

A Letter on the Righteousness of God

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My dear brother,

The "Record" has pronounced a judgment; yet, as the pope's after all was not final with Luther, but raised a question which his authority was not calculated, as he had supposed, to settle, so I apprehend it will be now. For my part, I am thankful for the article. It has kept alive a question which I believe also to be important to the Church of God. . . .

The article . . . [takes up] the doctrine of the imputation of the *legal* obedience of Christ to sinners as their righteousness, and as the only title to eternal life, "a title which His death," they say, does not give. This the "Record" calls the gospel. "Where it is not taught, it is another gospel." Now I do not charge with being heretics those who hold the active obedience of Christ under the law as imputed righteousness. I have known many beloved saints holding these views; but I think they are very obscure in their gospel. And, without any animosity or reproach of antichristian doctrine, merely as taking the question fairly and distinctly up, I say, what the "Record" insists on is not *the* gospel; and so far from it, that what they preach is not the true gospel of God as contained in scripture. For a long time the doctrine was held, and held confusedly, and statements made inconsistent with it by the persons who hold it; or it was partially held, and not strictly. And all I should have said was, they were not clear. In modern times, the doctrine has been insisted on with more precision. Whether *ex motu proprio*, or provoked by some external influence, I know not; but the "Record" has committed itself to this doctrine as so precisely taught, and I affirm it to be precisely wrong. And that which it calls *the* gospel is not the gospel at all, nor in the gospel as taught in scripture; so that issue is fairly joined.

I hardly ever heard a person (a charge from which I do not pretend to be exempt) who did not in preaching lose his balance a little between human responsibility and sovereign grace. In earnest love to souls he would speak to win, so as to compromise the absolute need of grace; or, in carefulness to shew the work was God's, dim the fulness of love in his presentation of it. This is human infirmity, and we must humble ourselves and have patience. When I went to Plymouth, a vast body of the Christians there were dear old Dr. Hawker's disciples. I did not agree with his statements, though my heart might long after his true and earnest love to his Master. The other great body of Christians were Wesleyans, with whom too I should be very far indeed from agreeing; and each of these would have denounced the other as teaching most awful doctrine. I regret the extremes, but I thank God He blest both. Between these there may be much imperfect teaching, and yet, where Christ is loved, and foundation-truth held, and souls earnestly sought, God, blessed be His name, will bless and does bless in spite of the infirmity. All error is mischievous, for we are

sanctified by the truth. Still, we have to do with a patient and gracious God; and, while we never can justify any mistake, where *the truth is* held He will bless. I say this, that we may discuss peacefully what is an important doctrine, without denouncing one who is not clear. . . .

Hence the truth becomes of the deepest interest and the deepest importance. It rallies the soul to God, to Christ, the only true stay and centre. Faith recognizes that there is such a thing as truth, and a divine record of it; that there is a divine teaching, that we may know the truth, and that we may reckon upon it. Hence the importance of holding fast foundation truth, and having it as clearly as possible, that the enemy may have no advantage and souls not be scattered by human admixture. Rome, Puseyites, and Papists would have authority; the Evangelical churchman, the formularies of the Reformation, which have already failed in uniting godly people; the rationalist would make his own judgment the measure of enquiry, and deny the inspiration and authority of scripture, or speak of Shakespeare's and Milton's, by which all divine authority in the word is openly denied. In the midst of this, let faith hold the truth, and enquire with the certain standard of the word of God, what the full truth of God is. No new truth can unsettle an old one. None can unsettle the absolute authority on which alone all truth is founded – the word of God. Let the saints do this with patience and grace, and it will be a resting-place, through divine mercy, for many an anxious soul – a haven in the storm.

It is in this spirit I would enquire into the doctrine whether Christ's obedience to the law is imputed to us as meeting our failure under it. . . . To be clear, I will begin with the "Record's" doctrine. . . we are told, "that though I am pardoned, I am not justified – mere pardon is not justification." Now this is the precision I speak of.

It is not merely that Christ fulfilled the law for us so that we may be said to have fulfilled it; that is a tolerably ancient doctrine. It dates from the close of the Reformation. I am not aware that it was ever heard of before. The Reformers were not clear in everything. The Homilies of the Establishment teach that Christ fulfilled the law for us in His life. Nor, for my part, if thus vaguely and generally stated, should I have anything which would rouse me to combat what was said, though it would be probable the person was not clear. But the writer's notion of justification, its contrast with pardon, never enters into the minds of the authors of these Homilies. Thus speaks the Homily: "Every man of necessity is constrained to seek for another righteousness, or justification, to be received at God's own hands; that is to say, the forgiveness of sins and trespasses." So that for them justification was forgiveness. The two were identified with "that is to say." So again, in the second part, "for to have only by him remission of our sins, or justification."

So Calvin: "To justify, therefore, is nothing else than to acquit from the charge of guilt, as if innocency were proved." (On God's justifying the wicked.) Again, he says (Rom. 3: 26), "What can be the sense, unless by the benefit of faith, to free from condemnation which their iniquity merited?" So, in Acts 13, "Thou seest how, after remission of sins, this justification is put as an interpretation (*in loco*

*interpretationis*), so he absolves by the imputation of righteousness." Further, "But in Romans 4: 6-8 he first calls [it] imputation of righteousness, nor doubts to place that in the remission of sins." And this he does very definitely; he says, after quoting the passage, "There, certainly he does not discuss a part of justification, but the whole of the thing itself; whence it appears that this justice which is spoken of is simply opposed to guilt." So when he speaks of 2 Corinthians 5, "The righteousness of God in him," he says, "In this place nothing else is to be understood than that we stand supported by the expiation of Christ's death before the tribunal of God." Again, "God by pardoning justifies." Again, "Certainly he does not cite the prophet as a witness, as if he taught that the pardon of sins was a part of righteousness, or that it contributed to the justifying a man, but includes the whole righteousness in gratuitous remission." All this he calls Christ's righteousness. And his language (Inst. III, 17: 13) excludes all idea of Christ's making a righteousness for us by the keeping of the law. So in his commentary: "That most beautiful sentence therefore remains to us safe – he is justified by faith who is purged before God by the gratuitous remission of sins." These doctrines are asserted by him over and over again, and proved by scripture. Once he states on Romans 3:31, "but when we come to Christ first, the exact righteousness of the Lord is found in Him, which, by imputation, also becomes ours." But even this makes no part of his general doctrine; and he uses it only as a proof that the law is confirmed – never as meeting our failures.

Now, I do not accept simply the doctrine of the Homilies or Calvin. But this is certain, that both carefully contradict the distinction between the forgiveness of sins and imputation of righteousness. When Calvin speaks of the words "the obedience of one," he applies it to the satisfaction offered to His Father. Any one can see that what is charged as a grievous error is distinctly affirmed by the Homilies and by Calvin, and that for them remission of sins is justification. The truth is, the Reformers were charged, as Paul was, and as the Brethren are, with setting aside the law. They declare that they establish it; and in *one* place Calvin, as proving they do, says – Christ fulfilled it, which is reckoned to us; but the law is specially introduced by Calvin as an answer to works of supererogation or satisfaction . . . . law does not speak of particular acts, but if you are to have righteousness by it, you must keep it all, and no man has done this. It was thus against the merit of partial works he uses the requirement of the law, and in doing this, never hints at Christ's fulfilling it as the answer to our failure. Only in his commentary, when speaking of confirming the law by faith (not in the Institutes), he says, Christ was perfect in it, and that is ours by imputation.

If we turn to Luther, the whole thought is entirely foreign to him. He declares the law to have only ceased when Christ came, if you take it literally; and if spiritually, as soon as Christ is known in the soul; that its only use was previously on account of sin, and to convict of it, and that we have nothing more whatever to say to it; that it was given to Israel, not to the heathen at all; only that as to fundamentals, natural conscience supplied its place, and that we have nothing to say to it. His language is the strongest possible. For those who are already righteous (through faith in Christ) are far outside and above all laws (*weit ausser und uber all Gesetze*). Therefore

should the law be laid on those alone who are not yet righteous, and yet would willingly be righteous, yet not for ever, but for a time, until the righteousness which is by faith come; not that such righteousness be obtained by law, for such is not rightly using but misusing the law, but that they may, alarmed and humbled, flee to Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to all those who believe (Gal. 3:19-23). "The law is a light which makes plain and clear, not grace, also not righteousness whereby man obtains life, but sin, death – God's wrath and judgment. That is the proper and right work of the law, in which it should remain, and not take a step further." So "when the law has accomplished its work or office, that is, given me to recognize my sin, frightened me, and revealed God's anger and judgments . . . it has reached its set time and end, so that it is to cease and leave me unplagued by its tyranny." So, in the first book of Moses, "The law of Moses concerns the Jews, which does not bind us any more. For the law is given to the Jewish people alone, and the heathen are excluded." He then directly refers to the moral law, saying that the heathen have the main points in their conscience. "It is not new what Moses commands here." He says, "Thus I keep the commandments now, not because Moses has commanded them." "But," he says, "it is objected, God spoke to them." His answer is, "This is not all, that God has spoken it: we must know to whom he spoke it." "Therefore answer, Leave Moses and his people together; it is finished with them, it does not concern me. I have the word which regards me – we have the gospel." "Only," he says, "it is to be preached to make men fear, so as to drive them to the gospel."

