

Grace and Power

EXALTING CHRIST PUBLISHING

710 BROADWAY STREET

VALLEJO, CA 94590

707-553-8780

www.cbcvallejo.org

Ordering email: publications@cbcvallejo.org

Copyright © 2001 STEVE FERNANDEZ

Printed By Permission Only

Revised 2004, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION:	1
Salvation In Scripture	
I. Total Depravity, Absolute Inability, And The Bondage Of The Will.....	5
II. Unconditional Election: Chosen By God.....	15
III. Irresistible Grace And Effectual Calling:	29
How God Brings A Sinner To Himself	
IV. Regeneration.	33
V. Conviction.	43
VI. Faith And Repentance.	49
VII. The Final Perseverance Of The Believer.	63
VIII. Secure In Christ.....	69
IX. Justification by Faith Alone.	73
X. Adoption.....	99
XI. Eternal Life Assured.....	105

INTRODUCTION

SALVATION

Salvation in its fundamental meaning refers to deliverance and rescue (Acts 27:31). In the New Testament as in the Old, salvation is a term with a broad meaning and significance. Therefore, it doesn't refer only to deliverance from the guilt of sin and eternal punishment in hell. It does, indeed, sometimes refer to a past already completed salvation from sin's guilt (Ephesians 2:8-9). However, depending on context, it also can refer to a not yet completed present deliverance from the power of indwelling sin (Romans 6:14; Philippians 2:12; 2 Corinthians 1:6). It may refer, as well, to the future not yet completed salvation which will occur at death or at the second coming (Romans 13:11). In short, the New Testament uses the term salvation to refer to three different tenses or aspects of God's over-all saving work.

I. THE PAST: SALVATION AND DELIVERANCE IN THE PAST FROM THE GUILT AND PUNISHMENT OF SIN THAT IS ALREADY COMPLETED.

A. There Is a Salvation And Deliverance From The Guilt, And Penalty Of Sin Already Accomplished.

- 1. It is a present full deliverance from the penalty of sin already enjoyed (Ephesians 2:5, 8; Titus 3:5).**
- 2. We have already been justified from the guilt and punishment of sin and declared righteous before God with a full and completed justification and pardon (Acts 13:38-39; Romans 5:1, 9, 8:30; Luke 18:14; 1 Corinthians 6:11).**

NOTE: Justification is a narrower term than salvation. It refers to a declaration by God of a full and complete justification. It is the declaration that the believer is forever accepted and righteous in His sight. Unlike other aspects of salvation, justification as a declaration, has no future, not yet completed,

aspect. The distinction between justification and salvation is critical. Salvation (deliverance) is a product and result of an already accomplished justification (Romans 5:9). We must persevere to be saved, but never persevere to be justified (Matthew 10:22; Mark 13:43). We will be delivered (saved) because we are already completely and forever justified (Romans 5:9).

B. There Is A Redemption Already Fully Accomplished And Enjoyed.

Redemption refers to deliverance, but with a specific emphasis on the fact that the deliverance is by a payment price or ransom. Redemption was a purchase in order to accomplish a transfer of ownership, or a purchase in order to set someone free. Christ's redemption accomplished both of these for us.

- 1. We possess a completed redemption by His blood (Ephesians 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 1 Peter 1:18).**
- 2. We have been bought and are no longer our own (1 Corinthians 6:19).**
- 3. We are already justified by the redemption in Christ Jesus (the payment of a price that turned away anger; a propitiation, Romans 3: 24-25).**

II. THE PRESENT: SALVATION AND DELIVERANCE IN THE PRESENT FROM THE POWER OF SIN THAT IS NOT YET FULLY ACCOMPLISHED.

A. We Are Being Saved And Delivered In The Present From The Power Of Indwelling Sin.

We are saved and delivered as the Word of God takes hold of our life (1 Timothy 4:13-16).

B. We Are Being Saved From The Mastery Of Sin (Romans 6:14) And The Power Of Temptation (2 Corinthians 1:6).

C. We Are Being Saved In The Present As God Works In Us (Philippians 2:12).

III. THE FUTURE: SALVATION AND DELIVERANCE IN THE FUTURE FROM THE POSSESSION OF SIN THAT IS NOT YET FULLY ACCOMPLISHED.

A. We Will Be Saved And Delivered From The Possession Of Remaining Indwelling Sin (Romans 13:11).

B. We Will Be Saved And Delivered From The Wrath Of God (Romans 5:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:9).

This is not justification, but a blessing that is ours because of a final justification that is already ours.

C. We Will Be Saved And Delivered From The Battles And Temptations Of This World Into The Enjoyment Of Our Eternal Inheritance (1 Peter 1:4-5).

D. We Will Be Redeemed From The Groanings Of The Falleness Of Our Bodies (Romans 8:22-24).

NOTE: As mentioned before, salvation and redemption, as well as other broad terms, have aspects that are already complete and aspects not yet complete. Justification is narrower. It is a once-for-all, final declaration of our eternal acceptance with God. It has no future aspect (Romans 5:1, 9).

TOTAL DEPRAVITY, ABSOLUTE INABILITY, AND THE BONDAGE OF THE WILL

I. THE CRITICAL IMPORTANCE OF TOTAL DEPRAVITY AND ABSOLUTE INABILITY.

A. There Is A Contemporary Aversion To Man's Depravity And Sinfulness That Has Affected The Church.

1. There is a diminishing of sin, and with it the glory of salvation.

I look on the doctrine as of great importance; which everybody will doubtless own it is, if it be true. For, if the case be such indeed, that all mankind are by nature in a state of total ruin, both with respect to the moral evil of which they are the subjects, and the afflictive evil to which they are exposed, the one as the consequence and punishment of the other; then, doubtless, the great salvation by Christ stands in direct relation to this ruin, as the remedy to the disease; and the whole gospel or doctrine of salvation must suppose it; and all real belief, or true notion of that gospel, must be built upon it. Therefore ... I think the doctrine is most certainly both true and important.

Jonathan Edwards, *Works Vol. I*, p. 145

2. There is a danger of misdiagnosing the problem and giving the wrong solution.

I don't think anything has been done in the name of Christ and under the banner of Christianity that has proven more destructive to human personality, and hence counterproductive to the evangelistic enterprise than the unchristian, uncouth strategy of attempting to make people aware of their lost and sinful condition ... Classical Reformed theology has erred in its insistence that theology be God-centered, not man-centered.

Robert Schuller, *Self-Esteem The New Reformation*, p. 64

B. A Comprehension Of The Gospel Of Grace Is Dependent On An Understanding Of It.

1. The true nature of man's helpless state under sin must be seen.

- a. Man's problem is an evil disposition of the heart, not just evil deeds (Ephesians 2:1-3).
- b. Grace is fully understood in the context of sin and total depravity (Ephesians 2:1-8).

2. The glory of God or man is the issue.

- a. Man's ability to deliver himself in anyway gives him a basis of boasting (Romans 3:27-28; 1 Corinthians 1:31; Ephesians 2:9; Philippians 3:1-3).
- b. Only an understanding of total depravity including the bondage of the will removes pride (Ephesians 2:3-9).

We, again ... maintain that his whole nature is so imbued with depravity, that of himself he possesses no ability whatever to act right. Thus far, therefore, do we dissent from those who oppose our doctrine, that while they neither humble man sufficiently, nor duly estimate the blessing of regeneration, we lay him completely prostrate, that he may become sensible of his utter insufficiency in regard to spiritual righteousness, and learn to seek it, not partially, but wholly, from God ... It is certain, as I have already observed, that we differ from others only in this, that by convincing man of his poverty and powerlessness, we train him more effectually to true humility, leading him to renounce all self-confidence, and throw himself entirely upon God; and that, in like manner, we train him more effectually to gratitude, by leading him to ascribe, as in truth he ought, every good thing which he possesses to the kindness of God.

John Calvin, *The Necessity of Reforming the Church*,
pp. 39-40

C. Confusion In Evangelism Is The Result Of Misunderstanding It.

1. A man-centered gospel with formulas and techniques is the result.

... A revival is not a miracle, nor dependent on a miracle, in any sense. It is a purely philosophical result of the right use of the constituted means—as much so as any other effect produced by the application of means. The belief that the new birth and revival depend necessarily on divine activity is pernicious. If the whole church as a body had gone to work 10 years ago ... there might not now have been an unrepentant sinner in the land.

Charles Finney, *Lectures*, pp. 116-117

2. Man-induced false conversions become common.

There is nothing in religion beyond the ordinary powers of nature. It consists entirely in the right exercise of the powers of nature. It is just that, and nothing else. When mankind becomes truly religious, they are not enabled to put forth exertions which they were unable before to put forth. They only exert powers which they had before, in a different way, and use them for the glory of God.

Finney, Quoted from *Modern Reformation*, January/
February, 1995

II. THE CONCEPT OF TOTAL DEPRAVITY AND ABSOLUTE INABILITY IN SCRIPTURE.

A. It Is A Deep-Seated Corruption Of The Nature (Ephesians 2:1-3).

- 1. Man is an object of God's wrath by nature.**
- 2. It is a corrupt nature acquired at conception (Psalm 51:5, 58:3).**

B. It Is A Deadness Toward God and Therefore A Condition Completely Beyond Human Recovery (Ephesians 2:1).

- 1. The metaphor and picture is chosen to emphasize man is beyond his own self-recovery.**
- 2. The meaning of "deadness" shows the need for Divine intervention.**

III. THE COMPREHENSIVENESS OF TOTAL DEPRAVITY EXTENDS TO EVERY FACULTY IN MAN'S NATURE.

A. The Entirety Of His Being Is Under Sin's Power.

- 1. He is a slave of sin and its desires (Romans 6:17-18; Ephesians 2:3; John 8:31-36).**
 - a. He sins immediately and continuously (Acts 17:30; Genesis 6:5).
 - b. He sins progressively (Romans 6:19).
- 2. He is subject to and under the dominion of God's enemy the devil (Romans 6:17-18; Ephesians 2:2).**
 - a. He is willing to do Satan's will (John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4).
 - b. He is characterized by the same spirit of disobedience as Satan (Ephesians 2:2).
 - c. He is controlled by Satan's basic agenda of self-glorification.

B. There Is An Enmity In His Emotions And Affections Towards God.

- 1. The primary characteristic of sin is a hard heartedness toward God, the secondary is manward (Ephesians 4:18-19; Romans 1:23-24, 28).**
- 2. There is a withholding of love towards God, and the giving of honor and glory to God (John 5:42; Romans 1:21).**
- 3. There is a wilful omission of what God requires (Romans 1:30; 1 John 3:4).**
- 4. He is not willing to be subject to God's law, nor able to do so (Romans 8:7).**

C. There Is An Estrangement And Darkness In His Mind Towards God.

- 1. He is darkened in his understanding and detests spiritual truth (Ephesians 4:18; 1 Corinthians 2:14).**
- 2. He is hostile in his thoughts towards God (Romans 8:7; Colossians 1:21).**

D. There Is An Enslavement Of His Will Towards God: His Will Is Not Free.

- 1. He refuses to acknowledge and honor God (Romans 1:21, 28).**
- 2. He does not seek God or His glory (Romans 3:11, 23).**

3. He will not and cannot come to Christ for his nature loves darkness (John 3:19-20, 5:40, 6:44; John 8:31-36).

NOTE: Man is free to act as he wishes. Another way to say it is that man is a free agent, no one forces him to do what he does. However, his will, since it is controlled by his nature, (by what he delights in and enjoys the most, etc.) always chooses sin. Therefore, in relation to sin and God, man's will isn't free. In short, all of man is in bondage to sin, including his will.

Now can we possibly, without extreme absurdity, maintain that there previously existed in any man the good merit of a good will, to entitle him to the removal of his stony heart, when all the while this very heart of stone signifies nothing else than a will of the hardest kind and such as is absolutely inflexible against God? For where a good will precedes, there is, of course, no longer a heart of stone.

Augustine, *On Grace and Free Will; AntiPelegian Writings*, pp. 455-456

4. He is not willing to be subject to God's law nor able to do so (Romans 8:7).

'It is irreligious, idle and superfluous' (you say) 'to want to know whether our will effects anything in matters pertaining to eternal salvation, or whether it is wholly passive under the work of grace.' But here you speak to the contrary, saying that Christian piety consists in 'striving with all our might', and that 'apart from the mercy of God our will is ineffective ... I will set your theology before your eyes by a few analogies. Suppose a would-be poet or speech-maker never thought to ask what ability he had, what he could and could not do, and what the subject he was tackling demanded of him – never considered Horace's adage about 'What the shoulders can sustain, and what they will not bear' – but went straight to work, thinking: 'I must strive to get it done; it is idle and superfluous to ask whether I have enough learning and eloquence and ability' – what would you think of him? And if someone who wanted a rich crop from his land was not idle enough to perform the superfluous task of investigating the nature of the soil (as Virgil in the Georgics so idly and pointlessly advises), but rushed

precipitately into action, thinking of nothing but the work, and ploughed the seashore and cast his seed wherever there was room, whether in the sand or in the mud – what would you think of him? And what if a man who purposed war, and wanted a glorious victory, or carried responsibility for some other piece of public service, was not so idle as to reflect upon what was in his power, whether the treasury could finance him, whether the soldiers were fit, whether there was opportunity for action; but disregarded the historian’s advice (‘Before acting, deliberate, and when you have deliberated, act speedily’), and charged ahead with eyes shut and ears stopped, shouting nothing but ‘War! War!’ – pressing on with the work? Tell me, Erasmus, what would you think of such poets, farmers, generals and statesmen? ... So it is not irreligious, idle, or superfluous, but in the highest degree wholesome and necessary, for a Christian to know whether or not his will has anything to do in matters pertaining to salvation. Indeed, let me tell you, this is the hinge on which our discussion turns, the crucial issue between us; our aim is, simply, to investigate what ability ‘free-will’ has, in what respect it is the subject of Divine action and how it stands related to the grace of God ... Now, if I am ignorant of God’s works and power, I am ignorant of God himself; and if I do not know God, I cannot worship, praise, give thanks or serve Him, for I do not know how much I should attribute to myself and how much to Him. We need, therefore, to have in mind a clear-cut distinction between God’s power and ours, and God’s work and ours, if we would live a godly life.

Martin Luther, *Bondage of the Will*, pp. 76-78

IV. THE CONSEQUENCES OF TOTAL DEPRAVITY ARE BEYOND MAN’S RECOVERY AND REQUIRE GOD’S INTERVENTION.

A. He Is Destitute Of Righteousness, Unable To Please God, Nor Able To Come To God (Romans 8:7; John 6:44, 65).

B. He Is Dependent Entirely On God’s Initiative And Mercy (Ephesians 2:1, 4).

V. A DEFINITION OF TOTAL DEPRAVITY AND ABSOLUTE INABILITY.

It does not mean: That man is without conscience of wrongdoing or impulses to do right, or is without qualities and activities useful to society when viewed apart from a relationship to God, or that he sins to his full capacity.

It does mean: That man is corrupted in every part of his nature by a sinful enmity towards God. That is, his emotions are depraved, his mind is hostile and his will is enslaved, so that he withholds from God the love, honor and glory He rightfully deserves. Therefore, he is totally unwilling and unable of changing his state or meriting approval from God.

UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION: CHOSEN BY GOD

INTRODUCTION

Why is it important to teach election? Why is it that God chose to reveal His choice of His people? Election, since God revealed it, must be for the edification of His people. It is constantly taught in Scripture, and when it is taught, it is presented as a basis for the believer's full assurance of God's love (Romans 8:33-39; 1 Thessalonians 1:4; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-17; Colossians 3:12; Luke 18:7; Deuteronomy 7:7-9; Romans 9:13). There is no reason to withhold what the Bible teaches on election. We can be confident that God knew what is best and what should be taught to His people.

A. It Was Revealed By God, Therefore It Is Beneficial.

1. Truth is never dangerous.

Truth, in Scripture, is called, 'sound' doctrine. Therefore, it is good for the spiritual health and well being of Christians (2 Timothy 1:13, 4:3).

2. God's wisdom is to be trusted.

God has chosen what to reveal in Scripture. We must not avoid to teach what He, in His wisdom, has decided should be revealed.

How much more fitting is it for wretched men like ourselves to ascribe to God, who knows all men's hearts, the glory of settling the way in which, and the persons to whom, and the occasions when, the truth should be spoken! He himself knows what should be said to each, and when, and how ... so your Creator must learn from you, His creature, what may usefully be preached and what not? God was so stupid and thoughtless, was He, that He did not know what should be taught till you came along to tell Him how to be wise, and what to command? ... No; if God has willed that these things should be openly proclaimed and published, who are you to forbid it? The apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, frankly discusses these very matters, not in a corner, but openly, publicly, before the whole world ... Here, I see, you are taking the view that the truth and usefulness of Scripture should be measured and decided

according to the feeling of men ... so that nothing henceforth will be true, Divine and wholesome but what these persons find pleasing and acceptable; and what is not so will at once become useless, untrue and harmful. What else do you here plead for, but that the words of God may thus depend on, and stand or fall by, the will and authority of men?

Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, pp. 96-98

B. It Roots The Believer In The Right Concept Of God.

- 1. It exalts God's sovereignty as the starting point of everything we have in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:26-31; Ephesians 1:4-6, 8, 11).**
- 2. It exalts undiminished grace and love.**

You can't fully understand grace without understanding election. It is a foundational part of our understanding of God's grace towards us as sinners (Romans 11:5-6).

There has also come to be at the present time a remnant, according to God's gracious choice. But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace. (Romans 11:5-6).

C. It Readjusts And Promotes Right Thinking About Ourselves.

- 1. It promotes true humility (Romans 9:20; 1 Corinthians 1:30).**

But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption. (1 Corinthians 1:27-30).

For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it? (1 Corinthians 4:7)

- 2. It requires submissiveness to God's revelation of His character (Romans 9:14, 20).**
- 3. It gives a realistic estimate of our conversion. It explains what distinguishes us from those who aren't saved.**

Definition: Election is the act of God whereby, in eternity past, for nothing foreseen in them, but based entirely on His own character and free grace, He personally chose, in love, specific individuals among the fallen race of Adam to be recipients of salvation and eternal glory.

