

Paul's Epistle to the Romans

LESSON VI: EXCURSUS — WHAT IS SIN? WHAT IS JUSTIFICATION?

Douglas Moo has several “*excursuses*” in his commentary to take in-depth looks at certain subjects that come up throughout the book of Romans. Well, in order to keep up with the “Moo’s” (no cow jokes please) I want to take time this week to look at two items: the definitions of sin and justification. Next week we will continue on to Romans 3:21-31, D.V.

excursus (ĭk-skūr-səs) noun – (1) a lengthy, appended exposition of a topic or point; (2) a digression

WHAT IS SIN?

At the end of last week’s lesson we touched upon something which bears repeating and more definition: **all under sin (3:20)** — “We have, then, in this statement, Paul’s own comment on his purpose in this section of his letter. All people who have not experienced the righteousness of God by faith are ‘under sin’: that is, they are helpless captives to its power. However arrived at, Paul’s understanding that all people, Jews as well as Gentiles, were not just sinners but helpless pawns under sin’s power, distinguished him sharply from his Jewish contemporaries. Nothing that Paul has said suggests that there are exceptions to this rule, and nothing shows more clearly the desperate need for the message of the gospel. ***For the problem with people is not just that they commit sins; their problem is that they are enslaved to sin. What is needed, therefore, is a new power to break in and set people free from sin — a power found in, and only in, the gospel of Jesus Christ.***” [Moo, *Romans*, pg 201]

Basic Definitions of Sin — Hebrew OT:

- **hata** = *to miss, miss the way, sin, incur guilt* — root word used about 580x in OT, and is primary word for sin; Judges 20:16 (literal rendering of the Heb word) sling stone and not miss
- **asham** = *trespass, guilty, offense, sin* — primary meaning centers on guilt, but often moves from the act which brings guilt to the act of punishment; the word used in trespass offering
- **awōn** = *iniquity, guilt, punishment for guilt* — used as singular to cover sins collectively; i.e. Isa 53:6 Lord laid on Jesus the iniquity (singular) of us all
- **pasha** = *rebel, transgress, revolt, rebellion* — fundamental idea of the root is a breach of relationships, either civil or religious
- **sāgag** = *to err, to do wrong through ignorance or inadvertence* — verb used only 4x, 2x in Lev to refer to sin of ignorance; Ps 119:67 before I was afflicted I went astray
- **sāgāh** = *to wander, to err through ignorance, mistake* — verb used 22x, mostly “to err”, used to mean sin done inadvertently

Greek NT:

- **hamartia** (ἁμαρτία) = *missing of the mark*; only Gk word (or form of it) used in NT translated “*sin, sinner*” — translated **sin**, sinner, offended Acts 25:8, trespass Lk17:3
- **ponēria** (πονηρία) = *wickedness, evil* — translated **wickedness**, iniquity
- **adikia** (ἀδικία) = *unrighteousness, a condition of not being right (with God or man)* — translated iniquity, unjust, **unrighteousness**
- **adikēma** (ἀδικήμα) = *a misdeed, a wrong act* — translated wrong, evil doing, iniquity
- **anomos** (ἄνομος) = *without law, lawless, lawlessness* (a = not, negative, nomos = law) — translated wicked, transgressors Mk 15:28, without law 1 Cor 9:21, lawless, unlawful
- **paranomia** (παρανομία) = *law-breaking* (para = against, nomos = law) — used 1x translated iniquity 2 Pet 2:16

Scriptural Proof texts

We won’t spend much time speaking of the external acts which people consider sin; this is self-evident and accepted by any who read and accept the Bible (e.g. 10 commandments). The problem is there are those who believe that’s the extent of sin. ***Sin is more than external acts, man is under bondage to this reigning principle called sin. This means man’s disposition and state is as much called sin as outward acts.*** Pastor used the illustration once of a ship crossing the ocean in which all the ship’s personnel mutinies: from that point on, everyone on the ship is guilty regardless of any subsequent good deeds.

