

Justification by Faith Re-Examined

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VERDICT

Verdict is committed to “Nothing But the Gospel, and the Gospel Plus Nothing.” It affirms that this gospel, according to the faithful testimony of Holy Scripture, concerns the objective, historical, finished and unrepeatable act of God on behalf of the human race in the life, death and resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world. Verdict believes that the gospel is the joyful proclamation that all who believe in Christ’s life, death and resurrection on their behalf are forgiven, accepted of God and may have the assurance of eternal life. It also believes that all who belong to Christ will exhibit the spirit of Christ and live for God’s glory and the well-being of humanity.

Verdict is opposed to every religious accretion which corrupts the gospel. This includes sectarianism, which insists that salvation is found in believing the gospel plus something else; subjectivism, which confounds the gospel with religious experience; sentimentalism, which substitutes pious feelings about the Jesus of popular imagination for faith in the New Testament Christ; mysticism, which looks for the knowledge of God in private illumination; techniqueism, which advocates that salvation is attained through the application of religious formulas or disciplines; and nationalism, which identifies the cause of Christ with political or cultural self-interests.

Verdict’s commitment to “Nothing But the Gospel, and the Gospel Plus Nothing” is not a Christian reductionism which accepts less than the whole counsel of God. Rather, it is recognition that the gospel of Christ is God’s final word, beyond which there is no more profound knowledge or experience of God. This is not to imply that Verdict is unconcerned with the great range of issues which impinge on human existence, but it is to affirm the desire that the gospel determine and structure our view of everything else.

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Introduction

The historical method 1 of biblical study has produced an explosion of biblical knowledge. “Since World War II, biblical scholars have learned more about the development of early Christianity and the formation of the New Testament than the combined scholarship of the preceding nineteen centuries.” 2 This is one of the principal reasons why the church today is facing a crisis of radical change. The religious thought-forms of the last five hundred years are no longer adequate.

The historical method has even compelled us to re-examine the classical Protestant doctrine of justification by faith. As Nigel Watson indicates, new philological and exegetical discoveries mean that the traditional ways of expressing the doctrine of justification by faith fail to do justice to all the facts. 3

We hasten to state, however, that such a re-examination does not signal our intention to abandon the cause of the Reformation which *Verdict* has championed for

the last ten years. But repeating the slogans and reproducing the thought-forms of the sixteenth century do not prove that we deserve to stand in the succession of the Reformers. If we can learn from the tragic history of early Jewish Christianity, we may see that such conservatism could well prove to be the worst form of heresy. The heretical Jewish Christians of the second century proudly saw themselves as direct descendants of the original Jerusalem church. But history left them behind because they refused to develop with the unfolding new age of Christ. As James D. C. Dunn says, “Heretical Jewish Christianity was a form of stunted, underdeveloped Christianity, rigid and unfitted to be the mouth piece of the gospel in a new age.” 4

The rediscovery of the gospel in the sixteenth century was an enormous achievement, and the entire church will always be indebted to the great contribution of Luther and Calvin. Yet it is our thesis that the sixteenth-century understanding of Paul left the Protestant movement with several serious weaknesses. It sometimes takes centuries for certain weaknesses to become clearly apparent. Furthermore, the historical method has so illuminated the apostolic age that we can now see beyond some of the limitations of the sixteenth century. We agree with Tom Wright when he says, “We are most faithful to the Reformers when we go back to the New Testament and see whether we can understand it even better than they did.” 5

The Legacy of Luther

The Protestant understanding of the New Testament in general and of Paul in particular is colored by Luther. His experience is legendary. For years he struggled to become right with God through personal piety and asceticism, but he found no assurance of acceptance. When he reached the point of despair, he discovered (or had discovered to him) from Paul that justification before God came as a gift through faith alone in Christ and had nothing to do with his own achievement before the law.

Luther’s rediscovery of Paul’s doctrine of justification by faith alone, apart from the law (Rom. 3:28), gave birth to the Protestant doctrine of forensic justification. Protestant purists not only contend for a forensic justification, but they also stress, like J. I. Packer, that it is “strictly forensic.” 6 The word forensic indicates that justification pertains to the law court, that it is a legal or judicial verdict. The principal elements of forensic justification are:

1. Justification is the verdict of the Judge. To justify means to *declare* righteous, not to *make* righteous. Thus, justification is not to be confounded with the Holy Spirit’s work of inner renewal and sanctification.

2. Justification is based on the righteousness of Christ *imputed* (reckoned, accounted) to the believer, not on the righteousness which the Spirit works in the heart of the believer.

3. Justification by faith does not mean justification *because of faith*, as if faith were either the ground or contributing cause of salvation. Faith is therefore the *instrumental* means of salvation and not its *meritorious* cause.

As G. C. Berkouwer points out, forensic justification has provoked a long and bitter battle in the history of theology. ⁷ Critics of the doctrine, even from within the Protestant movement, have characterized it as a cold, legal abstraction which fails to do justice to either the warm, personal nature of salvation or the dynamic moral renewal effected in salvation.

The critics of forensic justification, however, have missed the heart of the Reformation's concern. No informed exponent of the classical Protestant doctrine contends for a forensic justification simply because he has a penchant for legal categories of thought or because he likes to indulge in hair-splitting legal abstractions. What Jesus of Nazareth has done and suffered is the sole and exclusive ground for eternal life. The forensic metaphor makes clear that the ground of salvation is wholly outside of man. Inner renewal and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit relate to personal righteousness and spiritual attainments. The believer can never stand before God with an easy conscience if he grounds his acceptance with God on anything within himself; Justification is kept strictly, forensic, in order to give glory to Christ's finished work and to comfort troubled consciences. There is a healthy, objective virility about the Reformation doctrine.

Forensic justification, therefore, is simply a means of highlighting the gospel. Every aspect of this doctrine points to the vicarious doing and dying of Christ and declares that this plus nothing is the believer's only righteousness before the face of God. There is a marvelous simplicity in the Reformation doctrine. It focuses exclusively on the person and work of Christ. In the matter of finding a gracious God, it allows nothing else to come into view. The slogans of the Reformation— *sola gratia, solo Christo, sola fide* ⁸ – expressed the Reformation conviction that what Jesus did on behalf and in the place of the believing sinner was all-sufficient for acceptance before God. “Adolph von Harnack, the great historian of dogma, called Luther a genius of reduction.” ⁹ Whereas the medieval church had obscured the gospel of salvation in a complicated maze of theology, Luther's *sola fide* focused on Christ's living, dying and rising, and declared that this plus nothing is our salvation.

The Legacy of Christian Nomism

The Protestant doctrine of justification by faith is largely the formal expression of Luther's experience. Although the doctrine is based on the writings of the apostle Paul, it is Paul in the light of Luther's experience.

Luther's great breakthrough “legal night to gospel light” came after he had reached the point of despair. This led to his law/gospel dialectic, which became the foundation for so much of his thinking. The law must first be preached, said Luther, to bring us to the point of despair and so prepare us for the hearing of the gospel. When this

preparatory function of the law was systematized by Melancthon, he called it the second (or pedagogical) use of the law. 10 The principal proof-texts to support this use of the law were Galatians 3:24 (“The law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.”) and Romans 7:7 (“I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what it was to covet if the law had not said, ‘Do not covet.’”)

