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On the Motto of a Seal **BELIEVE! — LOVE! — OBEY!**

Cornelius Bayley

This motto is indeed a very short one, but surely it contains much in little. It is replete with every instruction necessary to teach us how to be happy both in time and in eternity. Let us then examine a little into each of its particulars, beginning with the first:



BELIEVE!

When the jailer asked of the apostle, what he should do to be saved, he was answered — *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.* This answer is what remains to be given to everyone who shall make the same enquiry, to the end of the world. This being the case, let us next enquire what it is to believe in Jesus Christ. Our Savior tells us in John 3:16 that *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.* Now the whole tenor of the Old Testament teaches us that Christ should come to be a sacrifice and a propitiation for the sins of the world, to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness.

All which he has done, according to the Scriptures: being raised from the dead, and ascended on high: for when he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down on the righthand of the Majesty on high, to give eternal life to all that should come unto him. In consequence of this, remission of sins is preached in his Name to all who believe. *To him give all the prophets witness, that through his Name, whosoever shall believe in him shall receive remission of sins,* Acts 10:23. Now, as Christ's blood was shed for the remission of sins, so faith in his blood received the remission of sins, and *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

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Every true believer experiences the same thing in his own soul, whereof the Holy Ghost is the witness. *He that believeth hath the witness in himself.*

And we are all called; we are all invited; we are all commanded, to *believe in him whom God hath sent.* May we all accept this great salvation, and by faith receive the Atonement! Now let us proceed to the next particular,

LOVE!

This can never be separated from true faith. For faith, when it is real, always works by love. How is it possible that we can really believe that God hath loved us and forgiven us our sins without loving him again? It can never be. For as St. John says, *We love him, because he first loved us.* And he that says he

believes in Jesus Christ, and does not find love to God, may be assured he deceives himself with only a notion of faith. A picture of fire is without heat, but a real fire cannot be without

it. A notional faith is without love, but a real one is never without it. *But to you, who are indeed Believers, Christ is precious,* yea more precious than all things. Love then; and walk in love; increase in love; and let love be your element, your business, your every thing; but remember! the flower withers when cut off from the stalk — so your love will wither, unless you stand fast, and grow in the Faith. Unless you abide in the Faith, the fire of love will go out.

If this is the case with any, let them believe again, and love will come again, for they always come and go together. Do we profess to believe? and do we profess to love? Say, my friends, is our faith unfeigned? And is our love without dissimulation? If so, let us proceed to the third particular; which is,

OBEY!

As a heart-felt faith in Jesus Christ produces a heart-felt love to him, so obedience to his commands will follow as the opening flowers, and ripening

fruits follow the genial heat of the sun. Christ saith, *If ye love me, keep my commandments.* What are his commandments? Love to God, and love to one another: the first shows itself in doing his will, both actively and passively. Doing what we know is our duty, and patiently suffering, yea and resigning ourselves to his disposal in all things. The second shows itself in doing to others as we would be done by. In all loving and kind offices, in forgiving injuries, in all things being just and true, also in patience, long-suffering, and forbearance, and all other duties, mentioned in the law. Also loving our enemies, returning good for evil, and praying for our persecutors. Obedience to God, is showing the reality of our love to him, in following the example of Christ in all his imitable perfections. And this obedience is the result of having his Spirit dwelling in us, inclining us to walk in all the ways of holiness: summed up in loving God with all our hearts, and our neighbor as ourselves: in which are contained all the precepts of the moral law — which law is written in the hearts of all true believers. See 1 Corinthians 13.

Thus we see in these three particulars—Believe—Love—Obey are contained the very essentials of all true Religion. What then remains, my Friends, but that we give all diligence to be found, *believing, loving, obedient followers* of the Lamb of God? If so, let us not quarrel about other matters. Let us keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace and bear with one another's different opinions and forms, that do not clash with true Faith, true Love and true Obedience. Let us not wrangle about circumcision, or uncircumcision, but let us contend for the Faith, which worketh by love. Let the strong bear with the weak, and let the weak not be offended with the strong. May the motto of the seal be engraved in all our hearts, and may our sober, godly and righteous lives and conversations demonstrate to all the world that it is really so! In a word: may we all believe; may we all love; and may we all obey! So prays, from his very heart, one who is a lover of all the true Church of Christ; one who is for Christ's sake a truly affectionate servant in the ministry of the Gospel of Peace and Salvation.

The Arminian Magazine 4 (August 1781) 439-442. John Wesley, editor.

Forgive Us Our Trespases

Joseph D. McPherson

The question has many times been asked: “Does having attained Christian perfection or entire sanctification eliminate the necessity of daily asking forgiveness for trespases committed? A scripturally based answer is found within the written views of five early Methodist leaders and an early Church father. In addition to John Wesley’s comments, we share those of Adam Clarke, Richard Watson, John Fletcher, W. B. Pope, and Chrysostom.

In conference with his preachers, Mr. Wesley explained to all present that

Everyone may mistake as long as he lives. A mistake in opinion may occasion a mistake in practice. Every such mistake is a transgression of the

perfect law. Therefore, every such mistake, were it not for the blood of atonement, would expose to eternal damnation.