I. ELECTION IS THE REASON FOR ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSING ... IN CHRIST, JUST AS HE CHOSE US (Ephesians 1:3-4a).

A. The Starting Point For All We Have In Christ Is God's Sovereign Choice Of Us.

- 1. It is pre-faith.**
- 2. It is pre-creation.**

B. The Sovereign Purpose Of God Is The Source Of Specific Spiritual Blessings (Ephesians 1:5, 9-11).

II. ELECTION IS A REALITY DECLARED WITHOUT HESITATION IN SCRIPTURE. HE CHOSE US IN HIM (Ephesians 1:4a).

A. It Is Asserted Repeatedly In Scripture: There Are Many Clear Statements Of Its Reality.

1. It is directly asserted (Ephesians 1:4; Acts 13:48; 2 Timothy 1:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; John 15:16).

- a. He Himself chose us before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4; 1 Corinthians 1:28-30).
- b. Those appointed to eternal life believed (Acts 13:48).
- c. He purposed to save us from all eternity (2 Timothy 1:9).
- d. He chose us to be saved from the beginning (2 Thessalonians 2:13).
- e. He chose us and we did not choose Him (John 15:16).

2. It is indirectly asserted.

- a. Christ reveals Himself to specific ones (Matthew 11:27, 16:17).
- b. The Father has those who are His before they come to Christ (John 6:37, 17:6).
- c. Jesus has sheep who are His before they believe in Him (John 10:26-27).

B. The Scripture Admonishes Any One Who Finds Fault With God's Election (Romans 9:14-20).

NOTE: The context is clearly individual election. Paul is in the middle of his explanation of why so few Jews believed in Christ (vv. 4-6). He places the ultimate reason why so few Jews were saved in God's election (v. 11). Only some in Israel are "children of God" (v. 8) and those are children because of election.

- 1. He anticipates their question and accusation (v. 14), which would only be asked if Paul was teaching an unconditional election (cp. Romans 6:1).**
- 2. He confronts the presumption that sits in judgement of God (Romans 9:14, 19-25).**
- 3. He corrects their thinking; the issue isn't justice, but mercy (Romans 9:15-18).**

C. It Assumes Man's Hopeless Bondage In Sin.

- 1. The extent of his sin includes the slavery of the will (Romans 3:11, 8:7; John 3:19-20).**
- 2. The enslavement is total; his nature doesn't want God (Romans 1:28, 3:11).**

III. ELECTION IS ROOTED IN AN ACT OF GOD'S SOVEREIGN WILL, NOT OUR FORESEEN FAITH. BEFORE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD (Ephesians 1: 4b).

A. An Act Of The Divine Will Is Its Cause. He Chose Us.

- 1. The initial choice was His. Paul emphasizes this fact by the use of the middle voice (Romans 9:15-16).**

2. The final purpose for it is Himself, it was for His own glory (Ephesians 1:6).

B. It Is Apart From Any Consideration Of Our Faith Or Works.

1. Nothing in us moved Him to do it (2 Timothy 1:9). He saw no faith or good works in us, for there was none to see (Romans 3:10-11, 9:11, 11:5-6). He simply loved us (Deuteronomy 7:7-8; John 6:65).

2. It is His personal choice of each one of us (John 15:16).

... For He chose us, not because we believed, but that we might believe, lest we should be said first to have chosen Him, and so His word be false (which be it far from us to think possible), 'Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.' Neither are we called because we believed, but that we may believe; and by that calling which is without repentance it is effected and carried through that we should believe ... God, therefore, worketh in the hearts of men with that calling according to His purpose, of which we have spoken a great deal, that they should not hear the gospel in vain, but when they heard it, should be converted and believe, receiving it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God.

Augustine, *On the Predestination of the Saints*
AntiPelegian Writings, p. 517

C. He Passes By The Rest, Leaving Them In Their Self-Chosen Rebellion And Love Of Darkness (Romans 9:21-22).

Now, if we are not really ashamed of the Gospel, we must of necessity acknowledge what is therein openly declared: that God by His eternal goodwill (for which there was no other cause than His own purpose), appointed those whom He pleased unto salvation, rejecting all the rest; and that those who He blesses with this free adoption to be His sons He illumines by His Holy Spirit,

that they may receive the life which is offered to them in Christ; while others continuing in their own will in unbelief, are left destitute of the light of faith, in total darkness.

John Calvin, quoted by RC Sproul, *Grace Unknown*, pp. 157-158

IV. THE RESULT OF ELECTION IS OUR HOLINESS. THAT WE WOULD BE HOLY AND BLAMELESS (Ephesians 1:4c).

A. Its Effect Is Holiness In Our Lives.

- 1. Holiness and our good works are not the cause, but the effect of election (Ephesians 1:4b).**
- 2. Election leads to the new birth and a changed nature (1 Thessalonians 1:4).**

B. It Eliminates Boasting And Promotes True Humility (1 Corinthians 1:27-30).

V. THE REALITY OF ELECTION DOES NOT HINDER MINISTRY OR EVANGELISM.

A. It Encourages Us To Do The Work Of Evangelism.

- 1. The means of calling out the elect are God-ordained and so they will be successful (John 10:16; Acts 18:10; 1 Corinthians 1:21).**
- 2. The promise in Scripture is that God will save a multitude (Acts 18:9-10; Revelation 5:9).**

B. It Harmonizes With God's Promises And Desires.

- 1. The examples of His promises (Revelation 22:17).**
- 2. The earnestness of His promises, and invitations to sinners are not to be diminished (Matthew 23:37-40; Romans 10:21).**

Lost sinners who sit under the sound of the gospel are not lost for the want of the most affectionate invitation. God says he stretches out his hands ... What did he wish them to come for? Why to be saved. 'No', says one, 'it was for temporal mercies.' Not so, my friend; the verse before is concerning spiritual mercies, and so is this one, for they refer to the same thing. Now, was God sincere in his offer? God forgive the man who dares to say he was not. God is undoubtedly sincere in every act he did. He sent his prophets, he entreated the people of Israel to lay hold on spiritual things, but they would not, and though he stretched out his hands all the day long, yet they were 'a disobedient and gainsaying people' and would not have his love ... We are often in the dark, and puzzled about difficulties, but do you know half the difficulties in the Bible spring from a cold state of mind; but when the heart gets right, the head seems to get right too, in great measure. I remember a person puzzling himself fearfully with the passage of Scripture about Jesus weeping over Jerusalem. He went and looked at Dr. Gill about it, he went to Thomas Scott about it, and he went to Matthew Henry about it; and these good divines all puzzled him as much as they could, but they did not seem to clear up the matter. The good man could not understand how Jesus Christ could say as he did, 'How oft would I have gathered thee, but thou wouldest not!' One day he received more grace, and got a love for souls, and then the old skin of narrow mindedness which had been large enough for him once began to crack and break, and he went to the passage then, and said, 'I can understand it now; I do not know how it is consistent with such and such doctrine, but it is very consistent with what I feel in my heart.

Charles Spurgeon, in *Spurgeon Vs. Hyper-Calvinism*,
Iain Murray, pp. 89-90, 95

C. The Responsibility Of Man To Believe Is Not Diminished.

1. Using election to rationalize unbelief is an excuse (Matthew 23:37). Spurgeon says,

If a man has fallen overboard, a rope is thrown to him, but he says, "I should like to grasp that rope, only I do not know whether I am predestined to be drowned." Fool! he will go down to the bottom with a lie in his mouth. We do not say, "I would sit down to dinner today, but I will not eat, because I do not know whether I am predestined to have dinner today." Election is a great truth but never a reason for a man not believing in Christ. You are ill and the doctor comes and says, "there is medicine, I will guarantee if you take it, it will heal you." You say, "Sir, I would take it at once, but I do not know whether I am predestined to get over this fever. If I am predestined to live, why then, sir, I will take this medicine, but I must know first." Ah, says the doctor, "I tell you what, if you do not take it, you are predestined to die."

Charles Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle*, Vol. X, p. 385

2. We are commanded to repent, trust and believe (Acts 10:42-43, 17:30; 2 Thessalonians 1:8).

D. It Must Be Recognized That Men Are Not Hindered From Coming - They Do Not Want Christ And A Holy Heaven (John 3:19-20).

If you were elected you would not like it, according to your own confession. If God this morning had chosen you to holiness, you say you would not care for it. Do you not acknowledge that you prefer drunkenness to sobriety, dishonesty to honesty? You love this worlds pleasure rather than religion then why should you grumble that God has not chosen you to religion? ... According to your own confession...you do not want religion, do not want a new heart and a right spirit, do not want forgiveness of sins, do not want sanctification, you do not want to be elected to these things; then why should you grumble? ... who

are you that you should find fault with God, when it is your own desperate will that keeps you from loving these things-your own simple self makes you hate them ... You do not like holiness, you do not like righteousness; if God has elected to me to these things, has He hurt you by it?

Charles Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Vol.I, p.316

E. It Must Be Recognized That God Loves All Men, Though Not With The Distinguishing, Peculiar, Unchanging Love He Has For The Elect (Micah 7:18; Matthew 5:44-45, 48; Mark 10:17-22; Luke 13:34-35, 19:41).

'Cast yourself upon the Saviour's love and you shall go down to your house justified ... 'With hands loaded with love he stands outside the door of your heart ... Is not this good reason for opening the door and letting the heavenly stranger in, when he can bless you with such a vast extent of benediction?...I exhort you to flee to Christ. O my brother, dost thou know what a loving Christ he is? ... Beloved, the benevolent love of Jesus is more extended than the lines of his electing love ... That [i.e. the love revealed in Matthew 23:37] is not the love which beams resplendently upon his chosen, but it is true love for all that.'God's special love 'is not love for all men ... There is an electing, discriminating, distinguishing love, which is settled upon a chosen people ... and it is this love which is the true resting place for the saint.'

Charles Spurgeon, in *Spurgeon Vs. Hyper-Calvinism*,
Iain Murray, pp. 96, 98

There is a love of God that goes forth to lost men and is manifested in the manifold blessings which all men without distinction enjoy, a love in which non-elect persons are embraced, and a love that comes to its highest expressions in the entreaties, overtures and demands of gospel proclamation.

John Murray, *Works*, Vol. I, p. 68

Did the rich young ruler persist forever in his deplorable refusal? The answer has not been revealed. Some reason as follows: Scripture tells us that Jesus loved him (Mark 10:21). God loves the elect, no one else. Conclusion: this young man must have become converted. But, this amounts to superimposing

an erroneous theological idea upon the text. If those who cling to it would be satisfied with the proposition that God loves in a peculiar way all those who place their trust in him (Ps. 103:13; I John 3:1), their teaching would be on firm ground. But when they go beyond this and deny that there is a love of God which extends beyond the sum total of the elect, we must part company with them. See Ps. 145:9, 17.

William Hendrickson, *New Testament Commentary, Luke*, p.835

VI. THE RELATION BETWEEN ELECTION AND FOREKNOWLEDGE.

A. Foreknowledge Is The Result And Consequence Of Election, Not The Reason Or The Cause Of It.

- 1. The connection of foreknowledge to election is a necessity, yet in itself indicates nothing about the nature of the foreknowledge.**

God can only predestine (which is inclusive of election) persons He has in mind beforehand (that He has a foreknowledge of). This however, doesn't tell us how or in what way God foreknew them! (Romans 8:29-30).

- 2. The character of God's foreknowledge is the issue: How does He foreknow the elect?**

There are two options:

- God had a prior factual knowledge of those who would believe: That is, God foresaw the fact that they would believe, and as a result, He chose them for salvation. In this case, election is the result or consequence of a factual prior foreknowledge. In the end, it is man who chooses not God. In this view, God chooses because we chose Him. This is the Arminian view.

- God had a prior relational knowledge of those that He elected to salvation. That is God – because He purposed to choose them and His purpose can't fail – knew from eternity past His elect in a relational, personal way as His own people. In short, because He chose to save them, their salvation was a certainty, and because it was a certainty, He knew them in eternity past as His people in a personal way. That is why Paul refers only to the elect as, "Those whom He foreknew" (Romans 8:29). Therefore, although God had a prior factual knowledge of all people, it is only the elect who are "Those whom He foreknew." In other words, God's election is the cause of His foreknowledge and not the reverse. Foreknowledge, therefore, does not mean that God knew beforehand who would believe so He chose them for salvation. It is the opposite. Because He chose them He entered virtually (not actually) into a personal relationship with them as those He "knows." So what it comes down to is this: Foreknowledge is not the reason He chose a person; it is the result!

3. The consequence of foreknowledge is calling (faith) (Romans 8:30).

Paul indicates in Romans 8:29-30 that faith is a result of God's election and foreknowledge. He does so using the idea of calling. It is those whom He foreknew who are called (which, of course, includes belief in Christ). Belief is a result of already being foreknown and predestined as His elect.

You are predestined and foreknown and, as a result, receive a call by which you are saved and justified. It is only those predestined and foreknown who are called and believe. Therefore, foreknowing precedes and is the cause of faith. In short, we believe (are called) because we were previously predestined and foreknown.

B. Foreknowledge Is A Relational, Intimate, Prior Knowing Of The People He Chose To Be His Sheep. Whom He Foreknew (Romans 8:29).

It must be noted again that Paul is not saying that God merely knew about them: It is more than that, it is personal, for he expressly says, "Whom He Foreknew."

1. There was a certainty in eternity that they will be His people because of His decision to choose them.

Because His elective decree is irrevocable and unstoppable, the elect are seen and regarded as His own people in eternity past. A good example is God's foreknowledge of Christ as the crucified Savior. Christ's crucifixion was foreknown because of the predetermined counsel of God (Acts 2:23; 1 Peter 1:19-20). God did not merely know beforehand Christ would be crucified. Christ was known, by the Father, as the crucified Savior because God's decree beforehand made it a certainty.

2. There was a personal, relational intimacy of God with His chosen people in eternity, because He had purposed to save them.

"Known" refers to a personal, relational, experiential knowing of someone. It is not a mere abstract, cognitive knowledge (Amos 3:2; 2 Timothy 2:19; John 10:14; Matthew 1:25). It is a knowing of someone in a personal, experiential way. In this case, God knew His elect people in a personal way from eternity, before they actually came into existence.

3. There is a prior identity in God's thinking (because of His election) of those who are His own people

They are known in eternity as His sheep, because of His choice. They are those "Whom He Foreknew."

IRRESISTIBLE GRACE AND EFFECTUAL CALLING: HOW GOD BRINGS A SINNER TO HIMSELF

There is no better verse to describe God's overall work of calling a sinner into fellowship with Himself than John 10:16 where Jesus said; *I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd.*

I. THE CENTRAL IMPORTANCE OF CALLING IN REGARDS TO SALVATION.

A. It Is Demanded Because Of Man's Depravity And Sinfulness.

1. Salvation by Christ is rejected by all.

- a. They do not seek God (Romans 3:11, 8:7).
- b. They do not come to the light (John 3:19-20).

2. Supernatural persuasion is required, not just provision (John 6:44, 65; 10:16).

NOTE: If it were not for depravity, men would flock and embrace God's offer of salvation. Robert Dabney states,

But such is man's depravity that a redemption must not only be provided, but he must be effectively persuaded to embrace it. Now since our effectual calling is the remedy for our original sin; as is our conception of the disease, such will be our conception of the remedy. Hence, in fact, all men's theology is determined hereupon, by their views of original sin. We, who believe the unconverted will to be certainly determined to ungodliness, by ungodly dispositions, therefore believe in an effectual and super-natural call.

Systematic Theology, p. 554

B. A Designation Of Believers In Scripture Is The ‘Called’.

The “called” is a common designation of believers. It emphasizes God’s grace and initiative (Romans 1:6; Jude 1; 1 Corinthians 1:24).

C. It Is A Description Of How Someone Becomes A Believer.

1. The emphasis is on God’s initiative and work in actually bringing certain individuals to salvation.

a. The Father calls His people to salvation.

God called us by His grace (2 Timothy 1:9). God called us according to His purpose (Romans 8:28, 30). God called us out of darkness into light (1 Peter 2:9). God actually effectually causes His people to come (John 6:37, 44, 65).

It is certain that it is we that act when we act; but it is He who makes us act, by applying efficacious powers to our will, who has said, ‘I will make you to walk in my statutes, and to observe my judgements, and to do them’. When He says, ‘I will make you ... to do them,’ what else does He say in fact than, ‘I will take away from you your heart of stone,’ from which used to arise your inability to act, ‘and I will give you a heart of flesh’, in order that you may act? And what does this promise amount to but this: I will remove your hard heart, out of which you did not act, and I will give you an obedient heart, out of which you shall act?

Augustine, *On Grace and Free Will*,
AntiPelegian Writings, p. 457

b. Christ calls His people to salvation.

He calls personally by name (John 10:3, 16; *They hear His voice and follow*, v. 27; Matthew 11:28). He calls sinners to repentance. *I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance* (Luke 5:32).

NOTE: The call is a summons that achieves its purpose. It is more than an invitation. It is an invitation that comes with a creative working in the sinner that results in their actually coming and receiving Christ. God, in calling, creates the ability to come (2 Corinthians 4:4-6; Lazarus is a good illustration).

2. It encompasses the whole process leading to salvation.

- a. It results in justification (Romans 8:28, 30).
- b. We are called into fellowship (1 Corinthians 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 2:12; 1 Peter 2:9).

II. THE COMPREHENSIVENESS OF CALLING INCLUDES TWO ASPECTS.

A. The General Call Through The Instrumentality Of The Word Of God.

God calls none apart from the instrumentality of His Word. This call goes out through preaching and is indiscriminately offered to all. It is a genuine, heartfelt call of God.

- 1. There is the proclamation of the Gospel (2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Acts 2:38; Matthew 22:14).**
- 2. There is an invitation to repent and believe (2 Corinthians 5:20; Acts 2:38).**
- 3. There is the promise of forgiveness (Luke 24:47; Acts 13:38).**

B. The Effectual Call In Which There Is The Initiative And Intervention Of God.

The effectual call is the overall work of God in bringing a sinner from his state of depravity and deadness in sin to his state of justification and fellowship with His Son. It includes the initial work in the believer where he is brought under conviction of sin. It also includes as well the final immediate work of God in regeneration.