Thus the doctrine that the blood gives pardon and the law righteousness, and that we have one without the other, is denied by the Establishment in its Homilies, diligently by Calvin; and as to Luther, so far is he from thinking of such a doctrine, that though he holds that the law may be used to condemn and burden the soul, he declares the Christian is in no way under it. It has ceased for him. Man may get light from it, but, once applied, it is only death, and only meant to be so, and ceases literally and spiritually when Christ comes. If he keeps it, it is not because Moses has commanded it, but because it agrees with natural conscience. We are to suppose that they had not the gospel, nor taught what all the Church of God held as taught in the word!

Now, I do not agree with much that remained unclear to the Reformers: consubstantiation; Christ completing His work in hell; baptismal regeneration, which they all clearly held – the putting away of original sin by infant baptism. For the Reformers I bless God unfeignedly, but they are in no way a rule of faith for me: "To the law and the testimony." I must have the word of God. But with these statements in the Reformers, to talk as the "Record" does is more than idle. . . .

There is another point remarkable in all these reasonings; not one passage of scripture is produced. We are told "that it is another gospel than that held by the whole Church of God, as taught in the word of God." I deny it is held by the whole Church of God. None of the Wesleyans hold it at all. Dr. Wardlaw declared there was no scripture for it at all. . . . And as to the difference of pardon and justification or righteousness, the doctrine of the "Record" is contrary to the Homilies and to Calvin,

contrary to the whole doctrine of the Reformation. But what I have to remark is, that when *any* of them who do speak of it approach any part of this doctrine (and, as I have stated, it was partially and vaguely held, that Christ fulfilled the law for us, by the reformed portion of the work of the sixteenth century, but not by the Lutheran, and not as the "Record" and their friends do, but when they approach it), scripture instantly disappears. The "Record" says, "Held by the whole Church of Christ, as taught in scripture." Taught where? Total silence. I turn to Calvin: he luxuriates in scripture proofs when he condemns the doctrine of the "Record"; when, in a solitary passage, he at all approaches it – not a scripture to be had. He says so.

So again here: "The essence of the glorious gospel lies in this – that the Lord Jesus not only bore our penalty but did our work!! . . . And this whole work of His . . . is called in the scriptures, and proclaimed in the gospel, as the righteousness of God." Where? Silence; total silence. Is not this singular? "We have, in our Surety, suffered all the law's penalty, and fully and perfectly obeyed all its precepts. This is the righteousness which is revealed in the gospel, which is brought nigh to us, by which God is just while he is a justifier." Not so Calvin; quite the contrary. I suppose he was not of the Church of God! But let that pass. Where revealed? Not a letter of scripture to be had, but a text alluded to, entirely perverted, which really teaches quite otherwise – quite the opposite. I might add another, which we shall equally see is misapplied. What is attempted to be given from scripture proves this with an unquestionable distinctness. . . . But why this ominous silence? Why this incapacity to produce one text for what is held by all the Church of Christ?

One text [Rom. 3:26], I have said, is alluded to; I refer to the phrase, "This is the righteousness which is revealed in the gospel, which is brought nigh to us, by which God is just while he is a justifier." Now, I say that that is false and contrary to the scripture referred to. Let any one judge. It is, I must say, unless it be prejudice and carelessness, an audacious *contradiction* of scripture. It is insisted that, not only "we have in the person of our Surety suffered all the law's penalty, but fully and perfectly obeyed its precepts; and that this is the righteousness by which God is just and a justifier." The curse of the law borne and its precepts fulfilled – that is the righteousness. Now for the passage [Rom. 3:20-26]: "Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified before God." **He does not say merely by my doing it, but not by deeds of law; no one is justified in that way. "For by the law is the knowledge of sin."** As Luther argues, "That was its use; other use of it was a misuse." (Miszbrauch.) "But now the righteousness of God without the law [*choris nomou* – **wholly apart from law**] is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time, his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Now here we have the words "just and

justifier," but not one word of bearing the curse of the law, nor of keeping its precepts. "Redemption through his blood" is spoken of, and we are justified by that.

**But this is not all. Not only is the justifying ascribed to the blood only, but we are told negatively that it is not by deeds of law.** And further (to make the matter clear, as that which the apostle insisted upon, that it was not law, whoever fulfilled it) it is said, "But now, apart from law." Now, to quote this text, or allude to it, to prove that the righteousness by which God is just and a justifier is righteousness by law, is a monstrous and direct contradiction of scripture — a denial of the apostle's doctrine.

"We are, in Christ," not only pardoned but justified men; we are righteous in Him. All true, but *how?* is the question. The "Record" tells us that the essence of the gospel lies in this, that the Lord not only bore our penalty, but did our work, and that this is called in the scriptures, and proclaimed in the gospel, as the righteousness of God. Where? I challenge the "Record" to produce a passage.

. . . such subjects as these can only be judged of by scripture, and I shall quote all the passages in which the righteousness of God is spoken of besides Romans 3, already commented on, and itself sufficient to prove the contrary. They are the following: Matthew 6:33; Romans 1:17; ch. 3:5; ch. 10:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9. **Now, in which of these is the keeping of the law called the righteousness of God?** Not such a thought is found in them. The first is, "Seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness." The second is, "The righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel from faith to faith: as it is written, "The just shall live by faith" — a passage quoted by the apostle to shew it is not by law. "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for the just shall live by faith: and the law is not of faith, but the man that doeth them shall live in them" (Gal. 3:11, 12). **Now, remark, it is not here the question who fulfils it, but that it is not by law because it is by faith, and the law is not of faith,** "but the man that doeth these things shall live in them": and not then that another does it in order to justify, **but that another way of justification is brought in. It is not by doing, let the doer be Christ or another. It is not by law. The principle of keeping law to justify, says the apostle, "is not of faith."** If the "Record" added, "Surely the man cannot be justified by his doing them, because he has not done them; but he is justified by doing them, because Christ has done them for him," **what would come of the apostle's argument, "A man is not justified by works of law?"** But it is added, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" — and kept it for us besides, says the "Record." But the Holy Ghost says not a word of the kind, though it was just the opportunity to bring it in.

"If my unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God" (Rom. 3:5). This has nothing to say to the matter; only we may remark, to exclude all controversy, that here it is God's being justified in His ways and vengeance: hence His own righteousness in Himself.

The next is **Romans 10:3**: "They, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God." Thus far does not help us, but the words following do: "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." **He is the end of it, not the fulfiller of it for me because I am under it now. If I am, He is not the end of it. This passage Luther uses in the sense I give to it, and insists largely on the truth.** But the apostle does go on to say what the righteousness which is of faith is, and never says one word of the law, and could not if Christ was the end of it.

"We are the righteousness of God in him" (**2 Cor. 5:21**). **There is the sinless One made sin that we might be the righteousness of God in Him – not keeping the law, that we might be. Being made sin is not keeping the law.**

"And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (**Phil. 3: 9**). **There is never the trace of an idea of a righteousness of God by Christ's keeping the law.** All these passages refute entirely the assertion and condemn the doctrine of the "Record."

One passage [**2 Pet. 1:1**] may be attempted to be cited, though the "Record" has not done so – "To them who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." I am quite willing to take it as others desire, through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ. **But there is not a word of the law. I am perfectly satisfied that righteousness of our God and Saviour does not mean here justifying righteousness, but the faithfulness of God to His promises.** They have obtained the precious faith of Christ as God had surely promised to His people – for He writes to Jews. They have obtained it through the righteousness of God. At any rate, law does not enter in any way into the verse.

