared and proved. And we shall



also manifest, that the apostle James, in the second chapter of his epistle, does not speak unto this inquiry, nor give an answer unto it; but it is of justification in another sense, and to another purpose, whereof he treats. And whereas we cannot either safely or usefully treat of this doctrine, but with respect unto the same ends for which it is declared, and whereunto it is applied in the Scripture, we should not, by any pretenses, be turned aside from attending unto this case and its resolution, in all our discourses on this subject; for it is the direction, satisfaction, and peace of the consciences of men, and not the curiosity of notions or subtlety of disputations, which it is our duty to design. And, therefore, I shall, as much as I possibly may, avoid all these philosophical terms and distinctions wherewith this evangelical doctrine has been perplexed rather than illustrated; for more weight is to be put on the steady guidance of the mind and conscience of one believer, really exercised about the foundation of his peace and acceptance with God, than on the confutation of ten wrangling disputers.

3. Now the inquiry, on what account, or for what cause and reason, a man may be so acquitted or discharged of sin, and accepted with God, as before declared, does necessarily issue in this: — “Whether it be any thing in ourselves, as our faith and repentance, the renovation of our natures, inherent habits of grace, and actual works of righteousness which we have done, or may do? Or whether it be the obedience, righteousness, satisfaction, and merit of the Son of God our mediator, and surety of the covenant, imputed unto us?” One of these it must be, — namely, something that is our own, which, whatever may be the influence of the grace of God unto it, or causality of it, because wrought in and by us, is inherently our own in a proper sense; or something which, being not our own, nor inherent in us, nor wrought by us, is yet imputed unto us, for the pardon of our sins and the acceptation of our persons as righteous, or the making of us righteous in the sight of God. Neither are these things capable of mixture or composition, Romans 11:6. Which of these it is the duty, wisdom, and safety of a convinced

sinner to rely upon and trust unto, in his appearance before God, is the sum of our present inquiry.

4. The way whereby sinners do or ought to betake themselves unto this relief, on supposition that it is the righteousness of Christ, and how they come to be partakers of, or interested in, that which is not inherently their own, unto as good benefit and as much advantage as if it were their own, is of a distinct consideration. And as this also is clearly determined in the Scripture, so it is acknowledged in the experience of all them that do truly believe. Neither are we in this matter much to regard the senses or arguing of men who were never thoroughly convinced of sin, nor have ever in their own persons “fled for refuge unto the hope set before them.”

5. These things, I say, are always to be attended unto, in our whole disquisition into the nature of evangelical justification; for, without a constant respect unto them, we shall quickly wander into curious and perplexed questions, wherein the consciences of guilty sinners are not concerned; and which, therefore, really belong not unto the substance or truth of this doctrine, nor are to be immixed therewith. It is alone the relief of those who are in themselves “ὑποδίκω τῷ θεῷ,” — guilty before, or obnoxious and liable to, the judgment of God, — that we inquire after. That this is not any thing in or of themselves, nor can so be, — that it is a provision without them, made in infinite wisdom and grace by the mediation of Christ, his obedience and death therein, — is secured in the Scripture against all contradiction; and it is the fundamental principle of the gospel, Matthew 11:28.

6. It is confessed that many things, for the declaration of the truth, and the order of the dispensation of God’s grace herein, are necessary to be insisted on, — such are the nature of justifying faith, the place and use of it in justification, and the causes of the new covenant, the true notion of the mediation and suretyship of Christ, and the like; which shall all of them be inquired into. But, beyond what tends directly unto the guidance of the minds and satisfaction of the souls of men, who seek after a stable and abiding foundation of acceptance with God, we



are not easily to be drawn unless we are free to lose the benefit and comfort of this most important evangelical truth in needless and unprofitable contentions. And amongst many other miscarriages which men are subject unto, whilst they are conversant about these things, this, in an especial manner, is to be avoided.

7. For the doctrine of justification is directive of Christian practice, and in no other evangelical truth is the whole of our obedience more concerned; for the foundation, reasons, and motives of all our duty towards God are contained therein. Wherefore, in order unto the due improvement of them ought it to be taught, and not otherwise. That which alone we aim (or ought so to do) to learn in it and by it, is how we may get and maintain peace with God, and so to live unto him as to be accepted with him in what we do. To satisfy the minds and consciences of men in these things, is this doctrine to be taught. Wherefore, to carry it out of the understandings of ordinary Christians, by speculative notions and distinctions, is disserviceable unto the faith of the church; yea, the mixing of evangelical revelations with philosophical notions has been, in sundry ages, the poison of religion. Pretense of accuracy, and artificial skill in teaching, is that which gives countenance unto such a way of handling sacred things. But the spiritual amplitude of divine truths is restrained hereby, whilst low, mean, philosophical senses are imposed on them. And not only so, but endless divisions and contentions are occasioned and perpetuated. Hence, when any difference in religion is, in the pursuit of controversies about it, brought into the old of metaphysical respects and philosophical terms, whereof there is τολὺς νόμος ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα,— sufficient provision for the supply of the combatants on both sides, — the truth for the most part, as unto any concernment of the souls of men therein, is utterly lost and buried in the rubbish of senseless and unprofitable words. And thus, in particular, those who seem to be well enough agreed in the whole doctrine of justification, so far as the Scripture goes before them, and the experience of believers keeps them company, when once they engage into their philosophical definitions and

distinctions, are at such an irreconcilable variance among themselves, as if they were agreed on no one thing that does concern it. For as men have various apprehensions in coining such definitions as may be defensible against objections, which most men aim at therein; so no proposition can be so plain (at least in “*materia probabilis*”) but that a man ordinarily versed in pedagogical terms and metaphysical notions, may multiply distinctions on every word of it.

8. Hence, there has been a pretense and appearance of twenty several opinions among Protestants about justification, as Bellarmine and Vasquez,¹ and others of the Papists, charge it against them out of Osiander,² when the faith of them all was one and the same, Bellar., lib 5 cap. 1; Vasq. in 1,2, quest. 113, disp. 202; whereof we shall speak elsewhere. When men are once advanced into that field of disputation, which is all overgrown with thorns of subtleties, perplexed notions, and futilous terms of art, they consider principally how they may entangle others in it, scarce at all how they may get out of it themselves. And in this posture they oftentimes utterly forget the business which they are about, especially in this matter of justification, — namely, how a guilty sinner may come to obtain favor and acceptance with God. And not only so, but I doubt they oftentimes dispute themselves beyond what they can well abide by, when they return home unto a sedate meditation of the state of things between God and their souls. And I cannot much value their notions and sentiments of this matter, who object and answer themselves out of a sense of their own appearance before God; much less theirs who evidence an open inconformity unto the grace and truth of this doctrine in their hearts and lives.

9. Wherefore, we do but trouble the faith of Christians, and the peace of the true church of

¹ [Gabriel Vasquez (1551-1604). Probably, *Commentariorum ac disputationum in primam partem Sancti Thomae* (Lugduni, 1620). Cardinal Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621). *Disputationum Roberti Bellarmini ... de controversiis christianae fidei* (1628).]

² [Andreas Osiander, German Reformer (1498-1552). Osiander opposed forensic justification but his views were rejected in the Formula of Concord (1577), article III.]



God, whilst we dispute about expressions, terms, and notions, when the substance of the doctrine intended may be declared and believed, without the knowledge, understanding, or use of any of them. Such are all those in whose subtle management the captious art of wrangling does principally consist. A diligent attendance unto the revelation made hereof in the Scripture, and an examination of our own experience thereby, is the sum of what is required of us for the right understanding of the truth herein. And every true believer, who is taught of God, knows how to put his whole trust in Christ alone, and the grace of God by him, for mercy, righteousness, and glory, and not at all concern himself with those loads of thorns and briers, which, under the names of definitions, distinctions, accurate notions, in a number of exotic pedagogical and philosophical terms, some pretend to accommodate them withal.

10. The Holy Ghost, in expressing the most eminent acts in our justification, especially as unto our believing, or the acting of that faith whereby we are justified, is pleased to make use of many metaphorical expressions. For any to use them now in the same way, and to the same purpose, is esteemed rude, undisciplinatory, and even ridiculous; but on what grounds? He that shall deny that there is more spiritual sense and experience conveyed by them into the hearts and minds of believers (which is the life and soul of teaching things practical), than in the most accurate philosophical expressions, is himself really ignorant of the whole truth in this matter. The propriety of such expressions belongs and is confined unto natural science; but spiritual truths are to be taught, “not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” [1 Cor. 2:13] God is wiser than man; and the Holy Ghost knows better what are the most expedient ways for the illumination of our minds with that knowledge of evangelical truths which it is our duty to have and attain, than the wisest of us all. And other knowledge of or skill in these things, than what is required of us in a way of duty, is not to be valued.

It is, therefore, to no purpose to handle the mysteries of the gospel as if Hilcot and Bricot, Thomas and Gabriel, with all the Sententiarists, Summists, and Quodlibetarians of the old Roman peripatetical school, were to be raked out of their graves to be our guides. Especially will they be of no use unto us in this doctrine of justification. For whereas they pertinaciously adhered unto the philosophy of Aristotle, who knew nothing of any righteousness but what is a habit inherent in ourselves, and the acts of it, they wrested the whole doctrine of justification unto a compliance wherewithal. So Pighius himself complained of them.³

Secondly. A due consideration of him with whom in this matter we have to do, and that immediately, is necessary unto a right stating of our thoughts about it. The Scripture expresses it emphatically, that it is “God that justifieth,” Romans 8:33; and he assumes it unto himself as his prerogative to do what belongs thereunto. “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins,” Isaiah 43:25. And it is hard, in my apprehension, to suggest unto him any other reason or consideration of the pardon of our sins, seeing he has taken it on him to do it for his own sake; that is, “for the Lord’s sake,” Daniel 9:17, in whom “all the seed of Israel are justified,” Isaiah 45:25. In his sight, before his tribunal, it is that men are justified or condemned. Psalm 143:2, “Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.” And the whole work of justification, with all that belongs thereunto, is represented after the manner of a juridical proceeding before God’s tribunal; as we shall see afterwards. “Therefore,” says the apostle, “by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight,” Romans 3:20. However any man be justified in the sight of men or angels by his own obedience, or deeds of the law, yet in his sight none can be so.

3. Controv. 2, “*Dissimulare non possumus, hanc vel primam doctrinae Christianae partem (de justificatione) obscuram magis quam illustratam a scholasticis, spinosis plerisque quaestionibus, et definitionibus, secundum quas nonnulli magno supercilio primam in omnibus auctoritatem arrogantes,*” etc. [Albert Pighius, Roman Catholic apologist (1490-1542), *Controversiarum quibus nunc exagitur Christi fides* (1542)].



Necessary it is unto any man who is to come unto a trial, in the sentence whereof he is greatly concerned, duly to consider the judge before whom he is to appear, and by whom his cause is finally to be determined. And if we manage our disputes about justification without continual regard unto him by whom we must be cast or acquitted, we shall not rightly apprehend what our plea ought to be. Wherefore the greatness, the majesty, the holiness, and sovereign authority of God, are always to be present with us in a due sense of them, when we inquire how we may be justified before him. Yet is it hard to discern how the minds of some men are influenced by the consideration of these things, in their fierce contests for the interest of their own works in their justification: "*Precibus aut pretio ut in aliqua parte haereant.*" But the Scripture does represent unto us what thoughts of him and of themselves, not only sinners, but saints also, have had, and cannot but have, upon near discoveries and effectual conceptions of God and his greatness. Thoughts hereof ensuing on a sense of the guilt of sin, filled our first parents with fear and shame, and put them on that foolish attempt of hiding themselves from him. Nor is the wisdom of their posterity one jot better under their convictions, without a discovery of the promise. That alone makes sinners wise which tenders them relief. At present, the generality of men are secure, and do not much question but that they shall come off well enough, one way or other, in the trial they are to undergo. And as such persons are altogether indifferent what doctrine concerning justification is taught and received; so for the most part, for themselves, they incline unto that declaration of it which best suits their own reason, as influenced with self-conceit and corrupt affections. The sum whereof is, that what they cannot do themselves, what is wanting that they may be saved, be it more or less, shall one way or other be made up by Christ; either the use or the abuse of which persuasion is the greatest fountain of sin in the world, next unto the depravation of our nature. And whatever be, or may be, pretended unto the contrary, persons not convinced of sin, not humbled for it, are in all their ratiocinations about spiritual things, under

the conduct of principles so vitiated and corrupted. See Matthew 18:3, 4. But when God is pleased by any means to manifest his glory unto sinners, all their prefidences and contrivances do issue in dreadful horror and distress. An account of their temper is given us, Isaiah 33:14, "The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness has surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?"

Nor is it thus only with some peculiar sort of sinners. The same will be the thoughts of all guilty persons at some time or other. For those who, through sensuality, security, or superstition, do hide themselves from the vexation of them in this world, will not fail to meet with them when their terror shall be increased, and become remediless. Our "God is a consuming fire;" and men will one day find how vain it is to set their briars and thorns against him in battle array. And we may see what extravagant contrivances convinced sinners will put themselves upon, under any real view of the majesty and holiness of God, Micah 6:6, 7, "Wherewith," says one of them, "shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousand of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" Neither shall I ever think them meet to be contended withal about the doctrine of justification who take no notice of these things, but rather despise them.

This is the proper effect of the conviction of sin, strengthened and sharpened with the consideration of the terror of the Lord, who is to judge concerning it. And this is that which, in the Papacy, meeting with an ignorance of the righteousness of God, has produced innumerable superstitious inventions for the appeasing of the consciences of men who by any means fall under the disquietments of such convictions. For they quickly see that nothing of the obedience which God requires of them, as it is performed by them, will justify them before this high and holy God. Wherefore they seek for shelter in contrivances



about things that he has not commanded, to try if they can put a cheat upon their consciences, and find relief in diversions.