- 1. The word must be heard through preaching and witnessing (1 Peter 1:25; 1 Corinthians 1:21; James 1:18).**
- 2. There is conviction where sinners are awakened and begin to be sensible of their spiritual need (John 16:7-11).**
- 3. There is regeneration where sinners are made alive and renewed in the will (Ephesians 2:4).**
- 4. There is faith and repentance where sinners embrace and receive Christ (Romans 8:30).**

C. Definition

The effectual call, we hold, consists of these elements, [the general call] and also a work of the Holy Ghost, "whereby convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, He doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the gospel.

Dabney p. 554

REGENERATION

I. THE CALL FOR IT: WHY IS REGENERATION DEMANDED BY GOD IN ORDER TO BE SAVED? YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN (John 3:3-7).

A. The In-Born Pollution And Depravity Of Sin Demands It. No One Can See Or Enter The Kingdom Of God (3:3, 6).

1. Man's disposition of nature is polluted with sin and makes him unfit for Heaven.

NOTE: Not only does man need the penalty of sin pardoned, he needs sins pollution cleansed. He not only needs guilt removed, he needs his heart renewed. Man doesn't just need objective atonement, but a subjective renewal. The issue is more than evil deeds. The heart itself is an offense to God (Ephesians 2:3).

2. Man's deeds, as an expression of his evil heart, are unacceptable to God.

a. The example of Nicodemus proves that externals such as; heredity, law keeping, religious privilege and duty are rejected by Christ.

b. The emphasis of Jesus was on the internal heart (Matthew 5:20).

Man's righteousness must exceed the external law keeping of the Pharisees. The spirit of the law must be kept as well, and this is impossible without a new heart. "Make a tree good and its fruit will be good" (Matthew 12:33).

B. The Inability Of Man To Change Himself Demands It. That Which Is Born Of The Flesh Is Flesh (v. 6a).

- 1. A fundamental spiritual change acceptable to God is impossible.**

Man can modify, restrain, redirect or conceal his sin, but he can't change the basic disposition of his soul. The basic appetites, lusts and desires remain. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh."

- 2. The fallen nature bound in sin prohibits self-change.**

NOTE: Man is both spiritually dead and spiritually blind. Light that shines upon a blind eye does not give it sight. A dead body can't reanimate itself. The exercise of an outside power is required.

C. The Intervention Of God's Almighty Creative Power Is Demanded. That Which Is Born Of The Spirit Is Spirit (v. 6b).

- 1. A subjective internal change of the heart by God's Almighty Power is required.**

There is a demand for an external agent outside of man. More than an enlightenment of the mind is needed because man's heart guides his head. He will only perceive something as acceptable and appealing if it is desirable to him, therefore his heart must be changed first.

- 2. A saving change (regeneration) upon the heart enables the sinner to let go of his rebellion and receive Christ.**

II. THE CHARACTER OF REGENERATION: WHAT DOES GOD DO IN REGENERATION?

Regeneration is a work of God that effects the entire human nature. This can be seen in three broad aspects.

A. It Is the Release Of God's Almighty Creative Power Directly On The Sinner.

Regeneration is an immediate divine work upon man's nature. In an ultimate sense it is apart from man's participation. God is active, and man is the passive recipient (It is monergistic).

1. It is asserted to be a Divine Work.

- a. We are His workmanship and creation (Ephesians 2:4-5, 10; 4:24; Colossians 3:10).

Creation is not a realtering of what already exists. Creation is a bringing into existence that which had no prior being or existence. The new birth is a creation. It is a bringing into existence properties in man that were not there before. Paul refers to regeneration as a creative act of God 6 times (Galatians 6:15; Ephesians 2:10, 4:24; Colossians 3:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17; James 1:18). This shows the importance of seeing it as entirely God's own work.

- b. It is apart from human participation (John 1:12-13).
- c. It is distinguished from the Word of God which is the instrument of regeneration (1 Corinthians 2:4-6; 1 Thessalonians 1:5-6; 1 Peter 1:23).

Regeneration is the result of the exercise of God's Almighty Power. It is not something we must or can do. It is something God does. He makes us alive (Ephesians 2:1, 5). Therefore, it is not an equivalent to believing. God is the active agent in regeneration and man is the passive recipient.

The power of God most gloriously appears in man's being actually saved and redeemed in this way. In his being brought out of a state of sin and misery, into a conformity to God; and at last to the full and perfect enjoyment of God. This is a more glorious demonstration of divine power, than creating things out of nothing, upon two accounts...one is, the effect is greater and more excellent. To produce the new creature is a more glorious effect, than to merely produce a creature— making a holy creature, a creature in the spiritual image of God, in the image of divine excellencies, and a partaker of the divine nature is a greater effect than merely to give being. And, therefore, as the effect is greater, it is a more glorious manifestation of power. And then, the production of this last effect, is a more glorious manifestation of power, than the work of creation; because though in creation, the terms are very distant—as nothing is very remote from being—yet there is no opposition. Nothing makes no opposition to the creating power of God. — But in redemption, the divine power meets with and overcomes great opposition. There is great opposition in a state of sin to a state of grace. Men's lusts and corruptions are exceedingly opposite to grace and holiness; and greatly resist the production of the effect. But this opposition is completely overcome in actual redemption. Besides, there is great opposition from Satan. The power of God is very glorious in this work, because it therein conquers the strongest and most powerful enemies. Power never appears more illustrious than in conquering. Jesus Christ, in this work, conquers and triumphs over thousands of devils, strong and mighty spirits, uniting all their strength against Him.

Jonathan Edwards, *Vol. II*, p. 144

2. It is asserted to be a sovereign act.

- a. It is His merciful intervention in a life (2 Corinthians 4:5-6; 1 Peter 1:3).
- b. It is the result of the exercise of His will (John 1:13; James 1:18).

'What!' says one, 'do you mean to say that God absolutely interposes in the salvation of every man to make him regenerate?' I do indeed; in the salvation of every person there is an actual putting forth of divine power, whereby the dead sinner is quickened, the unwilling sinner is made willing, the desperately hard sinner has his conscience made tender; and he who rejected God and despised Christ, is brought to cast himself down at the feet of Jesus ... If you like it not, quarrel with my Master, not with me; I do but simply declare his own revelation, that there must be in your heart something more than you can ever work there. There must be a divine operation, call it a miraculous operation if you please; it is in some sense so. There must be a divine interposition, a divine working, a divine influence, or else do what you may, without that you perish, and are undone— For except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. The change is radical; it gives us new natures, makes us love what we hated and hate what we loved; sets us in a new road; makes our habits different, our thoughts different, makes us different in private, and different in public. So that being in Christ it is fulfilled,—'If any man be in Christ he is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.'

Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Vol III, p. 188

3. It is affirmed that it is an almighty creative act by the different effects the Word has on people.

Regeneration, as a sovereign direct release of God's creative power, alone explains the different effects that accompany preaching at the same time to different men. And it alone explains the differing effects to the same people at different times.

B. It Is The Reanimating Of A Nature Dead In Sin By The Impartation Of Life.

There are a number of references that indicate that regeneration is the imparting of life in man's once spiritually dead nature.

1. **It is a birth (John 3:3; James 1:18).**
2. **It is a making alive (Ephesians 2:5; 1 John 3:14).**
3. **It is a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:15).**

C. It Is A Reconstructing Of The Fallen Human Nature With A Holy Disposition.

Regeneration is fundamentally the imparting of life; but it is more than this. It is the reworking of the human nature.

I cannot think of a better definition than this: regeneration is an act of God by which a principle of new life is implanted in man, and the governing disposition of the soul is made holy. That is regeneration. It means that God by His mighty action puts a new disposition into my soul.

Martin Lloyd-Jones, *Ephesians Vol.II*, p. 79

It is not an excitation or awakening of some gracious principle which lay hid before in nature under the oppression of ill habits, as corn lay hid under the chaff but was corn still; not a beating up something that lay skulking in nature, not an awakening as of a man from sleep; but a resurrection as of a man from death; a new creation, as of a man from nothing. It is not a stirring up old principles and a new kindling of them ... A revolution, a reconstruction takes place at the centre of man's moral and spiritual being; sin and pollution are dethroned in the citadel of man's being, and righteousness takes its place. 'Regeneration', says Charnock again, 'is a mighty and powerful change wrought in the soul by the efficacious working of the Holy Spirit, wherein a vital principle, a new habit, the law of God, and a divine nature, are put into and framed in the heart, enabling it to act holily and pleasingly to God, and to grow up therein to eternal glory ... There is a change, a creation, that which was not is brought into a state of being.

John Murray, *Collected Writings*, p. 171

- 1. It is a cleansing of inward pollution (John 3:3-5; 1 Peter 1:22-23; 1 Corinthians 6:11).**

NOTE: The understanding of "water" in John 3:5 is best understood in the light of the Old Testament (Ezekiel 36:25-27) and the significance of this to Nicodemus. Nicodemus a self-righteous man was ignorant first of the Old Testament truth of God's promise to cleanse the human heart. Secondly he was ignorant of his personal need for it.

- 2. It is a removal of the stony heart for a heart of flesh (Ezekiel 11:19, 36:25-27).**
- 3. It is a recreating of the image of God in righteousness and holiness in the nature (Ephesians 4:24; 1 John 2:29, 3:7).**
- 4. It is a renewal of the inner man (Titus 3:5).**

NOTE: Two things need to be clarified.

The defective old nature/new nature view.

A word must be said about the view that in salvation a believer receives a new nature alongside the old nature. This is usually taught together with the idea that the old nature remains unchanged in this life. There are a number of things wrong with this teaching.

- a. There is no new fundamental direction and change toward God and righteousness (which consists, essentially, in an adoration and delight in Christ and His glory) since the old and new natures are supposedly equal in power.
- b. It is impossible to expect and pray for true transformation. Since the old can't be cleansed and the new has no need of it. What is cleansed and transformed? A third nature?

The remaining presence of sin is a broken inferior power.

The believer's nature is changed pervasively, but not perfectly. It is dominantly righteous, but not absolutely (1 John 2:29, 3:9; Romans 6:18-22, 7:23). Sin remains in the believer's nature as a continual unceasing force. It is not simply a residue of his physical or bodily appetites. Remaining sin has lusts and desires so it is part of his immaterial man (Galatians 5:16). It is like a diseased tree which is still basically green and fruitful. It is like a deposed monarch that continues to harass the new government by continual guerrilla warfare.

III. THE CAUSES OF REGENERATION: WHAT DOES GOD USE TO BRING ABOUT REGENERATION?

A. Ultimately God Is The Agent (Ephesians 2:5; 1 Peter 1:3).

B. Intermediately The Word Is The Instrument.

1. We are brought forth by the Word (James 1:18).

2. Faith comes by hearing (Romans 10:17).

3. We are born by the imperishable Word (1 Peter 1:22-23).

IV. THE COURSE OF REGENERATION: WHEN DOES REGENERATION OCCUR IN RELATION TO FAITH?

A. The Dominion Of Sin Requires That Regeneration Logically Precedes Faith.

- 1. Enlightenment is impossible without a change of nature (Ephesians 4:18).**
- 2. Enmity to God makes faith in Christ impossible (Romans 8:7-8; Hebrews 11:6).**

B. The Definitive Teaching Of The New Testament Is That Regeneration Precedes Faith.

- 1. Entering heaven, which is by faith, requires the new birth (John 3:3-5).**
- 2. Receiving Christ by faith is the result of the new birth (John 1:12-13).**
- 3. Belief in Christ is the consequence of the new birth (1 John 5:1).**
- 4. Regeneration is the reason for the faith that saved us (Titus 3:5-7).**

NOTE: The issue of the order of regeneration and faith is no small matter, as it is sometimes claimed. The matter centers around the extent of depravity and the nature of our dependence on the Spirit. Is the central factor of man's depravity his understanding? Does his mind only need to be illuminated, or does it go deeper? Is his depravity a basic disposition of heart that will never allow the truth about Christ to be welcomed and received? If man's fundamental, central depravity is the underlying disposition, then he will never be enlightened unless his heart is changed (Acts 16:14). This means he must be regenerated in his heart for his mind to be enlightened.

Hence it follows, first, that faith does not proceed from ourselves, but is the fruit of spiritual regeneration; for the Evangelist affirms that no man can believe, unless he is begotten of God; and therefore faith is a heavenly gift. It follows, secondly, that faith is not bare or cold

knowledge, since no man can believe who has not been renewed by the Spirit of God. It may be thought that the Evangelist reverses the natural order by making regeneration to precede faith, whereas, on the contrary, it is an effect of faith, and therefore ought to be placed later...and yet faith itself is the work of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in none but the children of God ... so then, in various respects, faith is a part of our regeneration ... and thus faith flows from regeneration as from its source; but since it is by the same faith that we receive Christ, who sanctifies us by His Spirit, on that account it is said to be the beginning of our adoption.

Calvin, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, pp. 44-45

V. THE CONSEQUENCES OF REGENERATION.

A. The Inevitability Of A New Conduct.

- 1. Righteousness (1 John 2:29).**
- 2. Love (1 John 3:14, 4:8).**
- 3. No longer sinning (1 John 3:9-10).**

B. An Illuminated Mind That Sees The Beauty And Glory Of Christ.

- 1. A nature is given which now sees glory and beauty where it saw none before (2 Corinthians 4:3-6).**
- 2. A nature is given that delights in and relishes (or tastes) the moral excellencies of God's nature and works (1 Peter 2:1-3, 9).**

CONVICTION

I. IT IS THE DYNAMIC THAT CHRIST PROMISED WOULD ATTEND PREACHING AND WITNESSING IN A WORLD THAT HATES CHRIST (John 15:18-27).

A. The Animosity Of Man Requires It (John 15:18-25).

- 1. Their hatred of Christ (John 15:18-19).**
- 2. Their indifference to His Word and works (John 15:21-25).**

B. The Assurance Is That The Spirit's Work Would Accompany Their Preaching (John 15:26-27).

NOTE: The Spirit is sent to bear witness of Christ internally as we bear witness of Christ in preaching externally.

II. IT IS A DEMONSTRATION OF CHRIST'S GLORY AND MAN'S GUILT TO THE CONSCIENCE (John 16:7-11).

A. The Explanation Of The Term 'Convict'.

1. The general concept:

The basic, general meaning of the word convict (ελεγχω) is: To call to account, to refute with a suggestion of shame or a sense of guilt. It is that by which a thing is proved.

2. The objective aspect: External on the mind alone.

In its objective sense it means: To substantiate a charge and furnish proof, to expose, make evident (Ephesians 5:11, 13) with unanswerable arguments

3. The subjective aspect (elect): Internal on the mind and heart.

In a subjective or inward sense it refers to: A sensible realization of guilt, a breaking of insensibility so guilt is felt (1 Corinthians 14:24). A parallel idea is to cut to the heart, to pierce (Acts 2:37).

B. It Is The Exalting Of Christ's Person And Work Before The Sinner.

1. The greatness of His words and work (John 15:21-24; Romans 3:25-26; Galatians 3:1).

2. The glory of his being (2 Corinthians 4:4-6).

C. It Is The Exhibiting Of The Sinner's Sin And Guilt To His Conscience.

1. The engaging of man's conscience is the essence of it: They realize that they will be judged (vv. 9, 11).

2. The elimination of man's excuses is the end toward which it works (John 15:22).

D. The Examples In Scripture.

1. Paul (Acts 26:14).

2. Pentecost - 'pierced to the heart' (Acts 2:37).

Conviction is not the same as conversion or regeneration. A person can be convicted by the Spirit and not be regenerated (Acts 7:51; Hebrews 6:4; 10:29).

Under the term world are, I think, included not only those who would be truly converted to Christ, but hypocrites and reprobates. For these are two ways in which the Spirit convinces men by the preaching of the Gospel. Some are moved in good earnest, so as to bow down willingly, and to assent willingly to the judgement by which they are condemned. Others, though they are convinced of guilt and cannot escape, yet do not sincerely yield, or submit themselves to the authority and jurisdiction of the Holy Spirit, but, on the contrary, being subdued they groan inwardly and being overwhelmed with confusion, still do not cease to cherish obstinacy within their hearts.

Calvin, *The Gospel of John*, pp. 138-139

III. IT IS A DISTURBANCE OF MAN IN THREE SPECIFIC AREAS (John 16:7-11).

A. Sin – There Is A Whole-Hearted Assent To The Reality Of Sin.

- 1. There is a recognition of the true standard of God's holiness. Sin is inward as well as outward (Matthew 5:21-28).**
- 2. There is the realization that rebellion reaches its apex in unbelief (2 Thessalonians 1:8).**

B. Righteousness – There Is An Awakening To Personal Unworthiness.

- 1. There is a sensibility that they have offended God and Christ (cp. Acts 2:22-24, 32-36).**

2. Self-Complacency is destroyed.

- a. There is a renouncing of external self-righteousness and works.
- b. There is a real sense of internal self-abasement.

C. Judgment – There Is An Awakened Sense Of Accountability To God.

- 1. The mindset that opposes and belittles judgment is overcome.**
- 2. The marks of true guilt are manifested.**

IV. IT DIFFERS IN ITS MANIFESTATION FROM PERSON TO PERSON.

A. The Presence Of Outward Remorse And Sorrow Is Not The Essential Element.

Examples of sorrow without true conversion are common: Judas/Saul come to mind. Sometimes conviction of sin isn't a complete work. It awakens guilt, but doesn't always lead to saving faith and repentance. The Bible says men can resist the Spirit, (Acts 7:51) and despise the Spirit of grace (Hebrews 10:29) - they can be convicted without conversion (Hebrews 6:4-5).

B. The Primary Indication Of Genuine Conviction Is A Controlling Sense Of Unworthiness, Not Displays Of Sorrow (Luke 18:13, Acts 2:37).