This second use of the law led logically and inevitably to the doctrine of the third use of the law. In this the law becomes the Christian’s rule of life after he has been justified by faith in Christ. The Puritans were fond of saying that the law first points a person to Christ for salvation, and then Christ points him back to the law for direction in Christian living. 11

Although the third use of the law was adopted by confessional Lutheranism, there is still some question whether Luther actually taught it. Nevertheless, it is at least implicit in Luther. How can the law convict of sin (second use) unless it is seriously urged as the rule of life which man is obligated to observe (third use)? For Calvin and the Reformed branch of Protestantism, the third use of the law became its primary use.

In orthodox Protestant teaching “the law” came to mean the Old Testament Sinaitic law, but shorn of its Jewish ceremonies. It became virtually synonymous with the Ten Commandments. Large parts of the great Protestant catechisms, therefore, were devoted to expositions of the Ten Commandments in order to bring both conviction of sin (in preparation for the gospel) and guidance for the duties of the Christian life.

The Puritans became great masters in using the law to describe the duties of the Christian life in enormous detail. In his classic on *The Gospel-Mystery of Sanctification* 12 Walter Marshall defined sanctification in terms of the true keeping of the Sinaitic law. Not all Protestants were as rigorous or as thorough as the Puritans in applying the details of the law to the Christian life, but in all orthodox Protestant teaching the law was regarded as God’s instrument to structure and govern the Christian’s existence. This can be readily verified by examining the standard works on systematic theology by either the Lutheran or Reformed divines.

Orthodox Protestant teaching is thus characterized by two features— its doctrine of justification by faith and its doctrine of the law. These stand together, and each derives its strength from the other. The second use of the law is designed to lead inevitably to the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith. And the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith leads inexorably to an exaltation of the law as the Christian’s rule of life. 13

Classical Protestant theology begins in law (second use) and ends in law (third use). Furthermore, the starting point of the entire orthodox Protestant theological edifice is the law, and every part of this theological system is developed with reference to it. For example, righteousness (for God or man) is defined as conformity to the law. God himself acts in accordance with an eternal law. It determines the rules

by which man may be lawfully saved. Christ's life of righteousness (active obedience) is defined in terms of law. Thus, Calvin could say that Christ's righteousness consisted in his perfect obedience to every precept of the law. Christ's death is also described in terms of the law— i.e., the satisfaction which he rendered to the law on the sinner's behalf. Imputed righteousness is Christ's life of perfect obedience to the law, credited to the believer. Imparted righteousness is Christ's law-keeping life in us, giving us power to obey the rule of life just as he did— for our example as well as for our salvation.

Contemporary Lutheran scholar Gerhard O. Forde, makes the following significant acknowledgment:

The key to the traditional orthodox position is the understanding of the place of the law in the theological system. Protestant orthodoxy operated with . . . a static-ontological concept of divine law. This idea of law provides the basic structure for the whole orthodox system and so determines the understanding of all other related doctrines— the nature of the gospel, revelation, and of course, the doctrine of the atonement.

The orthodox understanding of law stemmed, no doubt, from its theology of justification. Orthodoxy made the doctrine of justification of central importance; this led quite naturally to a system based on divine law and justice.

God's righteousness, God's claim upon man, expresses itself in the form of law, and justification must take place in accordance with this law. Law is, therefore, an eternal, objective order, a *lex aeterna* which sets forth the ideal to which human life must attain in order to find favor with God. In the law man encounters the personal will of God, so that relationship to this will becomes the decisive problem of his existence. Only a righteousness which is *absoluta conformitas* with the divine law can count in justification. Here the basic structure of the orthodox system is already given; the entire orthodox theology of sin and grace is formulated against this background...

The law provided, therefore, the structure which governed the understanding of other doctrines...

Vicarious satisfaction of the demands of the divine law is therefore the heart of the orthodox doctrine of the atonement. Here orthodoxy follows mainly in the tradition of Anselm, although with some alterations. Their main point is Anselmian: that Christ made the satisfaction which was necessary to allow God to meet man in mercy.

The alterations come in two places. First, the Anselmian alternative, either punishment or satisfaction (*poena aut satisfactio*), was rejected. The law demands punishment for sin, so that satisfaction can be made only if the necessary punishment has been suffered. For orthodoxy the punishment is the satisfaction. Second, orthodoxy differs from Anselm in its emphasis upon active obedience in the fulfillment of the law as well as passive obedience. If man cannot fulfill the law, Christ must do it actively as man's substitute; the demands of the law must be fulfilled under all circumstances. It is important to note here that both alterations serve the same end: they strengthen and magnify the place of law in the system.

Thus the elevation and insistence upon the law as *lex aeterna* were the distinctive features of the orthodox system. The demand for satisfaction was even more insistent than it was in Anselm; the Anselmian view is magnified and made more legalistic...

The law provides the rational framework for understanding what takes place in the atonement. This can be called a speculative construction because it seeks to posit what is necessary "from God's point of view" before atonement can take place. By using this framework orthodoxy is forced to think in terms of a rational equivalence between the punishment inflicted on Christ, the divine-human substitute, and the demands of the divine righteousness.

This orthodox doctrine of law has several consequences for the rest of the theological system...

Starting from assumptions about the eternal standard of the law, the system produced a chain of consequences which are difficult, if not impossible, to avoid— up to and including a view of scripture which could hardly survive the crisis presented by the development of the historical-critical method...

The orthodox system was a system wedded to a particular conception of law; this meant that the entire edifice was permeated by a stringent legalism which it could not avoid. 14

Some may question the comment that the entire system of orthodox Protestant theology is “permeated by a stringent legalism.” Legalism is generally understood as fallen man’s attempt to use the law as a method of salvation. The Reformation, of course, was a revolt against that form of legalism. Even the better Roman Catholic teachers of Luther’s day (and all orthodox Roman Catholics) recognized that a man is not saved by his own efforts to keep the law. Recent studies have even shown that the Pharisees did not teach a bald legalism— i.e., that man can attain covenantal fellowship by keeping the law. Thus, neither the Pharisees nor good Catholics are legalists in the ordinary sense in which legalism is understood. And certainly the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith in Christ alone was a clear refutation of that form of legalism.

Since the word *legalism* can be misleading, we suggest that it would have been better if Gerhard O. Forde had concluded his excellent summary of orthodoxy by stating that “The entire edifice was permeated by a stringent *nomism* 15 which it could not avoid.” Nomism is now used to describe a way of thinking or a way of life which is structured, colored and governed by law at every point. The Pharisees, for example, should not be called legalists, for that could misrepresent their religious outlook. The theology of the Pharisees is said to be a system of “covenantal nomism.” 16 Luther and the Protestant Reformation have given us a legacy of Christian nomism. This is a way of thinking and a way of life that is structured, colored and informed by the law.

Yet it would not be accurate to imply that Christian nomism originated with Luther and the Protestant Reformation. The theology of Western Christianity was derived from three main sources— the Jewish, Greek and Latin heritage. The Latin or Roman heritage contributed the genius of government, institutions and a law-ordered existence to Western Christianity. The Latin mind has a penchant for legal thinking and develops everything in terms of law. Gerhard O. Forde correctly identifies the orthodox Protestant way of thinking as the “‘Latin’ point of view,” “the Latin view of the atonement” and “the Latin theory.” 17

Luther and Calvin were sons of the Western or Latin Church. It is understandable that they accepted the nomism of Western Christianity as a *given*. They therefore developed their evangelical doctrine within a Latin framework which began with law and ended with law. The argument between the Reformers and Roman Catholicism was not about the framework in which they all developed their doctrine of salvation. Both sides assumed the philosophical and theological presuppositions which were grounded in a Latin view of law.