It follows, that the

most perfect have continual need of the merits of Christ, even for their actual transgressions, and may say for themselves, as well as their brethren, ‘Forgive us our trespases.’

A person filled with the love of God is still liable to these involuntary transgressions.

The founder of Methodism assures us that

The best of men still need Christ in His priestly office to atone for their omissions, their short-comings (as some not improperly speak), their mistakes in judgment and practice, and their defects of various kinds. For these are all deviations from the perfect law, and consequently need an atonement. Yet that they are not properly sins, we apprehend may appear from the words of St. Paul, “He that loveth, hath fulfilled the law; for love is the fulfilling of the law,” Rom.13:10.

He makes plain the fact that “mistakes, and whatever infirmities necessarily flow from the corrupted state of the body, are no way contrary to love; nor therefore, in the Scripture sense, sin.”

To explain himself a little further on this head he writes: “Not only sin, properly so called (that is, a voluntary transgression of a known law), but sin, improperly so called (that is, an involuntary transgres-

sion of a Divine law, known or unknown), needs the atoning blood.” He goes on to say that he believed “there is not such perfection in this life as excludes these involuntary transgressions which I apprehend to be naturally consequent on the ignorance and mistakes inseparable from mortality.” For this reason Mr. Wesley claims to never use the phrase, “sinless perfection...lest I should seem to contradict myself.” He assures his readers that he believed “a person filled with the love of God is still liable to these involuntary transgressions. “Such transgressions,” says he, “you may call sin [in the proper sense], if you please: I do not, for the reasons above mentioned.”

Mr. Wesley leaves a warning, however, to those who tend to trivialize their view of involuntary transgressions. They are never to think of themselves to be “in such a state... that they stand before infinite justice without a Mediator.” To assume such “must argue,” says he, “either the deepest ignorance, or the highest arrogance and presumption.” Even among those who are made perfect in love “there is not a full conformity to the perfect law, so the most perfect do, on this very account, need the blood of atonement, and may properly for themselves, as well as for their brethren, say, ‘Forgive us our trespases.’” To those who, like some Calvinists, call all involuntary transgressions sins, he gives warning to “beware how they confound these defects with sins, properly so called.”

In his comments on what is called the “Lord’s Prayer,” Adam Clarke writes: “What satisfaction must it be to learn from God himself, with what words, and in what manner, he would have us pray to him, so as not to pray in vain!” While some have supposed that praying the so-called “Lord’s Prayer” should be more appropriately reserved for worship in corporate assemblies, Clarke is convinced that our Lord meant it to be a pattern for private petition as well and asks, “Should we not begin our addresses to God with this prayer? and then after that manner continue our requests to a reasonable length? But whether used in the beginning, middle, or end [of our personal prayer time] let it never be forgotten.”

Clarke’s treatment of the initial question is different than that of Wesley’s, but is nevertheless applicable. He assures us that

When a man has any doubts whether he has grieved God's Spirit, and his mind feels troubled, it is much better for him to go immediately to God, and ask forgiveness, than to spend any time in finding excuses for his conduct, or laboring to divest it of its seeming obliquity. Restraining or suppressing prayer, in order to find excuses or palliation for infirmities, indiscretions, or improprieties of any kind, which appear to trench on the sacred limits of morality and godliness, may be

to a man the worst of evils: humiliation and prayer for mercy and pardon can never be out of its place to any souls of man, who, surrounded with evils, is ever liable to offend.

This prayer for forgiveness belongs to believers. For the uninitiated could not call God Father.

Richard Watson, who wrote the first systematic theology for early Methodism was aware of those who "alleged, that a person delivered from all inward and outward sin has no longer need to use the petition of the Lord's prayer, — 'and forgive us our trespasses;' because he has no longer need for pardon." Watson quickly corrects such misguided logic by assuring the reader that "this petition is still relevant to the case of the entirely sanctified and the evangelically perfect, since neither the perfection of the first man nor that of angels is in question." He reminds us that although the entirely sanctified is made perfect in love, he or she is still "rendered naturally weak and imperfect [in body and soul by the Fall], and so liable to mistake and infirmity, as well as to defect in the degree of that absolute obedience and service which the law of God, never bent or lowered to human weakness, demands from all."

Watson further shows that "we are not the ultimate judge of our case as to our 'trespasses,' or our exemption from them; and we are not therefore, to put ourselves into the place of God, 'who is greater than our hearts.'" He explains further by showing that "although St. Paul says, 'I know nothing by myself,' that is, I am conscious of no offense, he adds, 'yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord:' to whom, therefore, the appeal is every moment to be made through Christ the Mediator, and who, by the renewed testimony of his Spirit, assures every true believer of his acceptance in his sight."

"Though a perfect Christian," writes Mr. Fletcher, "does not trespass voluntarily, and break the law of love, yet he daily breaks the law of Adamic perfection through the imperfection of his bodily and mental powers: and he has frequently a deeper sense of these involuntary trespasses than many weak believers have of their voluntary breeches of the moral law."