But while it is no doubt true, that it is the natural tendency of correct apprehensions of our real character in the sight of God to produce these strong emotions of humiliation and sorrow; and while it is no less true, that those who

have made the most eminent attainment in holiness have generally had the largest share of these inward trials, it is not to be supposed that they are necessary to the character of a Christian. On the contrary, a believing apprehension of the mercy of God in Jesus Christ, while it would not prevent humiliation and penitential sorrow on account of sin, would effectually extract the bitterness of remorse and fear from the cup of repentance. There is no true religion in these terrors and fearful apprehensions ... Though, therefore, the pain of remorse and dread of the wrath of God often attend conviction of sin, they do not constitute it ... The common complaint with many is that they cannot feel; that their hearts are like ice; that the knowledge and perception of their ingratitude and disobedience produce little or no emotion... This form of experience is just as consistent with the nature of conviction of sin as the others. All that is necessary is the testimony of conscience to the justice of the Divine representations of our character and conduct; the consciousness and acknowledgment that we are what God declares us to be. Where this judgment of the conscience, or this sense of personal unworthiness, exists, leading the sinner to lay his hand upon his mouth in the presence of God, and to bow at his feet as undeserving of mercy, there, as far as this point is concerned, is genuine conviction.

Charles Hodge, *The Way of Life*, pp. 84-85

C. It Is Produced In Different Ways In Different People.

This state of mind may be produced in very different ways. Sometimes it is the result of a calm review of life, and a comparison of the habitual state of the heart and general course of our conduct with the law of God. Sometimes, some one offence, more than commonly aggravated, seizes upon the conscience; some broken vow, some neglected call, some open sin, is made the means of revealing the man to himself. Whatever may be the particular occasion, the mind is led to fix itself on its responsibility to God, and the conviction to its guilt becomes settled and confirmed. This is necessary to the sinner's return to God. So long as he thinks himself whole, he will not apply to the Physician.

Hodge, *The Way of Life*, p. 85

It is obvious that there can be no intelligent acceptance of Christ as a Saviour without this conviction of our exposure to condemnation, and there can be no conviction of such exposure without a perception of the justice of the penalty of the law. It is however, to be remembered, that there are many things involved in Christian experience, which may not be the object of distinct attention. It

may, therefore, well happen, that many pass from death unto life without any lively apprehension of the wrath of God, or any very distinct impression that all that he has threatened against sin might be justly inflicted upon them. Their attention may have been arrested and their hearts moved by the exhibition of the love of God in Christ, and they may have been conscious, at the time, of little more than a cordial acquiescence in the gospel, and the desire and purpose to live for the service of God. Still, even in such persons, as soon as their attention is directed to the subject, there is a full recognition of ill desert, a readiness to acknowledge that salvation is a matter of grace, and that they would have no right to complain had they been left to perish in their sins. Diversified, therefore, as may be the experience of God's people on this subject, they agree in acknowledging the justice of God in his demands and his threatenings, and in regarding themselves as unworthy of the least of his favours.

Hodge, *The Way of Life*, pp. 88-89

FAITH AND REPENTANCE

I. THE COMPONENTS OF SAVING FAITH IN SCRIPTURE.

A. Faith's Essence And Core Element Is Trust And Reliance On The Death Of Christ Alone For Justification And Acceptance.

1. There must be knowledge (notitia) and assent (assensus).

a. There must be knowledge of the gospel. The gospel must be heard and Christ's person and work must be set forth (Romans 10:14, 17).

b. There must be a whole-hearted assent that the gospel is the truth (1 John 5:9-13, 20; John 3:14; Ephesians 1:13).

2. It is a renunciation of all personal righteousness. It is a self-emptying attitude that disowns any personal merit or righteousness (Luke 18:9; Romans 4:5).

There is a self-emptying that recognizes we have nothing to offer for our righteousness (Luke 18:9).

And He also told the parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt (Luke 18:9).

3. It is a reliance, dependence, and trust in Christ's substitutionary obedience and wrath-absorbing death alone for a full pardon and a free and final justification (Galatians 2:16; Romans 3:22-25).

- a. The kindness, grace and love of God demonstrated in Christ's atonement is rested upon for our acceptance and justification (Romans 3:24-25; 1 John 4:9-10).
- b. The gracious and generous disposition of God towards sinners is seen and whole-heartedly embraced and received (Romans 3:24-26, 5:1, 6-10). We trust in Christ's righteousness and sin-bearing death alone.

B. Faith Encompasses Repentance And Turning To Christ.

1. The demonstration of the attitude of the heart in true repentance is seen in visible fruit.

- a. Repentance is a change "from" one moral purpose "to" a new moral purpose (1 Samuel 7:3; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; Acts 3:19, 26; 9:35).

Therefore repent and return, so that your sins may be wiped away, in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord ... For you first, God raised up His Servant and sent Him to bless you by turning every one of you from your wicked ways (Acts 3:19, 26)

- b. Repentance is verified by a new life direction and allegiance to God (Luke 3:8-14; Acts 26:18-20; 2 Corinthians 7:8-11).

"Therefore bear fruits in keeping with repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father,' for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham. Indeed the axe is already laid at the root of the trees; so every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." And the crowds were questioning him, saying, "Then what shall we do?" And he would answer and say to them, "The man who has two tunics is to share with him who has none; and he who has food is to do likewise." And some tax collectors also came to be baptized, and

they said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Collect no more than what you have been ordered to." Some soldiers were questioning him, saying, "And what about us, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse anyone falsely, and be content with your wages." (Luke 3:8-14)

2. The connection of repentance and saving faith is clearly made in Scripture (Luke 3:8-14; Acts 26:18-20; 2 Corinthians 7:8-11).

- a. Repentance is used interchangeably with faith as the condition of salvation (Acts 2:38, 44, 17:30, 34, 20:21). Those who repent are also those who believe.

Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent ... But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them (Acts 17:30, 34).

- b. Repentance is used interchangeably with faith as the condition of the gospel message (Luke 5:32; 24:47; Acts 5:31, 10:43, 13:38-39, 26:18-20) for the forgiveness of sins. Forgiveness is a result of both faith and repentance.

... and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem (Luke 24:47).

Of Him all the prophets bear witness that through His name everyone who believes in Him receives forgiveness of sins (Acts 10:43).

*... to open their eyes so that they may **turn** from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified **by faith in Me.**' So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then*

throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance. (Acts 26:18-20).

3. The connection of turning to God and saving faith is clearly made in Scripture.

- a. Turning to God is used interchangeably with faith as the condition of salvation (Acts 3:19; 9:35, 42; 11:21).

And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who believed turned to the Lord (Acts 11:21)

- b. Turning to God (v.9) is used interchangeable with faith (v. 8) to indicate a new commitment and allegiance that always works itself out in life (I Thessalonians 1:8-9).

For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything. For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God (1 Thessalonians 1:8-9).

4. The description of repentance in Scripture.

Based upon the teaching from Scripture about repentance above, we can make the following conclusions:

- a. Negatively - what it is not. It is not a preparation that qualifies someone to exercise faith. It does not precede faith as that which makes a person ready to believe. Nor is it only a change of mind about the facts of the gospel. Finally, it is not the new life that follows from faith.

- b. Positively - what it is. It is an element of true faith. It is a heart attitude where the whole person goes in a new direction away from sin and self towards God and righteousness. It is a gift from God (Acts 11:18). A person may not be aware they have repented since often the focus is upon God's grace in Christ. However, it is evident by a new direction in life.

Furthermore, we have declared before what the word repentance doth signify, to wit, that it is an inward turning of man unto God, which showeth itself afterwards by external works.

John Calvin, *Commentary on Acts*, p. 218

5. The definition of repentance in Scripture.

The definition of repentance is based on more than the etymology or the root meaning of the word. While the root meaning is 'to change your mind' the full meaning comes from its use in context and involves the following aspects.

- a. The intellectual aspect: It recognizes the nature of personal sin as an affront to God. It sees personal sin as guilty and serious before God.
- b. The emotional aspect: It involves a sense of the guilt of sin and personal unworthiness. This comes in degrees and varies in how it is manifested from person to person. There is no standard and external measure by which to judge this, other than a person has a new direction in life.
- c. The volitional aspect: It involves a change of determination of the will. There is a redirection of the whole person from sin and self to God. The moral direction of the person changes (Luke 3:8-14).

Definition: Repentance is a repudiation and abandonment of sin that involves a recognition of and surrender to Christ's Lordship and His rightful authority to direct and govern one's life.

6. The evaluation of whether there is repentance is not required before trusting Christ: Repentance is not a preparation to believe.

I believe the tendency of that preaching which puts the warrant for faith anywhere but in the gospel command, is to vex the true penitent and to console the hypocrites; the tendency of it is to make the poor soul, which really repents, feel that he must not believe in Christ, because he sees so much of his own hardness of heart. The more spiritual a man is, the more unspiritual he sees himself to be ... Often the most penitent men are those who think themselves the most impenitent ... If we begin to preach to sinners that they must have a certain sense of sin and a certain measure of conviction, such teaching would turn the sinner away from God in Christ to himself. The man begins at once to say, 'Have I a broken heart' Do I feel the burden of sin? This is only another form of looking at self. Man must not look to himself to find reasons for God's grace ... The gospel is that you believe in Christ Jesus, that you get right out of yourself, and depend alone in him. Do you say, 'I feel so guilty'? You are certainly guilty, whether you feel it or not; you are far more guilty than you have any idea of. Come to Christ because you are guilty, not because you have been prepared to come by looking at your guilt. Trust nothing of your own, not even your sense of need. Sinners, let me address you with words of life; Jesus wants nothing from you, nothing whatsoever, nothing done, nothing felt; he gives both work and feeling. Ragged, penniless, just as you are, lost forsaken, desolate, with no good feelings, and no good hopes, still Jesus comes to you, and in these words of pity he addresses you, 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.'

Charles Spurgeon, *Spurgeon Vs. Hyper-Calvinism*, pp. 77-79

You need nothing but Christ, dear heart; you need pump up no tears of repentance to help Christ, for He will give you repentance if you seek it of Him. You must come to him to get repentance; you must not seek that gospel blessing anywhere but the cross. You will need no baptisms and Lord's Suppers to rely upon; it will be your duty as a believer to profess your faith in him, and to remember him at the table, but these things will not help your salvation, you will be saved by Jesus and by Him alone. You need experience no terrors, you need undergo no preparation, Christ is ready to receive you now. Like the surgeon whose door is open for every accident that may occur; like the great hospitals

on our side the river, where, let the case be what it may, the door swings open the moment an entrance is demanded - such is my master.

Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Vol. XIII, p. 215

II. THE CONTROVERSY OVER SAVING FAITH: THE ISSUE OF REPENTANCE AND LORDSHIP.

A. The Non-Lordship View Of Faith: This Is The Intellectual, Or Non-Moral View Of Saving Faith.

This is a deficient understanding of faith. It is a faith which does not affect a person's sense of sin, so that a person doesn't turn from it to serve Christ. This faith does not save (James 2:14, 18-20).

1. This description of faith is a faith that is merely mental. It is simply an act of the intellect not the heart.

- a. The root meaning of repentance is "to change the mind." Therefore, in this view it is claimed that repentance is just another word for faith. Repentance merely refers to the fact that unbelief is changed to belief. There, simply is a change of mind. The moral sense of sin and the heart itself is unaffected.
- b. There is not, in faith, a new purpose that turns away from sin to God.
- c. Faith, therefore, is simply trusting the truth of the facts of the gospel. There is not necessarily a change in the life.

2. The defense of this intellectual faith is that is it consistent with grace.

- a. It claims to maintain the freeness and grace of the gospel and the gift of eternal life.

- b. It believes that any element of commitment or surrender in faith is a work.

This non-lordship faith completely leaves out the heart change that is a core element of true faith. It produces people to whom Christ will one day say, "I never knew you, depart from me you who practice lawlessness" (Matthew 7:23).

B. The Lordship View Of Faith: The Intellectual/Moral View Of Faith.

This is a faith that includes in it a sense of the offensiveness of sin which turns from it to serve Christ. This is the faith that saves.

1. This description of faith includes a conviction and loathing of sin that causes a person to turn from sin to follow Christ.

- a. Repentance is an attitude towards sin that turns from sin to God. It is a basic element of genuine faith. It does not precede faith, but is an essential element of true saving faith.
- b. Repentance is an attitude that includes a new moral purpose to turn from sin to God. Therefore, genuine faith is not only trust in Christ, it is a repentant trust in Christ.

2. The defense of repentant faith is that it is consistent with grace as well as the full biblical teaching of faith and repentance.

It maintains the freeness of salvation, since repentance refers only to an internal heart attitude. In other words, repentance is an attitude of the heart and not the deeds and life change that follow.

C. The Central Issue In The Controversy Over Faith.

1. Negatively speaking.

The issue is not must a person do more than believe in Christ. Faith alone cannot be tampered with, without becoming another gospel.

2. Positively speaking.

The issue is, does faith consist simply in an intellectual assent and an affirmation of truth? Or does it also include within it a moral element that recognizes the evil nature of sin as wicked rebellion against God, so that there is in faith a commitment to turn from sin and give allegiance to God? In other words, does faith include receiving Christ as Lord as well as Savior? The Scriptures clearly point to the fact that this is the true nature of saving faith.

III. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SAVING FAITH.

A. It Is A Faith/Repentance That Is A Gift From God (Acts 11:18, 18:27; Philipians 1:29; Ephesians 2:8-10).

"By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" ... What I suppose he means is, that the relative "that," being of the neuter gender, and the word 'pistis' of the feminine, they do not agree together. But if he would translate the Greek relative "that thing," viz. the thing last spoken of, all the difficulty vanishes ... the virtuous actions of men that are rewardable, are not left to men's indifference, without divine ordering and efficacy, so as to be possible to fail.

Edwards, p. 547

... thus showing that even faith itself cannot be had without God's mercy, and that it is the gift of God. This he very expressly teaches us when he says, 'For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves; it is a gift of God'. They might possibly say, 'We received grace because we believed; as if they would attribute the faith to themselves, and the grace to God. Therefore,

the apostle having said, 'Ye are saved through faith', added 'and that not of yourselves,' but it is the gift of God.' And yet further, lest it should be imagined that faith itself is to be attributed to men independently of the grace of God, the apostle says: 'And that not of yourselves; for it is a gift of God.' It follows therefore, that we receive, without any merit of our own, that from which everything...has its beginning - that is, faith itself ... if it is contended that faith is so bestowed as to be a recompense for merit, not a free gift, what then becomes of another saying of the apostle: 'Unto you it be given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake'? Each is by the apostle's testimony made a gift, -- both that he believes in Christ, and that each suffers for His sake. These men however, attribute faith to free will in such a way as to make it appear that grace is rendered to faith not as a gratuitous gift, but as a debt - thus ceasing to be grace any longer, because this is not grace which is not gratuitous.

Augustine, *The Works of St. Augustine AntiPelegian Writings*,
pp. 450, 230

B. It Is Faith Which Possesses A Spirit Of Obedience (Matthew 18:1-3; John 3:36; Acts 6:7).

C. It Is A Faith That Is Permanent And Endures (John 3:15, 18, 36; 5:24; 1 John 5:1; Colossians 1:22-23; Hebrews 3:6, 14).

True saving faith continues. The true believer believes till the end (Hebrews 3:6, 14; 1 John 5:2). These scriptures contradict what some affirm. The following authors deny that true faith must continue and endure.

Normally one who has believed can be described as a believer; that is one who continues to believe. But a believer may come to the place of not believing, and yet God will not disown him, since He cannot disown Himself.

Charles C. Ryrie, *So Great A Salvation*, p. 141

Along the same lines, some have argued that the term believe, when referring to salvation, is always used in the present tense, as is the case in John 6:47. The implication is that a believer is one who is always believing. Therefore, to stop believing is to disqualify oneself from the family of believers. As convincing as

these arguments may sound, they are shot through with problems. The Bible clearly teaches that God's love for His people is of such magnitude that even those who walk away from the faith have not the slightest chance of slipping from His hand.

Charles Stanley, *Eternal Security*, pp. 73-74

D. It Is A Faith That Is Dynamic And Demonstrated In Works (James 2:14-26).

E. It Is A Faith The Essence And Core Of Which Is A Self-Emptying Attitude Of The Soul That Casts Its Welfare Entirely On God's Grace. It Rests Solely On Christ's Obedience And Atonement For Eternal Acceptance (John 3:14-16; Romans 3:22-26).

Obviously, the believer is a man who ceases to justify, or to try to justify himself by his works or by anything else. Would you know for certain whether you have justifying faith? Here is the way to find the answer: are you looking in any sense to yourself? Are you in any sense relying even to the slightest extent upon any good you have ever done, or anything you have ever been? Are you even relying on your own faith? Do you think that it is your belief that saves you? Is it that? Is that your righteousness? If it is, you are not saved, you are not a Christian, because the Christian is a man who looks entirely to the righteousness of Jesus Christ. His entire righteousness is in Christ. Christian faith is a faith that looks only to the Lord Jesus Christ and to nothing and to nobody else...What is justifying faith? It is the faith that believes what God says in Christ in spite of all I know about myself, my past sins, my present sinfulness, in spite of the fact that I know that I still have an evil nature within me which makes me say with Paul, 'in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.' Justifying faith is that which enables a man to believe the Word of God in spite of knowing his own weakness, his own proneness to fall, his own proneness to fail – that is justifying faith...In spite of the fact that all this is true of me, I know I am righteous in Christ. He does not look at himself to find justification, he looks entirely out to Christ and all he is in Christ. He believes this Word about the resurrection, the proclamation of God in raising Christ from the dead. He looks to that in spite of all. If you cannot do that you have not got justifying faith. Faith is this confident protest against every voice that assails us from within and from hell...It is in spite of what we know about

ourselves, of what the Law knows about us, of what hell knows about us. So stop talking about your past sins, stop talking about your present sinfulness. In this matter of justification you must not mention them. You just stand as you are in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and in Him believe the staggering Word of God about yourself.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Romans Chapter 4*, pp. 247-249

IV. THE CONNECTION OF SAVING FAITH WITH RECEIVING CHRIST AS LORD.

A. Faith Involves A Surrender And Allegiance To Christ's Lordship.

1. The meaning and association of repentance with faith demonstrate that faith involves surrender.

... to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.' So, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance. (Acts 26:18-20)

2. The moral rebellion of man requires that faith involves surrender (the alternative is impossible).

3. The description of faith as involving an attitude of obedience requires it (John 3:35-36; Romans 1:5).

4. The nature of "coming to" and "receiving" Christ demands that faith involves surrender (John 3:19-20; John 1: 10-13).

5. The nature of the Spirit's conviction ministry requires surrender (John 16:7-10).

- 6. The specific terms of the gospel require it (2 Corinthians 4:4-6; Acts 16:31; Romans 10:9).**
- 7. The examples of “coming after” Christ in saving faith in the Gospels require it (Matthew 16:24-27).**

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:24-26)

B. Surrender To Christ’s Lordship In Saving Faith Does Not Involve Works.

- 1. The intent to serve Christ as Lord is not the act of following itself: We turn to God (believe) with the result we serve (1 Thessalonians 1:9).**

For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God (1 Thessalonians 1:9).