A Critique of Christian Nomism

The historical method has led us to question the entire Latin framework of Christian nomism. It has become obvious that we do not do justice to Paul when we project Luther's experience back to him and make him a first-century Lutheran. We can no longer assume that the concerns behind Paul's doctrine of justification by faith were the concerns of guilt-ridden man. 18

It was the historical method which demanded my re-examination of Paul's doctrine of justification by faith. The historical method had first led me to question the traditional Protestant doctrine of the second and third uses of the law. In fact, *Verdict* recently devoted several issues to a major review of Christian ethics, 19 and in these issues we broke with the nomism of the Puritan-Reformed tradition. But we could not end our spiritual pilgrimage here. We had to ask, "Where does this classical Protestant doctrine of the third use of the law come from?" The answer is startling but unavoidable. It derives its life and strength from the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith. For the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith leads inevitably and inexorably to the view that the law must be kept as the rule of life. This is amply demonstrated in the Heidelberg and Westminster catechisms, and it was also demonstrated in *Verdict* for ten years.

At this very point we discern a startling contrast between Paul's doctrine of justification by faith and the Reformers' doctrine of justification by faith. Paul's entire argument in Galatians and Romans is (in the words of a scholar who uses the historical method) "*against the necessity of keeping the law.*" 20 As Richard N. Longenecker, 21 Morna D. Hooker 22 and a host of other scholars who employ the historical method now point out, Paul not only opposed the idea of keeping the law as a method of salvation; he particularly opposed those Jewish Christians who urged Gentile Christians to observe the Jewish Torah as the rule of life. In other words, the Judaizers in Galatia taught something very similar to the Protestant idea of the third use of the law. As Nicholas Thomas Wright says, "Paradoxically, the Lutheran *tertius usus legis* 23...turns out to be nearer to Paul's opponents than to Paul himself." 24

There are breathtaking implications to Wright's statement. It means that although the Reformers thought they were opposing Galatianism, they did not attack the root of Galatianism at all but left it in the ground; indeed, they nourished it and watered it with a doctrine of justification by faith which actually demanded that the law structure and govern the Christian's life. The entire stream of Western Christianity, therefore— both Catholic and Protestant— is permeated by a stringent nomism. Western Christianity has not been able to avoid Christian Pharisaism, whether it developed justification by faith as a Catholic or as a Protestant doctrine.

The Historical Content of Biblical Ethics

Let us now show how the historical method challenges the nomism of traditional Christian ethics.

First, the historical method challenges the traditional view of revelation and inspiration. The Latin system, which grounds everything in an abstract, static law, is accompanied by an abstract, static view of revelation and inspiration. The utterances of the Bible are regarded as infallible theological propositions which God handed down from heaven. Man's task is simply to arrange these propositions (proof-texts) in an orderly system (systematic theology). The dynamic flow of salvation-history in the Bible may be interesting and may even be used to reinforce the system of theology, but this system really exists above and independently of that flow of history.

The same is true for ethics. God is also regarded as handing down ethical propositions. These, considered as independent of the events of history, are binding on all people for all time. Thus, the Ten Commandments have traditionally been regarded as a divine legislation given as a perfect and complete rule of life for all men for all time. Just as there is no vital link between the flow of salvation-history and theology, so there is no vital link between the flow of salvation-history and ethics. Both theology and ethics are dehistoricized—they are removed from their historical biblical context and dehumanized. (We say dehumanized because man is a historical being and can find true meaning only in a historical context.)

Against a dehistoricized systematic theology and a dehistoricized Christian nomism we now assert that the Bible is a story of the saving acts of God in history. These great acts of God in history are the “stuff” of revelation and the basis of inspiration. 25 The ethics of the Bible are based on a narrative—a story. 26 Man is a historical creature. A person can explain who he is only by telling his story. And if he is to understand either God or his own existence, he must have a story to live by. Human existence cannot be based on bare principles and policies. Every nation or community must have a story to structure and color its existence. “No society can be just or good that is built on falsehood.” 27 Further, “It is cowardice to cling to a faith [a story] once we have denied its origins.” 28

The ethics of Old Testament Israel were based on a story—the story of the Exodus. Israel had good reason to believe that the Exodus story gave a truthful account of her existence as a people. If we want to reach the starting point behind the Exodus story, we must go to another story behind the story—the story of how God made a promise to Abraham. That promise was founded on Christ (Gal. 3:15-19). The absolute starting point is certainly not a theological system grounded on an abstract, external law or on an abstract concept of election and predestination. No, the absolute starting point is Jesus Christ and God's purpose of grace in him. “He is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Col. 1:17). From the beginning God promised, committed or covenanted to love the human race, which was made by and for his Son. Love is unconditional. This means that from the beginning God promised, committed or covenanted to go to any length, at any cost to himself, for the benefit of the human race. The Bible is an account of how God's amazing commitment to man was worked out in history.

The Judaizers in Galatia made the law the starting point of their theological thinking. But Paul showed them that the starting point of true biblical thinking is not law but God's promise in Christ which preceded the law (Gal. 3:17). We are therefore sympathetic with Karl Barth, who challenged classical Lutheranism for beginning with law rather than gospel and classical Calvinism for beginning with predestination rather than Jesus Christ. Whether it be the Israelite faith or the Christian faith, the true starting point is a story of God's grace— i.e., the gospel.

The major part of the law (the books of Moses) is not law code but narrative. (Paul even reminds us that the law tells the story of Abraham's two sons [Gal. 4:21, 22]). The high point of this narrative is how God fulfilled his promise to Abraham in rescuing the Israelites from Egyptian bondage and leading them to the land of promise. The commandments and stipulations of the law appear in the context of this story and have their true meaning only in that historical context. 29 God knew that the covenantal community could not live by an abstract law code; it could only live by remembering, repeating, reciting, re-presenting and rehearsing the deed of the Exodus. Lest she forget, every religious festival was simply a device given to Israel to act out the story of the Exodus. 30 In this story God was known as the Helper of the oppressed. 31 Israel must remember this and in her own life reflect the likeness of God. The law therefore commanded Israel not to oppress the alien, the poor and the fatherless, but rather to execute justice for all that are oppressed. 32 In other words, Israel's entire religious and ethical existence was to be determined, structured, colored and informed by the story of the Exodus. 33

This intimate connection between story and commandments means that the laws given to Israel were *all* given in the context of a historical situation. Both the meaning and application of these commandments are conditioned by history. Thanks to modern research, we now know that the entire body of law known as the Law of Moses was not written by Moses in its present form. Much of it was developed over centuries as the covenantal community interpreted and reinterpreted the law or Torah to meet new historical situations. Banks shows that the Torah (meaning instruction, way or teaching) was never designed to be static but, with the help of prophetic insight, was meant to be developed or reinterpreted throughout Israel's historical pilgrimage. 34 This even applies to the Ten Commandments, which are literally called the Ten Words, indicating that the original form must have been exceedingly brief. There are at least three differing versions of the Ten Commandments in the Old Testament scriptures. One account differs markedly from the others. 35 They all exhibit evidence of editing at different periods of Israel's history. It is now generally conceded that the law was not given its final form until Ezra assembled the sacred documents after the Babylonian exile. All the reflection, expansion, reinterpretation and editing of the law were accomplished within the sacred community as that community saw its entire life and history in the light of the Exodus story.