disposition — a prevailing tendency, mood or inclination; the tendency of something to act in a certain manner under given circumstances; synonyms: temperament, character, personality

- **Sin referred to as a state of being**

Isa 1:5,6 whole head and heart is sick

Jer 17:9 heart deceitful, who can know it? — the sin here that cannot be known is not an act but sin of the heart

James 4:17 to know to do good but not do it is sin — when the sin is not doing something, it cannot be an act but a state of being

Sin is not confined to merely sinful actions but rather is a state of being; i.e. man just doesn't sin but is in a state of sin. Sin is therefore our realm of existence and not just a wrong deed.

- **The source of our external sin actions is said to be within**

Heb 3:12 evil thoughts, evil heart

Mat 15:17-20 sins come from our hearts

Mat 5:21,22a hatred = inward murder

Mat 5:27,28 lust = inward adultery

Lk 6:43-45 evil man from heart brings forth sin

Moral evil is ascribed not only to the thoughts and affections, but to the heart from which they spring. The state or condition of the soul which gives rise to wrong desires and acts is expressly called sin. Therefore, sin is not just “oh, that person committed an act of sin!” as if a righteous person made a mistake or stumbled; rather all sinful actions find it's source within our fallen human nature.

poem:

Below the surface stream, shallow and light, of what we *say* we feel;
Below the stream, as light, of what we *think* we feel;
There flows, with silent current, strong, obscure and deep,
The central stream of what we feel *indeed*.

This answers such questions as: “Why did I do that?” “How could I have done that?” — cp psychology's “sub-consciousness”

- **This inner source (sin) is an influence which controls our being**

Rom 7:11,13,14,17,20 *sin wrought in me all manner of covetousness... sin beguiled me... worketh death in me... I am carnal, sold under sin... sin which dwelleth in me*

Rom 7: 9,10 *when commandment came, sin revived and I died* — if sin revived, it must have existed prior to its manifestation

Rom 7:8 *apart from the law sin is dead* — here is sin which is not yet sin of act; dead or unconscious sin is still sin

Sin is represented here as an inward principle which exists in our souls (in our fallen human nature) even prior to our being conscious of its existence, which is discovered and awakened by the holy commands of God to be seen as it really is.

E.g.: a torch in cave discovers reptiles and stirs them, but they were there before, the light and heat did not create them; a beam of light through your shades in a darkened room reveal thousands of particles floating in the air whose existence was not seen before

Rom 6:12 sin is said to reign

Rom 5:21 sin reigns

Jn 8:31-34 everyone that commits sin is a servant of sin

A momentary act cannot reign nor dwell. As poisonous gases find its source in dangerous chemicals, so the ever re-occurring thoughts and acts of sin reveal a source of sin within. **God declares sin to be a permanent or reigning principle; not just a momentary act but a settled depravity of nature.**

Therefore we conclude **sin to be the lack of conformity to the moral law of God, either in act, disposition, or state.** Without taking the time to bring forth scriptural support, this definition includes the following:

- *sin is only predicable to rational and voluntary agents*
- *assumes man has a nature below his consciousness, a voluntary nature separate from his actual volition*
- *the divine law requires moral likeness to God in the affections and tendencies of the nature, as well as the outward activities; therefore the lack of conformity to the divine holiness in disposition or state is a violation of God's law, equally with the outward act of transgression*

Consider the testimonies of others:

Luther during his early experience often wrote to Staupitz: *“oh my sins, my sins!” yet in the confessional he could name no sins in particular which he had to confess*; it was clearly a sense of the general depravity of his nature which filled his soul with deep sorrow and pain