- 2. The works flow from the core surrender and commitment, but are not the core commitment itself. Believers are those who:**

...turn from darkness to light and...to the dominion of God...performing deeds appropriate to repentance (Acts 26:18-20).

C. Surrender To Christ’s Lordship Does Not Minimize Future Surrenders.

- 1. The initial surrender is a surrender in general principle (Romans 12:1-2).**

Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect (Romans 12:1-2).

2. Surrender is further required and renewed as areas of sin surface (Romans 7:22-25).

ILL: It is like a 'conquered territory' that requires further search and destroy missions to remove remaining pockets of rebellion.

A DEFINITION OF SAVING FAITH.

Faith is a God-given capacity that: (1) in its essence, trusts and relies solely and completely on God's love and mercy in Christ's substitutionary, propitiatory death as the only means and basis of eternal acceptance and the eternal forgiveness of sins. (2) it encompasses a recognition of the evil of sin as a personal and culpable offense against God's majestic person and rightful authority and (3) turns with a new allegiance to follow Christ as Lord.

Is Christ first and last and middle with you, top and bottom, foundation and pinnacle, all in all? He knows not Christ who does not know that Christ is all. Christ and company will never do. Christ is the sole Saviour, the sole trust, the one prophet, priest, and king to all who accept Him. Is he everything to you? Ah, there are some who think they love Christ; they think they trust Christ; but if he were to come to their house he would have a seat at the far right end of the table if they treated him as they treat him now. They would give him part of the Sabbath-day: they were loafing about all the morning, they were only able to get here this evening, and even now they have not come to worship, but only out of curiosity. A chapter in the Bible, how long is it, young man, since you read one? Private prayer – ah, I must not go into that; it is such a sorry story that you would have to tell. If anybody said to you, 'You are not a Christian', you would be offended. Well, I will say it, and you may be offended if you like, but remember you should be offended with yourself rather than with me. If you offend my Lord I am not at all afraid of your being offended with his servant, and therefore I tell you, if Christ be anything short of Lord and king in your soul, Christ and you are wide apart. He must be in the front rank, Lord High Admiral upon the sea, and Commander-in-Chief on the land. He is not going to be a petty officer, to come in at your odd times to be a lackey to you. You must take him to be Head, Lord, and Master. Is it so with you? If not, you differ from those in heaven, for he is all in all to them.

Charles Spurgeon, *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit* Vol. XXI, p. 179

THE FINAL PERSEVERANCE OF THE TRUE BELIEVER

The New Covenant is the basic constitutional agreement that sets the terms of the believer's relationship with God. It is the foundation to understanding the perseverance and security of the believer.

I. THE COVENANT PROMISES WHICH GUARANTEE THAT TRUE BELIEVERS PERSEVERE TO THE END AND FOREVER REMAIN HIS PEOPLE (Hebrews 8:8-12).

A. The Certainty Of Final Perseverance Rests On The Reality That God Himself Undertakes Both Aspects Of The New Covenant. I Will Make A New Covenant (8:8).

Notice that there are seven references to "I will." God is emphasizing the unilateral nature of the New Covenant.

- 1. It is in contrast to the old covenant when the people failed to keep their part of the covenant (8:9).**
- 2. He has committed to undertake His part: "I will be their God" (8:10), (Psalm 31:14, 81:9-10, 140:6; Isaiah 41:10-11).**
- 3. He has committed to undertake to guarantee that we do our part: "They shall be My people" (Hosea 1:6-9; Hebrews 8:9-10).**

B. The Component Elements Of The New Covenant Which Makes Certain The Final Perseverance Of All True Believers.

1. He will remain our God and never reject us.

He has worked for all His people so that they all are secure in their relationship to Him: "He will remember our sins no more." Our sins are the only basis for Him to reject us, and they have forever been removed by the blood of Christ (Hebrews 9:26, 10:10).

2. We will remain His people never utterly falling away.

"I will put my law into their minds and write them on their hearts." He Himself will work in all His people so that they all will ultimately persevere and remain His people forever.

C. The Confirmation From The Prophet Jeremiah That God In The New Covenant Undertakes To Guarantee His Part And Ours (Jeremiah 32:38-40).

II. THE CONNECTION WITH REGENERATION THAT GUARANTEES OUR FINAL PERSEVERANCE.

A. The Creation Of A New Nature Brings Perseverance In Godliness.

1. Our nature was washed (1 Corinthians 6:11).

2. Our soul was purified (1 Peter 1:22-23).

3. Our inner man was renewed (Titus 3:5; Ephesians 4:24).

B. The Conduct Of A New Life Inevitably Comes From The New Birth (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

- 1. There is a new walk. This is a concise summary of the character and consequences of the new birth (Ezekiel 36:26-27; see also – 1 John 3:9-10, 4:7-8).**
- 2. There is a former lifestyle (1 Corinthians 6:11; Ephesians 2:2-3).**

III. THE CASE FOR PERSEVERANCE IN SCRIPTURE.

A. The Criterion Of A True Believer Is A New Lifestyle.

- 1. Practice is the only test that proves genuineness (Matthew 7:16-23).**
- 2. Deeds deny profession irrespective of what a person claims (Titus 1:15-16: 1 John 2:3-6).**

B. The Conduct Of A True Believer Involves A Basic New Direction Of Life.

- 1. Negatively: There is a discontinuance of habitual sin.**
 - a. The certainty of it (Ephesians 5:5-6; Galatians 5:21).
 - b. It is the consequence of a renewed nature (1 John 3:9).
 - c. It gives a clear identity of our spiritual state (1 John 2:3-4, 3:10).

By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother (1 John 3:10).

2. Positively: There is a demonstration of righteousness and love.

- a. Holiness is pursued though there be periods of defeat (Hebrews 12:14).
- b. Righteousness and love become the dominant characteristics (1 John 3:7, 4:7).

C. The Chastisement And Scourging By The Father Of Every Son (Hebrews 12:5-11).

D. There Is A Continuance Of Faith And Hope In Confession Of Christ To The End (Hebrews 3:6, 14).

IV. THE CLARIFICATION OF PERSEVERANCE.

A. The Carnal Believer Is Not A Description Of A Continual Lifestyle.

1. It is not a chronic or comprehensive description of someone (1 Corinthians 3:1-3).
2. It concerns areas and periods of sin in a believer's life.

B. The Sin To Death Involves A Sovereign Act Of God, Not Someone Who Can't Be Sanctified (Acts 5:1-6; 1 John 5:16).

C. The Conflict With Sin Is Real And Often Leads To Temporary Periods In Sin (Romans 7:14-25; Galatians 5:16).

NOTE: We must not too quickly and finally judge the salvation of a professing Christian. Concern may be shown, but a quick and final judgement about a person's state betrays a misunderstanding of the degree of the remaining presence of sin. Real Christians can sin and do sin grievously!

Many ... are ... guilty of too great forwardness to censure others as unconverted. For this may be through mistakes they have embraced concerning the marks by which they are to judge of the hypocrisy and carnality of others; or from not duly apprehending the latitude the Spirit of God uses in the methods of his operations; or, from want of making due allowance for that infirmity and corruption that may be left in the hearts of the saints; as well as through want of a due sense of their own blindness and weakness, and remaining corruption, whereby spiritual pride may have a secret vent this way, under some disguise, and not be discovered. If we allow that truly pious men may have a great deal of remaining blindness and corruption, and may be liable to mistakes about the marks of hypocrisy, as undoubtedly all will allow, then it is not unaccountable that they should sometimes run into such errors as these. It is as easy, and upon some accounts more easy to be accounted for, why the remaining corruption of good men should sometimes have an unobserved vent this way, than most other ways; and without doubt (however lamentable) many holy men have erred in this way.

Jonathan Edwards, *The Distinguishing Marks of A Work of the Spirit of God*, Vol II, p. 264

SECURE IN CHRIST – Romans 8:31-39

INTRODUCTION

Romans 8:31-39 is a primary passage which declares the eternal security of all those who have placed their sole faith in Christ alone for their acceptance before God. Paul systematically unfolds the guarantee of this great reality declared in verse 1, *Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

I. HE REASSURES BELIEVERS OF THEIR SECURE, NON-CONDEMNED STATE IN DIFFERENT WAYS FOR EMPHASIS (8:31-35a).

A. He Announces His Confidence In The Believer's Security With Four Different Questions That Express That Confidence And Responds With Four Possible Challenges To That Confidence.

1. The First Confidence: If God is for us (8:31a).

Challenge: Who is against us? (8:31b).

2. The Second Confidence: He who did not spare His own Son ... how will He, also with Him, not freely give us all things? (8:32).

Challenge: Who will bring a charge against God's elect? (8:33).

3. The Third Confidence: God is the One who justifies (8:33b; Isaiah 50:8).

Challenge: Who is the one who condemns? (8:34a).

4. **The Fourth Confidence: Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised ... who also intercedes for us (8:34b).**

Challenge: Who will separate us from the love of Christ? (8:35).

B. The Apex Of Our Secured, Non-Condemned State Is That God Himself Has Made The Declaration Of Our Justification.

1. **There is no appeal that can be made to end or overturn God's declaration.**
2. **The declaration is the answer to v. 31, which asks, "who is against us?" The anticipated answer is, "no one!"**

II. THE REALITY OF CHRIST'S PAST ATONING DEATH AND PRESENT INTERCESSORY WORK SECURES OUR SALVATION (Romans 8:33-34).

A. His Justification Of His People Is Final And Complete.

B. His Substitution For Us In His Death Is The Entire Basis Of Our Final and Secure Justification.

The purpose of His substitution was explained before (3:21-26, 4:25).

C. His Resurrection Certified The Justifying Work Accomplished By His Death.

D. His Ascension And Enthronement At The Right Hand Of God Guarantees His Justifying Work.

- 1. His supreme authority guarantees it – nothing can take His people from His hand (John 10:28).**
- 2. His locality before God on our behalf is specific and real—the God-man is in an actual place.**
- 3. His sovereignty over all hostile forces and adverse circumstances guarantees it (8:35-39).**

D. His Intercession On Our Behalf, At God’s Right Hand, Guarantees It.

- 1. It is an objective intercession of His death that it accomplished a final redemption and propitiation. He appeared for us in heaven (Hebrews 9:11-13, 24).**
- 2. It is a subjective intercession by which He sustains His people.**
 - a. It is His continued activity on behalf of His people from His exalted position (Hebrews 7:25).
 - b. It is His sustaining provision for every need with every grace (1 Peter 5:10; Hebrews 4:15-16; Psalm 28:7-9).

III. THE REASSURANCE OF CHRIST’S INSEPARABLE LOVE SECURES OUR SALVATION (8:35-39). THE EXPANSION AND CONTINUATION OF THE THEME OF GOD’S LOVE DEMONSTRATES OUR SECURITY.

A. The Climactic Statement Of The Passage Is God's Inseparable Love For His Elect.

B. The Central Element Of The Gospel And Free Justification Is Christ's Love For Us Not Our Love For Christ.

1. He does not allow anything to separate us from His love.

2. His peculiar love for his people is an inseparable love.

C. The Circumstances And Adversities Which Could Possibly Separate Us, Cannot Do So Because Of His Love.

1. It is an unqualified declaration – "In all these things." It is the love by which He loved us in the past at the cross.

2. It is a universal statement, true in every case.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE

INTRODUCTION

There should be little difficulty in stating the doctrine of Justification by Faith clearly. One who cannot do so should never stand in a pulpit. In such a matter there should be exactitude and precision.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Ephesians*, Vol. III, p. 154

Some of you are drudging on in bondage, because you do not understand justification by faith completely; and I believe that the great fault of the ministry of our day is, that complete justification in the person of Jesus Christ is not preached in all its length and breath. ...If I had no good works at this moment, and if I have faith, am I not as completely justified as though I had ten thousand good works? I know, if I am justified by faith, good works will always follow; but good works will never merit justification. They are the handmaidens, not the mistress. Faith in Christ is the foundation, the corner-stone, and top-stone of justification. Good works are evidences of justification; they have nothing to do with procuring it. The poor thief who died, having been hardly able to do a good work, went to heaven just as surely as the man shall who lives eighty years in the service of his Master. It is not anything in myself that saves me; it is Christ alone.

C.H. Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle, Perfection in Christ* Vol. 44, pp. 366-367

- A. Justification Shows How Sinful Man, Who Does Not And Never Will Have A Personal Righteousness, Can Be Accepted By God. Justification Simply Means, "To Declare Righteous."**
- B. Justification States That The Sole Righteousness By Which We Are Justified Is Outside Of Us, It Comes From God Based On Christ's Obedience And Sin-Atoning Death Alone (Philippians 3:9).**

C. Justification Is The Subject And Supreme Reality Of The Gospel Of Grace And Is The Theme Of Major Sections Of The Key New Testament Books (Romans 1:18-5:21; Galatians 2:1-3:29; Luke 18:9-14; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Philippians 3:1-9; Titus 3:4-8; Hebrews 9:24-10:22).

I. THE CENTRALITY OF JUSTIFICATION: WHY IT IS THE ULTIMATE ISSUE (Philippians 3:1-12).

A. The Good Of Man.

- 1. Our confidence in our eternal destiny is based not on ourselves (v. 2), but on the sure foundation. Christ's perfect righteousness is the article by which the church stands or falls (Philippians 3:1-3).**

Paul, after he says, *rejoice in the Lord* (Philippians 3:1) goes on to show that justification by Christ's righteousness is the basis of our joy. We are those who *glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh* (v. 3). Then he goes on to state that our justifying righteousness isn't our own but comes from God (v. 9). This is the main source and spring of our joy.

- 2. Our conscience is no longer tormented by guilt (Hebrews 10:1-4, 22), so that we now offer a joyful service and worship through Christ alone (Philippians 3:1-3).**

Men could not attain perfection in their standing before God (they could not draw near with confidence, v. 22) because they were still conscious of unforgiven sin. They could not, in Paul's words, forget what lies behind (Philippians 3:12).

3. The confusion of man-made superstitions and traditions is ended.

Paul argues, that 'if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect.' (Romans 4:14). Why so? Just because the law keeps a man in doubt, and does not permit him to entertain a sure and firm confidence. But they, on the other hand, dream of a faith, which, excluding and repelling man from that confidence, which Paul requires, throws him back upon conjecture, to be tossed like a reed shaken by the wind. And it is not surprising that after they had once founded their hope of salvation on the merit of works, they plunged into all this absurdity. It could not but happen, that from such a precipice they should have such a fall. For what can man find in his works but materials for doubt, and, finally, for despair? We thus see how error led to error ... the safety of the Church depends as much on this doctrine as human life does on the soul. If the purity of this doctrine is in any degree impaired, the Church has received a deadly wound; and therefore, when I shall have shown that it was for the greater part extinguished, it will be the same as if I had shown that the Church had been brought to the very brink of destruction.

John Calvin, *The Necessity of Reforming the Church*, p. 15

4. It is the chief article of faith everything else is shaped and determined by what we believe about justification.

Our service, worship, Christian life, and all else is determined by how we understand our justification before God.

B. The Glory Of God.

- 1. It exalts God's glory to the greatest degree (Romans 3:27; 1 Corinthians 1:30-31; Philippians 3:1-3).**
- 2. It exalts God's mercy and grace (Romans 3:24; Titus 3:7).**

II. THE CONCEPT OF JUSTIFICATION IN GENERAL: WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE JUSTIFIED?

A. It Is The Pronouncement Or Declaration Of A Righteous Standing With God, Not A Making Of Someone Personally Righteous (Romans 8:33-34).

- 1. The concept comes from courts and judicial matters (Romans 8:33; Deuteronomy 25:1).**

If there is a dispute between men and they go to court and the judge decides their case and they justify the righteous and condemn the wicked (Deuteronomy 25:1).

- 2. It is in contrast to a declaration or an announcement of condemnation (Romans 8:33-34).**

B. There Is A Precondition That Must Be Met In Order To Be Justified (Romans 3:19-26).

- 1. We must be found without guilt and not deserving of punishment (Proverbs 17:15; Romans 3:19-20, 23).**

He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the righteous both of them are an abomination to the Lord (Proverbs 17:15).

- 2. We must possess righteousness and a glad obedience to be entitled to eternal life (Romans 3:22, 25-26; 5:18-19). This involves loving God with our whole heart (Matthew 22:37-38).**

There are two things involved. First, to be justified we must not only have not committed any unrighteous acts. Second, we must also have positively loved and gladly obeyed God. A forced obedience is not honorable to anyone, how much more to God.

Therefore, justification is more than forgiveness. Justification is also the result of the obedience of Christ done on our behalf and imputed to our account (Romans 5:18-19). It was a voluntary obedience (Philippians 2:7-9) that was done in response to the glory and worthiness of God (John 17:1-5). A glory and worthiness we scorned and rejected (Romans 1:24, 3:23).

C. The Primary Realities Of Justification As Described In Scripture.

1. It is an act of free grace (Romans 3:24a).

We are justified freely as a gift. The word gift is translated "without a cause" in John 15:25.

2. It is found "in Christ" by legal union and the once for all imputation of His perfect righteousness to our account (Romans 3:24, 4:5).