How wide of the mark, therefore, has been the traditional notion that the Ten Commandments constitute a divine legislation given to all men for all time—as though the Decalogue stood independent of that Jewish history which gave both its original and its final shape. 36 The Old Testament makes it abundantly clear that the Ten Commandments were the words of the (old) covenant addressed to Israel alone. 37 That they contain universal ethical principles ought to be self-evident. That they also contain cultic elements applying within the historical situation of ancient Israel ought likewise to be self-evident. 38 But great harm has been done when commandments which flow out of the Exodus story and Israel's history are lifted indiscriminately out of that historical context and applied directly and literally to Christian people living in a time and a culture far removed from that of ancient Israel. 39 Paul had no objection to Jewish Christians who wanted to continue observing the regulations of the law, but, as D. R. De Lacey says, Paul was “opposed to the re-establishment of the Decalogue as a law for the Christian life.” “Paul refuses to discuss Christian conduct in terms of obligation to it.”40

The law or Jewish Torah was never intended to be a static code by which a Jew could know how to act in advance of every situation. As Ragnar Bring rightly states, no law code could encompass the kind of living righteousness and absolute claims which God's law makes upon people's lives. 41 God's love is unconditional—it goes to any length, at any cost, to benefit its object. Such is the nature of covenantal love, which is not to be confused with a contractual or conditional arrangement. 42 This covenantal love of God demands an unconditional response which the New Testament calls faith. Faith does not try to set any limits on how far it is willing to go in devotion to God. There are no limits, for the claims of God are absolute. Faith means to give God a blank check on the entire life. The law or the Torah was merely a signpost which pointed the covenantal people in the right direction. It was never intended to be a substitute for the unconditioned openness to God's demand upon the total life.

Yet from the time of Ezra, the commandments and regulations of the law increasingly assumed the character of a rigid code. Righteousness became defined in terms of obeying static rules. The Pharisees were not legalists in the sense that they used works of the law to attain the privilege of covenantal fellowship with God. They well knew that a place in the covenant had been given to Israel by God's grace. 43 But keeping the regulations of the law was the sign and badge of their status and security within the covenant. Jesus exposed their hypocrisy because they used the law to limit God's claims upon their lives. The covenantal (unconditional) relationship with God had degenerated into a contractual (conditional) relationship. They used the law to shield themselves from full moral responsibility, to reduce the living righteousness which God required to their own puny size. Their covenantal nomism became a dehumanizing system of hypocrisy.

The Christian Ethic

Christian ethics cannot be based on abstract principles or policies, even if they are called love or freedom or anything else. Christian ethics are based on a story— that good story which we call the gospel.

The basis of the Christian ethic is faith in a living, personal God who has disclosed His grace and His will in Jesus Christ...The fundamental and characteristic thing in Christian action is not obedience to fixed norms or a moral code, but living response to a Person. 44

The Christian does not live in covenant with God by virtue of the old Exodus but by virtue of the new exodus which has taken place in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That which structures, governs, informs and colors the Christian's life is not the old history, for God has given him a new history. He sings "a new song" (Rev. 14:3), for the old song will never do. God's new-covenant deed in Jesus Christ far eclipses anything in the old history. The Christian is not to live under the Law of Moses but under the law of Christ—the one belongs to the old history, and the other to the new.

In examining the evidence of the New Testament, it is clear that the apostles constantly reason from what God has done for us in Christ to how we ought to live. The central commandment of our Lord is that we love one another as he has loved us (John 13:34). The cross defines the nature of Christian existence. The Spirit of Christ, who comes to us clothed in Christ's gospel, uses that gospel to show us how we ought to live. There are, of course, some concrete instructions and commandments in the New Testament, but these are neither the sum nor the center of Christian ethics. That center is the One whom the New Testament presents from beginning to end as God's living and final Law. The Christian's supreme Law is not a code but a Person.

All the titles and honors which Judaism had heaped on the law the New Testament bestows on Jesus of Nazareth. Thus, in his prologue to the Fourth Gospel John takes a pre-Christian hymn of praise to the Torah and applies every key appellation to Jesus— "in the beginning," "the Word," "with God," "the world was made," "light," "life," "the true light that enlightens every man," "grace and truth," "in the bosom of the Father." 45 All that Judaism had claimed for the law— bread, water of life, light of the world, shepherd, the way, the truth and the life— John systematically applies to Jesus Christ. 46 He, rather than the Torah, is the final revelation of God's will. Thus, he is the real Torah in the fullest sense— that is to say; he is both the story of God's saving love and the great rule of life for his people. The Jewish Torah was only a shadow of the real Torah, which was made flesh in Jesus of Nazareth (Col. 1:16, 17; Heb. 10:1).

Yet sadly, even in the days of the apostles, some Jewish Christians could not grasp that Jesus was the real Torah, God's living Law (Word). It was certainly understandable that they should continue a Jewish life-style, for the new age of the Messiah had made both the observance of the Torah and its nonobservance irrelevant. But these Jewish Christians insisted that Gentile Christians must also accept the Jewish Torah (that is what "the law" generally means in the New Testament 47) as their rule of life. Yet this was a denial that Christ was Lord in the

fullest sense— Guide as well as Savior. These Jewish Christians tried to make a synthesis of New Testament grace and Old Testament rules. This is what Paul had to battle against, especially in Galatia. 48

It is a mistake to suppose that the real issue in Galatia consisted in using the law to become a Christian. The Galatians were already Christians. The real issue was whether the Old Testament law should be imposed as the Galatians' rule of life. Must the old written code now structure and govern the Christian's existence? Was Christianity simply to become a purified form of Judaism? Against all this Christian nomism Paul thundered a resounding No! The law, he said, was only designed to be a stopgap custodian until Christ should arrive (Gal. 3:19-25). Having been an orthodox Jewish rabbi, Paul well knew that neither Gentiles nor dead people were under the law. 49 On these two counts the Galatian Christians should pay no attention to the Jewish Torah— on the first count they were Gentiles, and on the second count they had died with Christ (Rom. 7:4-6; Gal. 2:20). To accept the yoke of the Torah now that Christ had inaugurated the new age was to return again to prison or to enslavement, in fact, Paul warned the Galatians that this would be as serious as returning to their old paganism.

Pentecost had been a Jewish feast which celebrated the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. 50 But the new Pentecost followed the new exodus of Christ's death and resurrection. Luke dramatizes the giving of the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, and in the history following Pentecost he describes how the Spirit led the primitive Christians to ignore the restrictions of the law in their Gentile outreach. Thus, Philip baptized a eunuch— an act contrary to the law (Deut. 23:1; Acts 8:38). Peter went into the house of Gentiles and ate with them in violation of the law (Acts 11:3). Soon a thriving Gentile community, which paid no attention to the law, was raised up at Antioch. 51 Thus, Luke shows in vivid story form that the gift of the Spirit from Mount Zion has replaced the gift of the law from Mount Sinai. 52

Luke's history in Acts is an apology for Paul. Many Jewish Christians had charged the apostle with betraying Israel by deserting the law. Luke shows that Paul did not initiate this scandalous freedom from the constraints of the Jewish Torah. Rather, it was Jesus, present in the church by his Spirit, who prompted the church to ignore the law at every advance step in the Gentile mission. Men like Stephen, Philip and Peter had begun acting with freedom from the law even before Paul's apostolic ministry began.