Jonathan Edwards wrote: Often since I have lived in this town I have had very affecting views of my own sinfulness and vileness, very frequently to such a degree as to hold me in a kind of loud weeping, sometimes for a considerable time together, so that I have been often obliged to shut myself up. *I have had a vastly greater sense of my own wickedness and the badness of my heart than ever I had before my conversion. It has often appeared to me that if God should mark iniquity against me, I should appear the very worst of all mankind, of all that have been since the beginning of the world to this time; and that I should have by far the lowest place in hell.* When others that have come to talk with me about their soul's concerns have expressed the sense they have had of their own wickedness, by saying that it seemed to them they were as bad as the devil himself; I thought their expressions seemed exceeding faint and feeble to represent my wickedness.... *When I look into my heart and take a view of my wickedness, it looks like an abyss infinitely deeper than hell.* And it appears to me that were it not for free grace, exalted and raised up to the infinite height of all the fullness and glory of the great Jehovah, and the arm of His power and grace stretched forth in all the majesty of His power and in all the glory of His sovereignty, I should appear sunk down in my sins below hell itself, far beyond the sight of everything but the eye of sovereign grace that can pierce even down to such a depth. And yet it seems to me that my conviction of sin is exceeding small and faint; it is enough to amaze me that I have no more sense of my sin. I know certainly that I have very little sense of my sinfulness. When I have had turns of weeping for my sins, I thought I knew at the time that my repentance was nothing to my sin. ... It is affecting to think how ignorant I was, when a young Christian, of the bottomless, infinite depths of wickedness, pride, hypocrisy, and deceit left in my heart.

George Whitefield used to say, *“When I see myself I seem to be half devil and half beast,”* and again, as he passed through great crowds on his way to preach: “I wondered why the people did not stone so vile a wretch as myself.”

From the diary of **David Brainerd** - missionary to the Indian in New Jersey in 1700s. Much of his diary was found to be occupied with bemoaning his sinful state:

May 13, 1742: *Saw so much of the wickedness of my heart, that I longed to get away from myself. I never before thought there was so much spiritual pride in my soul. I felt almost pressed to death with my own vileness. Oh what a body of death is there in me! Lord, deliver my soul.*

May 15: indeed I never saw such a week as this before; for I have been almost ready to die with the view of the wickedness of my heart. I could not have thought I had such a body of death in me.

June 30: spent this day alone in the woods, in fasting and prayer; underwent the most dreadful conflicts in my soul that ever I felt, in some respects. I saw myself so vile, that I was ready to say, “I shall now perish by the hand of Saul.” I thought, and almost concluded, I had no power to stand for the cause of God, but was almost afraid of the shaking of a leaf. Spent almost the whole day in prayer, incessantly. I could not bear to think of Christians showing me any respect.

This awareness of man's depravity is a result of the Holy Spirit's work and not a natural conclusion. Where in the scriptures do we find a lost man in anything but defiance to God's holiness and defensive of himself? The lost as Pharaoh may be quick to say “I have sinned” when caught but just as quick to return to their sin when the pressure's relieved. *It is only from the saved that we see an awareness of our inner depravity:*

● **David:** *Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. — Ps 51:1-5*

● **Isaiah:** *Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. — Isa 6:5*

● **Paul:** *O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? — Rom 7:24; This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. — 1 Tim 1:15*

● **Peter:** *When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. — Lk 5:8*

The unsaved pharisee justified himself while the saved publican cried “God be merciful to me a sinner” — Lk 18:13. *“It is evident that in none of these cases were there merely single acts of transgression in view; the humiliation and self-aborrence were in view of permanent states of depravity.... It may be doubted whether any repentance is genuine which is not repentance for sin rather than sins; cp Jn 16:8 — He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.”*

WHAT IS JUSTIFICATION?

As we answer the question put before us, I'd like to divide the response into two parts: a very basic definition and then a more specific definition.

BASIC DEFINITION — The root word which we translate as “*just*” has the sense of “*right, righteous.*” It is used in this manner several places in the NT: “*And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.*” (Matt 23:39-41 KJV) The thief on the cross stated they were being condemned *justly*, i.e., it was the right thing to do to these thieves. Jesus said, “*I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.*” (John 5:30 KJV) Jesus states his judgment is right and true.