By legal union we mean that before God as a judge, we are seen as one with Christ. We are united with Christ so that His doing is regarded as if we did it, and our doing is regarded as if He did it. In short, His obedient, propitiatory death is imputed to us and in Him we are justified. Therefore, the Catholic view of infused righteousness conflicts with Scripture.

I greatly longed to understand Paul's Epistle to the Romans and nothing stood in the way but that one expression, 'the justice of God', because I took it to mean that justice whereby God is just and deals justly in punishing the unjust. My situation was that, although an impeccable monk, I stood before God as a sinner troubled in conscience, and I had no confidence that my merit would assuage him. Therefore, I did not love a just and angry God, but rather hated and murmured against him. Yet, I clung to the dear Paul and had a great yearning to know what he meant. Night and day I pondered until I saw the connection between the justice of God and the statement that, the just shall live by his faith.' Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith. Therefore, I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone

through the open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on a new meaning, and whereas before the 'justice of God' had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love. This passage of Paul became to me a gate to heaven ... If you have a true faith that Christ is your Saviour, then at once you have a gracious God, for faith leads you in and opens up God 's heart and will, that you should see pure grace and overflowing love. This it is to behold God in faith that you should look upon his fatherly, friendly heart, in which there is no anger nor ungraciousness. He who sees God as angry does not see him rightly but looks only on a curtain, as if a dark cloud had been drawn across his face.

Luther, in *Here I Stand*, Roland Bainton, pp. 49-50

3. It is based on Christ's redemption and propitiation alone (Romans 3:24-25).

Christ's death was a redemption, a redemption accomplished by His wrath-absorbing propitiation on the cross.

As we continue our study of this crucial statement I would remind you that the Apostle's fundamental pronouncement is that 'we are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.' How does the Lord Jesus Christ ransom us? Redemption means ransoming – how does He ransom us? The answer is that 'God hath set him forth as a propitiation' as a propitiatory sacrifice – 'for our sins.'

Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Romans Chapter 3*, p. 81

4. It is based on what Christ has done for us, outside of us, not what He does in or through us.

- a. He paid our debt and removed our guilt (Romans 3:24-25).

Christ's death paid a ransom price in order to accomplish redemption (v.24). It was also a propitiation, it was a sacrifice that satisfied and appeased God's wrath. This is the sole and only ground, basis, or cause of a complete and final justification (Romans 4:24-25).

Now concerning this ransom, we have to observe, that it was all paid, and all paid at once...Christ stood forward, and to the utmost farthing paid whate'er his people owed. The sacrifice of Calvary was not a part payment; it was not a partial exoneration, it was a complete and perfect payment, and it obtained a complete and perfect remittal of all the debts of all the believers that have lived, do live, or shall live, to the very end of time. On that day when Christ hung on the cross, he did not leave a single farthing for us to pay as a satisfaction to God.; he did not leave, from a thread even to a shoe-latchet, that he had not satisfied ... He did not drivel out a part-payment, and then declare that he would come again to die, or that he would again suffer, or that he would again obey; but down upon the nail, to the utmost farthing, the ransom of all people was paid, and a full receipt given to them, and Christ nailed that receipt to the cross, and said, "It is done, it is done' I have taken away the handwriting of ordinances, I have nailed it to the cross; who is he that shall condemn my people, or lay anything to their charge? For I have blotted out like a cloud their transgressions, and like a thick cloud their sins!" ... The whole of the punishment of his people was distilled into one cup; no mortal lip might give it so much as a solitary sip. When he put it to his own lips, it was so bitter, he well high spurned it – "Let this cup pass from me." But his love for his people was so strong, that he took the cup in both his hands, and "At one tremendous draught of love, He drank damnation dry" for all his people. He drank it all, he endured it all, he suffered all; so that now forever there are no flames of hell for them, no racks of torment; they have no eternal woes, Christ hath suffered all they ought to have suffered, and they must, they shall go free.

Spurgeon, *Justification By Grace*, Vol. III, pp. 154-155

- b. He provided the obedience and righteousness, that we don't have, which is necessary for us to be justified (Luke 18:9; Romans 3:25-26, 4:4-6, 5:18-19; Philippians 3:9).

So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men. For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One the many will be made righteous (Romans 5:18-19).

God's honour will not suffer by their escaping punishment and being made happy ... But if they go to Christ, the honour of God's majesty and authority will not be in the least hurt by their being freed and made happy. For what Christ has done has repaired God's honour to the full. It is a greater honour to God's authority and majesty, that, rather than it should be wronged, so glorious a person would suffer what the law required. It is surely a wonderful display of the honour of God's majesty, to see an infinite and eternal person dying for its being wronged. And then Christ by his obedience, by that obedience which he undertook for our sakes, has honoured God abundantly more than the sins of any of us have dishonoured him, how many soever, and how great soever. How great an honour is it to God's law that so great a person is willing to submit to it, and to obey it! God hates our sins, but not more than he delights in Christ's obedience which he performed on account. This is a sweet savour to him, a savour of rest. God is abundantly compensated, he desires no more; Christ's righteousness is of infinite worthiness and merit.

Jonathan Edwards, *Works*, Vol II, p. 930

5. It is received solely through the instrumentality of a single, one-time, act of self-emptying repentant faith. It is a faith which has as its only object Christ set forth by God as a propitiatory sacrifice (Romans 3:25a, 28; 5:1).

The Definition: Justification is the judicial declaration by God that the believer, not for any goodness or righteousness in him/her, but solely because of legal union with Christ and the forensic imputation of Christ's righteousness to His account is righteous in God's sight.

The Issue: How can God be just and justify the ungodly?

The Controversy: The Protestant Catholic Controversy is over the definition of Justification. It is impossible for there to be a compromise.

The following is the Catholic view as stated by the Council of Trent.

'... If anyone says that the righteousness received is not preserved and also not increased before God, by good works, but that those works are merely the fruits and signs of justification obtained, but not a cause of its increase, let him be anathema ... If anyone says that by the said sacraments...grace is not conferred through the work worked, but [says] that faith alone in the divine promises is sufficient for the obtaining of grace, let him be anathema ... If anyone says that by faith alone the sinner is justified, so as to mean that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to obtain the grace of justification ... let him be anathema ... If anyone says that men are justified either by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ alone, or by the remission of sins alone, to the exclusion of the grace and love that is poured forth in their hearts by the Holy Spirit and is inherent in them; or even that the grace by which we are justified is only the favor of God - let him be anathema.

The issue is clearly stated by John Calvin and John Murray.

There is no point which is more keenly contested, none in which our adversaries are more inveterate in their opposition, than that of justification, namely, as to whether we obtain it by faith or by works. On no account will they allow us to give Christ the honour of being called our righteousness, unless their works come in at the same time for a share of the merit. The dispute is not, whether good works ought to be performed by the pious, and whether they are accepted by God and rewarded by him, but whether, by their own worth, they reconcile us to God; whether we acquire eternal life at their price, whether they are compensations which are made to the justice of God, so as to take away guilt, and whether they are to be confided in as a ground of salvation.

John Calvin, *The Necessity of Reforming the Church*, p. 13

It is to be acknowledged and appreciated that theologians of the Roman Catholic Church ... are giving ... recognition that 'to justify' is 'to declare to be righteousness,' that it is a declarative act on God's part ... but the central issue of the reformation remains. The decrees of the Council of Trent have not been retracted or repudiated. Even in the case of those theologians who admit that justification is declarative, the question still remains; on what ground does God justify? Is it on the

basis of righteousness inwrought and outwrought, or on the basis of the righteousness of Christ wrought for us? ... On what basis are we sinners justified before God and made heirs of eternal life? Is it righteousness infused by which we are made just, or righteousness imputed by which we are reckoned just? The issue concerns the heart of the gospel, the grand article of a standing or falling Church ... When Paul invokes God's anathema upon any who would preach a gospel other than that he preached (Galatians 1:8-9), he used a term which means 'devoted to destruction' ... to the core of his being he was persuaded that the heresy combated was aimed at the destruction of the gospel. It took the crown from the Redeemer's head. It is this same passion that must imbue us ... Central to the issue that raised the banner in 1517, and central to the issue with Rome still, is the gospel of a full, perfect, and irrevocable justification by free gift through faith in Jesus Christ, on the basis of a righteousness undefiled and undefilable ... the righteousness of him who fulfilled all righteousness and was obedient unto death, even death on the cross.

John Murray, *Collected Writings Vol. I*, pp. 302-304

III. THE CHARACTER OF THE JUSTIFIED: WHO ARE THE PEOPLE GOD JUSTIFIES? (Romans 4:4-8).

A. Those Declared To Be Ungodly.

- 1. Those who denounce their own works righteousness (v.5a).**
- 2. Those who depend solely on God who justifies the ungodly (v. 5b; Luke 18:9-14).**

This is that expression which hath stirred up so much wrath amongst many, and on the account whereof some seem to be much displeased with the apostle himself. If any other person dare but say that God justifieth the ungodly, he is personally reflected on as one that by his doctrine would overthrow the necessity of godliness, holiness, obedience, or good works; "for what need can there be of any of them, if God justifieth the ungodly?" Howbeit this is a periphrasis of God, that he is... "he that justifieth the ungodly?" This is his prerogative and property; as such will he be believed in and worshipped which adds

weight and emphasis unto the expression; and we must not forego this testimony of the Holy Ghost, let men be as angry as they please ... Wherefore, although in and with the justification of a sinner, he is made godly – for he is endowed with that faith which purifieth the heart and is a vital principle of all obedience, and the conscience is purged from dead works by the blood of Christ, – yet antecedently unto this justification he is ungodly and considered as ungodly, as one that worketh not, as one whose duties and obedience contribute nothing unto his justification.

John Owen, *The Works of John Owen, Vol. V*, Carlisle, PA, p. 316

At the point of justification the person justified is ungodly. This does not mean, however, that they will not be transformed and grow in godliness. However, at the moment of justification they are ungodly. No other than the ungodly are justified, for there are, in fact, no others among men than the ungodly.

B. Those Destitute Of Their Own Personal Righteousness.

- 1. The imputation of righteousness means we have none of our own (v. 5c).**
- 2. The non-imputation of sin indicates that those justified are, in fact, guilty of sin and worthy of eternal condemnation (vv. 7-8).**

IV. THE CONDITION FOR JUSTIFICATION: HOW IS A PERSON JUSTIFIED?

A. A Person Is Justified Apart From Any Works Of Righteousness, Even Those Done As A Christian In The Power Of The Spirit. (Romans 3:20, 28; 4:5).

- 1. The explicit, clear statements of Scripture are that we do not have a justifying righteousness by our own works, even as a Christian (Titus 3:5; Romans 3:20, 28, 7:15, 24; Galatians 2:16; cp. Psalm 143:2).**

If God accepted our righteousness, even as Christians, He would, in fact, be accepting an imperfect righteousness which He cannot do. If God accepted our imperfect righteousness He would declare us to be what we, in fact, are not. He would compromise Himself, which He cannot do.

This is the truth. Awakened consciences, when they have to do with God's judgment, recognize this as the only safe haven in which they can securely breathe ... They who do not direct their attention to such a spectacle can, indeed, for the moment pleasantly and peacefully construct a righteousness for themselves, but one that will soon in God's judgment be shaken from them, just as great riches heaped up in a dream vanish upon awakening. But they who seriously, and as in God's sight, will seek after the true rule of righteousness, will certainly find that all human works, if judged according to their own worth, are nothing but filth and defilement. And what is commonly reckoned righteousness is before God sheer iniquity; what is adjudged uprightness, pollution; what is accounted glory, ignominy.

Institutes of The Christian Religion, pp. 758-759

- 2. The implicit statements in Scripture also indicate we have no righteousness. We are told that all are called to repentance, therefore, all have sinned (Acts 17:30; Romans 3:23).**
- 3. The works which are rejected are moral works, not merely ceremonial works that were the outward symbols of Judaism (Romans 2:21-27, 3:9-20; Luke 18:9-14).**

B. A Person Is Justified By A Single, One Time Act Of Faith That Relies Upon Christ's Death Alone As The Sole Basis And Cause Of Justification (Romans 3:24-26).

- 1. Faith is specifically directed at the death of Christ as a propitiation (Romans 3:25b).**
- 2. Faith isn't a 'work' (Romans 4:4-5).**
- 3. Faith simply connects us to Christ who saves (John 1:12, 3:14-15; Acts 2:41,44; Romans 3:22, 25-26, 28; Galatians 2:16; 1 Thessalonians 1:6).**

The Scripture consistently affirms that we are saved through faith, by faith, and out of faith, but never on account of faith. In other words, faith is a receptive instrument. That is it, merely receives with an empty hand, that reaches out, and embraces Christ, who alone saves. The outstretched hand of a beggar doesn't enrich the beggar, it merely lays hold of the money which enriches him. It merely receives, so also does saving faith. It only receives.

- 4. Faith is a whole-hearted repentant trust in Christ alone (John 3:14-16; Acts 20:21).**

V. THE CAUSE OF JUSTIFICATION: HOW CAN GOD BE JUST AND JUSTIFY THE UNGODLY?

- A. He Institutes, By Faith, A Binding Relationship With Christ, So That The Believer Is In Union With Christ Before God. And May Be Found In Him, Not Having A Righteousness Of My Own Derived From The Law, But That Which Is Through Christ, The Righteousness Which Comes From God On The Basis Of Faith (Philippians 3:9).**

The union with Christ indicated is not an inward union but, a legal or positional union because of a complete identity with Christ (2 Corinthians 5:19, 21; Galatians 3:26-27).

- 1. The meaning of union with Christ: It is a legal or positional union because of a complete identity with Christ (2 Corinthians 5:19, 21; Galatians 3:26-27).**
- 2. The aspects of union with Christ: There is also a vital or living union which is distinct from legal union (John 15:1-5).**
- 3. The accomplishing of union with Christ is by faith in Christ. It is faith which unites sinners to Christ (Galatians 3:26-27).**

B. He Imputes Christ's Righteousness To The Believer (Romans 4:1-11).

1. The meaning of imputation:

The basic meaning of imputation is to charge, to credit, or to reckon over to someone's account.

There are two types of imputations. There is first an imputation which is of debt, or what is due. Secondly there is an imputation of favor or grace (Romans 4:4). In other words, there is an imputation of something which, at the time of the imputation, already belongs to the person to whom it is charged (Psalm 106:30-31). This is an imputation of debt or what is due. There is also an imputation of something that does not belong to the person at the point it is charged. This is an imputation of favor or grace (Numbers 18:27, 30). Paul's whole emphasis in Romans 4 is that justifying righteousness is credited or imputed based on grace. It is a free, gracious imputation of a righteousness that is not ours in any way, manner, or form.

2. The imputation or crediting of Christ's righteousness to the believer's account is the center of justification and the gospel. This can be seen by its constant repetition (Romans 4:6, 9; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9).

The term imputation (count credited) occurs 11 times in Romans 4. Paul says, regarding imputation, "But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness" (Romans 4:5). It is through faith, not on account of faith. Faith connects us to Christ like a coupling connects boxcars to the engine on a train. Faith isn't our righteousness, it connects us to Christ who is our righteousness. There are two views of the meaning of the phrase, 'his faith is credited as righteousness':

a. The first view states that faith itself is credited as if it were our righteousness. In other words, it is a righteousness which consists of faith. In this case;

- Faith connects to Christ's atonement which is our righteousness.

- Plus, faith itself, is our righteousness in addition to Christ's righteousness. This opens the door to a works righteousness for faith is a righteousness in addition to Christ's righteousness accomplished on the cross.

The problem with this, beside the fact the text doesn't teach it, is that our faith is never perfect. Therefore, it is not acceptable so it can't be our justifying righteousness.

b. The second view states that faith, which is one thing, is credited as righteousness, which is another thing. Faith, therefore, is not our righteousness it is merely the receptive instrument that connects to Christ and His alien righteousness, which is then charged to our account. This is the teaching of Paul throughout chapter 4. Our sole and only justifying righteousness is not our faith, it is Christ's righteousness accomplished by His blood and obedience on the cross (Romans 3:25-26).

It is called pre-eminently and emphatically, 'the righteousness of God'. By this name it is distinguished from the righteousness of man, and even contrasted with it as a ground of justification. It is brought in as a divine righteousness, only when all human righteousness has been shut out...if we would understand the reason why it is called 'the righteousness of God,' we must bear in mind that there was a twofold manifestation of righteousness in the cross of Christ; there was first a manifestation of the righteousness of God the Father, in requiring a satisfaction to His justice, – and inflicting the punishment that was due to sin; and to this the apostle refers when he says, that 'God set forth Christ to be a propitiation' – 'to declare His righteousness, that He might be just, and Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus; there was secondly, a work of righteousness by God the Son – His vicarious righteousness as the Redeemer of His people, when He, 'became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross', and thus became 'the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth.'

James Buchanan, *The Doctrine of Justification*,
The Banner of Truth Trust, PA, 1997, pp. 318-319

c. There are at least four reasons why faith itself is not to be regarded as our righteousness, but is merely the instrument which connects us to Christ.

- Paul has already, in the immediate context, identified the righteousness of God by which we are justified as the righteousness of God accomplished by Christ on the cross by His blood and obedience (Romans 3:25-26).

- It is a known use of the Greek term, 'crediting' that one thing (in this case faith) is credited for another thing (righteousness) (Numbers 18:27, 30).

- The Greek preposition *eis* translated by the English word, 'as' is commonly used to indicate that which, "leads to" or "results in", something. In this case faith leads to, or results in, the crediting of righteousness See this use in Romans 3:25, "this was to demonstrate His righteousness (See also Romans 8:15; 10:10).

Romans 10:10 may be the clearest example of this use of *eis*. Paul says, *with the heart a person believes, resulting (eis) in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting*

(eis) in salvation. Paul does not say faith consists in righteousness nor does confession consist in salvation. He says they lead to, or result in something: belief results in righteousness and confession in salvation.

• Paul explicitly says righteousness itself is imputed, not righteousness which consists of faith (4:6, 11; Philippians 3:9).