When Paul saw this new and amazing gift of the Spirit to the Gentile believers and their inclusion by God in the new community of the Messiah, he knew that the age of the law was terminated. This convinced him that justification was entirely apart from law— either its observance or nonobservance. Paul realized that the law code had acted as a barrier to cause hostility between Jew and Gentile. Now Christ had abolished it (Eph. 2:14, 15). "If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law" (Gal.

5:18). “The grace of Christ and the truth of the gospel are denied when circumcision or Sabbath-keeping or dietary restrictions are imposed.” 53

Whereas Judaism’s ideal of holiness was conformity to the Torah, the New Testament ideal is conformity to the image of Christ. Nowhere do Jesus and the apostles exhort Christians to consult the law to discover their Christian duty. Rather than being conformed to the world, especially to the religious world with its regulations and norms, Paul would have each Christian renewed in mind by the power of the gospel. “Then,” he says, you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is” (Rom. 12:2). How? In the next verse Paul says that God gives to every member of Christ’s body “the measuring rod of faith.” 54 This means to determine God’s will in the rough and tumble of Christian existence by reasoning from the gospel under the tutelage of the Spirit. In making most great moral decisions, there is no easy proof-text that we can use like a written code. But as James Whyte suggests, those who want to live by a written code may simply be manifesting an infantile dependence or a sadomasochistic personality. 55

One of the remarkable aspects of Paul’s Corinthian correspondence is the almost total absence of any reference to the law. In one instance he cited the Law of Moses regarding oxen in a free and illustrative manner (1 Cor. 9:9-12). And once he referred to the Ten Commandment covenant to show that it has been superseded by the more glorious covenant of the Spirit (2 Cor. 3). In the Corinthian church Paul confronted sexual immorality, drunkenness at the Lord’s Supper, and other scandalous behavior. Such conduct certainly gave Paul an opportunity to use the law to convict of sin or as a rule of life. But he did not confront the Corinthians with the law at all. Of course he showed the libertines that their conduct was wrong. But Paul reasoned from the gospel rather than from the law to show that their behavior was sinful. He showed them that being bought with the great price of Calvary and union with Christ precludes immoral behavior (1 Cor. 6:15, 20). This approach is typical of Paul’s reasoning in all his letters. While for Judaism whatever was not according to the written code was sin, for Paul whatever was contrary to faith (or the gospel) is sin (Rom.14:23).

The examples of Paul’s using the law to bring conviction of sin are conspicuous by their absence. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would “convict the world of guilt in regard to sin.” The Christian nomist may say, “Yes, the Holy Spirit uses the law to do this.” But Jesus adds that people will henceforth be convicted of sin “because men do not believe in me” (John 16:8, 9). Peter’s preaching on the Day of Pentecost illustrates what Jesus is saying. Many then were convicted of sin by the fact that God had sent his Son to the Jews and they had not believed him. Such reasoning is typical of all apostolic preaching. A course of action is shown to be sin when it is an expression of failure to believe in Jesus Christ and to obey the gospel. Thus, Paul convicted Peter and Barnabas of sin at Antioch, not on the basis that they had breached some clause in a written code, but because “they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel” (Gal. 2:14).

Galatians 3:24 is not a proof-text for the second use of the law. It is only a pretext. When Galatians 3:24 is read in historical context, it shows that Paul opposed the notion that Gentiles must find their way to Christ by way of the Jewish Torah. “The law” in Galatians, as in almost every other instance in the New Testament, means the Jewish law. The first-person “us” does not mean “us Christians” but “us Jews” in contrast to the second-person “you,” which means “you Gentiles” (Gal. 4:8). The object of Galatians 3 and Romans 7 is to show the pedagogical function of law in Israel’s history from Moses to Christ, not to support a supposed pedagogical function for the law today.

Paul stands in clear and harsh opposition to that Lutheran demand (also reflected in Reformed liturgies), that every man must be pulled through the narrowness, the slavery, the curse, or the preaching of the law and must thereby be led or driven to inner bankruptcy and despair, in order to be properly prepared for the reception of grace and for the acquittal of God. The apostle calls such a methodology— whether carried on and practiced from the side of Jews or Gentiles— a distortion of the Gospel, an apostasy from Christ, a fall from grace, or more briefly with a harsh term: “damned” (Gal. 2:11; 1:7; 5:4). Whoever today wishes to construct his exegesis and sermon exclusively or mainly according to the pattern law-gospel, whoever wishes to drive his fellow-men into heaven by means of fear, whoever wishes to proclaim the presence of a definite self-acceptance and the break with the latter as a prerequisite to the transition into authentic existence— for such a person the same hard judgment may presumably be expected. In a bold essay the Scandinavian Lutheran K. Stendahl has laid his finger exactly on this paradox: the demand that every man must have a conscience crushed by the law, before he is ripe for the blessing of grace, results from falling into that very “judaizing” which Paul by all means wanted to be prevented. 56

Thus, no doctrine of either the second or third use of the law is found in Paul. Rather than a doctrine of justification by faith which demands this use of the law, Paul’s doctrine of justification apart from the law (Rom. 3:28) repudiates all such ideas as inimical to the new age of the gospel. Paul believed that the churches which he raised up must be Spirit-led, not law-controlled. Although he saw his converts confronted by numerous threats and dangers, he had faith in the believers because he had faith in the ability of the Holy Spirit to make the gospel triumph in the church’s pilgrimage through this world. Because Paul never lost his faith in the power of the gospel to bring guidance as well as salvation, he did not resort to law-control even when aberrant human behavior threw entire churches into disorder.

Faced with wandering prophets, schismatic spirits and aberrant human behavior, those who followed Paul tragically resorted to law-control— as any human government or institution does. In this, the Latin mind at work in the principal church of the Roman Empire led the way. From the Latin culture proceeded a genius for government, institutions and the rule of law. For earthly institutions these principles are appropriate, but for the church, as a charismatic movement with a spiritual order, they are a disaster. Rudolph Sohm, a great German jurist, identified the real “falling away” when he said:

Mistrust appears, that is, lack of trust in the power of the divine Spirit. Fear raises its head, fear of sin; fear that the power of sin may be greater than that of love. Small faith demands props, crutches, and external securities for the conserving of right order in the *Ecclesia*. Small faith longs for legal regulation, formal limits, guarantees for the maintenance of Christendom. Out of this small faith of

the Christian epigones, Catholicism came into being . . . As soon as small faith won the upper hand, as soon as fear of sin became greater than trust in God, legal right followed as a historical necessity. Out of the power of sin, which won room even in Christendom, came the need for church law, and with it came Catholicism.

The reason is not far to seek: Because the natural man is a born enemy of Christianity...The natural man desires to remain under law. He strives against the freedom of the gospel... He longs for a legally appointed church, for a kingdom of Christ which may be seen with the eyes of the natural man, for a temple of God, built with earthly gold and precious stones, that shall take the heart captive through outward sanctities, traditional ceremonies, gorgeous vestments, and a ritual that tunes the soul to the right pitch of devotion...Before all, he longs for an impressive, authoritative constitution, one that shall overpower the senses, and rule the world. He desires, as the key-stone of the whole, a fixed body of doctrine that shall give certain intelligence concerning all divine mysteries, presented to him in literal form, giving an answer to every possible question... He desires a rock which his eyes can see— the visible church, the visible Word of God. Everything must be made visible, so that he may grasp it. From these impulses of the natural man, born at once of his longing for the gospel and his despair of attaining it, Catholicism has arisen. Herein lies the secret of the enormous power it has had over the masses who are “babes”; it satisfies these cravings. *The natural man is a born Catholic.*
57

The Unhappy Fruit of Christian Nomism

Romans 7 is a description of the unhappy fruit of a law-controlled existence, even when that law is the holy, just and good law which God gave to Israel. It arouses sinful passions and leads to bondage (vv. 5, 6). It produces every kind of covetous desire (v. 8). It is used by sin to deceive and to enslave (vv. 11, 21-24). All this was demonstrated in Israel’s history. The new exodus inaugurated a new Pentecost event in which the written-code law was replaced by “the law of the Spirit of life” (Rom. 8:2). “If you are led by the Spirit [new and living Torah], you are not under law [written code]” (Gal. 5:18).