“*To justify*” comes from that basic root word and in a very general sense means merely “*to declare to be right, to declare to be just.*” In taking this word in its most basic sense, it must be noted that ***it does not always refer to salvation.*** Examples are as follows:

● **Man Justifying Himself** — “*But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor?*” (Luke 10:29 KJV) So as Jesus was dealing with a man concerning his earthly responsibilities, the man replied to Jesus with a question, *trying to justify himself.* What that man was trying to do was *to declare himself righteous, to declare himself just* by making an excuse. From this, Jesus went into the story of the Good Samaritan.

Another instance may be shown where men were trying to *justify* themselves; i.e., they were attempting to show they were right and just: “*And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided him. And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.*” (Luke 16:14,15 KJV) In both these instances, the word “*justify*” has the sense of “*to declare to be right, to declare to be just.*”

● **Wisdom is Justified** — Jesus once said, “*The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.*” (Matt 11:19) Jesus was in the midst of rebuking the Pharisees for their rejection of the Word of God, both through John the Baptist and through Jesus. Jesus said that despite the rejection by the Pharisees, wisdom *is proven right, is vindicated*, by her works in the children who believe. What Jesus was saying was that John the Baptist preached the message of faith and repentance, and Jesus preached the message of faith and repentance. Even though the Pharisees rejected this message, the fact of how the gospel worked in the lives of those who believed justified the wisdom of the gospel. In this sense, “*wisdom’s children*” (Luke 7:35) are all those who were wise enough to take to heart the message preached by John and Jesus.

● **God is Justified** — The most obvious example possible to show “*justify*” does not always refer to salvation are the times of which it is said that God is justified. Obviously those verse have nothing to do with salvation. For example: “*And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.*” (Luke 7:29) In this verse God is “*declared to be right*” by those who had repented and received the baptism of John the Baptist. Obviously nothing to do with salvation.

In another verse the same point is repeated: “*God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.*” (Rom 3:4 KJV) As we saw in last week’s lesson, this was a quote from David’s penitent Psalm when he repented of his sin with Bathsheba. David (and Paul who quoted David) was saying God would be *declared to be right, declared to be just* when he judged David for his sin; i.e., David had sinned and the Lord was right to inflict judgment.

● **Man is Justified by his Works** — This leads us to a very practical portion of scriptures. James writes, “*What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.*” (James 2:14-26 KJV) ***The great controversy over these verses is all based upon the false assumption that the word “justify” used by James here refers to salvation.*** But we have just shown “*justify*” does not always refer to salvation. What is James saying in these verses then?

James whole thesis at this point is that true saving faith will show itself by outward works. ***James is saying that if a person says***

they are saved, their lifestyle should support their statement of faith. In v. 21 James says Abraham was “justified” when he offered his son Isaac on the alter. But other scriptures indicate Abraham was “saved” (in our NT language) in Genesis 15, when he looked into the heavens and believed God (Gen 15:6; cp. Rom 4:3). The verse quoted by James is from Genesis 22, at least thirty years after Abraham’s salvation experience. What James is saying in a nutshell is this: **“Abraham professed faith in the Lord by believing and trusting the promises of God. That profession of faith showed itself to be true faith when the Lord tested Abraham concerning offering his son Isaac on an alter. Abraham was therefore justified by his works, i.e., he was declared to be righteous, he was declared to be just by his obedience to the Lord.**

James continues with another illustration, this time from the other end of the spectrum. Abraham was a patriarch, Rahab was a harlot. Abraham was of the chosen people, Rahab was of a despised people, marked for destruction. Abraham was older and strong in the faith, Rahab was new and weak in the faith. Yet James says Rahab too was justified by her works: *“Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?”* James 2:25 KJV) So while Rahab did not have many of the advantages of Abraham, she too trusted in the Lord and showed forth her faith in a simplistic manner: she protected the spies of Israel just prior to Jericho’s destruction. While in all likelihood new to the faith, Rahab showed her faith to be genuine saving faith by her works.