For, if the whole personal righteousness of Jesus Christ be not the sole cause of my acceptance with God, if any work done by or foreseen in me, was in the least to be joined with it, or looked upon by God as inducing, impulsive cause of acquitting my soul from guilt, then I have somewhat whereof I may glory in myself. Not boasting is excluded in the great work of our redemption; but that cannot be, if we are enemies to the doctrine of an imputed righteousness. It would be endless to enumerate how many texts of scripture must be false, if this doctrine be not true. Let it suffice to affirm in the general, that if we deny an imputed righteousness, we may as well deny a divine revelation all at once; for it is the alpha and omega, the beginning and the end of the book of God. We must either disbelieve that, or believe what the prophet has spoken in the text, "that the Lord is our righteousness."

George Whitefield

The denial of imputed righteousness, which necessarily leads to a works-based righteousness, is clearly evident in these quotes from N.T. Wright:

...righteousness means covenant faithfulness and therefore that this righteousness is not a quality or substance that can be passed or transferred from the judge to the defendant...If we use the language of the law court, it makes no sense whatsoever to say that the judge imputes, imparts, bequeaths, conveys or otherwise transfers his righteousness to either the plaintiff or the defendant. Righteousness is not an object, a substance or a gas which can be passed across the courtroom...If we leave the notion of "righteousness" as a law court metaphor only, as so many have done in the past, this gives the impression of a legal transaction, a cold piece of business, almost a trick of thought performed by a God who is logical and correct, but hardly one we would want to worship ... Present justification declares, on the basis of faith, what future justification will affirm publically

... on the basis of the entire life ... The whole point about "justification by faith" is that it is something which happens in the present time (Romans 3:26) as a proper anticipation of the eventual judgment which will be announced, on the basis of the whole life led, in the future (Romans 2:1-16).

N.T. Wright, *Pauline Theology (Volume III)*, 38; *What Saint Paul Really Said*, 98; *Paul: In Fresh Perspective*, p. 57

C. The Initiative For Justification Is God's Merciful Love And Grace Toward His People (Romans 3:24, 5:8-9; Titus 3:7).

VI. THE CONTROVERSY OVER JUSTIFICATION IN HISTORY AND TODAY.

A. There Is An Assault On Free Justification That Is Ongoing And Unceasing.

1. Baxter and Osiander's assault.

2. It centers on denials of the sufficiency of justification by the imputation of Christ's righteousness alone.

a. Wright

b. Seifrid.

3. There is a redefinition of works as non-works, which are necessary to be justified in the last day.

Schreiner commentating on Romans 2:13, 26, 27 writes:

Hearing the law is of no salvific advantage; only those who do the law will be declared righteous before God (v.13). Verse 13 in essence reiterates the principle of verse 6: those who perform the required works

will be rewarded. Wilckens (1978:132) states rightly that Paul accepts in principle the idea that those who do good works will receive justification. It will become clear only in verses 26-29 [chapter 2] whether and in what sense he thinks any can truly obtain justification by keeping the law. I should also point out that both (dikaioi, righteous) and (dikaiouthesonai, shall be declared righteous) are forensic in this verse. Those who do the required works will be declared to be righteous by God, the eschatological judge, on the day of the Lord (The Race Set Before Us, p. 119).

Regarding Schreiner's understanding of 2:26-29 - which he says is the key to "whether and in what sense" a believer can obtain justification by keeping the law, he writes:

On the other hand, we should understand the good works that do lead to an eschatological reward in different terms. They are a result of the Spirit's work in one's life, as the connection forged between verses 26-27 and 28-29 demonstrates. The Spirit's work on the heart logically precedes the observation of the law by the Gentiles. Autonomous works are rejected, but works that are the fruit of the Spirit's work are necessary to be saved (145).

Since the Reformation, many Protestant Christians have tended to overstate Paul's doctrine of justification ... The consequence has been to exaggerate salvation's already aspects with the effect that Paul's orientation on salvation as not yet realized has virtually collapsed...For Paul, justification remains fundamentally the eschatological verdict of acquittal. Paul makes one thing clear: God's promise of salvation is conditional. On the day of judgment God will award eternal life to those who persevere in good works (Romans 2:7, 10), because God does not justify hearers of the law, but doers of the law (Romans 2:13) (160, 161, 166, 167).

4. There is a two-justification doctrine, defended in terms of the "already, not-yet framework."

B. The Practical Importance Of Free Justification.

VII. THE CASE FOR FINAL JUSTIFICATION: WHY IT IS FINAL AND COMPLETE WITH NO FUTURE ASPECT.

God's declaration of the justification of the believer is announced once for all at the point of faith in Christ. Romans 5:1 is the classic statement of this amazing reality. It announces, "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." The Scripture does not indicate that there will be, nor can there be, a future declaration of justification. There will be a future vindication by works of those who were previously fully justified (Romans 8:19). Or, to say it another way, there will be a future manifestation of those who were previously justified. But there will not be (in the future in addition to the present justification) a declaration of justification based on works. In spite of the clear teaching of Scripture, men such as N.T. Wright teach there are two phases, or stages, in justification: one the present and the other the future. Wright states, "Present justification declares, on the basis of faith, what future justification will affirm publically ... on the basis of the entire life" (*What Saint Paul Really Said*, p. 129). Elsewhere he writes, "The whole point about 'justification by faith' is that it is something which happens *in the present time* (Rom. 3:26) as a proper anticipation of the eventual judgment which will be announced, on the basis of the whole life led, in the future (Rom. 2:1-16)" (*Paul: In Fresh Perspective*, p. 57). There are at least three indications why there is not to be, nor can be, a future justification.

A. There Is The Parallel Between The Once For All Condemnation In Adam And The Once For All Justification In Christ (Romans 5:12-19).

- 1. All are condemned by Adam's one sin alone, not by their own personal acts of sin (Romans 5:12-14).**
- 2. All are justified in Christ apart from their own personal acts of righteousness (vv. 16-19).**

Paul's sustained emphasis all the way through the passage (vv. 15-19) is the parallel between a completed condemnation in Adam and a completed justification in Christ. There is not a future stage necessary to complete either. In fact, any supposed future justification overturns the entire argument of the parallel between Adam and Christ. It in effect eliminates any present justification at all. John Owen says,

And to say that no man is completely justified in the sight of God in this life, is at once to overthrow all that is taught in the Scriptures concerning justification, and therewithal all peace with God and comfort of believers...so that this distinction, instead of coining us two justifications, according to the gospel, has left us none at all.

The Works of John Owen, Vol. V, pp. 141, 145.

3. The one act of Adam's transgression, or disobedience (v. 19a), and its results of the final condemnation of all men, and the one act of Christ's righteousness, or obedience (v. 19b), and its result of the final justification of all who are His.

Made righteous in verse 19, in context, does not mean made personally righteous. It is used, for example, with the meaning of "constitute." It means to be made legally righteous before God. All men are already condemned (John 3:18). The final judgment is to decide the degree of punishment, not whether or not they will be condemned. All men are already in this life under sin and wrath (John 3:36; Romans 3:9).

B. Perseverance In Obedience And Good Works Is Necessary As An Evidence Of Justification, But Never Its Cause, Condition Or Means.

1. Perseverance is a means of having assurance of salvation and justification but never a means or condition of attaining it.

- a. It is necessary to do the will of God for all who are saved (Hebrews 10:34-36).
- b. It is necessary to show that you have (present tense) true saving faith which continues on without failing to the persevering of the soul (10: 38-39).

2. Perseverance is the proof or evidence we belong to Christ and are His true people (Hebrews 3:6, 14).

But Christ was faithful as a Son over His house – whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end (v.6).

For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end (v. 14).

3. Persevering on in good works assures that we are already justified and therefore assured we will be saved in the end (Matthew 10:22).

Continuing on in the faith and continuing to endure are evidences we have genuine saving faith and belong to Christ. Jesus said, "It is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved" (Matthew 10:22). Jesus does not say "if" they endure. In other words, they are not saved because they endure. Jesus simply gives a description of those who will be saved. The saved ones are those who endure. They are the ones who persevere. They are saved because their perseverance demonstrates they are already justified people who will not come under God's judgment and wrath. Paul states this clearly in Romans 5:9 where he says, "Much more then, having been now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him."

C. The Passages Which Are Used Of A Future Justification Are Few And When Rightly Understood Do Not Refer To A Future Justification By Works.

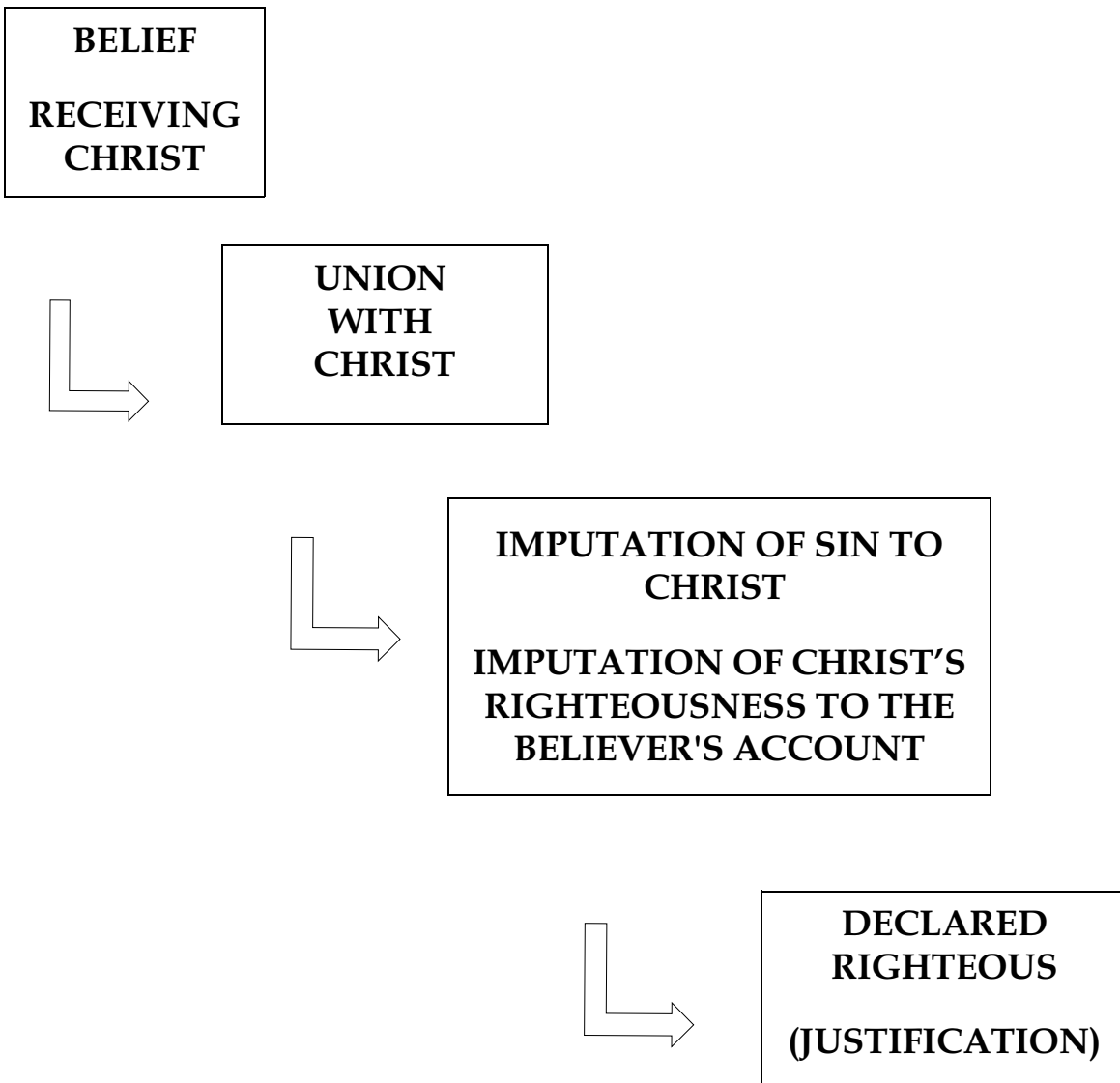
1. The majority of references to justification speak of justification as past and complete (Romans 3:24, 5:19; Galatians 2:16; Titus 3:7; Luke 18:14; 1 Corinthians 6:11).

- 2. The majority of references to future justification indicate that no one in the future will be justified by works done either by their own power or by the Spirit (Romans 3:20; Galatians 2:16).**

- 3. The main texts used for a future justification speak in the context of the impossibility of justification by works (Romans 2:13, 3:20) or do not refer to justification at all (Galatians 5:5).**

Romans 2:6 states that in order to be justified by their works, a person must not merely do good (even evil people sometimes do good), they must persevere without failing in doing good. Paul later in 3:12 says "there is none who does good." He concludes in 3:20 that in the future not a single person "will be justified" by their works. Therefore, 2:13 is not stating how He will justify anyone. In context, he is warning people not to seek justification by doing good! In chapter 3 verse 9, he states "we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin." To state that 2:13 is how God will justify sinners is to violate the context, and overthrow the foundation of Paul's argument of free justification, unfolded in Romans 1:18-3:20.

THE LOGICAL ORDER OF JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE



UNION WITH CHRIST

There are three aspects of union with Christ,
that are chronologically instantaneous, but logically in sequence
They occur at the same time, but they are logically in a specific order

Vital Union: A Union Of Life

Christ's life is imparted and interpenetrates the nature (John 15:1-5; Ephesians 2:1-4).

There is a renewal and regeneration of nature (Titus 3:5).

The will is renewed by God's direct creative act.

Actual and Personal Union: A Union Which Is A Result Of Faith

Christ is embraced and received by faith (Galatians 2:16).

Faith is exercised with reliance on Christ alone (Romans 3:25).

We are joined to Christ through the instrumentality of Faith.

Legal Union

The believer is counted as joined to Christ, in a legal, positional sense.

The believer is accepted as if he were Christ, he is positionally joined to Christ.

Christ's doing is regarded by God as the believer's doing, and the believer's doing is regarded as Christ's.

ADOPTION

INTRODUCTION

Adoption is the highest privilege and blessing that can come from God. It is impossible to go further. It may be defined as: "A legal act where a person, not a natural son, is received into the full rights and privileges of a son" (Murray). The grace of God is demonstrated in an exceeding abundance in adoption. This is where God's generosity towards His people is displayed in a manner beyond which it is impossible to go. He doesn't simply remove our debt, He exalts us into the full privilege of a son!

I. THE ETERNAL ACT OF LOVE THAT IS THE CAUSE OF ADOPTION (Ephesians 1:4b-5).

A. It Is Pure Grace. In Love ... He Predestined Us To Adoption (vv. 4b-5a).

- 1. Adoption can't be demanded, it is granted.**
- 2. The record of our own deeds and character excludes us from demanding it.**

B. It Was Planned In Eternity Past. He Predestined Us.

- 1. The riches of its blessing were planned.**
- 2. The reach of it encompasses all spiritual blessings.**

II. THE EXCEEDING PRIVILEGE OF WHICH ADOPTION CONSISTS (Galatians 4:1-7).

A. It Surpasses All Other Blessings. It Goes Beyond The Other Blessings We Have In Christ.

Now I say, as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father. So also we, while we are children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world. But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that they might receive the adoption as sons. Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God (Galatians 4:1-7).

1. It assumes the other blessings such as; regeneration, calling, justification and forgiveness (Galatians 1:6, 2:20, 3:24).

2. It is an act that confers status and rank even beyond our relationship to God as His child.

B. It Is The Supreme Status And Position That Can Be Given In His Family (2 Samuel 9:3-7, 11-13).

The king said, "Is there not yet anyone of the house of Saul to whom I may show the kindness of God?" And Ziba said to the king, "There is the son of Jonathan who is crippled in both feet." So the king said to him, "Where is he?" And Ziba said to the king, "Behold, he is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel in Lo-debar." Then King David sent and brought him from the house of Machir the son of Ammiel of Lo-debar. Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan the son of Saul, came to David and fell upon his face and prostrated himself. And David said, "Mephibosheth." And he said, "Here is your servant!" David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will surely show kindness to you for the sake of your father Jonathan, and will restore to you all the land of your

grandfather Saul; and you shall eat at my table regularly." Again he prostrated himself and said, "What is your servant, that you should regard a dead dog like me?" Then the king called Saul's servant Ziba and said to him, "All that belonged to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's grandson." (2 Samuel 9:3-7, 11-13).

1. It is the pinnacle of all.

Our first point about adoption is that it is the highest privilege that the gospel offers; higher even than justification. This may cause raising of eyebrows, for justification is the gift of God on which since Luther evangelicals have laid the greatest stress, and we are accustomed to say, almost without thinking, that free justification is God's supreme blessing to us sinners ... But this is not to say that justification is the highest blessing of the gospel. Adoption is higher, because of the richer relationship with God that it involves ... The two ideas are distinct, and adoption, is the more exalted, Justification is a forensic idea, conceived in terms of law, and viewing God as judge. In Justification, God declares of penitent believers that they are not, and never will be, liable to the death that their sins deserve, because Jesus Christ, their substitute and sacrifice, tasted death in their place on the cross. This free gift of acquittal and peace, won for us at the cost of calvary, is wonderful enough, in all conscience-but justification does not of itself imply any intimate or deep relationship with God, the judge. In idea, at any rate, you could have the reality of justification without any close fellowship with God resulting. But, contrast this, now, with adoption. Adoption is a family idea, conceived in terms of love, and viewing God as father. In adoption, God takes us into His family and fellowship, and establishes us as His children and heirs. Closeness, affection and generosity are at the heart of the relationship. To be right with God the judge is a great thing, but to be loved and cared for by the father is a greater.

J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*, pp. 186-188

2. The permanence of it is assured.

3. The prospect of our great inheritance is constantly stated in scripture (Colossians 1:12; Acts 26:18; Romans 8:18).

C. It Is A Summary Of All Our Riches In Christ.

1. Our access.

But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. ... for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father. (Ephesians 2:13, 18).

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all have sinned. (Romans 5:12).

2. A new name and family.

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household (Ephesians 2:19).

3. Our protection.

But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 8:37-39).

Who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (1 Peter 1:5).