Such are the passages which speak of the righteousness of God; but I go farther, and take the passages which speak of righteousness, and challenge the "Record" to produce one which speaks of its being by law, or Christ's fulfilling the law for us. I read of "righteousness, because I go to the Father." [**John 16:10**] **God was righteous in glorifying Him. Law does not come in question;** yet the demonstration of righteousness was here – lay in this – that Christ went to the Father, and men saw Him no more. **[Righteousness is manifested and demonstrated to the world, because Christ is gone to the Father. He had glorified God, and God has glorified Him with Himself, and (leaving aside just final condemnation for the moment) therein righteousness is proved.]** In **Romans 4:3**, faith is counted to Abraham for righteousness. He believed God. **Not a word of law; only care taken to exclude works which were under the law. "God imputeth righteousness without works" (v. 6), not imputeth works for righteousness.** And, at the close of his argument, the apostle takes care to add, "for the promise that he should be heir of the world was not to Abraham or to his seed through law, but through the righteousness of faith." The inheritance of promise is not by law at all, neither for Abraham nor for his seed. **Chapter 5:17-21**, afford us in themselves no word upon it, only it is a gift; but it is

added afterwards that the law entered by the by, as a distinct thing. Of this more farther on.

Christ is made unto us righteousness (1 Cor. 1:30). The blessed fact is there, **but no word of law; He Himself is it, not His keeping the law.**

In **Galatians 2:21**, we have an important verse, "For if righteousness come by the law, Christ is dead in vain." **Now here Christ's death and righteousness by law are contrasted.** We are told pardon comes by death, righteousness by law, Christ fulfilling it. **But the apostle declares that it does not come by law; that if it did, Christ is dead in vain.** Indeed, **why should He die, if I was righteous without it?** And note here, the apostle has no thought of a being righteous and unpardoned. Yet if Christ's life was there for us – not His death – a man were righteous and a guilty sinner at the same time. What an unscriptural notion! They do not put it in this way, I know, but they do the converse – pardoned but not righteous. Hence, it is equally certain, he might be righteous, but not pardoned! The whole system is false.

**Galatians 3:21:** If a law had been given which could have given life, righteousness should have been by the law: but it was not so. And then the apostle pursues the reasoning which Luther so insists upon. The law was our schoolmaster unto Christ; but after that faith came, we are no longer under the schoolmaster; before it came, we were under the law. **If I am not under it, Christ clearly has not to fulfil it for me, for I am not under it to call for it.** "Christ is become of no effect to you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4). **It is not Christ must keep it for you to be justified by it, because you have not; but you are fallen from grace if you are justified on this principle.** The "Record" says, **We are pardoned by Christ's death, but must be justified by law; the scripture, that we are fallen from grace, and Christ of no effect to us if we are.** Titus 3:5 speaks of it – **not a word of law.** I had omitted one passage where righteousness of God is mentioned, James 1:20; but it does not touch our present subject.

Again, Abel obtained witness that he was righteous by the offering of Christ (typically), not by his keeping the law. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly" (Rom. 4:5). **It is not by another's works. "He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. Therefore being justified by faith," etc.** No thought of law or Christ's law-fulfilling for it. It is His death and resurrection (v. 9). "Being justified by his blood." "A man is not justified by works of law" (Gal. 2:16). **But he is, if he be justified by Christ's doing them.** "That we might be justified by the faith of Christ, not by works of law; for by works of law shall no flesh be justified." **It is not merely he has not done them, but it is another way of being justified, not the Christian one.** I have already quoted chapter 3:17-24. **Now, what I find here is, the positive assertion of justification in another way than law; the rejection of the principle the "Record" insists on, and the declaration of the incompatibility of the two.** If the "Record" has a text or a testimony of scripture which teaches that a man is justified by Christ's keeping the law, let it be produced.



There is a text referred to [Rom. 5:19], "By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one, many shall be made righteous." But so far from there being a word of law or obedience to law here, it is in express contrast. "Moreover the law entered," *pareiselthe*, was no part of this great scheme in the two Adams, only came in by the by that the offence might abound. Mark, no word about keeping it. It had an object; it was to convict — bring in offence — make sin sinful. So Luther, *passim*. The obedience of Christ is in contrast with law. It is a monstrous idea to make Christ's obedience merely legal. He kept the law, surely; He was born under it, though as Son of man above it in title. But His obedience was absolute. What righteousness of the law called upon Him to give His life for sinners? But that He did as obedience. What, to bear the law's curse for another? All His life was obedience, but far beyond law; He laid down His life so, not according to law. And here it is obedience as a principle contrasted with disobedience, and no thought of law. There was a disobedient man and an obedient one — Adam and Christ. The law came in by the by. He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. Did the law make a righteous man suffer? Christ's obedience was perfect and absolute. To reduce it to fulfilling the law is horrible, though He fulfilled the highest requirement of the law. The law was suited to the first man, Christ's obedience to the glory of God, into which He is entered because He finished the work His Father gave Him to do. So in Philippians 2, He was obedient unto death (*mechri thanatou*). It is the character and extreme possible limit of a principle of obedience — He was obedient even to death. Think of saying, He fulfilled the precepts of the law even to death! What precept commanded a person to die? No; His obedience was the principle of perfect submission to His Father's will, whatever the cost might be. . . .

That the perfection of the law was in the heart of Christ, no Christian could for a moment deny. Psalm 40 suffices to declare it. And being born under the law, He could not but be perfect under it in His Person and walk. That is above all enquiry. It is received by the simplicity of faith as the truth. . . .

I have now gone through scripture, I trust fairly, and as completely as I could . . . . I have referred to the Reformers, not as any authority (for the word of God alone is that), but in reply to the statement that the whole Church of God teaches this doctrine. I have quoted the Institutes of Calvin and his commentary, the commentary of Luther on the Galatians and first book of Moses, and the Homilies of the Establishment. I will add here two sentences from the "Apology for the Confession of Augsburg," and the "Formula of Concord" (76 of part 2, article 4). The first says: "To obtain remission of sins is to be justified according to that [passage], Psalm 32." And such is the uniform doctrine of the "Apology," which refutes the idea of any fulfilment of law having anything to say to it, contrasting law and promise, referring the last to Christ in contrast with the former. The "Formula of Concord" speaks thus: "We repudiate and condemn all the false doctrine which we will here recite." The third doctrine condemned is: "That in the prophets' and apostles' sayings, where justification by faith is in question, the words 'to justify and to be justified' are not the same as 'to absolve and to be absolved from sins, and to obtain remission of sins.'"

The conclusion I draw is, that the Homilies contradict, Calvin laboriously controverts, and the Lutheran body openly condemns, that special distinction which is made essential by the "Record" and the party it represents, and declared by it to be the faith of the whole Church of God; that the Reformed or Calvinistic part of Protestantism did speak of the fulfilling of the law by Christ for us – that we may be considered as having fulfilled it in Him, **but barely alludes to it as maintaining the law, and not at all as it is now taught**; and that the Lutheran part of the Church rejects it altogether. I find, further, that there is no attempt to adduce scripture in proof of what they do state as to the law. The Westminster Confession speaks of Christ's obedience and death as a satisfaction, never of the law in justifying (ch. 8:5; ch. 11:1-3). Nor, when speaking of the law, does it speak of Christ's fulfilling it for us. The passages which it quotes are those in Romans, which exclude the law, and Jeremiah 33 and the like; though it says (what is foolish enough) that "God gave a law to Adam as a covenant of works, promising life upon the fulfilling (!), and threatening death upon the breach of it, and that this law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness, and as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai in ten commandments." **I refer to this, because this notion really lies at the bottom of the whole question.** I have, in the scriptures I have referred to, brought forward fully the testimony of the word of God on the subject. In these the law is excluded as a way of righteousness and life. Nor is it even hinted that Christ fulfilled it in our stead. It is declared that it was our schoolmaster up to Christ, and that now He is come, we are no longer under it; and, instead of its fulfilment by any one being our righteousness, it is declared that, **"if righteousness come by law, Christ is dead in vain."** If it be alleged that this referred to persons seeking it by their own works under law, supposing it were (for it is really an absolute principle), it is declared that **"Christ is the end of the law for righteousness" – that now faith is come, we are not under it – that we are delivered from it, having died in Him, the law having power over a man only as long as he lives.** That modern Evangelicals have generally this doctrine I do not deny; but they are no rule of faith. After all, half the Christians in the world, perhaps even at this moment, have no such principle.

I hold this doctrine of the Evangelical school on this subject to be false and wrong, because it is not in scripture, but contrary to scripture. Will the "Record" fairly meet the question on the ground of scripture? I do not hold with Lutherans against Calvinists, or with the latter against Lutherans; but **I bow to the word of God.** The doctrine of the "Record," the modern doctrine, as to pardon and justification, we have seen rejected by the Reformation entirely – rejected by the whole of it. I have quoted their statements only to relieve people's minds from prejudice. And, without concerning myself further about the opinions of any, I shall now endeavour to shew why I think the question is important, and what the scriptural view of it is.

