



New Covenant
Presbyterian Church

The Righteousness of Faith and the Gospel

In his 1550 preface to the Geneva Bible, titled *Christ, the End of the Law*, John Calvin made the following significant statement about the focus of the Scriptures:

“This is in sum what we should seek in the whole Scripture: it is to know well Jesus Christ and the infinite riches which are comprised in Him, and are, by Him, offered to us from God His Father. For when the law and the prophets are carefully searched, there is not to be found in them one word which does not reduce and lead us to Him. And in fact, since all the treasures of wisdom and intelligence are hid in Him, there is no question of having any other end or object, if we wish not, as of deliberate intention, to turn ourselves away from the light of truth, in order to lose our way into the darkness of lies. For this reason does St. Paul rightly say in another passage that he resolved to know nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”

I. The Righteousness of Faith in the Gospel

“The law had been given for this end, — to lead us as by the hand to another righteousness: nay, whatever the law teaches, whatever it commands, whatever it promises, has always a reference to Christ as its main object; and hence all its parts ought to be applied to him. But this cannot be done, except we, being stripped of all righteousness, and confounded with the knowledge of our sin, seek gratuitous righteousness from him alone.” - Calvin on Romans 10:4

“Moses says, ‘Do this and live,’ but, of course, Moses knows, ‘Nobody can do it and live;’ And not just Moses, but the Lord Jesus says, ‘Do this and live;’ but Jesus knows the rich, young ruler can’t do it either. Because of course, since the fall, righteousness, holiness, godliness, faithfulness, obedience has never been energized by the unregenerate human heart but only by the saving grace of God in His Gospel. And actually Paul had made that very clear earlier on in Romans ch. 4 as he makes it clear in Galatians 3--that when Moses said, ‘Do this and live’ Moses already knew that salvation couldn’t possibly lie at the other end of my obedience because I am not obedient to the Lord, but must depend upon that promise of God’s grace and salvation, which he that He had given, as he says in Galatians ch. 3, was given 430 years before the Law was given.” – Sinclair Ferguson

Jonathan Edwards, in his sermon *Bringing the Ark to Zion a Second Time*, noted the great danger of falling into the sin of self-righteousness as a believer. He explained:

“And let particular persons strictly examine themselves whether they hadn’t been lifted up with their particular experiences. I think, according to what observations I have made—as I have had [more] opportunity of very extensive observation than any other person in the town—that is has been a pretty prevailing error in the town, that persons are not sufficiently sensible of the danger of self-righteousness after conversion. They seem to be sensible that persons are in danger of it before they are converted, but they think that when a man is converted, he is brought off wholly from his own righteousness, just as if there was no danger of any workings of self-righteousness afterwards.



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But this is from a great mistake of what is intended by a man's being brought wholly off from his own righteousness when he is converted. 'Tis not meant that a self-righteous principle is wholly done away, that there is no remains of such a disposition in the heart. There is as much of the remains of that as there is of any other corruption of the heart.

So a man is brought, when converted, wholly to renounce all his sins as well as to renounce all his own righteousness. But that don't argue that he is wholly freed from all remains of sin. So no more is he wholly freed from remains of self-righteousness. There is a fountain of it left. There is an exceeding disposition in men, as long as they live, to make a righteousness of what is in themselves, and an exceeding disposition in men to make a righteousness of spiritual experiences, as well as other things;...a convert is apt to be exalted with high thoughts of his own eminency in grace.¹

While Moses says, 'Do this and live' Moses knows that it's not by doing but by trusting what God is doing." - Sinclair Ferguson "

Any teaching concerning salvation which does not express itself in terms of the demands of the Law of God is false teaching." - Lloyd-Jones

"Any teaching about salvation that doesn't put it in terms of how the Law of God has been satisfied is false teaching." - Martyn Lloyd-Jones

"Before the fall, obedience for Adam and Eve would have been perfectly natural under the Covenant of Works--we read of in ch. 19 of the Westminster Confession of Faith--but after the fall, when sin had entered into the lives of Adam and Eve, obedience was hard and never to be attained sufficient to satisfy the perfections of God with the result that Israel became so preoccupied with her striving to obey and fulfill the law that her whole horizon was filled with thought of her own struggles to attain righteousness by striving. You see, the original righteousness that God gave to Adam at creation (that he forfeited by his disobedience) had to be regained; and Israel proudly thought that she could regain it by striving. No! Never! Never! The righteousness of God was something inherent in God, and only He could give it. But you see, they were so taken up with gaining it by their own efforts that they completely forgot to ask it from God, by faith--which they should have done. For you see, this is what Christ came to give them, if they had known it--God's righteousness. What a tragedy the story of the Old Testament is!" - William Still

When Queen Victoria asked, "Can one be absolutely sure in this life of eternal safety?" John Townsend--a friend of George Muller--replied,"I believe in the finished work of Christ for me."



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II. Confessing the Christ of the Righteousness of Faith

"The hearts always the part that makes us right or wrong." – Robert Burns

III. Believing in Christ for the Righteousness of Faith

1. Jonathan Edwards Bringing the Ark to Zion a Second Time (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003) pp. 255-256 vol. 22