Christian nomism or a law-controlled “Christian” existence has the appearance of wisdom and devotion. It seems to offer a practical solution to the problems of Christian discipline. But regardless of the problems Paul faced among Christian communities, he refused to resort to a law-controlled discipline. For him that would be to deny the gospel and to fall back into the weak and miserable principles of an obsolete era. A law-controlled existence had placed the Galatians on a course of “biting and devouring each other” (Gal. 5:15).

Why is traditional Christianity so prone to be a feuding, fighting community? For centuries the Jewish people endured the savagery of massacre, looting and proscription at the hand of the intolerant orthodox Christian West. 58 And Christians have proved to be just as hostile toward their fellow Christians. They have hacked one another to death. They have hanged, burned and drowned theological dissenters. Protestants are no better than Catholics. Says Roland H. Bainton, the well-known biographer of Luther: “At the moment of its beginning Protestantism was more intolerant than contemporary Catholicism.” 59

Protestantism spawned a multitude of warring sects, each passionately committed to the notion that it alone had the truth and the rest were heretical or worse.

We are the choice elected few:

Let all the rest be damned:

There's room enough in hell for you.

We won't have heaven crammed. 60

Thus, the spirit of Jewish exclusiveness has persisted in Christianity. "The most vociferous exponents of evangelism are frequently the fanatically narrow-minded." 61 The spirit of religious fascism has seemed to be part and parcel of Western Christianity. One may sing, "My chains fell off, my heart was free," but not far away are the sectarian henchmen, ready to secure a commitment to some religious system and to confine believers in their sectarian cages, which permit fellowship only with birds of the same theological feather. Many who are wise enough and broadminded enough to smile at such sectarian bigotry do so simply because they do not take any theology seriously. "The problem is that the civil people are not committed and the committed people aren't civil," lamented Martin E. Marty. 62

The spirit of sectarian arrogance, exclusiveness and even overt hostility is the fruit of Christian nomism. It is the inevitable result of turning Christianity into a written-code religion. Under such circumstances the more conservative and the more devout people are, the more intolerant they become. Christian nomism is modern Pharisaism masquerading as genuine Christianity. Christian nomism is responsible for the most incredible stupidities conducted in the name of Jesus Christ. It makes many Christians paranoid and the church unattractive to nonbelievers.

While most Christian groups today do not attempt to live by the Jewish Torah, there is a tendency for each group to develop its own Torah of kosher theology, liturgy and piety. Who can deny that in principle there is a Lutheran Torah, a Reformed Torah, a Baptist Torah, an Adventist Torah, an Evangelical Torah ("inerrancy" is its first great commandment) and even a Pentecostal Torah? 63 Acceptance into full Christian fellowship is not based on Christ plus nothing but on adherence to the particular Torah of the group. Such religion is law-controlled instead of Spirit-led. The written code of the group (the "Confession" or the "Fundamentals") is a dividing wall which tends to isolate the member from every other Christian.

The legalistic type of person (the Christian nomist who lives by his religion) finds it impossible to come into real human, personal contact with his fellow-man. Between him and his neighbour there stands something impersonal, the "idea," the "Law," a programme (Confession?), something abstract which hinders him from seeing the other person as he really is, which prevents him from hearing the real claim which his neighbour makes on him. 64

The two great features of Protestant theology are its doctrines of justification by faith and the law as the rule of life. This is a synthesis of New Testament grace and Old Testament ethics. With this synthesis Protestants have solved the problem of finding a gracious God, but they have not solved the problem of finding gracious Christian neighbors. They can fellowship with God because he is gracious, but they find it difficult to fellowship with one another because they are not so gracious. They cannot

agree whose version of the Christian Torah will prevail. As long as they erect any religious barrier between man and man, they deny the gospel, which announces the removal of all these barriers through the death of Messiah Jesus (Eph. 2:14, 15). The only legitimate basis for Christian fellowship is that which God requires for fellowship with himself. If law or religion has no place in the latter, it should have no place in the former.

The Legacy of Protestant Individualism

Luther was a son of the medieval church, which had made the business of getting the soul to heaven the great preoccupation of religion. Luther's critique of the medieval church was not a critique of its burning question ("How can I find a gracious God?") but a critique of the answer which it gave to that question. Luther's contribution was the radically clear answer he gave to Western man's search for a gracious God.

The Protestant doctrine of justification by faith is wholly a private affair between the individual soul and God. Fellow-man and the church are involved only as a result of the joyful response to God's act of justifying the guilty sinner. But the act of justification itself was understood to be the answer to the solitary quest, "How can I find a gracious God?" The answer is learned, said Luther, only after the soul is brought to personal despair by the convicting and killing power of the law.

From beginning to end, the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith concentrates on the individual and his need. The individual's personal assurance of salvation is of supreme importance. The truth of justification by faith is learned as he wrestles with the problem of his own sinfulness until faith in Christ triumphs over all self-doubt.

The strength of the Reformation was its thoroughly Christocentric answer to the burning question of sixteenth-century man. Later generations of Protestants often tended to focus on such matters as their own act of appropriating the benefits of Christ or the development of their own Christian experience. ⁶⁵ For Luther, however, faith never looks to itself but takes the believer out of himself to the "alien" righteousness of Christ. This faith is no mere assent to the truths of Christianity, much less a belief in what the church decrees. It goes beyond the confession that Jesus died for Peter, Paul, Mary Magdalene and the sins of the world. It is a personal trust in the fact that Jesus died "for me" and that "my sins" are surely washed away in his precious blood.

The Protestant stress on the individual conscience, with personal faith and responsibility, elevated ordinary Christians to the status of a universal Christian priesthood. It helped give birth to the modern age of political democracy and religious toleration.

A Critique of Protestant Individualism

The historical method of biblical interpretation and the flood of new information on the first century have made it clear that the background to Paul's doctrine of justification by faith was not that of a man driven by the law to the point of despair. In contrast to Luther the monk, the learned rabbi from Tarsus was confident of being blameless through his law-keeping (Phil. 3:5, 6). After all, the Pharisees did not teach that God required the perfection of obedience which the conscience of Luther demanded.