Two systems are in presence. One is, that we are all under the law – Christians and all men; that the fulfilment of the law alone is righteousness; that in vain is propitiation made that we may be forgiven. That is not the means of being justified.

In order to this, Christ has kept the law in our stead and then died for our sins; but that His death is the means of pardon, but not of justification.

The other [system] is, that we believers are not under law, but under grace; that Christ, while perfect under law in His own Person, did not keep it to make good our defects under it, or give us legal righteousness or justification by it; that He died for our sins, and thus put them away; but that we are viewed as being also dead with Him, and no longer in the flesh at all, to which law applied, but stand as risen in the presence of God, in the position in which He stands, with all the value of His work upon us, and accepted in His Person, according to His acceptance now that He is risen; that this is measured by His having perfectly glorified God in His work, and hence is glorified in and with God in heaven; and that this is our title to be in heaven and glory in due time with Him – conformed to His image – the firstborn among many brethren.

Here is the importance of the matter. The first opinion makes our righteousness to be a righteousness under law, in flesh, connecting us with Christ's position before the cross, and making our righteousness purely legal, and putting us under the law; this being the measure and principle of it, we are justified by its being kept. "Do this and live." The second holds us to be dead to that state of flesh under law altogether; that when Christ was in the body He stood alone, and that our standing in Him is as dead and risen, the old man entirely condemned, but crucified and dead for faith; we, alive to God in Christ, risen, delivered from the law, united to Christ *risen*, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, because Christ has perfectly glorified God in dying, and that our place is that of having entered into God's presence through the cross, that new and living way (that is, through death, by which it is all left behind, and all that related to flesh in its relationship with God, though in fact, having to contend with it as an enemy to be overcome). They put us behind the cross under law. God has put us by the cross, and as now crucified with Christ, alive in His presence, as risen with Him.

Which is the scriptural truth? That is the question. I affirm the common modern Evangelical statement, maintained by the "Record," to be unscriptural; and that it destroys the true Christian liberty insisted on by Paul, and the claims for holiness presented by scripture, according to the new position into which grace has brought us; that it lowers Christianity and disfigures it, and denies the depth of sin and the power of resurrection; that the gospel as taught specially by Paul in conflict with Judaism, is denied by it. We both admit propitiation by blood. But they put before us a man living in flesh, and righteousness provided for him by Christ under law. Paul, I affirm, puts a believer in resurrection, and wholly dead to the former state, and accepted in Christ when he is no longer under law at all.

Now, I will commence by stating that I hold the maintenance of the law, in its true and highest character, to be of the deepest importance, and necessary to a right and full apprehension of divine teaching. It is the abstract perfection of a creature, loving God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves; and this Christ most surely did

in all He did. All the *moral* claims and teaching of law and prophets, as the Lord declares, hang on it. . . . For us, at any rate, the maintaining this immutable standard abstractedly as our creature perfection is, I believe, of deep moral importance. To say that it was given to Adam with a promise of life, and reproduced at Sinai, is an idle, unscriptural imagination, and utter confusion as to the ways of God. There was no promise of life to Adam innocent; it would have been out of place. It is false, and only confusion. A law to love God does not suit innocence. Loving a neighbour was not suited to Adam's position; had he remained innocent, he never would have had any, but been the head and father of his race without a neighbour. The ten commandments suppose the knowledge of good and evil: to give a law to Adam which supposed it would have falsified his position. What did stealing mean for him? And, what is yet more important, what a prohibition to lust? Sinai does take the two great commandments as basis (that we know), but supposes lust, knowledge of good and evil, and sin, and prohibits it. **Law is not made for the righteous, but for the unrighteous. That, Adam was not.** He had a command which was a test of obedience, and no more – a test by that which, save by prohibition, would have been as innocent in itself as all else. The acquirement of the knowledge of good and evil changed the whole moral condition of man (coming in by sin, too, as it did); and to that condition the law undoubtedly applied. **Of that condition (i.e., of a being having knowledge of good and evil) the two great commandments were perfection in the creature.** Adam had a law, that is plain – a simple test of obedience before the knowledge of good and evil. Moses gave from God a law, when man had the knowledge of good and evil, and suited to that state. Both these suppose the express authority of God. They both impose a rule under a penalty. The law under Moses adds "this do and thou shalt live." Man, departed from God, was lawless. This did not alter the abstract perfection of the law; but he had abandoned God in will, had a knowledge of good and evil, but no law save the law of conscience. God gave a law to Israel, and in it set the jewel of man's perfection according to law. Christ took a double character. He was born of a woman, and born under law. He was a perfect man in the midst of evil (but much more), and had the law in all its perfection in His heart; but, besides that, grace and truth came by Him. He, not the law, was the light of the world.

But now comes the question. **Man being a sinner, utterly departed from God, and if under law a law-breaker – is the law a way of justifying him, or the rule according to which he is justified? Ah, if he has kept it all right, he shall surely have righteousness by it and life.\*** {\*The scripture takes care never to say eternal life; for this is a gift of God, it is Christ Himself.} **But we have supposed with scripture that man is a sinner, and under law a law-breaker, so that he has not righteousness by it.** How then does scripture bring in righteousness and salvation? Is it by law? Is it founded on its rules and claims? or is it, while surely maintaining the excellency and authority of the law fully, in some other way? Upon the ground of the first Adam in law, it is all over with us – the way to the tree of life shut and all access forbidden. But from the outset what hope is given? It is another Adam, the seed of the woman, not a restoration of the first on any old principle. The seed of the

woman is to bruise the serpent's head. The destruction of evil is by Christ's coming in as a deliverer.

Next (and mark, for this is important and insisted on by the apostle – **the special thesis of his epistle to the Galatians, which is really a treatise on this point**) a promise without any condition comes, contrary in its nature to law. Promise may be attached to law; it was in Sinai, but then it depends on a condition; there are two parties, and man must be faithful to his or it fails.

Simply promise is of one, God, and then is infallible; and this promise was to the seed Christ. The promise is made to Him, simply, absolutely, unconditionally; but we may add, Abraham gives up all the promises as given to Isaac in flesh, sacrifices him, and the promise is confirmed to one risen in figure. This on every ground never can be annulled. The law comes in 430 years after, let man say what he will in dreaming about law, but it cannot touch the unconditional promise. So says the apostle; "it came in by the by," *pareiselthe*. Was it, then, immaterial that man was a sinner, that there was no righteousness? Was he to be blessed in his sin, and human righteousness or unrighteousness not to be considered? That would not do, and hence human righteousness – righteousness in flesh – of man, as a child of Adam, is proposed and required in the law, with promise of life [not eternal life] by it, and a curse attached to its breach, and given with every help and advantage to a chosen people. The result was simple. Flesh was not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, and those that are in flesh cannot please Him. The law convinced of sin, but did not touch and could not touch God's unconditional promise. Was it, then, the ground of righteousness so that man should have the promise? If it were, he must fail of the promise, for flesh could not keep it. Now comes the question: **Is the law broken, always broken by flesh, the ground on which the promise or eternal life is had, by another's keeping it when man does not? Is the law our righteousness? i.e., do our righteousness and eternal life come by it, through another's keeping it? That is our point. My answer shall be the apostle's: "If righteousness [come] by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."** It is as absolute and abstract as possible, *ouk atheto ten charin tou theou ei gar dia nomou dikaiosune apa Christos dorean apethanen*. It is *not*, if it be by my keeping it; but if righteousness be by law, Christ has died in vain. But God's promise was to be fulfilled. What is the relationship of promise and law? That is the first question. The second is the connection of law, and death and resurrection, though they run into one another in fact; but the first is treated more especially in Galatians, the second in Romans.