Mr. Fletcher continues by asserting that "Although a perfect Christian has a witness that his sins are now forgiven, in the court of his conscience, yet he 'knows the terror of the Lord:' he hastens to meet the awful day of God: he waits for the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, in the character of a righteous Judge." For these stupendous reasons "he keeps an eye to the awful tribunal, before which he must soon 'be justified or condemned by his words:' he is conscious that his final justification is not yet come; and therefore he would think himself a monster of stupidity and pride, if, with an eye to his absolution in the great day, he scrupled saying to the end of life, 'Forgive us our trespasses.'"

It is interesting to note that far from supposing this prayer for forgiveness to be designed only for penitent, unregenerate sinners, an early Church father by the name of Chrysostom declared: "This prayer for forgiveness belongs to believers. For the uninitiated could not call God Father."

With similar understanding, W. B. Pope, who is often referred to as "the prince of theologians" among early Methodists, says that "The prayer which every member of the pilgrim [or true] church utters, 'Forgive us our trespasses'... is not efficacious for those whose faith without works is dead; but for those whose faith worketh by love."

Although we have not included all that these men wrote concerning the question addressed, we nevertheless conclude by this limited study that the foremost leaders of early Methodist teaching were undivided in their belief and conviction that the prayer, "Forgive us our trespasses" was meant by our Master to be consistently expressed by all true believers, including those having attained Christian perfection. Nor do we find their view of this subject to be different than that of the early Church fathers as illustrated by the comment of Chrysostom. Such is the continuity of teaching we often find between the early Church fathers and early Methodism.

The Declaration of Sentiments contains ten chapters which Arminius compiled in his defense. Last issue we looked at Section 1, “On Predestination.” In this issue we will continue to examine sections 2-4.

SECTION II – “THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD”

This section focuses on the providence or guardianship of God in regards to the world and its inhabitants. Defending himself against accusations of Pelagianism, he uses inclusive language to describe

Many persons resist the Holy Spirit and reject the grace that is offered.

the sovereignty and power of God. He wants no one to misunderstand his intentions or beliefs in this matter. For Arminius, God is supremely in charge.

Even though it is presented as one long paragraph, in essence this section is comprised of three sub-sections. The first dwells on the overall providence of God; the second states God’s role in acts of goodness and evil, and the third section is a refutation of allegations against him. Ultimately, his goal is to allow his audience greater insight into his beliefs on God’s divine intervention in life, thereby acquitting himself of Supralapsarian accusations.

Arminius begins this section with a blanket statement describing the providence of God:

I consider Divine Providence to be that solicitous, continued, and universally present inspection and oversight of God, according to which he exercises a general care over the whole world, but evinces a particular concern for all his [intelligent] creatures without any exception, with the design of preserving and governing them in their own essence, qualities, actions, and passions, in a manner that is at once worthy of himself and suitable to them, to the praise of his name and the salvation of Believers.

As one can see from this complicated sentence, Arminius’ beliefs on the providence of God are multidimensional. However, some key words and ideas stand out. First, “Providence” concerns the oversight of God. He is transcendent and omnipotent in His divine duties. Second, God is lovingly active in the

world according to His nature and despite humanity’s nature. Third, attesting to God’s ultimate dominion in life, “... nothing in the world happens fortuitously or by chance.” The governance of God includes the actions and free-will of every individual.

The next sub-section deals with the origin of good and evil. Arminius states, “God both wills and performs good acts but that He only freely permits those which are evil.” Thus, God is the author of good, but not of evil. Arminius wants his listeners not to misunderstand him on this aspect.

The third section points to allegations “falsely imputed” against him and denies their validity based on the statements in this chapter as well as other documents. Arminius concludes this section with his own allegation of serious misconduct on the part of his attackers.

SECTION III – “THE FREE-WILL OF MAN”

This section is the shortest in the *Declaration*, but it is not without some significance. In it, Arminius describes the reality of humanity’s exercise of free will on earth. In an attempt to dispel more rumors of Pelagianism, as with the previous section, Arminius uses appropriate language to convey the hegemony of God. Despite God’s dominion, though, humanity has been endowed with some abilities to choose autonomously; however, the human will only operates in conjunction with the grace of God.

In his primitive condition as he came out of the hands of his creator, man was endowed with such a portion of knowledge, holiness and power, as enabled him to understand, esteem, consider, will, and to perform the true good, according to the commandment delivered to him. Yet none of these acts could he do, except through the assistance of Divine Grace.

Thus, God creates the will of a human being, but it can only be used with God’s help. Arminius supports this notion when he remarks, “... man is not capable, of and by himself, either to think, to will, or to do that which is really good.” Humanity is still utterly dependent upon God despite possessing some volitional autonomy.

Another aspect of this section that needs attention is Arminius' belief in the "synergistic" relationship of God and humanity. Much to the annoyance of his Supralapsarian opponents, Arminius uses inflammatory phrases like, "man was endowed," "through the assistance," and "made a partaker." These statements suggest a joint endeavor that incorporates the actions of humanity with God's will—a definite high Calvinist faux pas considering their monergistic position.

Assuredly, most extreme Calvinists would consider this understanding unorthodox and contrary to proper doctrine. However, Arminius does not defend his position at all, which seems peculiar as he is often considered to be pro-Catholic in this understanding. This may be where Arminius departs from complete Calvinist adherence, however. Perhaps he does not elaborate fully fearing his explanations would only provide his enemies with more "ammunition" to use against him.