Protestants have been much better informed about the events which led to Luther's discovery of justification by faith than about the circumstances behind Paul's discovery. After Paul recognized that Jesus was the Messiah, he began to understand the new and amazing thing that God was doing on earth. As an orthodox rabbi, Paul knew that Gentiles were not required to keep the law. From a reconstruction of the history of the primitive Christian movement, it is also clear that Gentile Christians generally paid no attention to the law.⁶⁶ Yet God gave them the Spirit and included them in Messiah's end-time community in equality with Jewish believers. This convinced Paul that justification ("a status of rightness within the covenant" ⁶⁷) was by faith alone apart from either law-keeping or non-law-keeping. Whereas Luther learned of justification by faith by traveling the road of despair and agonizing over his own standing with God, Paul learned it by beholding God's work among others. ⁶⁸

Even in matters of faith man is not an island! To be a human being means to have fellow-men of a completely different kind always with us, beside us, for us, not only in earthly relationships but also and especially [in] our knowledge and service of God. God gives us the gift of fellow-men. Peter and Paul needed the Gentiles, upon whom God's spirit was poured out, in order to be sure of their own way. Where does man find certainty of salvation? In the recesses of one's heart, in cultic experience, in biblical maxims or right doctrine? Hardly ever! But it can be found in the fellow-man who has received grace. The words *pro me* can be uttered with certainty only when they are supported by the realization that God already gave others his righteousness. No man can find meaning and fulfillment of his own life, as long as he is directed more and more to himself, his own faith, his personal principles, and his private relationship to God. That *syllogismus practicus* which every man needs is the neighbor blessed by grace. By and in his justification the neighbor is the proof of God's justice, and thereby also of my justification. I am in matters of faith dependent upon the benefit which "I" experience from his existence as a witness for me. ⁶⁹

The Background of Galatians and Romans

The book of Acts helps us appreciate that the Gentile mission was the great source of contention surrounding Paul's apostolic authority. Karl P. Donfried convincingly argues that Luke wrote the book of Acts to vindicate the authenticity of Paul's Gentile mission. ⁷⁰ In recent years the discovery of new documents and research into early Jewish Christianity has made it clear that conservative Jewish Christians were hostile to Paul and did everything possible to destroy his credibility. In their eyes he was a traitor because he forsook the law. These Jewish Christians caused havoc in some of the young Gentile churches. They were apparently so successful in undermining Paul's authority that the apostle lost the battle in church after church. At the time of

his death most of them had turned against him. But for Luke, his life and letters might have been consigned to oblivion. Paul's faithful companion, however, lived on to set the record straight in the book of Acts. Paul and his letters came back into favor soon after his death.

Luke's approach was perfectly designed to vindicate Paul to Jewish Christians. He showed that it was not Paul who initiated the law-free gospel to the Gentiles. It was the Spirit of Jesus who came at Pentecost to replace the leadership of the old law. The law-free Gentile mission was well established before Paul was called to be an apostle to the Gentiles. It was Peter (a favorite among Jewish Christians) rather than Paul who broke the law by initiating the Gentile mission. When Jewish Christians precipitated a storm of controversy at Antioch by their demand that Gentiles should be circumcised and keep the law, James, Peter and the elders at Jerusalem agreed with Paul that Gentiles were not under the jurisdiction of the law. Luke even seemed to emphasize that Paul himself habitually lived like a good Jew. The apostle simply refused to impose the law on Gentile believers.

It is not certain whether Paul wrote Galatians just before or after the Jerusalem conference (Acts 15). But it is clear that the letter was intended to meet a similar issue. ⁷¹ Jewish Christians were urging Gentile Christians to accept the yoke of the law. At stake was the status of Gentiles within the new-covenant community. Among the Jews there was a long-established tradition to grant Gentile God-fearers rights in the synagogue and a place among Abraham's children only when they became full Jewish proselytes— i.e., only when they were circumcised as a token of their subjection to the law. Unless Gentile Christians were therefore willing to signify their faith in Christ by subjection to the Jewish Torah, Jewish Christians were not prepared to recognize that they had equal rights in God's new Israel. In this, Jewish Christians were no different from Lutherans, Calvinists, Baptists or Adventists. Unless a Christian is prepared to accept their special denominational signs and be subject to their particular religious traditions, he is not granted full Christian fellowship. The issue in Galatia was not so much a question on how to become a Christian, for the Galatians were already Christians. The issue was over Gentile rights and Gentile status within the church. Does faith in Christ plus nothing entitle Gentiles to equality with Jewish Christians in the family of Abraham, or must Gentile Christians now eat kosher food, observe the Sabbath and generally live like most Jewish Christians continued to live. The immediate context of Paul's remarks on justification by faith is the problem of table fellowship between Jews and Gentiles (Gal. 2:11-21). This confirms that the doctrine addresses the problem of fellowship among diverse groups of Christians.

The background of the Epistle to the Romans is more complex. Christian scholars have been slow in applying the historical method of interpretation to this great epistle. From the time of Melanchthon to early in this century, Romans has been interpreted as if it were a theological treatise with little direct bearing on the historical situation

among the Christians in Rome. This traditional approach to Romans is now being challenged by those who employ the historical method. 72 A wealth of information has been gathered on the historical background to the book of Romans. 73

In brief, the Christians at Rome were not addressed as “the church at Rome,” as Paul generally addressed the Christians in his other letters. Apparently there was a reason for this. The Christians at Rome were divided into competing house churches which judged and condemned one another. On one hand, there were Jewish Christians who strictly followed dietary rules, kept the Sabbath day and in other ways lived in obedience to what was for them the law of God. They condemned Gentile Christians for what appeared to be their antinomian position and for the failure of more Jews to embrace Jesus as the Messiah. In their eyes the Gentile believers had no right to Abraham’s glorious inheritance. On the other hand, the Gentile Christians regarded the Jewish Christians as weak in the faith because they had not outgrown their petty Jewish restrictions and asserted their full liberty in the new age of the Messiah. These Gentile believers had become the majority among the Christians in Rome, and they were becoming increasingly critical and impatient with the Jewish minority. Anti-Jewish sentiment was rife in Rome, and some of this sentiment was in danger of affecting the attitude of Gentile Christians toward their Jewish brothers and sisters. 74

Paul wrote to the Roman Christians while on his way to Jerusalem (Rom. 15:25). With him was a special offering from the Gentile churches to the Christians at Jerusalem as a token of Gentile indebtedness to Jewish Christians (Rom. 15:26, 27). At stake was the recognition of the leaders of the Jerusalem church for Paul’s mission to the Gentiles. Also at stake was his vision of a worldwide church in which Jewish and Gentile Christians could preserve their distinctive identity and demonstrate that the Father of Messiah Jesus was the God of both Jew and Gentile. If Jew and Gentile could not unite in the fellowship of one community in Rome, the cause of the gospel would receive a tremendous setback as far as Paul was concerned. It was urgent that Jewish Christians stop condemning those Gentile Christians who failed to order their lives according to the Jewish law. And it was vital that Gentile Christians end their contempt for “weak” Jewish Christians who could not break away from their Jewish culture. Each must accept the other just as Christ had accepted them (Rom. 15:7). The issue, therefore, was not how to become a Christian but how such diverse Christians might recognize that every believer has the right of uninhibited acceptance.

Paul deals with this Jew/Gentile problem under the rubric of justification by faith. Justification means “status of rightness within the covenant.” 75 “To justify a man means to obtain for him the place due to him within the covenant.” 76

Justification primarily means the status of rightness before God and acceptance into his fellowship. Yet this vertical relationship is inseparable from the horizontal relationship. The Jew or Gentile Christian cannot condemn those whom God has justified. Every Christian is bound to accept him whom God has accepted. This

grounding of the believer's vindication in the verdict of God reinforces Paul's appeal to accept each other in the one body of Christ (Rom. 15:7).