Nor is it thus only with profligate sinners upon their convictions; but the best of men, when they have had near and efficacious representations of the greatness, holiness, and glory of God, have been cast into the deepest self-abasement, and most serious renunciation of all trust or confidence in themselves. So the prophet Isaiah, upon his vision of the glory of the Holy One, cried out, "Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips," chap. 6:5; — nor was he relieved but by an evidence of the free pardon of sin, verse 7. So holy Job, in all his contests with his friends, who charged him with hypocrisy, and his being a sinner guilty in a peculiar manner above other men, with assured confidence and perseverance therein, justified his sincerity, his faith and trust in God, against their whole charge, and every parcel of it. And this he does with such a full satisfaction of his own integrity, as that not only he insists at large on his vindication, but frequently appeals unto God himself as unto the truth of his plea; for he directly pursues that counsel, with great assurance, which the apostle James so long after gives unto all believers. Nor is the doctrine of that apostle more eminently exemplified in any one instance throughout the whole Scripture than in him; for he shows his faith by his works, and pleads his justification thereby. As Job justified himself, and was justified by his works, so we allow it the duty of every believer to be. His plea for justification by works, in the sense wherein it is so, was the most noble that ever was in the world, nor was ever any controversy managed upon a greater occasion.

At length this Job is called into the immediate presence of God, to plead his own cause; not now, as stated between him and his friends, whether he were a hypocrite or no, or whether his faith or trust in God was sincere; but as it was stated between God and him, wherein he seemed to have made some undue assumptions on his own behalf. The question was now reduced unto this, — on what grounds he might or could be justified in the sight of God? To prepare his mind

unto a right judgment in this case, God manifests his glory unto him, and instructs him in the greatness of his majesty and power. And this he does by a multiplication of instances, because under our temptations we are very slow in admitting right conceptions of God. Here the holy man quickly acknowledged that the state of the case was utterly altered. All his former pleas of faith, hope, and trust in God, of sincerity in obedience, which with so much earnestness he before insisted on, are now quite laid aside. He saw well enough that they were not pleadable at the tribunal before which he now appeared, so that God should enter into judgment with him thereon, with respect unto his justification. Wherefore, in the deepest self-abasement and abhorrence, he retakes himself unto sovereign grace and mercy. For "then Job answered the LORD and said, Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no farther," Job 40:3-5. And again, "Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak; I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself; and repent in dust and ashes," chap. 42:4-6.

Let any men place themselves in the condition wherein now Job was, — in the immediate presence of God; let them attend unto what he really speaks unto them in his word, — namely, what they will answer unto the charge that he has against them, and what will be their best plea before his tribunal, that they may be justified. I do not believe that any man living has more encouraging grounds to plead for an interest in his own faith and obedience, in his justification before God, than Job had; although I suppose he had not so much skill to manage a plea to that purpose, with scholastic notions and distinctions, as the Jesuits have; but however we may be harnessed with subtle arguments and solutions, I fear it will not be safe for us to adventure farther upon God than he durst to do. There was of old a direction for the visitation of the sick, composed, as they say, by Anselm, and published by Casparus Ulenbergius, which



expresses a better sense of these things than some seem to be convinced of: "Dost thou believe that thou canst not be saved but by the death of Christ? The sick man answers, 'Yes,' then let it be said unto him, Go to, then, and whilst thy soul abideth in thee, put all thy confidence in this death alone, place thy trust in no other thing; commit thyself wholly to this death, cover thyself wholly with this alone, cast thyself wholly on this death, wrap thyself wholly in this death. And if God would judge thee, say, 'Lord, I place the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and thy judgment; and otherwise I will not contend or enter into judgment with thee.' And if he shall say unto thee that thou art a sinner, say, 'I place the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and my sins.' If he shall say unto thee that thou hast deserved damnation, say, 'Lord, I put the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between thee and all my sins; and I offer his merits for my own, which I should have, and have not.' If he say that he is angry with thee, say, 'Lord, I place the death of our Lord Jesus Christ between me and thy anger.'" Those who gave these directions seem to have been sensible of what it is to appear before the tribunal of God, and how unsafe it will be for us there to insist on any thing in ourselves.

Hence are the words of the same Anselm in his Meditations: "My conscience has deserved damnation, and my repentance is not sufficient for satisfaction; but most certain it is that thy mercy aboundeth above all offense." And this seems to me a better direction than those more lately given by some of the Roman church; — such as the prayer suggested unto a sick man by Johan. Polandus, lib. *Methodus in adjuvandis morientibus*: "*Domine Jesus, conjunge, obsecro, obsequium meum cum omnibus quae tu egisti, et pssus s ex tam perfecta charitate et obedientia. Et cum divitiis satisfactionum et meritorum dilectionis, patri aeterno, illud offere digneris.*" Or that of a greater author, *Antidot. Animae, contege totum immisce te in hac morte, in hac morte totum te involve. Et si Dominus te voluerit judicare, dic, 'Domine, mortem Domini nostri Jesus Christi objicio inter me et tuum judicium, aliter tecum non contendo'. Et si tibi eixerit quia peccator es, dic,*

'Mortem Domini nostri Jesus Christi pono inter me et peccte mea'. Si dixerit tibi quot meruisti damnationem; dic, 'Domine, fol. 17, "Tu hinc o rosea martyrum turba offer pro me nunc et in hora mortis mee, merita, fidelitatum, constantiae, et pretiosi sanguinis, cum sanguine agni immaculati, pro omnium salute effusi." Jerome, long before Anselm, spake to the same purpose (lib. 6 in Isaiah 13:6, 7): "When the day of judgment or of death shall come, all hands will be dissolved" (that is, faint or fall down); "unto which it is said in another place, 'Be strengthened, ye hands that hang down.' But all hands shall be melted down" (that is, all men's strength and confidence shall fail them), "because no works shall be found which can answer the righteousness of God; for no flesh shall be justified in his sight. Whence the prophet says in the psalm, 'If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquity, who should stand?" And Ambrose, to the same purpose (in Psalm 119. *Resh*): "Let no man arrogate any thing unto himself, let no man glory in his own merits or good deeds, let no man boast of his power: let us all hope to find mercy by our Lord Jesus; for we shall all stand before his judgment-seat. Of him will I beg pardon, of him will I desire indulgence; what other hope is there for sinners?"

Wherefore, if men will be turned off from a continual regard unto the greatness, holiness, and majesty of God, by their inventions in the heat of disputation; if they do forget a reverential consideration of what will become them, and what they may retake themselves unto when they stand before his tribunal; they may engage into such apprehensions as they dare not abide by in their own personal trial. For "how shall man be just with God?" Hence it has been observed, that the schoolmen themselves, in their meditations and devotional writings, wherein they had immediate thoughts of God, with whom they had to do, did speak quite another language as to justification before God than they do in their wrangling, philosophical, fiery disputes about it. And I had rather learn what some men really judge about their own justification from their prayers than their writings. Nor do I remember that I did ever hear any good man in his prayers use any expressions about justification, pardon



of sin, and righteousness before God, wherein any plea from any thing in ourselves was introduced or made use of. The prayer of Daniel has, in this matter, been the substance of their supplications: "O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces. We do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies. O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; for thine own sake, O my God," Daniel 9:7, 18, 19. Or that of the psalmist, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified," Psalm 143:2. Or, "If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O LORD, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared," Psalm 130:3, 4.

On which words the exposition of Austin is remarkable, speaking of David, and applying it unto himself: "*Ecce clamat sub molibus iniquitatum suarum. Circumspexit se, circumspexit vitam suam, vidit illam undique flagitiis coopertam; quacunq[ue] respexit, nihil in se boni invenit: et cum tante et tam multa peccata undique videret, tanquam expavescens, exclamavit, 'Si iniquitates observaris Domine, quis sustinebit?' Vidit enim prope totam vitam humanam circumlatrari peccatis; accusari omnes conscientias cogitationibus suis; non inveniri castum praesumens de justitia; quod quia inveniri non potest, praesumat ergo omnium cor de misericordiam Domini Dei sui, et dicat Deo, 'Si iniquitates observaris Domine, Domine quis sustinebit?' Quae autem est spes? Quoniam apud te propitiatio est.*" And whereas we may and ought to represent unto God, in our supplications, our faith, or what it is that we believe herein, I much question whether some men can find in their hearts to pray over and plead before him all the arguments and distinctions they make use of to prove the interest of our works and obedience in our justification before him, or "enter into judgment" with him upon the conclusions which they make from them. Nor will many be satisfied to make use of that prayer which Pelagius taught the widow, as it was objected to him in the Diospolitan Synod:

"Thou knowest, O Lord, how holy, how innocent, how pure from all deceit and rapine,

are the hands which I stretch forth unto thee; how just, how unspotted with evil, how free from lying, are those lips wherewith I pour forth prayers unto thee, that thou wouldst have mercy on me." And yet, although he taught her so to plead her own purity, innocence, and righteousness before God, he does it not as those whereon she might be absolutely justified, but only as the condition of her obtaining mercy. Nor have I observed that any public liturgies (the mass-book only excepted, wherein there is a frequent recourse unto the merits and intercession of saints) do guide men in their prayers before God to plead any thing for their acceptance with him, or as the means or condition thereof, but grace, mercy, — the righteousness and blood of Christ alone. Wherefore I cannot but judge it best (others may think of it as they please), for those who would teach or learn the doctrine of justification in a due manner, to place their consciences in the presence of God, and their persons before his tribunal, and then, upon a due consideration of his greatness, power, majesty, righteousness, holiness, — of the terror of his glory and sovereign authority, to inquire what the Scripture and a sense of their own condition direct them unto as their relief and refuge, and what plea it becomes them to make for themselves. Secret thoughts of God and ourselves, retired meditations, the conduct of the spirit in humble supplications, deathbed preparations for an immediate appearance before God, faith and love in exercise on Christ, speak other things, for the most part, than many contend for.

Thirdly. A clear apprehension and due sense of the greatness of our apostasy from God, of the depravation of our natures thereby, of the power and guilt of sin, of the holiness and severity of the law, are necessary unto a right apprehension of the doctrine of justification. Therefore, unto the declaration of it does the apostle premise a large discourse, thoroughly to convince the minds of all that seek to be justified with a sense of these things, Romans 1, 2, 3. The rules which he has given us, the method which he prescribes, and the ends which he designs, are those which we shall choose to follow. And he lays it down in



general, "That the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith;" and that "the just shall live by faith," chap. 1:17. But he declares not in particular the causes, nature, and way of our justification, until he has fully evinced that all men are shut up under the state of sin, and manifested how deplorable their condition is thereby; and in the ignorance of these things, in the denying or palliating of them, he lays the foundation of all misbelief about the grace of God. Pelagianism, in its first root, and all its present branches, is resolved whereinto. For, not apprehending the dread of our original apostasy from God, nor the consequence of it in the universal depravation of our nature, they disown any necessity either of the satisfaction of Christ or the efficacy of divine grace for our recovery or restoration. So upon the matter the principal ends of the mission both of the Son of God and of the Holy Spirit are renounced; which issues in the denial of the deity of the one and the personality of the other. The fall which we had being not great, and the disease contracted thereby being easily curable, and there being little or no evil in those things which are now unavoidable unto our nature, it is no great matter to be freed or justified from all by a mere act of favor on our own endeavors; nor is the efficacious grace of God any way needful unto our sanctification and obedience; as these men suppose.

When these or the like conceits are admitted, and the minds of men by them kept off from a due apprehension of the state and guilt of sin, and their consciences from being affected with the terror of the Lord, and curse of the law thereon, justification is a notion to be dealt withal pleasantly or subtlety, as men see occasion. And hence arise the differences about it at present, — I mean those which are really such, and not merely the different ways whereby learned men express their thoughts and apprehensions concerning it.

By some the imputation of the actual apostasy and transgression of Adam, the head of our nature, whereby his sin became the sin of the world, is utterly denied. Hereby both the grounds the apostle proceeds on in evincing the necessity

of our justification, or our being made righteous by the obedience of another, and all the arguments brought in the confirmation of the doctrine of it, in the fifth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, are evaded and overthrown. Socinus, *de Servitor*, par. 4 cap. 6,⁴ confesses that place to give great countenance unto the doctrine of justification by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ; and therefore he sets himself to oppose, with sundry artifices, the imputation of the sin of Adam unto his natural posterity. For he perceived well enough that, upon the admission thereof, the imputation of the righteousness of Christ unto his spiritual seed would unavoidably follow, according unto the tenor of the apostle's discourse.

Some deny the depravation and corruption of our nature, which ensued on our apostasy from God, and the loss of his image; or, if they do not absolutely deny it, yet they so extenuate it as to render it a matter of no great concern unto us. Some disease and distemper of the soul they will acknowledge, arising from the disorder of our affections, whereby we are apt to receive in such vicious habits and customs as are in practice in the world; and, as the guilt hereof is not much, so the danger of it is not great. And as for any spiritual filth or stain of our nature that is in it, it is clean washed away from all by baptism. That deformity of soul which came upon us in the loss of the image of God, wherein the beauty and harmony of all our faculties, in all their acting in order unto their utmost end, did consist; that enmity unto God, even in the mind, which ensued thereon; that darkness which our understandings were clouded, yea, blinded withal, — the spiritual death which passed on the whole soul, and total alienation from the life of God; that impotency unto good, that inclination unto evil, that deceitfulness of sin, that power and efficacy of corrupt lusts, which the Scriptures and experience so fully charge on the state of lost nature, are rejected as empty notions or fables. No wonder if such persons look upon imputed righteousness as the shadow of a dream, who esteem those things which evidence its

⁴ [Faustus Socinus (Sozzini) (1539-1604), *De Jesu Christu Servatore* (1578).]



necessity to be but fond imaginations. And small hope is there to bring such men to value the righteousness of Christ, as imputed to them, who are so unacquainted with their own unrighteousness inherent in them. Until men know themselves better, they will care very little to know Christ at all.