SECTION IV – "THE GRACE OF GOD"

This next section examines God's grace, its nature and effect on humanity, and its existence in an individual's life. It is comprised of three sub-sections. The first two are descriptive; the last is a brief defense of Arminius' unique perspective on grace.

The first sub-section details the nature and description of divine grace. The grace of God is crucial in the presentation of the *Declaration*. In many ways, it is the "glue" that holds Arminius' defense together against the attacks of the high Calvinists.

He breaks down grace to three points. First, grace is unwarranted, "gratuitous affection" from God to the

sinner, providing eternal life, justification, and adoption. Grace is also an "... infusion ... of all those gifts of the Holy Spirit which appertain to the regeneration and renewing of man." These gifts only come from God; without them, humanity can do no good act. Finally, grace is "... that perpetual assistance and continued aid of the Holy Spirit" that inspires humanity to act in good ways for the glory of God.

The next sub-section in this chapter focuses on the influence of grace on human behavior. It is the catalyst for all good and loving actions. If an individual is behaving in godly fashion, it is solely due to the presence of God's grace asserting its influence. With this in mind, Arminius asserts, "a man, though already regenerate, can neither conceive, will, nor do any good at all, nor resist any evil temptation, without this preventing and exciting, this following and co-operating grace." True, Arminius believes in the free-will of man to do beneficial deeds; however, this ability is only in existence through the grace of God alone. There is no other source for it—an understanding deflating Supralapsarian claims of Arminius being a Pelagian or Socinian.

The last sub-section deals with the matter of resisting the Holy Spirit. Whereas his Supralapsarian adversaries contend that no human being can resist the Spirit of God, Arminius points to scripture and states, "I believe, according to the scriptures, that many persons resist the Holy Spirit and reject the grace that is offered." He does not dispute what can be accomplished with the help of the grace of God; he only suggests that it is not beyond rejection. He points out that though the nature of grace is observable both in life and in the Bible, its mode is more mysterious. This matter will be dealt with more definitively in Holland at the Synod of Dort in 1618.

Imputed and Imparted Righteousness, Part 2

Vic Reasoner

In the previous issue I asserted that Wesleyan-Arminian theology affirms imputed righteousness, but denies the Calvinistic doctrine of imputation. In this issue I assert that

3. Wesleyan-Arminianism holds to sola fides, but warns against Solifidianism

Early Methodist theology did not equivocate on justification by faith alone. At Romans 3:28 Luther had added the word *sola* to his conclusion that we are

justified solely by faith and not by works. Calvin argued that the concept of faith alone is implied in Romans 3:21, 24, 28.

To say that we are saved by faith alone is to say we are saved by Christ alone. This is what Wesley said about his experience at Aldersgate, that he "did trust in Christ, in Christ alone, for salvation." Kenneth Collins declared that John Wesley became one of the greatest champions of *sola fide* on English soil.

But John Fletcher warned that the term *solifidianism* means more. Fletcher labeled *solafidianism* as “a softer word for *Antinomianism*.” According to Fletcher, *solafidians* assert

that true faith is inamissible [cannot be lost], that it can lie in a heart totally depraved, that a man’s faith can be good when his actions are bad, detestable, diabolical; in a word, that true Christians may go any length in sin, may plunge into adultery, murder, or incest, and even proceed to the open worship of devils, like Solomon, without losing their title to a throne of glory, and their justifying, sanctifying, saving faith.

Thus, the doctrine of imputed righteousness must be kept in balance with imparted righteousness. Faith is initially imputed for righteousness, but the right-

eousness of Christ is not imputed in lieu of any subsequent obedience.

The righteousness of Christ is not imputed in lieu of any subsequent obedience.

Twice in Romans Paul uses the phrase “obedience of faith” (1:5; 16:26). In Romans 10:16 Paul equates obedience with faith. Douglas Moo wrote, “Obedience always involves faith, and faith always involves obedience. They should not be equated, compartmentalized, or made into separate stages of Christian experience.” Daniel Steele taught that the obedience of faith for the sinner is repentance and for the believer it is to keep the commandments of Christ.

Yet in his rebuttal to this paper Michael Horton said, “I understand Paul’s phrase ‘the obedience of faith’ to refer to the act of faith in Christ, not the fruit of that faith (viz., good works). In other words, ‘the obedience of faith’ is distinguished from ‘the obedience of works,’ so it cannot be understood as a way of smuggling the fruit of faith into the definition of justifying faith itself.”

4. Wesleyan-Arminianism insists that imputed righteousness must be balanced with imparted righteousness

Although Wesleyan theology affirms salvation by faith alone, Wesley avoided the danger of lawlessness by declaring, “I believe God *implants* righteousness in every one to whom he has *imputed* it.” What God declares to be righteous, he proceeds to make righteous. Thus, Wesley maintained a connection between justification, regeneration, the indwell-

ing of the Holy Spirit, and initial sanctification. We may dissect these terms theologically, but in Christian experience they are concurrent. If regeneration comes first in the Calvinistic order of salvation, then why does imparted righteousness not come *before* imputed righteousness?