Is the accomplishment of the promise on which all rests from Adam's fall, yea, from before the worlds, founded on law-fulfilling? I answer, No. Law was the test of the creature as its perfect rule, the test of the first man; the promise is given to and by the Second. He has magnified the law – has not left it to be the ground of righteousness. What says the apostle? As we are arrived here, we cannot do better than follow his order (that is, the guidance of God's Spirit). First, his own and Peter's course – "Knowing that a man is not justified by works of law, but by faith of Jesus Christ." Here I get two points. "Works of law" are not what justify me (it is *not* I am

a sinner and I need pardon): the question is, *What justifies?* The answer, Not works of law, says the apostle. The "Record" and the Evangelicals tell me it is. Secondly, it is in contrast with the faith of Christ. Works of law are one way of justifying, faith in Christ another. They are inconsistent with one another. . . . "For I through law am dead to law, that I might live to God." Dead to law! What is that? Why, he has nothing more to say to it as a man in flesh. The law, which is a ministration of death, as well as of condemnation, has killed him; **he does not, as in flesh, exist morally before God.** If he were alive to the law, sensible to it, or did it find a point of contact in him, he would not live to God. But the law has killed him as alive in flesh, and now he can live to God. **But this takes him out of all reach of law.** His life is not that which was in connection with law; he is dead to it, because, as to the life with which law had to do, it has killed him. How, then, is he justified by another's keeping it for him? The law has acted, but acted in another way. It has closed his existence as responsible to it. It has done the opposite to justifying him, and can do no more, for the man is dead. We shall see this more fully entered upon in the Romans. The way this is met and becomes real for us is, that we are crucified with Christ. Is the *justified* man crucified? **What we find in scripture is another way of dealing with the flesh, which breaks the law and cannot be subject to it; that is, condemning it and putting the man to death, viewed as in it. Now, crucified with Christ, he yet lives; but not he, but Christ.** The man again has ceased to exist for faith and in God's sight, and it is now Christ who is his life, but Christ risen from the dead. Now, that a true heart may not yet understand this, I can conceive; but the "Record" contradicts the doctrine of scripture, and adopts another – **justifying by law-works done by Christ, instead of holding the man dead and condemned, but now alive in Christ, in a new position.**

In the whole of chapter 3 the apostle contrasts the hearing of faith and law. Those who are of works of law are under a curse. How so, if it is fulfilled? **The curse has no ground, if the law has been vicariously fulfilled.** But the apostle is more precise. "But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident; for the just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith; but the man that doeth them shall live in them." **Now, nothing can be simpler than this. The principle on which a man is justified is contrary in its nature to a man's being justified by the law. We are told that man is pardoned through blood-shedding, but justified by law-keeping. The apostle says he is not, in God's sight, because the principles are diametrically opposed to one another.**

Now here was the time to explain the "Record's" system. The law brought a curse; Christ redeemed us from the curse – that is, by suffering on the cross. And will he not save the justifying by law-works to shew he did not mean to set aside Christ's vicariously keeping it? Not a word is to be found. Instead of this, he goes on to shew that the law could not have this place at all, because God had given before it a complete, confirmed covenant, which could not be added to. And, hence, though the law did come in after it, what was said to Abraham could not be added to nor disannulled; that law only came in, therefore, by the by – added because of transgressions till the seed should come; and that when faith came, we were no

longer under it. **It was a temporary ground of dealing with men between the promise and its fulfilment.** It was up to Christ, that we might be justified in another way. It will be at once objected, How do you reconcile this with the eternal character of the law and its subsistence? Here is just the point of the whole matter, and the mischievous fallacy of the "Record's" system. **The law in its essence is the principle of creature-righteousness, the perfect rule for responsible children of Adam.** The "Record" says, "Then it must be made good, that the children of Adam may be justified." Totally, ruinously false! The first Adam, and man, as such, are not justified; the Second is brought in, and we are accepted in Him. The first is condemned, killed, by the moral sentence of the law, and savingly in the death of Christ, that we may live. **But we are justified, not by making out a legal righteousness for the first, which ought to have been there, and which would have been his righteousness; but by redeeming us wholly out of that condition which is condemned and set aside, and bringing us livingly into the Second.** The first as a condition before God is never set up again. **Are we to be both first and second in our standing before God?**

The law, in itself, is eternally creature-righteousness; but the creature could not make it out. The law was given to man when he was a sinner. How could he have legal righteousness when the flesh was not subject to law? It served to prove that, **when the creature is a sinner, he could not.** Is then Christ come to set up its legal righteousness and re-establish it? He is not. He is come to write final condemnation on it, but by His own death, and to redeem us out of it, and bring us nigh in Himself to God. The law became a test of a sinful creature – was applied to man when he was a sinner, as a condition of obtaining life [not eternal life]. He was saved, not by setting him up on this ground, but by taking him out of it by redemption, and giving him acceptance in another and in another condition, the old one being put under death and condemnation, only that Christ took that on Himself. **He took the condemnation of the first Adam for us, but did not set up the righteousness of the first.** Thus, after the promise of the true Saviour, it came in by the by, till the seed came to whom the promise was made; "and then," as Luther says, "it had done its work and ceased" (Aufhorete). **"We are no longer under the schoolmaster." It is by the death of the old man (not by justifying it) the Christian is delivered from this charge. "He that is dead is freed [justified] from sin."** So Paul in the Philippians gives up, not his sins, but his legal righteousness, viewed as such, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. The promise, then, cannot be annulled or added to. We have, therefore, the inheritance not by law; for if it is by law, it is not by promise: now God gave it to Abraham by promise. **You cannot connect law-keeping with promise – you cannot connect law-keeping with faith – you cannot connect law-keeping with justifying: Christ is the seed of promise, the object of faith, and our righteousness.** The apostle declares the two incompatible, but that the law could do one thing – kill. This it had done, and his guilty self for faith existed no more. Instead of that, he had Christ, in whom it was he had died.

**But more. The apostle speaks of Christ's coming under law. Surely now he will tell us of the glorious gospel, the essence of which is said to lie in His keeping it to**

justify us! Not a word. Quite the contrary: "He was made under the law that he might redeem them that were under the law." Did He redeem by law-keeping or by blood? Did He redeem by leaving them in responsibility to law, and justifying them in it? He redeemed out of it by blood; so that we are no more servants, but sons. Now, servants are those under law. It is no longer our condition at all. Again, supposing we are justified by law, Christ is become of no effect unto us. Ah! will one say that is by our keeping it? No; it is the principle. "Ye are fallen from grace." What are we to do then as to godliness? Walk in the Spirit. Is not that right? Surely our opponents must say, Yes. But if you are led of the Spirit, you are not under law. You will do that against which there is none [no law], and so fulfill it *yourself* in practice, because you are not under it. But will not the apostle glory in this righteousness which Christ has made good for him by keeping the law? No; only in the cross. In a word, on the point of justifying, the apostle sets Christ, grace, promise, faith, the Spirit, all in opposition to law-works, and declares that they are incompatible in their nature.

Indeed it is a strange system which first keeps the law perfectly in every respect surely, so that we are justified, perfectly righteous before God, and then dies for us. Yet such is the "Record's" system. We are not justified, surely, if Christ has still to die for us. Yet Christ first lived and then died. The whole system is false. It justifies the old man instead of utterly killing and condemning him, that we may live in the new; owning, not rectification of our old position, but one wholly new consequent on Christ's death. As the fruit of Christ's death, we are past the whole settlement of the question of sin with God – that, for faith, was on the cross. He was made sin – went through the utter hatred of compassionless man, all that Satan could bring upon Him in terror and suffering – went through death, drank the cup of wrath – is risen out of it; and we are in Him consequent on His having gone through it all and settled the question of sin, death, wrath, and Satan's power. We are in Him as entered into what is beyond and after it, because He is; and according to the value of all He has done in glorifying God in the work through which He entered into this new position.

But let us turn to the Romans, where this subject is more fully discussed in connection with resurrection. Our thesis is this: the law is holy, just, and good; but, its application being to a sinful creature, it becomes simply death and condemnation. Our justification is, not by Christ's vicariously keeping it because we are under it as men born of Adam, so that we should be justified in that position by legal works, but (while He glorified God as a living man) through an entire deliverance from the whole standing of flesh before God, which is wholly judged and condemned by law, but in His death, and our introduction into a new position in Christ risen, according to the value of His work. It is death under law, death by sin without law, in the first Adam, but death in Christ who died for us to the putting off the old man, and we in newness of life in a position which law cannot reach, in Christ risen from the dead, living and called to live according to this new life. Such, I say, is Paul's doctrine in the Romans: death for and to sin as to the old man, and a new place in Christ in resurrection. Let us examine the epistle.



The first passage I may quote as a general principle is, "Therein is the righteousness of God revealed." It is according to the principle of faith; **the law, we know, is not of faith.**

Next, a passage I have already quoted, **chapter 3**, but which is too important to pass over here. "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 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. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." . . . Here, then, is guilt by law. The Jew's mouth stopped, and thus all the world guilty; for the Gentiles were confessedly so. Now the conclusions: "Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight": **none in this way whoever did them – "for by the law is the knowledge of sin."** But now the righteousness of God without the law (*choris nomou*, wholly apart from law) is manifested.