Against such as these the doctrine of justification may be defended, as, we are obliged to contend for the faith once delivered unto the saints, and as the mouths of gainsayers are to be stopped; but to endeavor their satisfaction in it, whilst they are under the power of such apprehensions, is a vain attempt. As our Savior said unto them unto whom he had declared the necessity of regeneration, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things," so may we say, If men will not believe those things, whereof it would be marvelous, but that the reason of it is known, that they have not an undeniable evidence and experience in themselves, how can they believe those heavenly mysteries which respect a supposition of that within themselves which they will not acknowledge?

Hence some are so far from any concernment in a perfect righteousness to be imputed unto them, as that they boast of a perfection in themselves. So did the Pelagians of old glory in a sinless perfection in the sight of God, even when they were convinced of sinful miscarriages in the sight of men; as they are charged by Jerome, lib. 2 Dialog.; and by Austin, lib. 2 contra Julian., cap. 8. Such persons are not "*subjects capacia auditionis evangelicae.*" Whilst men have no sense in their own hearts and consciences of the spiritual disorder of their souls, of the secret continual acting of sin with deceit and violence, obstructing all that is good, promoting all that is evil, defiling all that is done by them through the lusting of the flesh against the Spirit, as contrary unto it, though no outward perpetration of sin or actual omission of duty do ensue thereon, who are not engaged in a constant watchful conflict against the first motions of sin, — unto whom they are not the greatest burden and sorrow in this life, causing them to cry out for deliverance from them, — who can despise those who make

acknowledgments in their confession unto God of their sense of these things, with the guilt wherewith they are accompanied, — (they) will, with an assured confidence, reject and contemn what is offered about justification through the obedience and righteousness of Christ imputed to us. For no man will be so fond as to be solicitous of a righteousness that is not his own, who has at home in a readiness that which is his own, which will serve his turn. It is, therefore, the ignorance of these things alone that can delude men into an apprehension of their justification before God by their own personal righteousness. For if they were acquainted with them, they would quickly discern such an imperfection in the best of their duties, such a frequency of sinful irregularities in their minds and disorders in their affections, such an unsuitableness in all that they are and do, from the inward frames of their hearts unto all their outward actions, unto the greatness and holiness of God, as would abate their confidence in placing any trust in their own righteousness for their justification.

By means of these and the like presumptuous conceptions of unenlightened minds, the consciences of men are kept off from being affected with a due sense of sin, and a serious consideration how they may obtain acceptance before God. Neither the consideration of the holiness or terror of the Lord, nor the severity of the law, as it indispensably requires a righteousness in compliance with its commands; nor the promise of the gospel, declaring and tendering a righteousness, the righteousness of God, in answer whereunto; nor the uncertainty of their own minds upon trials and surprisals, as having no stable ground of peace to anchor on; nor the constant secret disquietment of their consciences, if not seared or hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, can prevail with them whose thoughts are prepossessed with such slight conceptions of the state and art of sin to fly for refuge unto the only hope that is set before them, or really and distinctly to comport with the only way of deliverance and salvation.

Wherefore, if we would either teach or learn the doctrine of justification in a due manner, a clear apprehension of the greatness of our apostasy



from God, a due sense of the guilt of sin, a deep experience of its power, all with respect unto the holiness and law of God, are necessary unto us. We have nothing to do in this matter with men, who, through the fever of pride, have lost the understanding of their own miserable condition. For, "*Natura sic apparet vitiata, ut hoc majoris vitii sit non videre,*" Austin.

The whole need not the physician, but the sick. Those who are pricked unto the heart for sin, and cry out, "What shall we do to be saved?" will understand what we have to say. Against others we must defend the truth, as God shall enable. And it may be made good by all sorts of instances, that as men rise in their notions about the extenuation of sin, so they fall in their regard unto the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. And it is no less true also, on the other hand, as unbelief works in men a disesteem of the person and righteousness of Christ, they are cast inevitably to seek for countenance unto their own consciences in the extenuation of sin. So insensibly are the minds of men diverted from Christ, and seduced to place their confidence in themselves. Some confused respect they have unto him, as a relief they know not how nor wherein; but they live in that pretended height of human wisdom, to trust to themselves. So they are instructed to do by the best of the philosophers: "*Unum bonum est, quod beatae vitae causa et firmamentum est, sibi fidere,*" Seneca, Epist. 31.⁵ Hence, also, is the internal sanctifying grace of God, among many, equally despised with the imputation of the righteousness of Christ. The sum of their faith, and of their arguments in the confirmation of it, is given by the learned Roman orator and philosopher. "*Virtutem,*" he says, "*nemo unquam Deo acceptam retulit; nimirum recte. Propter virtutem enim jure laudamur, et in virtute recte gloriamur, quod non contingeret, si donum a Deo, non a nobis haberemus,*" Tully, *de Nat. Deor.*⁶

Fourthly. The opposition that the Scripture makes between grace and works in general, with

⁵ [Seneca, Epistle 31, On Siren Songs. "What they wish to have heaped upon you are not really good things; *there is only one good, the cause and the support of a happy life – trust in oneself.*"]

⁶ [Tully, *De natura deorum* (on the nature of the gods).]

the exclusion of the one and the assertion of the other in our justification, deserves a previous consideration. The opposition intended is not made between grace and works, or our own obedience, as unto their essence, nature, and consistency, in the order and method of our salvation; but only with respect unto our justification. I do not design herein to plead any particular testimonies of Scripture, as unto their especial sense, or declaration of the mind of the Holy Ghost in them, which will afterward be with some diligence inquired into; but only to take a view which way the eye of the Scripture guides our apprehensions, and what compliance there is in our own experience with that guidance.

The principal seat of this doctrine, as will be confessed by all, is in the Epistles of Paul unto the Romans and Galatians, whereunto that also to the Hebrews may be added: but in that unto the Romans it is most eminently declared; for therein is it handled by the apostle *ex professo* [*expressly*] at large, and that both doctrinally and in the way of controversy with them by whom the truth was opposed. And it is worth our consideration what process he makes towards the decoration of it, and what principles he proceeds upon therein.

He lays it down as the fundamental maxim which he would proceed upon, or as a general thesis, including the substance of what he designed to explain and prove, that in the gospel the "righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith," Romans 1:17. All sorts of men who had any knowledge of God and themselves, were then, as they must be always, inquiring, and in one degree or other laboring, after righteousness. For this they looked on, and that justly, as the only means of an advantageous relation between God and themselves.

Neither had the generality of men any other thoughts, but that this righteousness must be their own, — inherent in them, and performed by them; as Romans 10:3. For as this is the language of a natural conscience and of the law, and suited unto all philosophical notions concerning the nature of righteousness; so whatever testimony was given of another kind in



the law and the prophets (as such a testimony is given unto a “righteousness of God without the law,” chap. 3:21), there was a veil upon it, as to the understanding of all sorts of men. As, therefore, righteousness is that which all men seek after, and cannot but seek after, who design or desire acceptance with God; so it is in vain to inquire of the law, of natural conscience, of philosophical reason, after any righteousness but what consists in inherent habits and acts of our own. Neither law, nor natural conscience, nor reason, do know any other. But in opposition unto this righteousness of our own, and the necessity thereof, testified unto by the law in its primitive constitution, by the natural light of conscience, and the apprehension of the nature of things by reason, the apostle declares, that in the gospel there is revealed another righteousness, which is also the righteousness of another, the righteousness of God, and that from faith to faith. For not only is the righteousness itself revealed alien from those other principles, but also the manner of our participation of it, or its communication unto us, “from faith to faith” (the faith of God in the revelation, and our faith in the acceptation of it, being only here concerned), is an eminent revelation. Righteousness, of all things, should rather seem to be from works unto works, — from the work of grace in us to the works of obedience done by us, as the Papists affirm. “No,” says the apostle, “it is ‘from faith to faith;’” whereof afterward.

This is the general thesis the apostle proposes unto confirmation; and he seems therein to exclude from justification every thing but the righteousness of God and the faith of believers. And to this purpose he considers all persons that did or might pretend unto righteousness, or seek after it, and all ways and means whereby they hoped to attain unto it, or whereby it might most probably be obtained, declaring the failing of all persons, and the insufficiency of all means as unto them, for the obtaining a righteousness of our own before God. And as unto persons, —

1. He considers the Gentiles, with all their notions of God, their practice in religious worship, with their conversation thereon: and from the whole of what might be observed

amongst them, he concludes, that they neither were nor could be justified before God; but that they were all, and most deservedly, obnoxious unto the sentence of death. And whatever men may discourse concerning the justification and salvation of any without the revelation of the righteousness of God by the gospel, “from faith to faith,” it is expressly contradictory to his whole discourse, chap. 1, from verse 19 to the end.

2. He considers the Jews, who enjoyed the written law, and the privileges wherewith it was accompanied, especially that of circumcision, which was the outward seal of God’s covenant: and on many considerations, with many arguments, he excludes them also from any possibility of attaining justification before God, by any of the privileges they enjoyed, or their own compliance wherewithal, chap. 2. And both sorts he excludes distinctly from this privilege of righteousness before God, with this one argument, that both of them sinned openly against that which they took for the rule of their righteousness, — namely, the Gentiles against the light of nature, and the Jews against the law; whence it inevitably follows, that none of them could attain unto the righteousness of their own rule. But he proceeds farther, unto that which is common to them all; and, —

3. He proves the same against all sorts of persons, whether Jews or Gentiles, from the consideration of the universal depravation of nature in them all, and the horrible effects that necessarily ensue thereon in the hearts and lives of men, chap. 3; so evidencing that as they all were, so it could not fall out but that all must be shut up under sin, and come short of righteousness. So, from persons he proceeds to things, or means of righteousness. And, —

4. Because the law was given of God immediately, as the whole and only rule of our obedience unto him, and the works of the law are therefore all that is required of us, these may be pleaded with some pretense, as those whereby we may be justified. Wherefore, in particular, he considers the nature, use, and end of the law, manifesting its utter insufficiency to be a means of our justification before God, chap. 3:19, 20.



5. It may be yet objected, that the law and its works may be thus insufficient, as it is obeyed by unbelievers in the state of nature, without the aids of grace administered in the promise; but with respect unto them who are regenerate and do believe, whose faith and works are accepted with God, it may be otherwise. To obviate this objection, he gives an instance in two of the most eminent believers under the Old Testament, — namely, Abraham and David, declaring that all works whatever were excluded in and from their justification, chap. 4.

On these principles, and by this gradation, he peremptorily concludes that all and every one of the sons of men, as unto any thing that is in themselves, or can be done by them, or be wrought in them, are guilty before God, obnoxious unto death, shut up under sin, and have their mouths so stopped as to be deprived of all pleas in their own excuse; that they had no righteousness wherewith to appear before God; and that all the ways and means whence they expected it were insufficient unto that purpose.

Hereon he proceeds with his inquiry, how men may be delivered from this condition, and come to be justified in the sight of God. And in the resolution hereof he makes no mention of any thing in themselves, but only faith, whereby we receive the atonement. That whereby we are justified, he says, is “the righteousness of God which is by the faith of Christ Jesus;” or, that we are justified “freely by grace through the redemption that is in him,” chap. 3:22-24. And not content here with this answer unto the inquiry how lost convinced sinners may come to be justified before God, — namely, that it is by the “righteousness of God, revealed from faith to faith, by grace, by the blood of Christ,” as he is set forth for a propitiation, — he immediately proceeds unto a positive exclusion of every thing in and of ourselves that might pretend unto an interest herein, as that which is inconsistent with the righteousness of God as revealed in the gospel, and witnessed unto by the law and the prophets.

How contrary their scheme of divinity is unto this design of the apostle, and his management of it, who affirm, that before the law, men were

justified by obedience unto the light of nature, and some particular revelations made unto them in things of their own especial private concernment; and that after the giving of the law, they were so by obedience unto God according to the directions thereof! as also, that the heathen might obtain the same benefit in compliance with the dictates of reason, — cannot be contradicted by any who have not a mind to be contentious.

Answerable unto this declaration of the mind of the Holy Ghost herein by the apostle, is the constant tenor of the Scripture speaking to the same purpose. The grace of God, the promise of mercy, the free pardon of sin, the blood of Christ, his obedience, and the righteousness of God in him, rested in and received by faith, are everywhere asserted as the causes and means of our justification, in opposition unto any thing in ourselves, so expressed as it uses to express the best of our obedience, and the utmost of our personal righteousness. Wherever mention is made of the duties, obedience, and personal righteousness of the best of men, with respect unto their justification, they are all renounced by them, and they betake themselves unto sovereign grace and mercy alone. Some places to this purpose may be recounted.

The foundation of the whole is laid in the first promise; wherein the destruction of the work of the devil by the suffering of the seed of the woman is proposed as the only relief for sinners, and only means of the recovery of the favor of God.

“It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel,” Genesis 3:15.

“Abraham believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness,” Genesis 15:6.

“And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat; and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited,” Leviticus 16:21, 22.



“I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only,” Psalm 71:16.

“If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O LORD, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared,” Psalm 130:3, 4.

“Enter not into judgment with thy servant: for in thy sight shall no man living be justified,” Psalm 143:2.

“Behold, he put no trust in his servants; and his angels he charged with folly: how much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust?” Job 4:18, 19.

“Fury is not in me: who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together. Or let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me; and he shall make peace with me,” Isaiah 27:4, 5.