Let’s take James’ teaching and apply it today. We would all admit that ultimately, no one *knows* who else is saved. That is because salvation is an internal action and spiritual in its nature. Therefore I cannot say with absolute 100% assurance if another person is truly a child of God or not. But, for example, I can say that _____ is a true Christian because of his profession of faith and because his lifestyle conforms to scriptural truths. What I am saying is this: that person, _____, is “justified by his works.” i.e., their lifestyle declares that person to be righteous and just, their lifestyle declares their profession of faith is genuine. That is the teaching of James.

SPECIFIC DEFINITION: JUSTIFICATION IN RELATION TO SALVATION — Speaking now directly of salvation, let’s look at the theological definitions of “justification.” (note: much of the following was gleaned from Strong’s *Systematic Theology*)

“By justification we mean that judicial act of God by which, on account of Christ, to whom the sinner is united by faith, he declares that sinner to be no longer exposed to the penalty of the law but to be restored to his favor. Or, to give an alternative definition from which all metaphor is excluded: Justification is the reversal of God’s attitude toward the sinner because of the sinner’s new relation to Christ. God did condemn; he now acquits. He did repel; he now admits to favor.” Important points of the definition are as follows:

- **Justification is a forensic term** — the term is one of the courtroom of heaven, a judicial act of God; it is the change in God’s attitude toward the sinner
- **Justification has its foundation in the sacrificial death of Christ** — God cannot merely overlook sin; it is only possible to justify sinners because Christ took the necessary penalty of those sinners upon himself at Calvary. This also rejects any human merit to be justified.
- **Justification is declarative function only** — God declares the sinner just, but that makes no inward change in the disposition of the sinner; the new birth is what changes the heart of a sinner towards God.
- **Justification is instantaneous, complete and final** — Instantaneous, since otherwise there would be an interval during which the soul was neither approved nor condemned by God (Matthew 6:24). It is complete, since the soul, united to Christ by faith, becomes partaker of his complete satisfaction to the demands of law (Colossians 2:9, 10). It becomes final since the union with Christ is indissoluble (John 10:28, 29).
- **Justification involves both the removal of punishment and the restoration to favor** — more will be said about this point later

forensic (fə-rěn-sĭc) — adj. – relating to, used in, or appropriate for courts of law
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SCRIPTURAL PROOF OF JUSTIFICATION —

*“Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house **justified** rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”* (Luke 18:10-14) cf. 13 (lit.) *“God, be thou propitiated toward me the sinner”*

*“And by him all that believe are **justified** from all things, from which ye could not be **justified** by the law of Moses.”* (Acts 13:39)

*“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be **justified** in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”* (Rom 3:20 KJV)

*“Being **justified** freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”* (Rom 3:24 KJV)

*“Therefore we conclude that a man is **justified** by faith without the deeds of the law.”* (Rom 3:28 KJV)

“But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that **justifieth** the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.” (Rom 4:5 KJV)

“Therefore being **justified** by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom 5:1 KJV)

“Much more then, being now **justified** by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.” (Rom 5:9 KJV)

“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that **justifieth**.” (Rom 8:33 KJV)

“Knowing that a man is not **justified** by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be **justified** by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be **justified**.” (Gal 2:16 KJV)

“But that no man is **justified** by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.” (Gal 3:11 KJV)

“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be **justified** by faith.” (Gal 3:24 KJV)

Elements of Justification: (1) Remission of punishment and (2) Restoration to favor

(1) Remission of punishment

(a) God acquits the ungodly ones who believe in Christ and declares them just. This is not to declare them innocent for that would be a judgment contrary to truth. It declares that the demands of the law have been satisfied with regard to them, and that they are now free from its condemnation. Dale, Ephesians, 67 — “Forgiveness may be defined in *personal* terms as a cessation of the anger or moral resentment of God against sin, in *ethical* terms as a release from the guilt of sin, which oppresses the conscience and in *legal* terms as a remission of the punishment of sin, which is eternal death.”