I am aware that Calvin taught, “Christ, therefore, justifies no man without also sanctifying him. These blessings are conjoined by a perpetual and inseparable tie.” In response to my paper Horton also declared,

The quote from Wesley, “I believe God *implants* righteousness in every one to whom he has *imputed* it,” could have come from any of the reformers and Puritans. No credible Lutheran theologian, much less Reformed, has ever allowed that justification could be separated from sanctification.

But this implanted righteousness must be reconciled with Calvin’s teaching that “As long as the faithful dwell in the flesh, they never arrive at the end of righteousness.” Calvin also wrote, “We shall not find a single saint who, clothed with a mortal body, ever attained to such perfection as to love the Lord with all his heart, and soul, and mind, and strength.” Thus the righteousness of the saints is positional and they remain sinners until their death.

Luther taught an alien righteousness. “Our faith depends solely on Christ. He alone is righteous, and I am not.” Luther taught that man was at the same time just and yet sinful (*simul justus et peccator*). Thus, there was not much emphasis on imparted or infused righteousness.

Regeneration and sanctification were not necessarily connected with justification under the old covenant. Wesley taught the Christian dispensation was higher than the Jewish standard. He reasoned that if we enter the kingdom of God by the new birth (as John 3:5 teaches), and if John the Baptist was not in the kingdom because it did not come until Pentecost, then neither John the Baptist, Abraham, David, nor any Jew was born again [“Christian Perfection,” 2.10-11]. Wesley declared, “The faith through which we are saved ... is not barely that which the apostles themselves had while Christ was yet upon the earth” [“Salvation by Faith,” 1.3]. Wesley concluded, “The Apostles themselves had not the proper Christian faith till after the Day of Pentecost” [*Works*, 8:291]. The death, burial, and resurrection

of Jesus Christ could not be proclaimed nor believed until they had become facts.

However, regeneration and sanctification *are* connected with justification under the new covenant. Under the old covenant we have imputed righteousness, but under the new covenant we have both imputed *and* imparted righteousness. This was the theology of John Fletcher who taught that pre-Pentecost believers were justified, but not regenerated.

Justification must be connected with a regeneration which is transformational.

In his chapter on “The Righteousness, Salvation, and Election of God and of His People,” Ben Witherington concluded that Paul believes once people are converted, God expects them to actually go on and live righteous lives. Paul does not talk about Christ being righteousness in the place of the believer or about the believer being clothed in the righteousness of Christ alone. Even farther off the mark is the notion that when God looks at believers, he sees only Christ and so neither holds believers accountable for their actions nor views sin as a threat to their sanctification and final salvation. Were it the case that when God looks at believers, he only sees Christ, that in turn would mean that God is prepared to be deceived or at least overlook Christian sin and not hold believers accountable for it. This is the direct opposite of what Paul says in Galatians 5 and 1 Corinthians 6. These ideas amount to a presentation to us of a God of legal fictions who in the end is less than totally righteous. This would contradict the teaching of Jesus that God was requiring a higher righteousness of Jesus’ followers than Moses required of his, indeed even higher than the very particular Pharisees. It may be asked, “Why would God expect less of the believer under grace and after the Spirit has been given than he expected and required under the Mosaic Law?”

The problem is not with the idea that justification is initially an “alien righteousness” or a righteousness which originates outside of mankind, the real problem arises when sanctification is also regarded as imputed. This is the danger of Phoebe Palmer’s altar theology.

In Romans *dikaios* is translated “just” four times and “righteous” three times in the KJV. Justification is imputed and righteousness is imparted. Joseph Sutcliffe concluded that if the active *and* passive righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, we do not

need the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit to make us righteous. Wesleyan theology insists that justification must be connected with a regeneration which is transformational.

Fletcher explained that we are made righteous, not by a speculative imputation of the works of Christ, but by being made partakers of the divine nature, begotten of God, and clothed with righteousness and true holiness. In Romans 13:14 Paul commands us to “clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.”

Paul used *dikaiousune* thirty-six times in Romans. While it is translated “righteousness,” the older English spelling was “rightwiseness.” It refers to the character or quality of being right or just in the sight of God. In Romans 5, five related words are used which all come from the root word *dike*, which means “justice.” The KJV translates them as “justified,” “justification,” “righteousness,” “righteous,” and “righteousness.” The righteous act of Jesus Christ provides justification. Through faith in him we were justified and made righteous. According to A. T. Robertson, when Paul used the word “righteousness” he meant both justification and sanctification. The Gospel reveals both “the righteousness that God has and that he bestows.”

W. E. Vine explained that “for” (*eis*) did not mean that faith was reckoned “instead of” righteousness, but “with a view to” righteousness. Thus, when Paul describes the Gospel as a righteousness from God (Rom 1:17), he is saying that the Gospel is the declaration that God’s method of salvation is to make us righteous. This righteousness is by faith and not by works, but the result is that “the righteous will live by faith.”