“Surely, shall one say, In the LORD have I righteousness and strength: in the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory,” chap. 45:24, 25.

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities,” chap. 53:6, 11.

“This is his name whereby he shall be called, The LORD our Righteousness,” Jeremiah 23:6.

“But ye are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags,” Isaiah 64:6.

“He shall finish the transgression, and make an end of sins, and make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness,” Daniel 9:24.

“As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name,” John 1:12.

“As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted

up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life,” chap. 3:14, 15.

“Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses,” Acts 13:38, 39.

“That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me,” chap. 26:18.

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God has set forth 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; to declare at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay; but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law,” Romans 3:24-28.

“For if Abraham were justified by works, he has whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the Scriptures? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin,” chap. 4:2-8.

“But not as the offense, so also is the free gift. For if through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, has abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offenses unto justification. For if by one man’s offense death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the



gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore, as by the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous," chap. 5:15-19.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us," chap. 8:1-4.

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth," chap. 10:4.

"And if by grace, then is it no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace; otherwise work is no more work," chap. 11:6.

"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption," 1 Corinthians 1:30.

"For he has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Corinthians 5:21.

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified," Galatians 2:16.

"But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," chap. 3:11-13.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has before ordained that we should walk in them," Ephesians 2:8-10.

"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," Philippians 3:8, 9.

"Who has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began," 2 Timothy 1:9.

"That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life," Titus 3:7.

"Once in the end of the world has he appeared, to put away sin," Hebrews 9:26, 28.

"Having by himself purged our sins," chap. 1:3.

"For by one offering he has perfected forever them that are sanctified," chap. 10:14.

"The blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanseth us from all sin," 1 John 1:7.

Wherefore,

"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen," Revelation 1:5, 6.

These are some of the places which at present occur to remembrance, wherein the Scripture represents unto us the grounds, causes, and reasons, of our acceptance with God. The especial import of many of them, and the evidence of truth that is in them, will be afterwards considered. Here we take only a general view of them. And every thing in and of ourselves, under any consideration whatever,



seems to be excluded from our justification before God, faith alone excepted, whereby we receive his grace and the atonement. And, on the other side, the whole of our acceptance with him seems to be assigned unto grace, mercy, the obedience and blood of Christ; in opposition unto our own worth and righteousness, or our own works and obedience. And I cannot but suppose that the soul of a convinced sinner, if not prepossessed with prejudice, will, in general, not judge amiss whether of these things, that are set in opposition one to the other, he should betake himself unto, that he may be justified.

But it is replied, — These things are not to be understood absolutely, and without limitations. Sundry distinctions are necessary, that we may come to understand the mind of the Holy Ghost and sense of the Scripture in these ascriptions unto grace, and exclusions of the law, our own works and righteousness from our justification. For, —

1. The law is either the moral or the ceremonial law. The latter, indeed, is excluded from any place in our justification, but not the former.

2. Works required by the law are either wrought before faith, without the aid of grace; or after believing, by the help of the Holy Ghost. The former are excluded from our justification, but not the latter.

3. Works of obedience wrought after grace received may be considered either as sincere only, or absolutely perfect, according to what was originally required in the covenant of works. Those of the latter sort are excluded from any place in our justification, but not those of the former.

4. There is a twofold justification before God in this life, — a first and a second; and we must diligently consider with respect unto whether of these justifications any thing is spoken in the Scripture.

5. Justification may be considered either as to its beginning or as unto its continuation; — and so it has divers causes under these diverse respects.

6. Works may be considered either as meritorious “*ex condigno*,” so as their merit should arise from their own intrinsic worth; or “*ex congruo*” only, with respect unto the covenant and promise of God. Those of the first sort are excluded, at least from the first justification: the latter may have place both in the first and second.

7. Moral causes may be of many sorts: preparatory, dispositive, meritorious, conditionally efficient, or only “*sine quibus non*.” And we must diligently inquire in what sense, under the notion of what cause or causes, our works are excluded from our justification, and under what notions they are necessary thereunto. And there is no one of these distinctions but it needs many more to explain it; which, accordingly, are made use of by learned men. And so specious a color may be put on these things, when warily managed by the art of disputation, that very few are able to discern the ground of them, or what there is of substance in that which is pleaded for; and fewer yet, on whether side the truth does lie. But he who is really convinced of sin, and, being also sensible of what it is to enter into judgment with the holy God, inquires for himself, and not for others, how he may come to be accepted with him, will be apt, upon the consideration of all these distinctions and sub-distinctions wherewith they are attended, to say to their authors, “*Fecistis probe, incertior sum multo, quam dudum.*”

My inquiry is, How shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? How shall I escape the wrath to come? What shall I plead in judgment before God, that I may be absolved, acquitted, justified? Where shall I have a righteousness that will endure a trial in his presence? If I should be harnessed with a thousand of these distinctions, I am afraid they would prove thorns and briars, which he would pass through and consume.

The inquiry, therefore is, upon the consideration of the state of the person to be justified, before mentioned and described, and the proposal of the reliefs in our justification as now expressed, whether it be the wisest and safest course for such a person seeking to be



justified before God, to betake himself absolutely, his whole trust and confidence, unto sovereign grace, and the mediation of Christ, or to have some reserve for, or to place some confidence in, his own graces, duties, works, and obedience? In putting this great difference unto umpirage, that we may not be thought to fix on a partial arbitrator we shall refer it to one of our greatest and most learned adversaries in this cause. And he positively gives us in his determination and resolution in those known words, in this case (Bellar. *de Justificat.*, lib. 5 cap. 7, prop. 3): “By reason of the uncertainty of our own righteousness, and the danger of vain glory, it is the safest course to repose our whole trust in the mercy and kindness or grace of God alone.”

And this determination of this important inquiry he confirms with two testimonies of Scripture, as he might have done it with many more. But those which he thought meet to mention are not impertinent. The first is Daniel 9:18, “We do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousnesses, but for thy great mercies;” and the other is that of our Savior, Luke 17:10, “When ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants.”

And after he has confirmed his resolution with sundry testimonies of the fathers, he closes his discourse with this dilemma: “Either a man has true merits, or he has not. If he has not, he is perniciously deceived when he trusts in any thing but the mercy of God alone, and seduces himself, trusting in false merits; if he has them, he loses nothing whilst he looks not to them, but trusts in God alone. So that whether a man have any good works or no, as to his justification before God, it is best and safest for him not to have any regard unto them, or put any trust in them.” And if this be so, he might have spared all his pains he took in writing his sophisticated books about justification, whose principal design is to seduce the minds of men into a contrary opinion. And so, for aught I know, they may spare their labor also, without any disadvantage unto the church of God or their own souls, who so earnestly contend for some kind of interest or other for our own duties and obedience in our justification

before God; seeing it will be found that they place their own whole trust and confidence in the grace of God by Jesus Christ alone. For to what purpose do we labor and strive with endless disputations, arguments, and distinctions, to prefer our duties and obedience unto some office in our justification before God, if, when we have done all, we find it the safest course in our own persons to abhor ourselves with Job in the presence of God, to betake ourselves unto sovereign grace and mercy with the publican, and to place all our confidence in them through the obedience and blood of Christ?

So died that great emperor, Charles V, as Thuanus gives the account of his *Novissima*. So he reasoned with himself: “That in himself he was altogether unworthy to obtain the kingdom of heaven by his own works or merits; but that his Lord God, who enjoyed it on a double right or title, by inheritance of the Father, and the merit of his own passion, was contented with the one himself, and freely granted unto him the other; on whose free grant he laid claim thereunto, and in confidence thereof he should not be confounded; for the oil of mercy is poured only into the vessel of faith or trust: that this is the trust of a man despairing in himself, and resting in his Lord; otherwise, to trust unto his own works or merits, is not faith, but treachery: that sins are blotted out by the mercy of God; and therefore we ought to believe that our sins can be pardoned by him alone, against whom alone we have sinned, with whom there is no sin, and by whom alone sins are forgiven.” This is the faith of men when they come to die, and those who are exercised with temptations whilst they live. Some are hardened in sin, and endeavor to leave this world without thoughts of another; some are stupidly ignorant, who neither know nor consider what it is to appear in the presence of God, and to be judged by him; some are seduced to place their confidence in merits, pardons, indulgences, and future suffrages for the dead: but such as are acquainted with God and themselves in any spiritual manner, who take a view of the time that is past, and approaching eternity, into which they must enter by the judgment-seat of God, however they may have thought, talked, and



disputed about their own works and obedience, looking on Christ and his righteousness only to make up some small defects in themselves, will come at last unto a universal renunciation of what they have been, and are, and betake themselves unto Christ alone for righteousness or salvation. And in the whole ensuing discourse I shall as little as is possible immix myself in any curious scholastical disputes. This is the substance of what is pleaded for, — that men should renounce all confidence in themselves, and every thing that may give countenance whereunto; betaking themselves unto the grace of God by Christ alone for righteousness and salvation. This God designs in the gospel, 1 Corinthians 1:29-31; and herein, whatever difficulties we may meet withal in the explication of some propositions and terms that belong unto the doctrine of justification, about which men have various conceptions, I doubt not of the internal concurrent suffrage of them who know any thing as they ought of God and themselves.

Fifthly. There is in the Scripture represented unto us a commutation between Christ and believers, as unto sin and righteousness; that is, in the imputation of their sins unto him, and of his righteousness unto them. In the improvement and application hereof unto our own souls, no small part of the life and exercise of faith does consist.

This was taught the church of God in the offering of the scapegoat:

“And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat. And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities,” Leviticus 16:21, 22.

Whether this goat sent away with this burden upon him did live, and so was a type of the life of Christ in his resurrection after his death; or whether he perished in the wilderness, being cast down the precipice of a rock by him that conveyed him away, as the Jews suppose; it is generally acknowledged, that what was done to him and with him was only a representation of

what was done really in the person of Jesus Christ. And Aaron did not only confess the sins of the people over the goat, but he also put them all on his head, וְהִתְיַדָּ אֶתְּמֵעַל־רֹאשׁ־הַשָּׂעִיר, — “And he shall give them all to be on the head of the goat.” In answer whereunto it is said, that he bare them all upon him. This he did by virtue of the divine institution, wherein was a ratification of what was done. He did not transfuse sin from one subject into another, but transferred the guilt of it from one to another; and to evidence this translation of sin from the people unto the sacrifice, in his confession, “he put and fixed both his hands on his head.” Thence the Jews say, “that all Israel was made as innocent on the day of expiation as they were on the day of creation;” from verse 30. Wherein they came short of perfection or consummation thereby the apostle declares, Hebrews 10. But this is the language of every expiatory sacrifice, “*Quod in ejus caput sit,*” — “Let the guilt be on him.” Hence the sacrifice itself was called חַטָּאת and עֲוֹן; — “sin” and “guilt,” Leviticus 4:29; 7:2; 10:17. And therefore, where there was an uncertain murder, and none could be found that was liable to punishment thereon, that guilt might not come upon the land, nor the sin be imputed unto the whole people, a heifer was to be slain by the elders of the city that was next unto the place where the murder was committed, to take away the guilt of it, Deuteronomy 21:1-9. But whereas this was only a moral representation of the punishment due to guilt, and no sacrifice, the guilty person being not known, those who slew the heifer did not put their hands on him, so as to transfer their own guilt to him, but washed their hands over him, to declare their personal innocence. By these means, as in all other expiatory sacrifices, did God instruct the church in the transferring of the guilt of sin unto Him who was to bear all their iniquities, with their discharge and justification thereby. So “God laid on Christ the iniquities of us all,” that “by his stripes we might be healed,” Isaiah 53:5, 6. Our iniquity was laid on him, and he bare it, verse 11; and through his bearing of it we are freed from it. His stripes are our healing. Our sin was his, imputed unto him; his merit is ours, imputed unto us.



“He was made sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might become the righteousness of God in him,” 2 Corinthians 5:21.

This is that commutation I mentioned: he was made sin for us; we are made the righteousness of God in him. God not imputing sin unto us, verse 19, but imputing righteousness unto us, does it on this ground alone that “he was made sin for us.” And if by his being made sin, only his being made a sacrifice for sin is intended, it is to the same purpose; for the formal reason of any thing being made an expiatory sacrifice, was the imputation of sin unto it by divine institution. The same is expressed by the same apostle, Romans 8:3, 4, “God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us.”

The sin was made his, he answered for it; and the righteousness which God requireth by the law is made ours: the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us, not by our doing it, but by his. This is that blessed change and commutation wherein alone the soul of a convinced sinner can find rest and peace. So he “has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, that the blessing of Abraham might come on us,” Galatians 3:13, 14.

The curse of the law contained all that was due to sin. This belonged unto us; but it was transferred on him. He was made a curse; whereof his hanging on a tree was the sign and token. Hence he is said to “bear our sins in his own body on the tree,” 1 Peter 2:24; because his hanging on the tree was the token of his bearing the curse: “For he that is hanged is the curse of God,” Deuteronomy 21:23. And in the blessing of faithful Abraham all righteousness and acceptation with God is included; for Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness.

But because some, who, for reasons best known unto themselves, do take all occasions to except against my writings, have in particular raised an impertinent clamor about somewhat that I formerly delivered to this purpose, I shall declare the whole of my judgment herein in the words of

some of those whom they can pretend no quarrel against, that I know of.

The excellent words of Justin Martyr deserve the first place:⁷

“He gave his Son a ransom for us; — the holy for transgressors; the innocent for the nocent; the just for the unjust; the incorruptible for the corrupt; the immortal for mortals. For what else could hide or cover our sins but his righteousness? In whom else could we wicked and ungodly ones be justified, or esteemed righteous, but in the Son of God alone? O sweet permutation, or change! O unsearchable work, or curious operation! O blessed beneficence, exceeding all expectations that the iniquity of many should be hid in one just one, and the righteousness of one should justify many transgressors.”