I cannot conceive how anything can be plainer. **They tell me God's righteousness is by Christ's keeping the law. Paul tells me, that is, the Spirit of God tells me, that it is without the law, that the law has nothing to do with it.** I believe the word of God, the teaching of the Holy Ghost in the divine word, and not the Evangelicals. "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ" . . . "being justified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." **Is redemption by law, or by keeping law? We are justified freely through this redemption. By faith in His keeping the law? No; by faith in His blood, to declare God's righteousness.** The law excluded wholly even for those who had been under it; justification by redemption, Christ a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare God's righteousness. Thus God is just and the justifier.

Thus far we have only His death. But the apostle goes farther, not surely to anything inconsistent. Up to this he had met the sin of the old man by the blood of Christ. Now, **from chapter 4**, he takes up the new man in resurrection, which presupposes death. Abraham is justified by faith, so are we who believe on Him who raised up Christ. **What Christ? A Christ who kept the law for us? Not such a thought. A Christ, blessed be His most gracious name, who was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification.** He died for the ungodly. The apostle then compares Adam and Christ [in ch. 5], speaking of the law as come in between, but that sin and death were there without it, and that we must not confine ourselves to those who were under law by Moses, but, taking the Second Adam, go to the first also. That, as by one man's disobedience, a mass of others connected with him were

constituted sinners, so, by the obedience of One, the mass connected with Him shall be constituted righteous. That is, he ascends to the two great heads, the obedient and disobedient man. The law, he adds, came in, by the by, that the offence might abound. **Have we a thought that Christ therefore kept it for us? No; its object was not righteousness, but to make the offence abound.** There where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. **No hint of meeting the law, as a fixed rule, by obeying it.** There was disobedience and obedience. **The law came in by the by, to give a special character to sin; then grace, not legal righteousness, reigns.**

The apostle then turns to the common confession of Christianity in baptism [in ch. 6]. What have you come to? To death. You have been baptized to Christ's death. The initiation of a Christian has no hint in it of legal righteousness. **Christ's death is the point of contact with him – *nothing before* – then newness of life according to His resurrection.** But, then, is sin to have dominion over us because the prohibitory enactments of the law do not reach us? No; we are dead to it, and alive to God, according to Christ's resurrection. But law, what as to it? Why, sin will not have dominion over us, *because we are not under it* [not under law]. Under what, then? Under grace. Are they, then, so diametrically opposite? **Diametrically in their nature. Grace would be no more grace, nor works works.** Eternal life is *God's gift*, not earned by law-keeping. . . .

But this leads the apostle to consider definitely the question of our being under law or not [in ch. 7]; and he lays down this principle: Law has dominion over a man as long as he lives. **Now we are not alive in flesh, because Christ has died, and we are in Him risen after death.** He puts the case of two husbands: the law, and (**not Christ on earth keeping law, but) Christ risen.** You cannot have both, says the apostle; it is mere adultery. How, then, are we delivered from law (as from sin)? Is it by blaming the law as bad, or setting it aside as such in its own nature? No: God forbid. How then? By our dying; for it has only power over a man as long as a man lives. We are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that we might be *to another* – to Christ risen from the dead; that we might bring forth fruit to God – **no fruit under law, but from Christ risen, fruit to God.** Thus we are delivered from the law, having died in that in which we were held.

The Christian is dead to the law, does not exist as to it, because he died in Christ (but that was death to sin too); hence he is delivered from it. Resurrection puts me in a new place, where law, the first husband, never reaches at all. I belong exclusively to Christ, and to Christ risen (for if He takes up my case, He must die and end law and sin, as to Him and me together), not to Christ living on the earth. Hence the apostle says, "Yea, if I have known Christ after the flesh, yet henceforth I know him no more." And now, mark how distinct the apostle is as to what our position is as dead and risen; and, if risen, having to say to the new husband – Christ risen – not to law: "When we were in the flesh, the motions of sin, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." **"When we were in the flesh" – what a word is that! Then we are not in the flesh at all? Surely not. When we were, the law was that by which the motions of sin got power, and brought in**

death and condemnation. But, as a child of Adam in flesh, I am not alive at all (compare Col. 2:20), because Christ has died; and not being alive, the law has no more to do with me; for it has power over a man only so long as he lives. But I am alive, and it is in Christ risen. I am not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. It is a new creation, not a justifying of the old, which had been put under the schoolmaster, but never obeyed. . . .

Are we not saved then, made righteous, by one man's obedience? Surely, as contrasted with Adam's disobedience, but not by the works of law of one man. He was obedient, absolutely, unlimitedly – did not accomplish so much simply, but was intrinsically and absolutely obedient at all cost – characterized as the Obedient Man, learned it, what it was to the uttermost, by the things which He suffered. His obedience was different in nature, and went very far indeed beyond law-fulfilling. "I come to do thy will, O God," be it what it might, and that was to die – give up His life for those the Father had given Him – suffer all things, even to the cup of wrath, to glorify God. Was that law? **It is monstrous, and, I must say, wickedness or blindness, to limit Christ's obedience to the keeping of the law.** Moreover, in Romans 5 it is in contrast with law. Christ, in offering Himself according to the roll of the book, offered Himself to do whatever God's will might be; the great example the apostle gives is, the offering of Himself once for all. Is that law? **It is outrageous, and a deadly wrong to Christ, to make this infinite obedience of devoted love a mere obedience to a prescribed rule of human righteousness, however perfect.**

I know not that I can add more. The scripture teaches us, not that human righteousness according to the perfect rule of the law is made good, so that we should be justified in our old position; but that flesh is condemned, death passed on it, the old man put off, the new put on, and this through the death of Christ and His resurrection. So that we say, "When we were in the flesh." **Never once does it speak of a vicarious fulfilling of the law, but of our deliverance from the state in which it applied to us, and our entrance into a new one.** "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, *and for sin*, condemned sin in the flesh."

Did not God then magnify the law and make it honourable in Christ? Undoubtedly. I have already said it was the perfect law of the creature abstractedly; and Christ came under the law, and God glorified His law thus; and it was most right and just. But we were dead, away from God, without any law at all. It is never said, He kept it for us. **He kept it to glorify God, to honour the law of God. But in this character He was alone. Death alone connected Christ really with those who were dead in sin.** As to pious life, in the new nature, He is surely, as walking on earth, the companion of those who fear God. But the sinner, looked at as a sinner, as a child of Adam (and we look at him as a sinner when we speak of justification), has no connection with Christ. They were without Christ, without God in the world; and a Jew was really the same by nature. "Except the corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone." **Christ was absolutely alone in His living state; He was perfect in it, overcame in it, knew no sin in it.** But man being dead in sin, Christ never came into his condition

properly known till He came into death. Really, truly man, sympathizing with him in everything, He never, as to His real state as to righteousness before God, came into man's position, till the cup of death was there; for death was the condition of man. The keeping of the law was over really with man. As a sinner with a will he was not subject to it at all, nor could be. Christ must be perfect in the place He took in contrast with man. He was the responsible man (through grace) and never failed; and, as law was, never failed under law (and that in the midst of every difficulty, not in Paradise) as Adam had failed; but He became the head of blessing after death, and when He had taken a new position in righteousness, as Adam when he had taken a new position in sin.

**But is not there the keeping of the law by us? Yes, in principle, in living in the Spirit, and by not being under it; but it is not vicariously, but really.** But then it will be said, Yes, but you do not even so keep it perfectly, and how do you make out righteousness then? My friend, I am a Christian. I do not make out righteousness by law. If it were so to be made out, Christ were dead in vain. I am righteous – the righteousness of God in Him – before I begin to do what is in the law practically. I never came under it. **A vicarious keeping of the law is unknown to scripture. If it be not, let those who maintain it cite a single passage – shew it from scripture.**

A poor soul says, Christ kept the law, and everything He did was precious for us. I delight in his piety, even if ignorance be mixed with it. . . . For we have seen God manifested, a perfect man before God, Satan overcome, the law kept and magnified, tender sympathies, perfect patience, and love. We have seen what God delighted in – the Bread come from heaven – the only path through a world of sin – One delighting in the sons of men – far more than I could now here speak of, more than I can think of, **but not redemption till His death. And redemption is the first need of a sinner dead in trespasses and sins. And this lies at the root of the question, Is man dead in trespasses and sin? How is he brought out of it?** If scripture be taken as authority, I am not afraid of the answer of any one taught of God on this subject.