Joseph Sutcliffe observed at Romans 5:1 that “Justification is never alone; all the graces follow in clusters, with privileges of the highest order.” According to Romans 5:5, the love of God is poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit at the same time we are justified. The love of God was poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us [aorist passive participle] when we were justified [v 1, aorist passive participle]. Thus, justification and the gift of the Holy Spirit both occur at the same time, since *having been justified* and *having been given* both occur at the moment of saving faith. John Stott declared that “it is not possible to be justified by faith without at the same time being regenerated and indwelt by the Spirit.”

Wesley maintained that regeneration is concomitant with justification.

And at the same moment that we are justified, yea, in that very moment, *sanctification* begins. In that instant we are “born again,” “born from above,” “born of the Spirit.” There is a *real* as well as a *relative* change.

H. Orton Wiley declared, “Regeneration is concomitant in experience with justification and adoption.” Watson also declared that while regeneration was distinct from justification as an act, it always accompanies it in a point of time. In his sermon “Justification by Faith,” Wesley declared that justification is not “the being made actually just and righteous. This is *sanctification*; which is indeed in some degree the immediate fruit of justification, but nevertheless is a distinct gift of God.” Wesley declared that “at the same time a man is justified sanctification properly begins.”

Wesley explained that the term *sanctification* refers to those who are justified unless it is qualified by another word such as “wholly” or “entirely.” Thus, in Romans 6 justification and initial sanctification are bound together. Paul is still dealing with justification and its concomitant blessings since the chapter opens with the connecting participle *oun*.

Romans 6:7 literally says that the one having died has been *justified* from sin. Justification, through participation in Christ’s death, is the basis for freedom from sin. Verses 18 and 22 also teach that we are *freed* from sin. Thus, the justified are not to go on sinning (vv 1, 15). Joseph Benson explained that the sinner is freed from the guilt of the past and the power of present sin, as dead men from the commands of their former masters.

In Romans 6:11 Paul exhorts us to reckon (*logizomai*) ourselves dead to sin. In so doing, Paul uses the same word he utilized eleven times in Romans 4. However, in Romans 4 it is God who does the reckoning or imputing. In Romans 6:11 the

believer is to reckon or impute himself dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. This is a command for believers to be what they are. We are exhorted to cooperate with grace and realize our new life in Christ by stopping sin from reigning over us. Obviously, *logizomai* is used here to mean more than legal imputation. This is also the case with its usage in Rom 8:18. According to vv 18 and 22, the justified have also been set free from sin. The result is that because we have been justified, we are no longer slaves to sin (vv 6, 14). Romans 6:23 summarizes the chapter with a closing reference to the gift of God (v 23). This free gift is justification with all its concomitants.

Romans 8:1 deals with imputed righteousness as the nonimputation of sin. But in 8:1-4 the result of this justification is not merely forensic or legal, it is transformational. The justified believer no longer walks according to the sinful nature. Thus, imputed and imparted righteousness are connected. Justification is connected with sanctification.

Again in Romans 8:30 we find that justification stands for all the concomitants of grace which occur between the Gospel call and final glorification. It is inconsistent with scripture to teach that one can become born again without any change. The goal of predestination in Romans 8:29 is conformity to the image of Christ both now and more fully in the age to come. Two natures may exist in the life of the justified, but only one can control. Wesley taught that while the old nature remained, the new nature reigned. Those who are born again do not walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit (Rom 8:4).

Thus, we need to maintain the biblical balance between the initial imputation of righteousness based on faith in Christ and the impartation of righteousness through the gift of the Holy Spirit which enables us to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.

This is an edited version of a paper given at the Evangelical Theological Society in Atlanta on November 17, 2010.

REVIEWS

**F. Leroy Forlines, *Classical Arminianism*. Nashville: Randall House, 2011. 379 pages
ISBN: 9780892656073**

In 2001 Forlines wrote *The Quest for Truth*, which was a readable systematic theology written at a popular level. *Classical Arminianism* has omitted his discussion on such topics as revelation, inspiration, the nature and attributes of God, the Trinity, creation, and the Incarnation to focus on the Calvinistic-Arminian controversy.

A graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College, Jim Jones studied under Forlines while there from 1977-1981. “Brother Forlines taught at Free Will Baptist Bible College for 39 years.

Although officially retired, he still teaches an occasional course. I had him for Systematic Theology and Biblical Ethics and have the upmost respect for him as both a man and a theologian.”

Forlines articulates what is termed “Classical Arminianism” or “Reformed Arminianism.” Classical Arminians agree with Calvinism on the sinfulness of humanity and the way God accomplished redemption through Christ, but disagree with Calvinism on how redemption is applied.

This label also distinguishes them from Wesleyan-Arminianism. While the agenda of this magazine is to articulate and defend classic Wesleyan-Arminian theology, before we raise our hackles, let us identify our common ground.

- We agree that the final authority of theology is the inerrant Scriptures
- We agree that denying God's foreknowledge as a means of solving the problem of Calvinism only results in larger problems since the Scriptures clearly teach God's foreknowledge
- We agree on total depravity, meaning that the corruption of sin has extended to man's entire being and that, as a result, man can do nothing to merit saving favor with God.
- We agree that mankind is unable to seek God on its own. Thus, the real debate with Calvinism is not over "free will," but over the practical application of God's sovereignty.
- We agree that God's election to salvation is conditional with that condition being faith in the atonement of Christ.
- We agree on the universal atonement of Christ.
- We agree that the preliminary grace of God may be resisted.
- We agree that salvation may be forfeited.