4. Our provision.

And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19).

5. Our inheritance.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you (1 Peter 1:3-4)

*And if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if needed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.
(Romans 8:17)*

III. THE EXPERIENCE OF ADOPTION TO WHICH WE ARE CALLED.

A. A Consciousness Of It Is Given By The Spirit (Romans 8:15).

*For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!"
(Romans 8:15).*

- 1. A realization of our sonship is produced by the Holy Spirit.**
- 2. An affection towards God as our Father is produced in us.**

B. A Confidence And Assurance That Comes From It Is Given To Us By The Spirit.

- 1. God has installed us into His family with full-fledged status.**
- 2. He will always relate to us in a fatherly manner.**
- 3. His dealings we can accept as from an all-loving and all-wise Father.**

ETERNAL LIFE ASSURED

INTRODUCTION

A. An Explanation Of It That Summarizes Biblical Teaching.

The assurance of salvation is a birthright that every true Christian should enjoy. God wants His people to have an assurance of their eternal salvation.

It is the certain confidence that because of what God has done on their behalf in Christ, the Christian has a full and sure knowledge of the forgiveness of all their sins and therefore knows they will go to heaven when they die.

B. The Extremes To Avoid.

1. There is a presumptuous false assurance.

The scripture speaks of a smug superficial assurance that is in fact a false assurance (Matthew 7:21-23; 1 John 4:16-18).

NOTE: George Barna says in *“What Americans Believe”* that 99% believe that they will go to heaven! This assurance begins with ‘I, I did, I experienced, I was baptized, I prayed, etc. (cp Luke 18:11-12).

Men are doubtless to blame for being in a dead, carnal frame; but when they are in such a frame, and have no sensible experience of the exercises of grace, but on the contrary, are very much under the prevalence of their lusts, and an unchristian spirit, they are not to blame for doubting of their state. It is as impossible, in the nature of things, that a holy and Christian hope should be kept alive in its clearness and strength, in such circumstances, as it is to keep the light in the room, when the candle that gives it is put out; or to maintain the bright sunshine in the air, when the sun is gone down. Distant

experiences, when darkened by present prevailing lust and corruption, will never keep alive a gracious confidence and assurance. If the one prevail, the other sickens and decays upon it. Does any one attempt to nourish and strengthen a little child by repeated blows on the head with a hammer? Nor is it at all to be lamented that persons doubt of their state in such circumstances; but on the contrary, it is desirable and every way best that they should. It is agreeable to that wise and merciful constitution of things which God hath established. For so hath God constituted things, in his dispensations towards his own people, that when their love decays, and the exercises of it become weak, fear should arise. They need fear then to restrain them from sin, to excite them to care for the good of their souls, and so to stir them up to watchfulness and diligence in religion. But God hath so ordered, that when love rises, and is in vigorous exercise, then fear should vanish, and be driven away; for then they need it not, having a higher and more excellent principle in exercise, to restrain them from sin, and stir them up to duty...So it is in the heart of a child of God; if divine love decay and fall asleep, and lust prevail, the light and joy of hope goes out, and dark fear arises; and if, on the contrary divine love prevail, and come into lively exercise, this brings in the brightness of hope, and drives away black lust and fear with it. Love is the spirit of adoption, or the childlike principle; if that slumbers, men fall under fear, which is the spirit of bondage, or the servile principle: and so on the contrary. They therefore directly thwart God's wise and gracious constitution of things, who exhort others to be confident in their hope, when in dead frames; under a notion of living by faith, and not by sight, and trusting God in the dark, and living upon Christ, and not upon experiences; and who warns them not to doubt of their good estate, lest they should be guilty of the dreadful sin of unbelief. It has a direct tendency to establish the most presumptuous hypocrites, and to prevent their ever calling their state in question, how much soever wickedness rages - reigns in their hearts, and prevails in their lives - under a notion of honoring God, by hoping against hope, and confidently trusting in God, when things look very dark. And, doubtless, vast has been the mischief that has been done this way.

The Works of Jonathan Edwards, Vol. I, pp. 259-260

2. There is also a preoccupation with evidences that robs of assurance.

This is an undue emphasis on the evidences of salvation that is overly self-focused and produces uncertainty. The focus is excessively inward with an extreme view of evidences that turns ones focus away from Christ and undermines the blessing of assurance. Christ's work in our behalf is designed to give us assurance. It is a blessing that God desires we have, that should not be lost by an extreme view of evidences of salvation.

But again, many have fallen into another mistake. They make their propitiation depend upon their evidences. I would be the last to say, "Away with evidences, away with evidences," for they are good things in their proper place; but there are so many persons who always judge of their past conversion and ultimate salvation by present evidence. Judge ye, brethren, whether you could ever form a proper estimate of the world by its appearance on any one day. If I had taken you out a month ago into the fields, you would have declared that the trees were dead. What signs of life would you have perceived? The bulbs were buried in the ground; you might have taken a solemn oath that flowers were banished, and you might have imagined that because there were none, there never would be any. But what was your evidence of the world's state worth. Look at it now, when the buds are bursting on the trees, when the flowers are springing from the sod, when everything is hastening on towards spring and summer. Why, as it is absurd and ridiculous for us to judge of the worlds estate by the fact that there was a cloud to-day and there was a shower of rain yesterday, and therefore infer that the sun has lost its force and will never shine; it is just as ridiculous to judge of our standing before God by our present standing, according to our evidences on some one day. The right way to read evidences is this. First, my soul, whether thou art saved or not, look to Christ as a poor guilty sinner. When thou hast done this, then read thy evidences; then, not till them. Then the blessed evidence will be a confirmation; the witness of the Spirit will confirm thy faith. But if thou look to thy evidences first thou wilt be foolish indeed. It is as in a reflector; first, let us have the light, then will the reflector be of use to us to increase and reflect back the light; but I take my reflector into a dark place, and look for light in it, I shall find none. I must first see to the light itself, and then to the reflection of it. Our graces are the reflection of Christ's love; they are the tokens of it, but we had better go

to Christ first, and then look to the tokens afterwards. I am sure if you, as a spouse, had offended your husband, you would find but very sorry comfort in looking at those little tokens of love which in the past he had conferred on you. You would go to him first, ask him whether his love was still firm, whether he had forgiven the fault, and when you had received the assurance of his unabated and pure affection, then could you go upstairs to the secret drawer and look over the love notes and love tokens, but they would have afforded you sorry comfort before.

Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. VII, p. 204

I. THE PEOPLE WHO ARE TO HAVE ASSURANCE. THESE THINGS I HAVE WRITTEN TO YOU WHO BELIEVE IN THE NAME OF THE SON OF GOD (1 John 5:13).

A. Those Who Have Placed Their Faith In The Son Of God.

1. It is inclusive of all believers, of all maturity (children, young men, & fathers, 1 John 2:14).

No one is excluded. It is not for the elite, the superspiritual.

2. It excludes the non-believer.

- a. The precondition of assurance is saving faith.
- b. It presupposes that Christ is the sole crucified Redeemer, the only Savior (1 John 4:10, 14, 16).
 - You deny the Son you don't have the Father (2:23).
 - He is the only name whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12).
 - He came by water and blood.
- c. Those apart from Christ are under wrath (John 3:36).
- d. He is the eternal Son who is Lord (1 John 1:13).

B. Those Who Have Problems With Doubt Or Have A False Assurance!

1. You can be truly saved and doubt it.

I have been in a state of mind in which I have questioned the possibility of there being a grain of grace in me, and yet I have clung to Jesus with a death grip. At such times my mind has worked morbidly, and its way has been turned upside down. Bunyan speaks of being 'much tumbled up and down in his thoughts;' and that nearly hits my mental condition. It is very possible for a man to be a very strong believer and yet to question whether he has a spark of faith. I have heard ministers ridicule this state of inward questioning; and, indeed, it is ridiculous to all but those who are in it. If you once become a sufferer under this wretched complaint, the absurdity of your disease will not lessen its painfulness, Our mental distresses need not be logical; they can be full of anguish, and yet be most unreasonable. You probably know some people who are excessively nervous: they are afraid the skies will fall or the earth will crack: this is very stupid, but the agony caused thereby is very real ... I am personally taught to be tender of poor doubters, for I have often been one myself. I would sometimes give all that I have to be able to feel myself to be even the least in the Lord's family. Just now I enjoy a full assurance, but I am not always on the mount; and therefore I have bowels for others because I am myself compassed with infirmity. We may not judge harshly, as if things were as we would theoretically arrange them, but we must deal with things as they are: and it cannot be questioned that some of the best believers are at times sorely put to it to know whether they are believers at all. The prayer of John is that such people, yea, and all believers, may know of a surety beyond all doubt that they have eternal life.

Spurgeon, *Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Vol. XXX, pp. 401-402

2. The task and object of the devil is to rob and undermine our assurance.

II. THE PRIORITY OF OBTAINING ASSURANCE IS WHAT COMPELLED HIM TO WRITE. THESE THINGS I HAVE WRITTEN TO YOU ... SO THAT YOU MAY KNOW THAT YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE (1 John 5:13).

The lack of assurance for a true Christian is a common problem or John would not have said this. The priority of assurance is important for a number of reasons:

A. It Defeats And Discourages When We Don't Have Assurance.

- 1. Our service is affected for we have no joy which empowers our service (Nehemiah 8:10; John 15:11).**
- 2. Our steadfastness which is based on hope is undermined (Romans 5:3).**
- 3. Our ability to sacrifice which is rooted in love and gratitude is affected (1 Thessalonians 1:3; Romans 12:1).**

B. It Indicates A Defective Faith For It Has A Diminished Understanding Of The Cross.

C. It Is Dishonoring To God, For It Minimizes His Grace, Mercy And Love To Sinners.

III. IT IS POSSIBLE TO HAVE ASSURANCE. THESE THINGS I HAVE WRITTEN TO YOU ... SO THAT YOU MAY KNOW THAT YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.

A. It Is A Recurring Theme Throughout The New Testament.

- 1. The reason Christ came was to give eternal life (John 3:16-17; 6:38-40).**
- 2. The reason the Gospels were written (John 20:30-31).**
- 3. The reason for a proclamation and announcement of gospel preaching (Luke 24:46-47).**
- 4. It is the reality taught emphatically in scripture, "nothing can separate us" (Romans 8:38-39).**

B. The Relationship Of God To His People Requires It.

- 1. A child should know that God is his Father and never question it (Romans 8:15).**
- 2. A bride should know the love of her groom without doubting it.**
- 3. A sheep should know its shepherd (John 10:14).**

IV. IT IS A PRODUCT OF A RIGHT UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT WE HAVE IN CHRIST. THESE THINGS TO YOU WHO BELIEVE IN HIS NAME.

A. Simple Faith In The Promises Is The Primary And Foundational Basis Of Assurance.

- 1. The gift nature of salvation should produce assurance (5:11; Romans 3:24; 6:23). He gives eternal life, it is apart from works.**

Briefly, he alone is truly a believer who, convinced by a firm conviction that God is a kindly and well-disposed Father toward him, promises himself all things on the basis of his generosity, who, relying upon the promises of divine benevolence toward him, lays hold on an undoubted expectation of salvation. No man is a believer, I say, except him who, leaning upon the assurance of his salvation, confidently triumphs over the devil and death; as we are taught from that masterly summation of Paul: I have confessed that "neither death, nor life, nor powers, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come ... can separate us from the love of God which embraces us in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:38-39). Thus, in the same manner, the apostle does not consider the eyes of our minds well illumined, except as we discern what the hope of the eternal inheritance is to which we have been called (Ephesians 1:18). And everywhere he so teaches as to intimate that we cannot otherwise well comprehend the goodness of God unless we gather from it the fruit of great assurance.

Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, p. 562

2. The great exchange nature of salvation should produce assurance.

All my sins, past, present and future, have been placed on Him (2 Corinthians 5:19, 21; Hebrews 9:26; 10:12). His righteousness has been imputed to my account at the point of my initial faith in Christ (Romans 4:3; Philippians 3:9). How will I face God? What will my hope be? Works are non-optional as evidence of salvation. But they are never, in any way, the basis of our salvation. If they are, we would have no sure hope (Romans 4:14). In other words, perseverance in faith and good works is a non-optional evidence of justification, but never a means or cause of justification.

So the natural man should have fear of the Day of Judgment, and the Christian should be free from the fear. How then, lastly, does the Christian become free? There are two main answers to this. The first is that Christians realize the love of God that comes to them in Jesus Christ, and the work of Christ for them. That is the great thing. The first way to get rid of this fear is to understand the doctrine of justification by faith only. That is why the Protestant Fathers emphasized it, and that is why only an utterly superficial idea of

Christianity dislikes this doctrine. The first way for us to get rid of this fear of the Day of Judgment is to realize what God has done for us in the person and the work of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Let me put this practically. As I contemplate myself standing before God on the Day of Judgment, I know perfectly well I am a sinner. I have offended God and have broken His law and have forgotten Him. I have not loved Him with all my heart and mind and soul and strength. I have been guilty of sins against His people and against myself. I am a sinner. How can I stand there? There is only one way in which I can stand, and that is to know and believe that He sent forth His Son to bear my sins in His own body on the tree. Hiding in Christ-nothing else can give me peace at that point. I may say that I have done a lot of good, but what is the value of good to counteract the evil I have done? There is only one thing, and it is Christ; I am hiding in Him. I have no other hope as I contemplate the holiness of God and the holiness of heaven. My hope is that there is a cloak of righteousness woven by the Son of God Himself which will cover me, which will cover the darkness of my sins and my sinful life, so that I shall stand clothed and robed and perfected in my Lord and Savior. That is the first thing to realize-the love of God and what He has done for me. Justification by faith only! The immediate or the direct way is to understand the doctrine of justification by faith only. When I feel utterly condemned and hopeless and sinful, there is only one thing to do: I can rely upon nothing but the work of Christ for me. I cannot rely upon my acts; they are the cause of my misery. 'Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God ...'(Romans 5:1). Thank God for that! So if you find yourself on your death-bed with the memory of an old sin, or if you have done something or thought something you know to be wrong and you do not have time to start living a better life, I say, just hide yourself in Christ; you are all right-you are justified by faith only.

Lloyd-Jones, *Life in Christ*, Vol IV, pp.188-190

"Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to the cross I cling."

God be merciful to me, a sinner (Luke 18:13).

B. Specific Evidences Are Secondary, Though Essential.

1. Evidences are secondary: They are aids and helps, but you don't start there.

Evidences are good as second things, but as first things they are usurpers, and may prove to be anti-Christ to Christ.

Spurgeon, *Christ Set Forth As A Propitiation: Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, vol. XII, p. 205

... but they do not attend to what is of primary moment in the matter, viz., that the good works of believers are never so pure as that they can please without pardon. They consider not, I say, that they are always sprinkled with some spots or blemishes, because they never proceed from that pure and perfect love of God which is demanded by the Law. Our doctrine, therefore, is, that the good works of believers are always devoid of a spotless purity which can stand the inspection of God; nay, that when they are tried by the strict rule of justice, they are, to a certain extent, impure. But, when once God has graciously adopted believers, he not only accepts and loves their persons, but their works also, and condescends to honor them with a reward. In one word, as we said of man, so we may say of works,-they are justified not by their own desert, but by the merits of Christ alone; the faults by which they would otherwise displease being covered by the sacrifice of Christ. This consideration is of very great practical importance, both in retaining men in the fear of God, that they may not arrogate to their works that which proceeds from his fatherly kindness; and also in inspiring them with the best consolation, and so preventing them from giving way to despondency, when they reflect on the imperfection or impurity of their works, by reminding them that God, of his paternal indulgence, is pleased to pardon it.

Calvin, pp. 44-45

2. Evidences of salvation when understood correctly, are necessary for a full assurance.

- a. **A sweet and real communion with God (1 John 1:3-4).**
- b. **A sensitivity to sin that produces confession and repentance (1 John 1:5-2:2).**
- c. **A spirit of obedience that obeys His commands (1 John 2:3-6).**
- d. **A separation from the world (1 John 2:15-17).**
- e. **A seeking of a righteousness in living (1 John 2:29-3:10).**
- f. **A selflessness in pursuing genuine Christlike love (1 John 3:13-5:3).**

V. PROBLEMS THAT UNDERMINE ASSURANCE.

A. Estimating Yourself By The Experience Of Others.

How did you get wet! Were you drenched by a downpour all at once, or drizzled upon all day but in the end soaked? It doesn't matter. The question is; are you right now wet?

B. The Evidences Of A Changed Life Are Wrongly Expected To Be A Life Of Near Perfection.

1. It imposes a standard of change and holiness that is beyond Scripture.

There is one school of divines always preaching the corruption of the human heart. This is their style: "Except thou be flayed alive by the law; except thou art daily feeling the utter rottenness of thine heart; except thou art a stranger to full assurance, and doest always doubt and fear; "Except thou abidest on the dunghill and dost scrape thyself

with a potsherd, thou art no child of God.” Who told you that? This has been the preaching of some experimental preachers, and the effect has been just this. Men have come to think the deformities of God’s people to be their beauty. They are like certain courtiers of the reign of Richard III, who is said by history to have had a hump upon his back and his admirers stuffed their back that they might have a graceful hump too. And there be many who, because a minister preaches of doubts and fears, feel they must doubt and fear too; and then that which is both uncomfortable to themselves and dishonoring to God comes to be the very mark of God’s people. This is the tendency of experimental preaching, however judiciously managed, when ministers harp on that string and on that alone: the tendency is either to preach the people into a soft and savory state, in which there is not a bit of manliness or might, or else into that dead and rotten state in which corruption out swells communion, and the savor is not the perfume of the king’s ointments, but the stench of a corrupt and filthy heart.

Spurgeon, *The First Sermon in the Tabernacle, Metropolitan Tabernacle, Vol. VII, p. 173*

- 2. It ignores the struggle with indwelling sin (Romans 7:15-25).**
- 3. It inverts the order by wrongly putting practice as a basis of assurance before promise.**

Practice must always be the secondary reason for assurance based upon the primary reason for assurance. The primary basis for assurance is God's promise of eternal life to those who place their faith in Christ alone for their forgiveness and acceptance.