. . . I will add one or two remarks as to righteousness, and the use of this word in scripture. First, it is quite certain that in Romans 3 righteousness means God's righteousness, as God in contrast with Christ's work, though displayed through and in virtue of it. It is the righteousness of God without law. This is its nature and quality. It is not man's, it is God's apart from law. Such is the constant use of the genitive. Next, it is the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ. That is the way it is brought to bear on men in their favour. Then His passing over sins in times past seemed to deny this righteousness; but the death of Christ accounted for that. And so God's righteousness was, at *this time*, that He might be righteous and Justifier of them who believe in Jesus. Now the person whose righteousness is spoken of is the righteous justifier, that is, God. The way is faith in Jesus. I say, then, in this capital passage it is a character or attribute of God, which is made good by the blood of Christ, when it seemed to be impossible, in respect of sinners, so as to favour them.

The righteousness of God is His consistency with Himself. Hence it shews itself in mercy when it is promised, in judgment on the wicked, in rewarding integrity, not as merit, but as that which pleased Him, and rightly – everything in which God makes good what He has revealed Himself to be. For in a certain sense He owes Himself to that, because withal it is Himself; and on this faith ought to reckon. Hence all the interventions of God in favour of His people, according to His revelation of Himself, or His promises, are called righteousness. Of course, His revelation of Himself is the truth of what He is: but this revelation is our only just way of knowing it. But it [*righteousness*, as opposed to being *righteous*] is a relative term. A person cannot be intrinsically righteous (i.e., without reference to someone else). Man's righteousness, if he had any, would be his consistency with the revelation of God and its requirements. "The righteous Lord loveth righteousness, his countenance doth behold the upright." But man was not this. Hence, when the law had been given, mercy is always put before righteousness, because the saints felt, as the Spirit taught, that he had forfeited everything. It is from this sense of righteousness (God's consistency with Himself as revealed, His acting on the revelation of Himself) that it has been said to mean goodness, mercy, and the like. The display of it was such; the thing spoken of as displaying it was such. Still, it was God's consistency with Himself, and this is constantly appealed to in the Psalms, and declared to be "near" and to be "for ever" in Isaiah 51, and connected with Israel's salvation when mercy and truth will be met together, righteousness and peace will kiss each other, and truth flourish out of the earth, and righteousness look down from heaven. So David speaks of bringing in everlasting righteousness amongst men when God manifests His glory, His perfect consistency with Himself, and blesses His people. The heavens will declare His righteousness, for God will be judge Himself; and the fruit of righteousness will be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever. Thus righteousness will reign in the millennium, and peace and bliss be maintained. In the new heavens and the new earth the righteousness will dwell, and nothing can be changed; there is nothing to change.

On the other hand, we read, "Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness." Here the godly man looks for enlargement out of distress, according to God's consistency with His revelation of Himself – the thing he looks to as the title to be helped, he walking in fear and faith. And the sacrifices of righteousness have the same force, sacrifices offered according to the true character in which God had revealed Himself (of course, in Israel, according to the law, but with the piety, purpose, and truth of heart which became this approach to God, and the consciousness of what He was). So, in the triumphant deliverance of His people at the end, it is righteousness sustains Him. He saw there was no man, but He was Himself, and He put it on as a breastplate, and made good His character against evil. And it is this which makes the perplexity of the saint in the Psalms who yet owns his sin. How was God's character made good when His people were oppressed, and not a promise fulfilled? Yet there is the confession of sin, and confidence in Him through grace. Integrity wrought in by grace calls on righteousness and expects an answer according to what God has said, and yet confesses sin. This last was uprightness.

But how could all this be made good, and God be really consistent with Himself, shew mercy, judge sin, bless faith and hope in Him according to promise? That was based on redemption, on Christ's work as made sin; and though there may be hope, the soul is never clear till this is known. Here God can be, yea, is, here alone is (now sin is come in), consistent with Himself in blessing. Thus He could righteously bless according to promise. "Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers" – and that effectually, only through death and resurrection.

But there was much more than this in Christ's death. God, independently of promise, was perfectly glorified in all He is – righteousness, love, truth, majesty – in all He is. Hence a ground of righteousness is laid for every sinner. God is consistent with – glorifies – Himself in blessing. I do not mean that this was all; for it was not – there was positive substitution for the redeemed; but I confine myself now to the one point. Thus the Gentiles, who had no promise, could glorify God for His mercy. Whoever believed had a part in it. God was righteous in blessing him – just in forgiving. Hence grace reigned, but reigned through righteousness, Jew and Gentile, when the matter was fully looked into, being all alike. God did and will make good His promises, but by nature all were children of wrath. There was no difference. It was, through Christ, God's righteousness unto all; and it is upon all them that believe.

This is Paul's great theme in the Romans: to the end of chapter 3, the death which made it good; from chapter 4 to the end of chapter 8, the position into which we are righteously brought in resurrection, the sure place which this glorifying of God has obtained for us, and which He righteously puts into, and must, so to speak, in Christ; and then (chaps. 9-11) the apostle meets the objection of special promise. He had only discussed law as yet with the Jew; and the Jew could say, Yes; but what about our special promises? And his answer is, God is sovereign; or, else, if you rest it on fleshly descent, you must let in Ishmael and Esau; and God will use this sovereignty to let in Gentiles. You have forfeited all by seeking it by law, and stumbling at the stumbling-stone. And yet (so profound is God's wisdom) He has not cast you off. He will make good His promises. He could not but do it; only now you must come in under mercy like a Gentile. The prophets, too, had foretold it all.

Thus, though God did make good His character revealed to the Jew, and His promise, yet that was not a partial thing. The cross must reveal deeper truth, and, displayed in all its perfectness and grace, what God was in Himself; and thus dealt with the sinner as such, with what man was in himself, that is, nothing but sin, and brought him, through faith in Jesus, according to the value of that sacrifice, into the presence of God Himself in heaven. The Jews, as a nation, must wait till the great High Priest comes out to know the sacrifice is accepted. Then they will be blessed. To them that believe the Holy Ghost is come out, while Christ is within; and we know that He is, and are at peace, and that according to righteousness. Grace reigns through righteousness.

Of course, in an article or a tract, I can only sketch the scriptural use of this word. The reader has only to take a concordance and see how far it is just. I have no doubt the New Testament, as would naturally be the case, alludes to several of these passages. I rather think Psalm 50 was in the apostle's mind in Romans 3, or that which the Spirit had produced by it in his mind. Thus, too, the remarkable passages in Jeremiah 23 and 33, "the Lord our righteousness" — the first said of Christ, the second of Jerusalem. **As Christ is righteousness to us, and we are the righteousness of God in Him, we are accepted, according to God's own character, righteously, in Him. His infinite value, including therein His work, is our title before God. . . .**

The reader, taught of God, will see that resurrection is the place where justification and life meet. "He hath quickened you together with Christ, having forgiven you all trespasses." Resurrection is the power of a new life which I have in Christ. Having Him as my life, I am risen with Him. But He had died, and I am forgiven all trespasses through a work done before I partake of the life. **He is raised for my justification, and I am in the presence of God according to the acceptance which belongs to the position in which He stands, after the putting away of sin and all He has done to the glory of God in doing it. Resurrection is both the witness of the righteous acceptance of Christ's work, and the entrance into the position which is the just result of it.** "He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father." It is life from the dead according to the power of God. He was raised for our justification; but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. I have a living place in righteousness before God. **Now, if we consider the value of that which brings us into it, it is infinite. The glory of the Father was all engaged in raising Christ. He had glorified God perfectly — not merely borne our sins and been a sacrifice for sin. That was the means of our righteous forgiveness; but there was more. He glorified God in doing it in the place of, and as to, sin, but in everything in which God's nature and character consisted.** "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him. God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him." This is in the place of Son (John 17), and by that which gives us a title — His finishing the work. Now this was more than forgiveness, it was positive. It was not (though about sin) sin-ward, but God-ward. How could God be righteous, and shew love too? How make good His word of judgment unto death, and save? How vindicate His majesty, yet bless sinners? Christ offers Himself. There is God's perfect love infinitely glorified; there is His righteousness against sin, as nought else could shew it; there His truth, that the wages of sin is death, there His majesty vindicated. His Son is given up to death because of it; His holiness made good in repudiating sin, when His Son was made sin. Surely it was the glory of the Son of man; but God was glorified in it; and man is entered in righteousness into the glory of God. This, surely, is more than forgiveness, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. We expect to be like Christ in His Father's house, perfectly conformed to Him — to bear the image of the heavenly, as we have borne the image of the earthy.