Therefore, we in the Wesleyan-Arminian camp appreciate the contribution of Forlines in *Classical Arminianism* to the cause of truth. His four chapters on a biblical theology of election are very helpful.

However, we cannot avoid the areas of tension between classical and Wesleyan Arminianism.

- Classical Arminianists, such as Forlines, Picirilli, Pinson, and Ashby are committed to a defense of the position that the atonement is penal satisfaction. Jones comments, "They falsely equate the governmental view of the atonement with all Wesleyan theology and reject it as inadequate, as do I. However, the early Methodists (and many Wesleyans today) also held to a penal satisfaction view as Reasoner documents in his Romans commentary, pp. 141-154. Thus, a proper understanding of the nature of the atonement is actually more of a tension *within* Wesleyan-Arminianism rather than between the Wesleyan and the Classical positions."
- Forlines contends that election, as taught in Romans 9, is individual and not corporate. Historical Methodism has been more open to the interpretation that the election in Romans 9 was corporate. This question needs to be addressed with more clarity. However, the greater issue — that election is conditional — should unite us. There is no need to divide over the secondary issue of whether conditional election is individual or corporate.

- Classical Arminianism rejects the doctrine of entire sanctification. While Wesleyan-Arminianism advocates this doctrine, we have not always been clear or Scriptural in our proclamation of the doctrine. This magazine has consistently challenged those under the Wesleyan-Arminian banner to return to the teaching of early Methodism. If entire sanctification is reduced to the later teachings of Charles Finney or Phoebe Palmer, then many who affirm the historic Methodist understanding of Christian perfection would reject the distortion along with classical Arminians. It remains to be seen whether Classical Arminians would embrace or reject a biblical and truly Wesleyan doctrine of entire sanctification. The Free Will Baptist Treatise of 1842 taught that one should seek entire sanctification in this life, now!

Thus far the tensions between the two brands of Arminianism may be better understood as tensions *within* the Wesleyan-Arminian camp. However, a review of Forlines' position does reveal at least two substantive differences.

- Classical Arminianism refers to justification as the imputation of Christ's active and passive obedience. The active obedience of Christ refers to his sinless life, while the passive obedience of Christ refers to his atoning death. The Wesleyan understanding is that *faith* is imputed for righteousness. Our concern is that an emphasis on the imputation of both active and passive righteousness of Christ, without imparted righteousness, leads to antinomianism. Wesley denied that the righteousness of Christ is imputed in lieu of any subsequent obedience.

Other early Methodists also weighed in. Joseph Sutcliffe concluded that if the active and passive righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, we do not need the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit to make us righteous. John Fletcher explained that we are made righteous, not by speculative imputation of the works of Christ, but by being made partakers of the divine nature, begotten of God, and clothed with righteousness and true holiness. Richard Watson concluded that imputation is never used in scripture "in the sense of accounting the actions of one person to have been performed by another." Instead, the imputation of righteousness is the non-imputation, or pardon, of sin.

As late as 1891, J.J. Butler and Ransom Dunn were teaching that Free Will Baptists did not believe in active imputed righteousness. That teaching did not enter the denomination until 1940 with the FWB Bible College in Nashville. Even now, there are those in Oklahoma who want to introduce a motion at their State Association stating that active imputed righteousness is not a prescribed FWB doctrine.

- Classical Arminianism does accept the possibility of apostasy, but in contrast to the Wesleyan-Arminian interpretation of apostasy, they define it as a once-for-all,

irremediable event, a complete shipwreck of saving faith. Matthew Pinson asserts that sin does not cause a loss of salvation in a believer. A. B. Brown said that apostasy is committed by willful unbelief, not by sin. But unbelief *is* sin! According to Stephen Ashby, a believer who dies in a state of unconfessed sin would not lose his salvation.

Yet there is an inherent danger in teaching that we can sin and not lose our salvation. How else would we lose it? According to Galatians 5:19-21 the works of the flesh listed can rob the believer of the kingdom of God. Thus, we must walk in the Spirit.

Classical Calvinists hold that no saint will die in sin. Thus, they have no assurance of their election unless they persevere. The popular once saved, always saved position teaches that one can have both assurance and security — even if the believer dies in his sin.

The early Methodists took sin and holy living seriously. Adam Clarke said, “Apostasy begins in the closet: no man ever backslid from the life and power of Christianity who continued constant and fervent, especially in private prayer.”

However, this is mis-characterized by Ashby as having to get saved all over again each time we commit sin. Ashby declares that we all sin and the implication is that we must do something much worse in order to lose our salvation. According to Ashby we must cease believing. Forlines declares that Christianity is not lost every time a believer sins. But the real question is whether an unrepentant believer can maintain faith while living in a state of continued disobedience and sin. Arminius declared that if David had died after his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah, he would have been condemned to death eternal [*Works*, 2:725]. “True believers are capable by their own fault of falling into flagrant crimes and atrocious wickedness, to persevere and die in them, and therefore finally to fall away and perish” [The Five Points of the Remonstrants,” Article 5, Proposition 4].