And Gregory Nyssen speaks to the same purpose (Orat. 2 in Cant.): “He has transferred unto himself the filth of my sins, and communicated unto me his purity, and made me partaker of his beauty.”

So Augustine, also (*Enchirid. Ad Laurent.*, cap. 41) “He was sin, that we might be righteousness; not our own, but the righteousness of God; not in ourselves, but in him; as he was sin, not his own, but ours, — not in himself, but in us.”

The Old Latin translation renders those words, Psalm 22:1, דְּבַרִי שְׂאֵנֹתַי, — “*Verba delictorum meorum.*” He thus comments on the place: “How says he, ‘Of my sins?’ Because he prayeth for our sins; he made our sins to be his, that he might make his righteousness to be ours. “O sweet commutation and change!”

And Chrysostom, to the same purpose, on those words of the apostle, — “That we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Epist. ad Corinth. cap. 5 hom. 11): “What word, what speech is this? What mind can comprehend or express it? For he says, ‘He made him who was righteous to be made a sinner, that he might make sinners righteous. Nor yet does he say so

⁷ [Now not thought to be Justin Martyr's. The anonymous writer gave himself the title of Mathetes. See *Epistle Of Mathetes To Diognetus*, Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. I.]



neither, but that which is far more sublime and excellent; for he speaks not of an inclination or affection, but expresses the quality itself. For he says not, he made him a sinner, but sin; that we might be made, not merely righteous, but righteousness, and that the righteousness of God, when we are justified not by works (for if we should, there must be no spot found in them), but by grace, whereby all sin is blotted out.”

So Bernard also, Epist. 190, ad Innocent: — *“Homo siquidem qui debuit; homo qui solvit. Nam ‘si unus,’ inquit, ‘pro omnibus mortuus est, ergo omnes mortui sunt;’ ut videlicet satisfactio unius omnibus imputetur, sicut omnium peccata unus ille portavit: nec alter jam inveniatur, qui forisfecit, alter qui satisfecit; quia caput et corpus unus est Christus.”*

And many more speak unto the same purpose. Hence Luther, before he engaged in the work of reformation, in an epistle to one George Spenlein, a monk, was not afraid to write after this manner: *“Midulcis frater, disce Christum et hunc crucifixum, disce ei cantare, et de teipso desperant dicere ei; tu Domine Jesu es justitia mea, ego autem sum peccatum tuum; tu assumpsisti meum, et dedisti mihi tuum; assumpsisti quod non eras, et dedisti mihi quod non eram. Ipse suscepit te et peccata tua fecit sua, et suam justitiam fecit tuam; maledictus qui haec non credit!”* Epist. an. 1516, hom. 1

If those who show themselves now so quarrelsome almost about every word that is spoken concerning Christ and his righteousness, had ever been harassed in their consciences about the guilt of sin, as this man was, they would think it no strange matter to speak and write as he did. Yea, some there are who have lived and died in the communion of the church of Rome itself, that have given their testimony unto this truth.

So speaks Taulerus (Meditat. *Vitae Christ.* cap. 7): “Christ took upon him all the sins of the world, and willingly underwent that grief of heart for them, as if he himself had committed them.”

And again, speaking in the person of Christ: “Whereas the great sin of Adam cannot go away, I beseech thee, heavenly Father, punish it in me.

For I take all his sins upon myself if, then, this tempest of anger be risen for me, cast me into the sea of my most bitter passion.” See, in the justification of these expressions, Hebrews 10:5-10.

The discourse of Albertus Pighius to this purpose, though often cited and urged, shall be once again repeated, both for its worth and truth, as also to let some men see how fondly they have pleased themselves in reflecting on some expressions of mine, as though I had been singular in them. His words are, after others to the same purpose:


“‘God was in Christ,’ says the apostle, ‘reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing unto men their sins,’ (‘and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.’) In him, therefore, we are justified before God; not in ourselves, not by our own, but by his righteousness, which is imputed unto us, now communicating with him. Wanting righteousness of our own, we are taught to seek for righteousness without ourselves, in him. So he says, ‘Him who knew no sin, he made to be sin for us’ (that is, an expiatory sacrifice for sin), ‘that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.’ We are made righteous in Christ, not with our own, but with the righteousness of God. By what right? The right of friendship, which makes all common among friends, according unto the ancient celebrated proverb. Being in grafted into Christ, fastened, united unto him, he makes his things ours, communicates his riches unto us, interposes his righteousness between the judgment of God and our unrighteousness: and under that, as under a shield and buckler, he hides us from that divine wrath which we have deserved, he defends and protects us therewith; yea, he communicates it unto us and makes it ours, so as that, being covered and adorned therewith, we may boldly and securely place ourselves before the divine tribunal and judgment, so as not only to appear righteous, but so to be. For even as the apostle affirms, that by one man’s fault we were all made sinners, so is the righteousness of Christ alone efficacious in the justification of us all: ‘And as by the disobedience of one man many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one man,’ says



he, 'many are made righteous.' This is the righteousness of Christ, even his obedience, whereby in all things he fulfilled the will of his Father; as, on the other hand, our unrighteousness is our disobedience and our transgression of the commands of God. But that our righteousness is placed in the obedience of Christ, it is from hence, that we being incorporated into him, it is accounted unto us as if it were ours; so as that therewith we are esteemed righteous. And as Jacob of old, whereas he was not the firstborn, being hid under the habit of his brother, and clothed with his garment, which breathed a sweet savor, presented himself unto his father, that in the person of another he might receive the blessing of the primogeniture; so it is necessary that we should lie hid under the precious purity of the First-born, our eldest brother, be fragrant with his sweet savor, and have our sin buried and covered with his perfections, that we may present ourselves before our most holy Father, to obtain from him the blessing of righteousness." And again: "God, therefore, does justify us by his free grace or goodness, wherewith he embraces us in Christ Jesus, when he clotheth us with his innocence and righteousness, as we are ingrafted into him; for as that alone is true and perfect which only can endure in the sight of God, so that alone ought to be presented and pleaded for us before the divine tribunal, as the advocate of or plea in our cause. Resting hereon, we here obtain the daily pardon of sin; with whose purity being covered, our filth, and the uncleanness of our imperfections are not imputed unto us, but are covered as if they were buried, that they may not come into the judgment of God; until, the old man being destroyed and slain in us, divine goodness receives us into peace with the second Adam."

So far he, expressing the power which the influence of divine truth had on his mind, contrary to the interest of the cause wherein he was engaged, and the loss of his reputation with them; for whom in all other things he was one of the fiercest champions. And some among the Roman church, who cannot bear this assertion of the commutation of sin and righteousness by

imputation between Christ and believers, no more than some among ourselves, do yet affirm the same concerning the righteousness of other men: "*Mercaturam quandam docere nos Paulus videtur. Abundatis, inquit, vos pecunia, et estis inopes justitiae; contra, illi abundant justitia et sunt inopes pecuniae; fiat quaedam commutatio; date vos piis egentibus pecuniam quae vobis affluit, et illis deficit; sic futurum est, ut illi vicissim justitiam suam qua abundant, et qua vos estis destituti, vobis communicent.*" Hosius, *De Expresso Dei Verbo*, tom. 2 p.21.⁸

But I have mentioned these testimonies, principally to be a relief unto some men's ignorance, who are ready to speak evil of what they understand not. 

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⁸ [Cardinal Stanislaus Hosius (1504-1579), *De expresso verbo Dei* (1558).]



Psalms or Hymns in Public Worship.

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by Rev. H M Cartwright



Rev I H Murray has written a booklet entitled *Should the Psalter be the only Hymnal of the Church?* which is published by the Banner of Truth Trust. He affirms that “for congregational praise there clearly needs to be a book or books for common use” and enquires as to “whether or not Christians and churches are left to form their own judgement on the material they use for this purpose, or whether there is a principle which requires them to use one book alone, namely the book of Psalms (that is, the Psalter in metrical form)”. The conclusion he endeavours to uphold is that “Scripture does not command any one manual of praise for the exclusive use of the Church. The regulative principle controls what shall or shall not be parts of worship: it is sung praise that is authorized as a part, not the very words of which that part has to be made up.”

The argument for hymns in public worship. Mr. Murray surprisingly denies that there is “proof in Scripture that God appoint the one-hundred and fifty psalms of David for the public worship of the Old Testament Church”. He maintains that even “if it could be proved that the Psalter alone was the authorized praise of the Old Testament Church, it would still be another proposition altogether to establish that it must remain the sole manual for the New.” He affirms that “nowhere in Scripture is the idea presented that praise *spoken* has to be restricted to Bible words, words appointed by the Holy Spirit; why then should praise *sung* be different?” He claims that the Book of Psalms “could be called a Book of Prayers as well as a Book of Praises. In that respect there is nothing comparable to it elsewhere in Scripture, yet no one holds that the prayers of the Church must ever be restricted to the inspired words that God has given us.”

He believes that “it can be argued from the New Testament not simply that the case for hymns is left open, but that there is good reason for believing that the praise of the Church was not intended to be left precisely where it was in the former dispensation”. Since “the coming of Christ and His finished work ensured a great advance in light and privilege for the people of God”, he asks if it is “credible that the language of Christian praise must ever be confined to the words of an age of far less light and privilege”. He agrees with Isaac Watts that “there are many hundreds of verses in that book which a Christian cannot properly assume without putting a very different meaning upon them” and alleges that “it is difficult, and at times impossible, to make the language of David and Asaph the most appropriate expression of Christian experience.”

The major defects of Mr. Murray’s “scriptural” argument. While he professes to justify his position from Scripture, his arguments consist largely of unsubstantiated deductions from “the greater light” of the New Testament dispensation together with conjecture as to the meaning of Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16. Hugh Martin said in the 1872 Free Church Assembly that “the question is not whether the dispensation under which we now live is better and brighter than that which preceded it, but whether, under this better and brighter dispensation, there is any security for better and brighter hymns than the Psalms of David, and whether there is a promise given to any man, or any body of men, of a richer unction of the Spirit – and not a richer unction only, but a specifically inspiring action of the Spirit – for the purpose of composing hymns for the public worship of God in the Church than was given to him of whom it is written that in his blessed swan song he spoke



as follows: 'David, the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, The Spirit spake by me, and His word was in my tongue'. Is there any modern hymnologist in circumstances to say that? ... The question is not whether we are to rise above the Old Testament dispensation, but whether we are, by the help of uninspired hymnologists, to arise above the Spirit and Word of God in the mouth of David ... the man who was raised up on high."

John Kennedy, in the same Assembly, asked: "What view of God's character is not unfolded in the Psalms? What aspect of his providence is not presented in them? What special dealing with His Church, individually or collectively, is not celebrated? What phase of spiritual feeling, from the deepest groan of agony and hopelessness to the highest ecstasy of triumphant joy is not expressed? And have we not in the psalms the grand facts of redemption in the historic form?" Referring to those who thought that hymns were needed for appropriate response to the "further light" of the New Testament, he said: "Have you further light? If so, bring it to the Psalms, and use it as a help to sing them with the understanding; and, the more you do so, I venture to assure you that you will meet with depths which you cannot sound and heights of attainment in faith and feeling which you are weak to climb."

Anyone studying the commentators on the Ephesian and Colossian passages will notice that those who find in them uninspired hymns and scripture songs other than the Psalms use such words as "seem", "might" and "may" as they present their conjectural interpretations, whereas there is no doubt that the Book of Psalms includes each category of praise described there. Paul's original readers, with their Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, knew that well. Apart from these misused texts, Mr. Murray presents no scriptural warrant for uninspired materials of praise.

Historical defects. In his use of history, Mr. Murray practically ignores the fundamental distinction between Lutheran and Reformed principles regulating worship, particularly as

illustrated in the early days of the Scottish Reformation. He does not take account of the difference between, on the one hand, the established and authorized practice of the Reformed Churches, which they considered warranted by the Word and, on the other, the inconsistent practice tolerated through time in some of them. He ignores the fact that the movement for hymns in the nineteenth-century Free Church of Scotland was parallel to the rapidly accelerating degeneracy of that denomination and principally promoted by some who were also prominent in the disestablishment and union movements and in the accommodation of higher-critical and anti-Confessional trends.

Selective quotations. In his use of quotations Mr. Murray is unfairly selective. For example, to support his claim that Thomas Manton's use of Psalms was due to preference rather than principle, he quotes two sentences from Manton to the effect that other songs were not forbidden, based on a claim made by Tertullian that in early times hymns were sung as well as Scripture Psalms. But he does not refer to the extensive comment of Manton in the same context supporting his assertion that "Scripture Psalms not only may be sung, but are fittest to be used in the Church, as being indited by an infallible and unerring Spirit, and are of a more diffusive and unlimited concernment than private dictates of any particular person or spirit in the Church. It is impossible any should be of such a large heart as the penmen of the Word, to whom God vouchsafed such a public, high and infallible conduct; and therefore their excellent composures and addresses to God being recorded and consigned to the use of the Church for ever, it seemeth a wonderful arrogance and presumption to any to pretend to make better, or that their private and rash effusions will be more edifying."