Romans 4:5 — “But to him that worketh not but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness”; cf. John 3:16 — “gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish”. Romans 5:1 — “Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God” — not subjective peace or quietness of mind, but objective peace or reconciliation, the opposite of the state of war in which we are subject to the divine wrath.

(b) This acquittal, in so far as it is the act of God as judge or executive, administering law, may be denominated pardon. In so far as it is the act of God as a father personally injured and grieved by sin yet showing grace to the sinner, it is denominated forgiveness. It is hard for us to understand God’s feeling toward sin. Forgiveness seems easy to us, largely because we are indifferent toward sin. But to the holy One, to whom sin is the abominable thing, which he hates, forgiveness involves a fundamental change of relation and nothing but Christ’s taking the penalty of sin upon him can make it possible. B. Fay Mills: “A tender spirited follower of Jesus Christ said to me, not long ago, that it had taken him twelve years to forgive an injury that had been committed against him.” How much harder for God to forgive, since he can never become indifferent to the nature of the transgression!”

Micah 7:18 — “Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth over the transgression of the remnant of his heritage?” Psalm 130:4 — “But there is forgiveness with thee, That thou mayst be feared.”

(c) In an earthly tribunal, there is no acquittal for those who are proved to be transgressors, for such there is only conviction and punishment. But in God’s government there is remission of punishment for believers, even though they are confessedly offenders and, in justification, God declares this remission. Illustrate by the poor man, who on coming to pay his mortgage, finds that the owner at death had ordered it to be burned so that now there is nothing to pay.

Psalm 34:22 — “Jehovah redeemeth the soul of his servants, And none of them that take refuge in him shall be condemned.”

A child disobeys his father and breaks his arm. His sin involves two penalties, the alienation from his father and the broken arm. The father, on repentance, may forgive his child. The personal relation is reestablished but the broken bone is not therefore at once healed. The father’s forgiveness, however, will assure the father’s help toward complete healing. So **justification does not ensure the immediate removal of all the natural consequences of our sins. It does ensure present reconciliation and future perfection.** As the Plymouth Brethren say: “It is not the sin-question, but the Son-question.”

“Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” (Hebrews 10:17). The father did not allow the prodigal to complete the confession he had prepared to make, but interrupted him, and dwelt only upon his return home (Luke 15:23).

(d) The declaration that the sinner is no longer exposed to the penalty of law, has its ground, not in any satisfaction of the law’s demand on the part of the sinner himself, but solely in the bearing of the penalty by Christ to whom the sinner is united by faith. Justification, in its first element, is therefore that act by which God, for the sake of Christ, acquits the transgressor and suffers him to go free. This acquittal is not to be conceived of as the sovereign act of a Governor but rather as a judicial procedure. Christ secures a new trial for those already condemned — a trial in which he appears for the guilty and sets over against their sin his own righteousness or rather, shows them to be righteous in him. C. H. M.: “When Balak seeks to curse the seed of Abraham, it is said of Jehovah: ‘He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, Neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel’ (Numbers 23:21). When Satan stands forth to rebuke Joshua, the word is: ‘Jehovah rebuke thee, O Satan.... is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?’ (Zechariah 3:2). Thus he ever puts himself between his people and every tongue that would accuse them.

‘Touch not mine anointed ones,’ he says, ‘and do my prophets no harm’ (Psalm 405:15). ‘It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?’ (Romans 8:33, 34).” Kaftan, in American Journal Theology, 4:698 — ***“The peculiar characteristic of Christian experience is the forgiveness of sins, or reconciliation — a forgiveness which is conceived as an unmerited gift of God, which is bestowed on man independently of his own moral worthiness.*** Other religions have some measure of revelation but Christianity alone has the clear revelation of this forgiveness and this is accepted by faith. And forgiveness leads to a better ethics than any religion of works can show.”