But the Remonstrants also taught that one can be renewed should he fall away. “Yet though true believers sometimes fall into grievous sins, and such as destroy the conscience, we do

not believe that they immediately fall away from all hope of repentance; but we acknowledge this to be an event not impossible to occur, that God, according to the multitude of His mercies may again call them by His grace to repentance” [Proposition 5].

Southern Methodist theologian, Thomas Summers, defended the thesis that saints may and do fall from grace — some partly but not totally or finally, some totally but not finally, and others both totally and finally. While some would attempt to make a distinction between backsliding and apostasy, Forlines thinks that the term “backsliding” creates confusion and does not like to use the term. While his view of apostasy is climatic and irreversible, yet we must also understand that the journey to apostasy is usually progressive. Apostasy is the culmination of backsliding and that backsliding is the result of sin.

There is not complete unanimity within the Wesleyan-Arminian camp on this question and perhaps further dialog would reveal less divergence between Wesleyan and Classical Arminianism. However, it seems that the classical position starts by assuming too much of a Calvinistic definition of sin and salvation. Wesley held that the standard of the new birth was victory over sin.

In their defense, they are guarding against legalism. Jones added, “Forlines helped me by showing that my assurance of salvation comes not from my performance, but through believing and trusting in the work that Jesus did for me. Up to this point in my life I had tried to trust my performance as the condition for my salvation. This came from being raised in an environment where one could never be sure he or she was saved. And Wesley’s teaching also helped me to understand, that the direct witness of the Holy Spirit of my acceptance by God is the birthright of every believer.”

But we must also guard against lawlessness, while at the same time trying to avoid the opposite ditch of legalism. Sin is the road to apostasy and one cannot continue to practice sin without losing faith in Christ.

—Vic Reasoner with James O. Jones, Jr.

Anthony J. Headley, *Family Crucible: The Influence of Family Dynamics in the Life and Ministry of John Wesley*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2010. 176 pages. ISBN: 978-1-60608-001-6

Tony Headley, Professor of Counseling at Asbury Theological Seminary, utilizes modern psychological paradigms in order to analyze John Wesley. The result is that Wesley appears a lot like we are. While Headley confesses his admiration for Wesley, he also confessed that he grieved for Wesley in his struggles with personal relationships.

Headley demonstrates how our family can become a crucible, giving shape to life and ministry. John Wesley was raised in an

environment which valued the Anglican Church, the ordained ministry, and loved education and poetry. It was also a family of troubled marriages and financial mismanagement. The family was also adversely influenced by Samuel’s desertion of the family on two occasions.

At five years of age John was a “brand plucked from the burning.” He was rescued from a second-story window of a house on fire moments before the roof crashed. But John was also a

replacement child. He is the fourth child in a family of nineteen to have been named John. He felt a sense of destiny and as a result, felt driven.

John's family tended to seek his advice and he, in turn, was shaped by his own mother's advice. John also fell in love with and considered marriage to the three women who nursed him as an adult: Sophy Hopkey, Grace Murray, and Mary Vazeille. Perhaps in all three instances he was looking for his mother. Yet his own marriage, at forty-eight years of age, was marred by his failure to understand the biblical relationship of marriage.

Originally John felt that marriage was a hindrance to ministry. However, Wesley wrote in 1749, "St. Paul slowly and gradually awakened me out of my mystic dream; and convinced me, 'The bed is undefiled and no necessary hindrance to the highest perfection.' Though still I did not quite shake off the weight, till our last conference in London." When he married two years later, he determined not to preach one sermon less or travel one less mile. Thus, he was driven to minister to the needs of others, while neglecting the needs of his own spouse. Perhaps John was reflecting the model exemplified by his father.

This book should not be dismissed as nothing more than psycho-babble imposed upon a great man of God. The discipline of psychology should neither be uncritically embraced nor uncritically rejected. I was willing to plow through the psychological jargon because I spent a week with Headley in Nigeria, where we were both adjunct lecturers at West Africa Theological Seminary in 2008. I heard sections of this book in its formation most evenings at the dinner table and I knew Headley was committed to the health of the minister. He was not trying to debunk our Wesleyan heritage or revise history.

Headley concluded, "Wesley stands as a shining example of what God can do in a life totally committed to him." Headley also expressed amazement at Wesley's ability to transcend, at least to some measure, his family of origin issues in order to influence a nation and the world. Yet Wesley was not infallible and he was influenced by the dynamics within his own family.

Some of us inherited similar baggage, but did not inherit equal gifts with Wesley. We will have to become intentional in working through our past if we are to have any significant ministry.

—Vic Reasoner



In 1991 Fundamental Wesleyan Publishers was launched with their first publication, *The Hole in the Holiness Movement*. Since the book had been sold out, in 2005 the board of publication asked Dr. Reasoner to write a second edition. *A Wesleyan Theology of Holy Living for the Twenty-First Century: The Pursuit of Perfection Across Twenty Centuries* is almost completed! Check our website at <fwponline.cc> for the announcement of its availability.

To read additional articles, go to The Arminian EXTENDED at
http://fwponline.cc/arm_extendex.html

Plan to attend our FWS Winter Conference in
Orangeburg, SC, on January 25-27, 2012.