When Mr. Murray claims to know "no prominent orthodox commentator" who takes the view that Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 refer solely to different sections of the Book of Psalms, he obviously discounts Manton, who wrote: "If the practice of the apostles may be interpreted by their instructions, the case will be



clear. In Col 3:16 and Eph 5:19, Paul bideth us 'speak to one another in *psalms* and *hymns* and *spiritual songs*'. Now these words (which are the known division of David's Psalms, and expressly answering to the Hebrew words *Shurim*, *Tehillim*, and *Mizmorim*, by which his Psalms are distinguished and entitled), being so precisely used by the Apostle in both places, do plainly point us to the Book of Psalms."¹ When he names Eadie, Hodge, Lenski and Hendriksen as examples of the prominent orthodox commentators who take his view of these verses, he ignores not only Thomas Manton, but also John Owen, John Brown of Haddington, Hugh Martin and John Murray, to name only some of those promoted by the Banner of Truth Trust as orthodox commentators and who take the view that these verses restrict sung praise in public worship to inspired materials.

Discounting of contrary arguments. In his references to the debates in the Free Church General Assembly between 1866 and 1872 – the pro-hymn arguments of which he largely reproduces and endorses in his booklet – he discounts the arguments put forward in opposition to the introduction of hymns. He ignores completely the contributions of such men as Hugh Martin, James Begg and Robert Elder. From a lengthy speech by John Kennedy he selects a brief remark where Kennedy distinguishes between a private use of hymns and the exclusive use of Biblical Psalms in public worship and alleges Kennedy and those who took his view could not answer questions regarding a scriptural warrant for this distinctions. He then makes the astonishing assertion that "it would appear that the inability of exclusive-psalm-singers to answer such questions contributed largely to the outcome of the debate in the Free Church of Scotland in 1872 which led to the provision of a full hymn book". Mr. Murray knows that answers were given, whether or not he accepts them, by each of the men named above, to these and other questions submitted by the advocates of hymns but that, for reasons which had nothing to do with the debate, its outcome was certain before it began.

Unwarranted assessments. Mr. Murray introduces notes into his discussion which are somewhat offensive and prejudicial. He gives the impression that those who contend for exclusive psalmody think complacently that only they are engaged in pure worship. However, in contending for pure worship as to the form, we are not oblivious to the fact that worship defective in form may be real, although displeasing to God in so far as it is not according to his mind, and that worship which is pure in form may be defective in other respects. Grace must be sought to worship both in Spirit and in truth. Mr. Murray, no doubt unintentionally, is rather immodestly condescending and judgemental when he "acknowledges that a few of the finest Christians he has known have been exclusive psalm singers: their lives and testimonies rose above the limitations of the language of their customary praise. That such is commonly the case in psalm-singing congregations is, however, as open to doubt today as it was in the time of Isaac Watts. In such congregations it is not normal for assurance of salvation to have the prominence which it ought to have, and the language of prayer can too easily become the language used 'before faith came' (Gal 3:23)." Such an assessment has no foundation in either historical or contemporary fact. To attribute the state of which he complains to exclusive use of the language of divinely-inspired Psalms in praise approaches to being a slur, not on men, but on the truth itself.

An outline argument for Psalms only. Regrettably, in this brief article it is not possible to review Mr. Murray's booklet more thoroughly or do other than outline the argument in favour of using Psalms only in public worship. That the case for hymns rests upon assumptions and conjecture, and not on clear warrant from Scripture, is itself an argument for the use of Psalms only. Our starting point is the truth that Christ is the Head of the Church. For our knowledge of His will we depend on His Word. When He reveals His will on any matter, conformity to it is our duty and privilege. God has revealed Himself in His glory as the object of worship. That He should be worshipped by the

¹ Manton, *Works*, vol 4, p 443.



Church is not an edict of men but an ordinance of God.

James Begg in *The Use of Organs* claims that “the worship of God is the most sacred thing with which His creatures have to do. It is more sacred than the government of the Church, more sacred even than Christian doctrine, for these are, in a sense, merely instrumental in bringing us into proper relations to God; and if it is true in anything whatsoever that God’s will must be the only rule, it is especially true of His own worship.” This doctrine is derived originally from the clear teaching of the Old Testament that God is jealous that He be worshipped, not only in the spirit of devotion, but also in the manner revealed by Himself. The Westminster divines drew this conclusion not just from the general indications of God’s will in His Word but from what they saw to be the tenor of the Second Commandment (see, for instance, *Shorter Catechism*, 50 and 51). This has not been affected by the movement from Sinai to Sion, or from Old Testament to New Testament (see Heb 12:28, 29 and compare the reiteration of Isaiah 29:13, 14 in Matthew 15:7-9; see also Jn 4:24; Col 2:20-23; 1 Pet 2:15). “If ye love Me, keep My commandments” (Jn 14:15) is a principle which prevails in every area of life. It is operative when a sinner seeks to draw near to God in worship.

When it comes to the *matter* of praise, the general principles brought out in these scriptures must be viewed in the light of biblical facts. Sung praise is a prescribed part of the public worship of God – for example, “according to the commandment of David, and of Gad the king’s seer, and Nathan the prophet” (2 Chr 29:25). Scripture authorizes men to preach the gospel and instructs persons to pray in terms which require that in these exercises they act in accordance with the Word and in dependence upon the Spirit, but not by divine inspiration or according to a prescribed form. Those who hear the preaching or the praying are to try the spirits and they can inwardly approve or dissent. But as *all* in a congregation are to sing praise, there must be previously agreed materials of praise and reason for satisfaction that what is to be sung has divine authority.


The Book of Psalms is the only scripturally authorized hymn book, as we see, for example, from 2 Chronicles 29:30 and from the use made of it by the Old Testament saints, by our Lord and by the Apostles. The oneness of the Church in Old and New Testament times, the completeness of the Psalms as regards doctrine and experience, and the divine provision of a book which adequately expresses the praises of God’s people in all ages, indicate its permanent place in the Church. It speaks the language of fulfillment as well as prediction, as Hugh Martin illustrated in 1872 by reference to Psalms 21:4; 40:6, 9; 68:18; 69:9, 20; 80:17; and 110:4. The divine provision of the Psalm Book secures the truthfulness of the praise and the liberty of the people from impositions by men. It expresses and promotes the unity of the Church. It also helps to form godly character and experience in those who enter into its doctrines and sentiments.

God did not include all the inspired songs of Scripture in the Book He provided, and so we have no authority to add even other portions of Scripture to what God has given as a complete book of praises. It was not supplanted or supplemented in New Testament times by divine appointment or inspiration. It cannot be supplemented by human hymns without displacing the divine. God has given a book of praise, and the biblical exhortations with respect to the subject matter of praise refer to that book. In the New Testament we are exhorted to sing Psalms and we have the example of Christ and the Apostles (for example, Matt 26:30; 1 Cor 14:15, 26; Eph 5:18-20; Col 3:16; Jas 5:13). Uninspired hymns are unknown in the New Testament. It is not without significance that none were used in the Churches of the Calvinistic Reformation.

We believe that the Westminster divines and our Scottish Reformers, in identifying the Psalms as the only authorized materials of the public praise of the Church, were acting in accordance with the biblical regulative principle summarized in the Westminster Confession of Faith: “The acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshipped




according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scripture.” (21:1). There is scriptural authority only for singing Psalms in the worship of the Church. That is why the Free

Presbyterian Church of Scotland is committed to exclusive psalmody. Having appreciated the work of Rev I H Murray and the Banner of Truth Trust in publishing sound literature, we regret the appearance of this booklet under these auspices. 

Singing the Name of Jesus.

The Psalm Singer “Can” Sing the Name of Jesus.

by Richard Bacon

n argument is sometimes made against the position of Exclusive Psalmody (the position that one should only sing the inspired songs from the OT Psalms in worship) that since the name of Jesus is not in the OT Psalms, that we must have new hymns for the NT Church. I’ve always been a bit puzzled by the force of this “argument.” I’ve seen the argument many times and expressed in a multitude of ways, but when pressed I’ve never been able to get any of its advocates to put it into a syllogistic form for me. Recently I’ve seen the suggestion that the fact that one does not find the name of Jesus in the Psalter is evidence against using the Psalter as an exclusive praise book. In order for that fact to count as evidence however, it seems to me that a syllogism something like the following would be needed:

We are commanded by Scripture to sing the name of Jesus.

The Psalter nowhere contains the name of Jesus.

Therefore the Psalter is insufficient as a songbook for the church.

However, what is generally proposed is something like:

It would be nice in my opinion to sing the name of Jesus.

The Psalter nowhere contains the name of Jesus.

Therefore I want to use some additional hymns that do contain the name of Jesus.

I do not think we are commanded anywhere in the OT to sing Jesus’ name anymore than we are commanded in the NT to sing it, so I think the argument is a sort of “red herring.” Why is the

name of Jesus (an Anglicization of the Greek transliteration of the Hebrew name Yehoshua) given to our savior? Because, as Matthew 1:21 informs us, “he shall save his people from their sins.” For those non-Hebraists reading this, he is called Yehoshuah (Joshua) because the Hebrew word for salvation is – you guessed it, “Yoshuah.” I wonder how many hymns are written using Jesus’ actual name that his mother or father who named him would have recognized? Probably not many, if any at all. Aside: I would not be surprised to find such hymns in Messianic congregations.

The Psalter is, however, replete with references to the Savior in his person, work, titles, attributes, and yes even his name. In the Psalms Christ is referred to by his “title” of Messiah (Greek = “Christ”). Of course, because in the Psalms we often find the word translated into English (we should sing with *understanding* as well as with spirit – 1 Cor. 14:15) we may not immediately recognize it. Never mind – we should learn what Jesus’ name ***means*** and not simply recite it as a mantra – I think all of us would agree with that regardless of our view of exclusive or non-exclusive Psalmody.

So then, here is a non-exhaustive list of Psalms that we can sing whenever we want to have Jesus’ title of Christ/Messiah/Anointed on our lips (I’ve included the verse by reference):

Psalm 2:2; Psalm 18:50; Psalm 20:6; Psalm 28:8; Psalm 45:7 (verbal variant); Psalm 84:9; Psalm 89:20 (verbal variant); Psalm 89:38; Psalm




89:51; Psalm 105:15; Psalm 132:10; Psalm 132:17.

I realize that it may be possible to sing these passages and have nothing other than King David in view. That would be a terrible misunderstanding of the Psalms, though. That would be like reading about the tabernacle without Christ in view or “the seed of Abraham” without Christ in view. The New Testament does not provide us with a new songbook in large measure because it teaches us how to **understand** the songbook God gave his church for the ages. In fact, I would maintain that there are some portions of the Psalms that are impossible to understand without a view to Christ (e.g. Psalm 68:18).

But wait, that list includes Jesus’ title, but not his name **Jesus**. Yes, that is correct. So, does singing the Psalter alone allow us to sing the name of Jesus? Yes, it does if we recall that he is named Jesus because his name is actually the Hebrew word for salvation. It would be more accurate for me to explain that it is **one** of the Hebrew words for salvation. The Psalter uses two cognate words for “salvation.” One is YShU`AH and the other is YSh`AH. If we note carefully, the only difference is the presence or absence of the shureq (letter “u”). The following list of Psalm verses speaks of the name YShU`AH, though you will typically find it translated by the English word “salvation.” These are the places that for all intents and purposes use the Hebrew word for the name of Jesus. For the Hebraists on the list, I should add that there will often be pronominal suffixes attached, but that does not change the fact that we are singing the English **translation** rather than merely the **transliteration** of Jesus’ name. Think of singing “king of the world” in the place of the name “Vladimir” or “Walter” and you will have a similar concept.

Psalm 3:8; 9:14; 13:5; 14:7; 20:5; 21:1, 5; 35:9; 38:22; 40:10, 16; 50:23; 51:14; 53:6; 62:1, 2, 6; 68:19; 69:29; 70:4; 71:15; 74:12; 78:22; 88:1; 89:26; 91:16; 96:2; 98:2, 3; 106:4; 116:13; 118:14, 15, 21; 119:41, 81, 123, 155, 166, 174; 140:7; 144:10; 149:4.

These verse numbers are all as found in the English Bible. Something that struck me as I was researching Psalm 89 is that this is the restatement of the Davidic covenant which clearly speaks of Christ and it also contains both his name (translated as “salvation”) and his title “Christ” fully four times.

Here is the “bottom line” of all this. As William Binnie said in his masterful work on the Psalms we must always read and sing the Psalms with one eye toward David and the other eye toward Christ. 

Tapes on Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage

The Westminster Confession at 24:5-6, reads in part

In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce and, after the divorce, to marry another, as if the offending party were dead. Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage: yet, nothing but adultery, or such willful desertion as can no way be remedied by the Church, or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage: wherein, a public and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed; and the persons concerned in it not left to their own wills and discretion in their own case.

This teaching is challenged today by many in the evangelical community. Is this part of the confession in error? Some allege that it is too strict and some say it is too loose. Pastor Bacon examines these statements of the Westminster Confession in his new series of sermons on *Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage*. This in-depth 16-tape series begins at the beginning with the marriage of Adam and Eve and continues on to examine the Biblical doctrines regulating marriage, divorce and remarriage in light of both the Old & New Testament.

This series contains much practical counsel. How should a Christian respond when his spouse leaves him? How should church sessions help establish and maintain godly marriages? Can a session help to prevent unbiblical divorces? How should we treat victims of divorce? How do we deal realistically and biblically with marriages, divorces and remarriages?

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Myanmar Missions Report.

The following are excerpts from emails Pastor Bacon sent during his August 2001 trip. "Sent" times are local time, Dallas, Texas, when these notes were forwarded to friends of FPCR by Mrs. Bacon.

Sent: Thursday, August 02, 2001 11:27 AM

"I arrived yesterday afternoon [Wednesday] on time. [Pastor] Micah and [his wife] Esther took me out to supper and then I came back to the hotel. I went to bed at about 7:00 (after taking some melatonin), but woke up at midnight. Then I lay awake until about 3:00AM (my body still has not adjusted to being out of synch by twelve hours). Then I slept until about 6:00 or so. The night was hot.