**But, even now, we have more than forgiveness — we have Christ's own position, not in body, of course, but much more really and importantly, summed up in one word: "As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; as is the heavenly, such**

are they also that are heavenly." The choicest blessing to the heart is, that we are not only blessed through, but with, Christ. As to peace — "My peace I give unto you" — "that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves" — "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me." "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them." "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am . . . that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." And this partaking livingly in His own portion is applied to assurance in respect of future judgment. "Herein is love made perfect with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world." Wondrous privilege! and all grace, yet in righteousness. And all confirms this. Is Christ hid in God? Our life is hid with Him in God. Does He appear? We shall appear with Him in glory. Does He live? We shall live also.

Now this is more than forgiveness. He is gone to His Father and our Father, to His God and our God: and does He sit because all is finished, and "that by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified"? **They sit, too, in heavenly places in Him. Our reproach bearing is His reproach. We suffer with Him and reign with Him. Such is the scriptural presentation, and much more than this, of our place. Is all this by keeping law, or by grace? Is it by the law, or by His offering, He hath perfected us for ever?**

I close. My answer to the "Record" is this: Its declaration, that the theory that pardon and justification are distinct things, and that a man may be pardoned but not justified is the universal doctrine of the Church of God, is ignorance of history. The contrary is stated by the Homilies and Calvin, and the thought is formally condemned by the Lutheran symbolical books as false doctrine. It is not the doctrine taught at the Reformation, but the contrary. The "Record" moves here in the narrow circle of its own associates. Next, I do not accept, more than the "Record" does, that justification is limited by that. A man *is* justified by blood — that is, by the blood of Christ. Scripture, as Calvin insists, is express upon it. **But when the "Record" would correct the absolute limitation of justification to pardon, it goes *back* instead of *forward*, and makes us justified before we are pardoned — justified, before Christ dies for us, by Christ's law-keeping before the cross. Here it is all wrong again. Scripture repudiates righteousness by law for man altogether, and declares, if it be on this ground, Christ is dead in vain, and that we are fallen from grace. The "Record" does not see the extent to which we are dead and condemned, and thus puts us under law and leaves us to make out our justification by a completing unfailing law-keeping by Christ's perfect law-keeping; so that it is a work which goes on, the application of this righteousness being progressive and proportioned to my failures. It denies the value of law, which counts the breaker of one commandment guilty of all, and the existence of one lust sufficient to damn. It is an allowance of failure in keeping the law when put under it; for a perfect obedience, not atonement, is provided beforehand. And the apostle's answer to this they have not got. He replies, Yes; but you are dead and risen again. How can you live in flesh when you are dead? But no such argument applies to law. Historically, the "Record" is totally wrong. **When it goes beyond the defect it condemns, it goes back to law, instead of forward in the power of****



**resurrection into Christ.** Let those who search the scriptures (and I beseech Christians to do it, and not satisfy themselves with my rapid and imperfect sketch of the truth for a periodical) say **whether law or resurrection is the ground on which the apostle – on which the Spirit of God – sets us in the word for justification before God, for life and acceptance in Christ. . . .**

**Pardon and justification are not the same thing.** Pardon is the favour and kindness of a person wronged passing over faults against himself, an act of prerogative goodness; so that kindness flows forth unimpeded by the wrong – though in this case it be by the blood of Christ. Justification is the holding not chargeable with guilt. The latter refers to righteous judgment; the former, to kindness. Where one is a sinner against God, they approach one another, and run together in fact, but are not the same, nor in the effect the same in the heart. Justified, I do not fear judgment; pardoned, my heart returns in comfort to Him who has pardoned me; but by His blood we have both. It is another aspect, not another act. So, when we connect our risen position with justifying, it is not logically exact. The justifying is always holding discharged from accusation. **The way in which we so stand is not simply holding us to be clear, but by the resurrection of Christ putting us into a new position; for if He be risen, and God has acknowledged therein the satisfaction made in Christ's death, He has therein discharged or justified us. But that which justified us implies, therefore, more than pardon, an introduction into God's presence as Christ stands there. If Christ be not raised, we are yet in our sins; but if He be, we are cleared by a work which brings us into the glory of God in perfect acceptance. This is not properly justification, but it is the justification we have got, seeing how we have obtained the justification; for we are justified by being the righteousness of God in Him, and are warranted practically in taking what Christ is as the measure of our justification, because it is that which will be recognized in the day of judgment. "Herein is love made perfect with us, that we should have boldness in the day of judgment; because, as he is, so are we in this world." The day of judgment pronounces on us. We are as the Judge – clearly justified therefore. But the Lamb is the Judge too: we appear before Him who bore our sins; so that their being put away, covered (in virtue of which work all is pardoned), is our justification too; for "we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."**

The merits of Christ, though a most justifiable and true expression, has misled, as it is in another order of ideas from justifying. It is not by meriting that we are held free from charge. . . . But meriting has respect to reward; and I have no doubt this has led to connect our justifying with His keeping the law. Now, no merits could have cleared us before God without death: that was the wages of sin, and "without shedding of blood there is no remission." And this leads us to see the wisdom of God, because, being thus, there is also a putting away, an end of the old evil, and the introduction in a new life into a wholly new order of things, pure and excellent. **Finally, the heart wants pardon, the conscience justifying. . . .**

There is morally speaking [to use the language of another] an infusion of the divine nature, though I do not admire the term! for it is a new life; but certainly

righteousness is not by it, though it cannot be without it. Here I think [Mr. H] is on slippery ground, because he says we cannot be accounted what we are not. **It is something like denying imputed righteousness altogether. Now that we must have this divine nature to be accounted righteous is true; yet we are not accounted righteous for this, but for Christ's sake in Himself.** I am imperfect in result; but before God, "as he is, so am I in this world." Without being aware of it, [Mr. H] has slipped into [Mr. O's] doctrine, which I do not hold at all, but reject. Does he mean to say that a man is reckoned just when he is so? His words are, "Reckons them to be what they really are." If so, it is only in the divine nature of which we are made partakers [which is false]. . . Next . . . [Dr. C's] doctrine is the common one of Christ's law-keeping being imputed to us – His active obedience as our righteousness. Only he holds that, Christ being God, an infinite value is imparted to His human obedience. . . **I hold no communication of essential righteousness. I hold Christ Himself in His own perfection to be, as now risen, our righteousness before God;** but I believe that righteousness is the true relative character of God as to good and evil, and that He accepts Christ in virtue of that character, and us in Him; but it would not be righteousness if Christ had not deserved it. To speak exactly, I do not think righteousness an essential quality at all [*righteousness*, as opposed to being *righteous*]. If I have said so, it was inexact. God is light and God is love: that is essential. But He is not *righteousness* nor *holiness*, because these are relative terms; **He is righteous and holy.** But righteousness is manifested and demonstrated to the world, because Christ is gone to the Father. He had glorified God, and God has glorified Him with Himself, and (leaving aside just final condemnation for the moment) therein righteousness is proved. It is righteousness in God, but would have not been so, had not Christ merited it. . . .

But the absence of the article [before *righteousness* of God] in the New Testament I hold to be purposed, and the true mind of the Holy Ghost. Thus, where it is said (perhaps alluding to Jer. 33:16), "**we are made the righteousness of God,**" there is **no article.** The article here would say a great deal too much: either that we were it, intrinsically and abstractedly so; or that we were the whole thing, and that there was no other righteousness of God but ourselves. **As it stands, it does not say this, but merely that we have this standing and character in Christ. Our place, title, privilege, is not merely mercy, which it is as to us in an infinite degree; but our salvation, looked at in Christ, is the display of God's righteousness. He is consistent with Himself in it. We are the expression and display of this righteousness, not in contradiction with it; and this is a glorious truth wrought out by Christ's work.** "The heavens shall declare his righteousness; for God is Judge himself." . . .

As to **2 Peter 1** I still think also it is nothing to the purpose. It is not imputed righteousness here, nor anything to do with it, nor a righteousness presented to God (Christ's righteousness, as men speak in this sense), but a righteousness exercised by God in virtue of which they got Christianity, or the precious faith. It was not a righteousness accepted, but a righteousness of God, which gave according to promise, and revealed grace. And so the English translators understood it, and, I have no doubt

at all, rightly. I do not know that I have any subject of controversy with [Mr. H], and I have no wish to have any. I think he runs a little into inherent righteousness, or is in danger of it – i.e., Wesleyanism; and I think he has not yet at all understood our position in Christ risen, as something else than His dying for us, though the fruit of it. I trust he will believe that I say this with no assumption, nor as a reproach, and that he will weigh it in the spirit I say it in; for I am quite ready to believe him more faithful to the light he has than I am. But still I think there is truth in scripture on this subject which he has not received.