Acts 13:38, 39 — “Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins: and by him [lit.: ‘in him’] every one that believeth is justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses”; Romans 3:24, 26 — “being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus”; 1 Corinthians 6:11 — “but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus”; Ephesians 1:7 — “in whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.”

(2) Restoration to favor.

(a) Justification is more than remission or acquittal. These would leave the sinner simply in the position of a discharged criminal, law requires a positive righteousness also. Besides deliverance from punishment, justification implies God’s treatment of the sinner as if he was and had been, personally righteous. The justified person receives not only remission of penalty but the rewards promised to obedience. Justification is setting one right before law. But law requires not merely freedom from offense negatively, but in all manner of obedience and likeness to God positively. Since justification is in Christ and by virtue of the believer’s union with Christ, it puts the believer on the same footing before the law that Christ is on, namely, not only acquittal but also favor. The prisoner who has simply served out his term escapes without further punishment and that is all. But the pardoned man receives back in his pardon the full rights of citizenship, can again vote, serve on juries, testify in court and exercise all his individual liberties as the discharged convict cannot. The Society of Friends is so called, not because they are friends to one another but because they regard themselves as friends of God. 2 Chron. 20:7 — “Abraham thy friend”; James 2:23 — “Abraham believed God and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness; and he was called the friend of God”, i.e., one not merely acquitted from the charge of sin, but also admitted into favor and intimacy with God.

Luke 15:22-24 — “Bring forth quickly the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat, and make merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found”; John 3:16 — “gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should have eternal life”; Romans 5:1, 2 — “Being therefore justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom also we have had our access by faith into this grace wherein we stand; and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God” — “this grace” being a permanent state of divine favor; 1 Corinthians 1:30 — “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord”; 2 Corinthians 5:21 — “that we might become the righteousness of God in him.” Galatians 3:6 — “Even as Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness”; Ephesians 2:7 — “the exceeding riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus”; 3:12 — “in whom we have boldness and access in confidence through our faith in him”; Philippians 3:8, 9 — “I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord...the righteousness which is from God by faith”; Colossians 1:22 — “reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and without blemish and unreprouvable before him”; Titus 3:4, 7 — “the kindness of God our Savior...that being justified by his grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life”; Revelations 19:8 — “And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright and pure: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints.” Acts 13:39 — “in him everyone that believeth is justified” i.e., in Christ; 1 Corinthians 6:11 — “justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ”; Galatians 4:5 — “that we might receive the adoption of sons” — a part of justification; Romans 5:11 — “through whom we have now received the reconciliation” — in justification; 2 Corinthians 5:21 — “that we might become the righteousness of God in him”; Philippians 3:9 — “the righteousness which is from God by faith”; John 1:12 — “to them gave he the right to become children of God” — emphasis on “gave” — intimation that the “becoming children” is not subsequent to the justification, but is a part of it.

(b) This restoration to favor, viewed in its aspect as the renewal of a broken friendship, is denominated reconciliation; viewed in its aspect as a renewal of the soul’s true relation to God as a father, it is denominated adoption.

John 1:12 — “But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on his name”; Romans 5:11 — “and not only so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation”; Galatians 4:4, 5 — “born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons”; Ephesians 1:5 — “having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto himself”; cf. Romans 8:23 — “even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body” — that is, this adoption is completed, so far as the body is concerned, at the resurrection. Luther called Psalms 32, 51, 130, 143 “the Pauline Psalms,” because these declare forgiveness to be granted to the believer without law and without works. Psalm 130:3, 4 — “If thou, Jehovah, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, That thou mayest be feared” is followed by verses 7, 8 — “O Israel, hope in Jehovah; For with Jehovah there is loving kindness, And with him is plenteous redemption. And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.” Whitefield was rebuked for declaring in a

discourse that Christ would receive even the devil's castaways. That very day, while at dinner at Lady Huntington's, he was called out to meet two women who were sinners and to whose broken hearts and blasted lives that remark gave hope and healing.