Today I spent the day at the CTC [Bible College] discussing the regulative principle of worship, etc. That was until 2:00. Then [Pastor] Micah and [his wife] Esther took me... [shopping].

On Monday the ministers' conference begins here in Yangon, goes for one week, then up to Kalemyo for one week. After that I come back to the CTC for one week and that will just about use up the time I have left. They have asked me to look at some property with them in Insein. That is where most of the Christians are in Yangon. I think we will do that on Saturday."

Sent: Friday, August 03, 2001 12:32 PM

Please thank everyone for their prayers on my behalf. I know that the reason I'm having such an easier time of this trip is due to their faithful prayers. Also, please tell them how much I appreciate them taking care of you and checking up on you. ... I am scheduled to preach both AM and PM services on Lord's Day. I anticipate beginning at Ephesians 6:10 on the whole armor of God. Tell everyone that I miss them and that I look forward to seeing them again. ... The Lord bless you all.

Pastor Bacon"

Sent: Saturday, August 04, 2001 8:48 AM

Pastor Micah and his father in law came by in a Taxi at almost 9:30 AM. We went to Insein to look at the area where the government is asking Pastor Micah to move his school. They are telling him that since it is a Christian school it should be in a Christian quarter. Pastor Micah has been looking at different places in the Insein quarter where he might move the school and we looked at some of them today.

The Lord bless."

Sent: Monday, August 06, 2001 10:12 AM

"I preached twice yesterday from Ephesians 6:10 — be strong in the Lord. In the morning I spoke about what the strengthening is and in the afternoon I spoke on the source and importance of the enabling. I think it was well received, but I must remember that a sermon takes twice as long when everything has to be repeated in order to be translated.

Sent: Monday, August 06, 2001 5:27 PM

"It hardly seems as though I have been gone from Rowlett for one whole week already. Of course I did not arrive in Yangon until Wednesday afternoon (Tuesday night by Rowlett time). I have finished a few of the days of teaching at CTC, which I spent teaching on the subjects of the RPW and also began to teach on TULIP, but only a bare beginning.

This week we begin the first of two ministers' conferences. The first one is here in Yangon and is for the ministers of their Burmese speaking congregations. I am hoping to give a reasonable overview of the Westminster Confession of Faith, but one week even meeting all day will probably not be enough because everything must be said twice — once by me and again by Micah as he translates into Burmese. Then next week we will be in Kalemyo at the Tahan MPCC. On Sunday we will have a church opening and I plan to preach from Psalm 84. During the rest of the week it will be the same conference as here, only in Falam [the language of the Chin people] language rather than Burmese language translation.

Finally, after our return from Kalemyo, I will finish teaching TULIP at the CTC and then leave for the USA on the 29th August.

Please continue to pray for me. My ministerings have been much more profitable this time, I think. Last year I landed sick (went through all the handkerchiefs I brought with me) and felt bad the whole time. This year I am doing much better. The weather is more difficult, but I think my health is better and I am actually feeling better most of the time."

Sent: Tuesday, August 07, 2001 9:41 AM

Thank you very much for your prayers on my behalf. I know God has been pleased to use your prayers in



great measure in doing his will here in Yangon. Last year when I came to this country, I landed at the airport with a head cold and it only got worse after that. This year, as the Chin say, my face has been shining the whole time.

For Thursday and Friday of last week I taught at the Christian Theological College of the MPCC. There are about 40 students ranging in age from 17 upward. Many of the students hope to be in church work of some kind one day. I thought it might be good to teach them about the biblical doctrine of salvation, especially using the acronym TULIP. So on Thursday and Friday we discussed total depravity and unconditional election. One of the young men observed that if total depravity is true then we cannot be saved by our free will. So I know that at least one student was listening!

On Sunday morning and evening (their PM service is at 3:00) I preached on Ephesians 6:10, "Be strong in the Lord and in the Power of his Might." In the AM I preached on what the enabling or strengthening of God is. Then in the PM I preached on the source of the enabling and its necessity. In one sense it seems like I preached for about 45 to 60 minutes in each service. But it was really much less than that because my translator used up so much of my time!

We are so very blessed of the Lord to have the resources at FPCR that we do. The people here want desperately to be able to sing the Psalms, but they have no Psalter in their language. Although the gospel has been here in Burma for nearly 200 years, up to now nobody has translated a metrical Psalter for these people. The people here don't even know how to read our "stem-note" musical notation. The only music notation that they can read is tonic sol-fa.

Yesterday in the ministers' conference, as I was teaching on the Confession of Faith chapter one regarding the word of God, I was spending some time teaching them how to study the Bible. I asked them to list the three things that they find most difficult or challenging about studying the Scriptures. In order, they were: 1) knowing the background of each book; 2) vocabulary is often too difficult for them; and 3) sometimes it is hard to know the author's purpose. This was amazing! I wondered if some of them had secretly been auditing my critical reading course last summer.

The Christian Theological College of the MPCC will help the next generation because they will be teaching more and more English. Once the students have English then they will have access to all manner of theological literature and Bible Study aids. But until

they have English it is hard for them to study the Bible even in their own language.

In the dormitory of the CTC only ten of 40 students have cots. The remainder sleep on a single piece of cloth between them and the concrete floor. Even this is considered good, because most of their churches have "clay" floors (smoothed mud). Also, there are only 10 desks and chairs, so they must take turns studying at their desks. Much of their work is memorized from class notes because there are no books except the lecturer's copy. The lecturer will read from an English language textbook, then translate into Falam (Chin language) or Burmese. The students then write down what he said into their notebooks and at night they work on memorization of their notes, if the electric power happens to be working.

Sent: Wednesday, August 08, 2001 9:52 AM

"It was good to hear from you and from the others who wrote to me through you. Please thank each of them on my behalf. It is especially nice to hear from the children (even if it is 'mom' doing the actual typing).

Just as I was developing something of a routine here in Yangon we will be off to Kalemmyo on Saturday or Friday, DV. Pastor Micah thinks that the Saturday flight might be booked full, so if it is we may have to fly up there on Friday. If you want to see where I will be, look on the map of Burma at the church bldg. The church opening (bldg. dedication) will be at Cicai (#6). Just north of Cicai about 30 Km or so is Tahan MPCC. I will be in Cicai, DV, on Lord's Day next then in Tahan for the week after that and then as God wills back to Yangon, as I sent in a previous message.

Here is what my days have been like this week. I get up between 4:00 and 4:30 and spend some time praying and reading. Then I take my first shower and get dressed and go to the lobby where I prepare lessons for the day, read email, & eat breakfast. My driver shows up at 8:15 and I spend 45 minutes on a thrill-ride that makes Six Flags look tame by comparison. I hope to use the lessons I'm doing here as the basis for a series of catechism books for the children and their mothers this coming school year. *Here is a quick and inexpensive sidenote: the Burmese word for lecturer is pronounced kateekah.*

The first lecture hour for me is 9:00. I think some of the students have 8:00 classes. But the lecture hall, garage, is available to us at 9:00. Many of the students stay. I lecture until 10:00 and the ministers eat "brunch" and rest until 11:30. Sometimes I lecture until 10:30 and then the break lasts until noon. Then I lecture for another two to two and a half hours, i.e.



2:00 PM. Usually by that time I've managed to get them into some pretty lively theological discussions. I don't understand any thing that they are saying, but the discussions are generally quite animated. I can't describe how thrilling it is to be watching as the first generation of reformers in Burma hammer out how they can respond to the calumnies of their detractors.

My driver shows up at 2:00 and takes me for another thrill-ride back to my hotel — where I usually arrive just before 3:00 PM. Time for my 2nd shower and then I turn the A/C in my room and enjoy a “coffee mix.” Coffee mix has only slightly more in common with coffee than pig Latin has with Latin. Mostly it's a cup of sugar and caffeine mixed with hot water (they may have passed it through the shadow of a Nescafe jar). This is a time of relaxing and composing emails (like this one). 6:00 is suppertime. U Khin [the hotel owner] figured that I would be spending money on eating out in the evening, so he prepared a menu for me to eat in the lobby here. His wife is a very good cook (or whoever does the cooking). Normally I would return to my room by 7:00, but tonight Rev. Titus said he would come by at 7:00. Still I hope to be in bed by 8:00 after asking God to bless the folks in Rowlett as they *begin* their day.

I drink lots and lots of water every day. So far I have been drinking *at least* 3 liters of water each day. The thing is, I probably perspire that much or more so I need to keep drinking. Believe it or not, even drinking 3 liters or more per day, I am still thirsty all the time...

This pretty much brings you up to date with a “day in the life” report. I am getting plenty of rice and water. Oh, and plenty of rain. I “almost” forgot to take my prescriptions and vitamins today, but I remembered late. In terms of Rowlett time, I was actually a little early! I guess my memory must still be on Rowlett time. With me 12 1/2 hours *ahead* (east) that is how it would have to work, or else I would remember things before they happened right?

This will be all for now. I hope you will send this letter around to those who are praying for me.

Sent: Thursday, August 09, 2001 10:12 AM

“There is not a lot of news today, so I will keep this short. We had a pretty good day at the ministers' conference. I put a sort of “makeshift diagram” of the ordo salutis on the porcelain board and that really helped many of them get the point on the relationship between regeneration and faith. We continued through perseverance today and will pick up tomorrow with marriage and the family.

Sent: Friday, August 10, 2001 8:05 AM

{News from Pastor Bacon. He is flying to Kalembo Saturday morning [Myanmar time] which will be Friday evening [Dallas time.] We will probably not hear from him again until he gets back to Yangon on the 20th. }

Thursday evening [Dallas Thursday am], “Just a quick note because I'm not sure if I'll be able to email you from Kalembo, so this may be my last one for about ten days. ...I will try to write tomorrow before we leave for Kalembo, but I will be getting on the plane very early Saturday (I think 6:30 AM or so), so I may have a chance to write one more post.”

Friday am [Thursday pm Dallas time] “...Nescafe does not seem to me like coffee when I have Folger's but when the alternative is “coffee mix” then it is pretty good. Coffee mix? Imagine a cup of coffee flavored syrup.

Please thank everyone for their prayers and especially thank the people who are keeping your “social calendar” so full. I know you thank them for you, but please thank them also for me.”

Sent: Friday, August 10, 2001 10:31 AM

“My last email for awhile. OK, so I keep saying that. This afternoon on the way back from the CTC, I stopped with Pastor Micah and picked up some tablets that are supposed to dissolve in water like alka seltzer. They are called “hydrite” tablets and basically they are supposed to restore the electrolyte balance that is lost by perspiration. They do seem to have helped some. I'm feeling much better, my nosebleed has stopped and my stomach cramps are almost completely gone. Also, I took some extra rest this afternoon so this too has probably helped.

We leave very early tomorrow morning (I must leave the hotel at about 4:00). I hope that U Khin will keep some of my luggage here in storage while I carry only the minimum with me for a single week. The plane departs at 6:15 AM. That is Friday evening for your Dallas time. I'm not sure what time we arrive in Kalembo, but Pastor Micah just now called even while I was composing this email and told me he has my ticket and will bring both my ticket and my passport with him tomorrow to the airport.

I finished teaching on the ten commandments, but didn't quite finish all the course material. I was hoping also to do some teaching on the sacraments and prayer, but we simply ran out of time. But still I finished as much as I could, and even though we had some rather slow sledding for awhile, I think it was good to spend the time on the things that we did. The things that were not so controversial for them we spent less time and the things they seemed to think they



needed more we spent more time. Sometimes the men and Pastor Micah would become involved in an exchange in Burmese and leave me out of it completely. I figure if they wanted to know what I had to say about whatever it was they were talking about, they would have taken the time to ask me.

I will close this now and simply ask that you keep writing emails without sending them. Then on Monday a week from now you can send them all in a single email to me at U Khin's email address and they will be waiting for me when I arrive on Tuesday.

[Notes for August 11 to 19]

August 11th,

It is now siesta time in Kalemmyo and I've finished my second shower, so I now will bring you up to date on my relatively uneventful flight to Kalemmyo and my first day in the north country. I woke up about 4:00 AM ...I had a cup of Nescafe. Burmese pronounce it "nest coffee." U Khin took me to the airport where I stood and waited outside for Pastor Micah for about 45 minutes. His taxi was an hour late picking him up. The thing was he had both my ticket and my passport, so I could not enter the airport without him. Finally Pastor Micah and U Ezra arrived and Micah scurried through immigration. Then in typical "airport" style, we sat in the waiting room for 45 minutes waiting for our flight to be called. The flight from Yangon to Kalemmyo stops in Bagan and Mandalay to drop passengers and pick up others. I think it was about 9:30 when we arrived at Kalemmyo. There was some controversy w/ immigration, but Micah handled it all. Pastor Joel and the rest of the men who met me at the airport went home from the hotel, but Pastor Micah is staying at the hotel with me in the room next to mine. He and I went for a walk this afternoon and we ended up in a part of town I would have called the bazaar. Pastor Micah called it "minishops" and said that what they call bazaar is fruits and veggies (farmers' market). It turns out that the Tihauing river between here and Cicai is too high for cars to pass. They were going to pick me up at the river in a chariot (i.e. an oxcart), but then I thought it might be better if we let the beasts of burden rest on the Sabbath. I know that some of the Puritans used to ride their horses to Sabbath meetings, but maybe they shouldn't have (there's one for the books — the Puritans were "soft" on the Sabbath). Anyway, for the Chin people the ox is a beast of burden six days a week, so it is better that they learn to keep the Sabbath for themselves *and* their beasts. Lord willing, then, I shall walk from the Tihauing on into Cicai in the AM.