(c) In an earthly pardon there are no special helps bestowed upon the pardoned. There are no penalties but there are also no rewards; law cannot claim anything of the discharged, but then they also can claim nothing of the law. But what, though greatly needed, is left not provided for by human government, God does provide. ***In justification, there is not only acquittal but there is also approval and not only pardon but also promotion. Remission is never separated from restoration.*** After serving a term in the penitentiary, the convict goes out with a stigma upon him and with no friends. His past conviction and disgrace follow him. He cannot obtain employment, he cannot vote. Want often leads him to commit crime again and then the old conviction is brought up as proof of bad character and increases his punishment. ***But the justified sinner is differently treated. He is not only delivered from God's wrath and eternal death but he is admitted to God's favor and eternal life. The discovery of this is partly the cause of the convert's joy. Expecting pardon, at most, he is met with unmeasured favor.*** The prodigal finds the father's house and heart open to him, and more is done for him than if he had never wandered. This overwhelms and subdues him. ***The two elements, acquittal and restoration to favor, are never separated. Like the expulsion of darkness and restoration of light, they always go together. No one can have, even if he would have, an incomplete justification. Christ's justification is ours and, as Jesus' own seamless tunic could not be divided, so the robe of righteousness, which he provides, cannot be cut in two.*** Failure to apprehend this positive aspect of justification as restoration to favor is the reason why so many Christians have little joy and little enthusiasm in their religious lives. The preaching of the magnanimity and generosity of God makes the gospel "the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). Edwin N. Stanton had ridden roughshod over Abraham Lincoln in the conduct of a case at law, which they had been joint counsel, Stanton had become vindictive and even violent when Lincoln was made President but Lincoln invited Stanton to be Secretary of War, and he sent the invitation by Harding, who knew of all this former trouble. When Stanton heard it, he said with streaming eyes: "Do you tell me, Harding, that Mr. Lincoln sent this message to me? Tell him that such magnanimity will make me work with him as man was never served before!"

(d) The declaration that the sinner is restored to God's favor has its ground, not in the sinner's personal character or conduct but solely in the obedience and righteousness of Christ, to whom the sinner is united by faith. Thus Christ's work is the procuring cause of our justification in both its elements. As we are acquitted on account of Christ's suffering of the penalty of the law, so on account of Christ's obedience we receive the rewards of law. All this comes to us in Christ. We participate in the rewards promised to his obedience. The gospel proclaims both pardon and justification. There is no significance in the use of the word 'justify,' if pardon is all that is intended. "Justification involves what pardon does not, a righteousness, which is the ground of the acquittal and favor and not the mere favor of the sovereign but the merit of Christ is at the basis of the righteousness, which is of God. The ends of the law are so far satisfied by what Christ has done that the sinner can be pardoned. ***The law is not merely set aside but its great ends are answered by what Christ has done in our behalf. Justification involves acquittal from the penalty of the law and the inheritance of all the blessings of the redeemed state. The penalty of the law — spiritual, temporal, eternal death — is all taken away and the opposite blessings are conferred, in and through Christ, the resurrection to blessedness, the gift of the Spirit, and eternal life.***

John 20:31 — "that believing ye may have life in his name"; 1 Corinthians 3:21-23 — "For all things are yours...all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." Hebrews 7:19 — "the law made nothing perfect...a bringing in thereupon of a better hope, through which we draw nigh unto God." This "better hope" is offered to us in Christ's death and resurrection. The veil of the temple was the symbol of separation from God. The rending of that veil was the symbol on the one hand that sin had been atoned for and on the other hand that unrestricted access to God was now permitted us in Christ the great forerunner. ***Bonar's hymn, "Jesus, whom angel hosts adore," has for its concluding stanza: "Tis finished all: the veil is rent, The welcome sure, the access free: — Now then, we leave our banishment, O Father, to return to thee!"***