August 12th,

The power seems to go off for awhile each night. I have to say that I prefer A/C to ceiling fans. ... The trip to Cicai and back was like something out of a national geographic special. ... The view from the footbridge was spectacular. We could see the Chin hills from the footbridge; they look like the Smokies. I have written all about my trip to Cicai and will show you what I wrote when I get home.

August 13th,

I slept much better last night than Saturday night. I guess a walk through the jungle helps me sleep better! Today was the first day of the conference and first real rain we've had since I've come to Kalemmyo. It kept a lot of people from getting here for the conference today. The roads suffer from the rain. Because the section on the word is so foundational, it will be tomorrow when more have arrived in town. So today we worked on who God is, the doctrine of the trinity, and the decree of God. Normally we would study creation and providence next, but since most all the pastors but one have now arrived, we will pick up on the subject of the Bible first thing, then move on.

[There was a special gift from a member of FPCR] who said for me to use it in Myanmar in any way I saw fit to do. Here is how I used it. Yesterday at Cicai, I noticed only about five Bibles in the entire congregation. I asked Micah if they had Bibles and he explained that most of the villagers don't see enough cash in a year's time to buy a Bible. So [the special gift] financed purchasing enough Bibles for every family in Cicai to have one. We went and picked them up this PM, and gave them to the Cicai missionary. I told Micah that I know some of the families in the church don't have any thing to speak of because their children came to church dressed in school uniforms — either because that's all they had, or the best they had. Micah said that was true and that the only reason they have the uniforms is because the church bought them for them.

August 15th,

Yesterday was a long and exhausting day, so I went to bed almost as soon as I returned to the hotel. There is a desk in my room, but no chair that pulls up to the desk, so it is easier for me to write at the breakfast tables off the lobby. We spent the day yesterday first learning the principles of Bible study, and then applying them in the PM. I think our Chin brothers are becoming increasingly convinced that they need a new translation. We had some really good studies the past two days. Yesterday PM I had the men working with context, linguistic analysis, cross referencing, and analogy of Scripture in studying the Lord's prayer in



Matthew 6. Some of the men became quite upset with their translation. A part of the difficulty is simply in the emphasis. The Greek contrasts between doing something in secret and God rewarding openly. The Falam misses that nuance entirely and emphasizes the idea of a reward for good works because God is so pleased with us. Today's lessons sort of gained a life of their own as some of the men grew bolder in their questions. I don't mean they were playing "stump the band" (note — that didn't take place until Friday!), simply that one question seemed to move naturally to another. In the section on creation, the Sabbath came up, then which day *is* the Sabbath, then why it was changed, then what (if any) Scripture support this position. We spent longer on Sabbath questions than we did creation v. evolution. Their translation slowed us down a lot, so we had to explain Greek phrases. Also, several questions about baptism arose, so we spent some time on those things. This is very difficult in the Falam Bible, because just as there is no one English word that captures the idea of "baptizo," so neither is there one in Falam. So the Falam Bible simply translates the word "dip into water." So even in First Cor. 10, Israel was "dipped in water" unto Moses. By the end of today's lessons, virtually everyone was agreed that the Falam speaking Chin need a better Bible.

August 16th,

I'm actually writing this early AM on the 17th, but that is because by the time we finally got back to the room last night I was very tired and was asleep about as soon as I got into bed. I think I'm finally becoming acclimatized to Burma weather. Today the Chin were complaining how hot it is and I thought it was one of the nicer days! The size of the group attending the seminars has just about doubled since Monday. I think some of them may have simply come for lunch at first — and there are still about six or eight who show up just before lunch and disappear as soon as we've eaten. But most are staying for the teaching. So regardless of their original motive they are hearing what God has for them. And it seems that each day there are a few more who begin to understand. There is a seminary here in Kalemmyo where Rev. Joel has been lecturing. I think Rev. Len Thang is on the board as well. The president (founder) is a man named Rev. Moses Dawnga. Rev. Moses had some of his students come by the seminar with him on Monday and they've been here every day since. He tried talking to me yesterday with one of his students translating for him. That didn't work so well, so I asked Rev. Micah to translate. Basically he wants to know what it would take to have his presently independent seminary recognized by the MPCC.

After the meetings we were invited to visit U Ezra's home. They live in the very edge of Kalemmyo. When you get to the edge of town, take the dirt road until it ends. Then get out of the car and walk along the cow path until you come to the last house on the right. The entire house could fit in most American living rooms. Like Burmese houses generally, it is bamboo built on a platform about six or eight feet off the ground. There is a chamber where they sleep and a large room where they do everything else. They have a vegetable garden in front of the house where they grow vegetables I didn't recognize. I'm not sure if I've mentioned before that U Ezra is a converted Buddhist monk and Rev. Micah's father in law. There were several plastic bags with uncooked rice (one to three cups each it appeared) that were sitting by the front door. U Ezra raises his two daughters and feeds all four of them on about 60 cents per day. But Thursday is alms-giving day in the MPCC, so they keep rice by the door for the nearby widows and poor people and they come by on Thursday and U Ezra tells them about Jesus and gives them rice. We had a nice visit and prayed with them and then they walked us back to the dirt road where the hotel car was waiting for us.

Micah seems to be coming down with a cold. I hope that's all it is. One of the men at the conference this week stayed in bed with chills from malaria Wednesday. It was Lal Rawi, the man who helped me across the footbridge on Sunday. Anyway, Micah and I spent a lot of time in a Rickshaw last night going from place to place looking for some medicine for him. I'm not sure what he finally found. The view of medicine here in Burma is quite a bit different from ours. Later — Micah just finished calling Esther and both she and the students are doing well. We have several items that need to be done today — I told Rev. Micah I would like a copy of the list of attendees; also we need to confirm our plane reservations, take photos of the attendees, go by Moses' seminary, etc. Also, I was hoping to spend the last two hours of class this afternoon in Q&A from the entire conference subjects.

August 18th

We managed to get everything finished yesterday and here I am back in Yangon. Everyone considered the Tahan conference a success, though it started very poorly on Monday. Yesterday I was competing with a rainstorm on a metal roof. So I feel like I was at a football game and I'm shouted "hoarse." By Friday we had a pretty full house — 150 to 160 is my best guess. Rev. Len Thang said if we had another week we would probably have had 500! That is an exaggeration of course, but they did invite me back. They would like for me to come back at the end of Feb or first of Mar,



bring Todd (or someone) with me and spend a week in Tahan teaching during the day and holding a “crusade” at night. They were hoping I would preach each night this year, but they realized after Monday night that neither Dr Bacon nor his translator could go all week long if we had meetings all day and preaching at night. It turns out that Rev. Moses’ seminary meets in his home. Yesterday at lunch they killed a cow for me — actually they killed it earlier in the week, but we ate it yesterday. They gave me some dried beef to bring back with me — I have no idea what customs will think of that.

Sent: Sunday, August 19, 2001 7:49 AM

[Upon return to Yangon]

“First, I am fine. The health problems were all related and were **never** worse than I told you. Dr Tat was convinced everything would be resolved by adding the Hydrite to my drinking water and so it was. I was affected by fatigue while in Kalemio, but nothing else. I continue to take salt tablets: they dissolve in water and have some dextrose added to make it palatable.

When you looked up Cicai you may also have seen Sadaw. There is an MPCC congregation at Sadaw that meets at the missionary’s house. His name is Lal Rawi or Lal Ruai (I’m not sure about the spelling). On the way back from Cicai we stopped at his house and most of the church members came by to see the American.

I told the conferees in Tahan last week the same thing about eating a cow...one bite at a time. Then when Rev. Len Thang presented me with a **huge** bag of dried beef I held it up and asked them all “How do you eat a cow?!” I would love to tell you much more about the Lord’s Day in Cicai and the conference as well; but the indirect nature of eMail makes that quite difficult. In the time being. I have written a lot of things down and we can talk about them when I return.

Lots of interesting stories that I’ve written down and will tell when I return. Not only was FPCR praying for me, but so also was virtually every church in the MPCC. God was pleased to use your prayers (and the Hydrite) and I’m doing fine now. All this worry was why I didn’t really want to say anything in the first place. Please continue to pray.”

Sent: Monday, August 20, 2001 8:00 PM

“Tomorrow I go back to CTC [the Bible School] to do some more lecturing. My plan is to begin tomorrow with baptism and the Lord’s Supper, Wednesday to move on to the church and its organization, and then Friday I hope to finish with congregational life and evangelism. That will finish my “work” here, but Rev.

Titus has asked me to preach on 8/26. Perhaps on Monday or Tuesday of next week I can talk somebody into taking me on a guided tour. If not, perhaps the gov’t operated MTT has a day-tour of Yangon.”

Sent: Tuesday, August 21, 2001 6:52 PM

“The dried beef (jerky) is very special and I seriously doubt that US customs or the USDA will let it into the USA. So I will give it to the students at CTS this week. The gift was from their parents (they killed a cow), so it is fitting that their children should end up with it. It was a heave offering. These are the students that I told you earlier are sleeping on concrete floors and taking turns at desks.

Today for lunch I had my first taste of Durian (or maybe it is spelled Durien). Since Durian is nothing like anything you have ever experienced, I will try to describe it. The fruit itself is about the size of an American football and looks like it has either cactus or porcupine in its lineage. The next time I saw it, it was ready to eat. [What] was presented to me were large brown seeds (about the size of your thumb) covered in a yellow flesh that is somewhere between pudding and custard in consistency. You eat it by sucking the yellow mass off the seeds. It has a very distinct “sweet” (like overripe bananas are sweet) aroma and a flavor that cannot be compared to anything else. You cannot trust your first taste. Rather, you must let it sit in your mouth as it becomes sweeter and sweeter. It is sweeter at the end than it was at the beginning. But that is not the last time you get to enjoy it. I ate over two hours ago and I’m still getting an occasional taste of it that “wells up.” It’s really a pity that they are not available in the US.”

Sent: Thursday, August 23, 2001 10:56 AM

Here are excerpts from the latest emails from Pastor Bacon. He is fine and doing well. I think he and Pastor Micah were both pretty well exhausted by the schedule last week, and so this week has been one of a little teaching and more resting, just to let them both build up their strength.

From Wednesday am: “Seven more days... I have a lesson this AM on the Lord’s Supper for the students at CTC. Then I have the PM for “resting.” (I know it is to guard my health) ...I am feeling very good today so the rest must be helping. It is going to be hot again I think. It is already very warm and the sun has not even come up as yet. Or maybe it is just now coming up. It is hard to tell — it has been some time since I’ve actually seen the **sky** through the clouds.”

Rev. Titus had asked me to preach for him on 8/26.

...



EPA probably has important hazardous material regulations regarding the aroma of the durian. When we had the durian at Micah's house... there were two other lecturers there... I asked both if they had ever eaten durian — this was before it was served — and neither of them had. I asked why not and both of them answered at once, "because I've smelled it." This is the fruit that one Brit (was it Kipling?) described as very much like eating a garlic custard while standing over an open London sewer grate. Anyway, I liked it and may have it again before leaving.

Sent: Saturday, August 25, 2001 5:10 PM

"It's Friday afternoon here at 3:00 (4:00 now that I'm typing), so in just about exactly five days' time I'll be lifting off for home. Of course I'll still be 35-36 hours from home, but it will still be a milestone for sure....I took delivery on the videos today. The man who shot them said they are both PAL and NTSC compatible but just in case they aren't I think we will want them in a format we can use. They are two 2 hour cassettes (VHS). So, for the proper "fee" people can get out of watching my vacation videos...."

Well, it is a slow and rainy Saturday afternoon...."

Sent: Monday, August 27, 2001 10:49 AM

[Sunday night] "I preached at the AM service and the PM service for Rev'd. Micah, and then Rev'd. Titus picked me up and I preached the PM service at Rev'd. Titus' church. I had a good visit with Rev'd. Titus after the service. His church meets in the ground floor of his house and he and his family live upstairs. He has some other family members who live with him, so total is seven sharing his upper story "flat."


By the time I got home both my tee shirt and my dress shirt were soaked with perspiration. In both the first MPCC service and the PRCM service I preached on the U of tulip. In the second MPCC service I preached on exhortations from the life of Joseph. Rev'd Titus was a very easy translator to work with. Sometimes Rev'd. Micah would begin translating while I was still speaking. Rev'd. Titus never did that.

As to keeping a journal, I've been writing more in my letters to you than I have been including in the email versions. There are about 180 or so people that I normally "update" regarding the progress of the MPCC. So I'm thinking I will send them excerpts of both my emails to you and the tidbits I've not been sending. But as you might imagine, the notes are all on canary notepad paper and can be placed in correct order only by comparison to the emails I've sent. Actually I *did* pack a journal (the suede one I bought last year), but I find these tablets easier to use.

Sent: Tuesday, August 28, 2001 1:34 PM

[Tuesday] Pastor Bacon says, "Just today and a wakeup and Lord willing I will begin my 36 hour trip home! ...As you have probably seen from watching weather.com, we have been getting plenty of rain (maybe even Rowlett's). My sunset was rained out last night, so I didn't get to watch it from the Kandawgyi. Of course this time of year we cannot anticipate seeing the sun at all, so we simply skipped the sunset watching. Otherwise it was an excellent tourism day.

First we went to the Nugar glass factory where all the glass is blown for all the schools and parks, etc. They did a demonstration of blowing a beer mug and a "fish shape vase that hangs from wall." They also demonstrated how they make the glassware for the school science labs.

Last night Dr T. and I went to the Karawaiq for supper. They had traditional Bamar and Kayin dancers, a traditional harp player, a puppet (marionette) show, a drum and cymbals band, etc. The food consisted of an "all you care to eat" buffet of Indian and Myanmar curries, spicy fish soup with noodles, bean sprouts, peanuts, etc. 2000Ks apiece, so expensive by Myanmar standards as well. Most of the guests were European or Japanese." 

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