Failure of Jewish and Gentile believers to embrace each other would constitute a most serious affront to the gospel, in which God's justice has been manifested (Rom. 1:17; 3:25, 26). God's justice is his fidelity to his ancient promise to bless all nations through the Seed of Abraham. It is a justice which stands for the oppressed and disadvantaged and helps those who have been denied or deprived of their rights (Ps. 103:6).

The judge intervenes to restore the right to him who has been deprived of it. He decides in favor of the deprived one, of him who is needy. He declares the oppressed or afflicted one to be *tsadaq*, to be in the right. 77

Justification is closely related to the biblical idea of justice, which is vindication and salvation for all that are oppressed. To justify a person means "to secure justice for him," "to champion someone's cause." 78 This is what God has done for all who believe in Jesus, whether Jew or Gentile. All have been hopelessly oppressed by the legacy of sin (Rom. 1-3), all have fallen short of God's glorious ideal (Rom. 3:23), and all are helpless— candidates for God's justice, which is biased in favor of the weak (Rom. 5:6). In Jesus Christ God has acted in a manifestation of justice far above what any man could ask or think. He has acted to restore the rights of those who are clearly in the wrong and to champion even the cause of his enemies (Rom. 5:10). He declares that all who believe in Jesus, whether Jew or Gentile, are declared to be in the right and are entitled to all the rights which belong to members of his family.

If, therefore, a law-observing Jewish believer should withhold his full acceptance of a non-law-keeping Gentile believer, he would be despising the very gospel which brought him his own acceptance unto life eternal. He would be acting like that older brother in Jesus' story of the prodigal son. The older brother refused to accept him whom the father had accepted. This story illustrates that the vertical (before God) and horizontal (before others) aspects of justification cannot be sundered.

Thus, he brings the justice which meant that both Jews and Gentiles had equal rights as children in God's domain. Thus, Paul's work can be seen as a fight for equality for all men...For Paul one's justification is closely related to the question of Jewish-Gentile unity... Paul fights for the justice established in Jesus Christ. It is a justice that gives the Gentile an equal right as a child in the household of God...Paul fights for the rights of Gentiles— rights based on the justification of Jews and Gentiles through Jesus Christ... Jewish Christians like Paul and Peter must honor the Gentiles as beloved brothers of equal rights, if they themselves really wish to proclaim and recognize the act of righteousness accomplished in Jesus Christ. So the prohibition, that men of one derivation force upon fellow-men of another derivation their own experience as necessary to salvation, works in both directions. In order that the one whole grace of God be recognized and celebrated, in sermons or at table or in the market-place, men are in need of fellow-men who are different from themselves. If they would remain only among themselves and their own kind, they would separate themselves from God and his justice. 79

In Western Christianity the doctrine of justification by faith was lifted from its historical New Testament setting and applied exclusively to the process of a lone individual's getting right with God. Justification was narrowed to show why and how

God is merciful “to me.” Each person was to concentrate on his own justification and find certainty of salvation for himself. Justification by faith became the classical doctrinal expression of Protestant individualism.

The Unhappy Fruit of Protestant Individualism

In tracing some of the unhappy social and ethical consequences of Protestant individualism, we do not want to forget the positive contribution of the Reformation, even the positive contribution of Protestant individualism itself.

In removing Paul from the historical setting of his struggle for Gentile rights, the Reformation doctrine did not do justice to the social character of justification by faith. It is true that Protestant expositors have often tried to show that individual justification will bear positive social fruit. It has been shown, for example, that the soul, freed from anxiety about itself, becomes free for the neighbor. With Luther the freedom of justification was always the freedom to become the neighbor’s servant. Justification itself, however, was not seen to involve the neighbor but solely my own peace with God. Markus Barth’s critique of traditional Protestantism is so powerful at this point that we will cite his remarks at length:

The actual process and procurement of justification seem to be limited to a work of God, of Jesus Christ, perhaps of the Spirit, which happens “for me,” “to me,” and has no use for fellow-man—except that he is treated as an *alter ego*, just another case of my own kind. Presumably under the influence of those Pauline expressions in which the pronoun “I” appears particularly prominent, the mystery of justification was sought by each person in his own justification. Each individual was considered capable of representing completely the needs of all men and also the redemption promised to all flesh. So the explanation of justification was finally narrowed to show why and how God is a merciful God “to me.” Thus it seemed that a person was involved to the deepest extent only and exactly when *his* absurd self-righteousness, *his* pardon, and *his* baptism held the center of the stage...

It cannot be denied that a danger lurks here— the danger of a crass individualism, of a religiously or ecclesiastically embellished egoism, also of strange conceptions of collective guilt and grace. There is also the danger of a missing ethical perspective. It is amazing that the *unio cum Christo* could be as much emphasized as it was among the Reformers when at the same time the function of the brother who may be a witness and representative of Jesus Christ had but the tiniest part to play, or none at all. It is less amazing that with the fading out of the Christological center, also every chance was lost for recovering the social and ethical character of justification. Not justification itself, but other acts of God, or human conditions and experiences, were established as the basis of social existence, especially of mutual love, joy and responsibility.

Justification by faith is a reality only in community with those fellow-men whom God elected for common justification. Fellow-man is neither simply a parallel case nor an appendage of “my” justification. For fellow-humanity is a presupposition of, a means to, and a proof of, the eternal righteousness promised “to me, also.” There is no personal justification by God without justification of fellow-men by God...

Thus it is clear that no man for himself alone can claim and have justification and believe in the justifying God. Even in matters of faith man is not an island! To be a human being means to have fellow-men of a completely different kind always with us, beside us, for us, not only in earthly relationships but also and especially our knowledge and service of God. God gives us the gift of fellow-men. Peter and Paul needed the Gentiles, upon whom God’s spirit was poured out, in order to be sure of their own way. Where does man find certainty of salvation? In the recesses of one’s heart,

in cultic experience, in biblical maxims or right doctrine? Hardly ever! But it can be found in the fellow-man who has received grace. The words *pro me* can be uttered with certainty only when they are supported by the realization that God already gave others his righteousness. No man can find meaning and fulfillment of his own life, as long as he is directed more and more to himself, his own faith, his personal principles, his private relationship to God. . .

Justification in Christ is thus not an individual miracle happening to this person or that person, which each may seek or possess for himself. Rather justification by grace is a joining together of this person and that person, of the near and the far, of the good and the bad, of the high and the low. It is a social event. No one is joined to Christ except together with a neighbor...

How impossible it is, for this reason, to reduce justification to a drama in the soul of the individual only, or to an act that is limited to the stage provided by the church and performed by the means entrusted to it. F. K asemann is certainly right in understanding justification as the establishment of the world-wide lordship of God, and in seeking by all means a way out of the narrow, purely anthropological (and psychological!) interpretation of Paul...

Justification is a public festival which no one can accept and celebrate for himself alone....

It seems clear that those people who personally are completely convinced of justification by grace alone, and who heartily grant to people of another color the right to the same justification (as long as they remain in their own churches, schools, ghettos, handyman occupations), give an ugly expression to the Augustinian and Reformation understanding of justification. By their emphasis upon the primacy of individual justification they deny the immediate social character and impact of the justification of the Jews and Gentiles, and they obstruct or delay the changes in common life which belong to the "new creation." 80

Paul used the doctrine of justification by faith to break down barriers between diverse Christians and to overcome a gospel-denying disunity among Christians. Yet Protestants have used this doctrine as an issue to divide Christian from Christian.

The strength of the Reformation doctrine was that it grounded its purely individualistic justification wholly in the outside-of-me work of Christ. At this vital point the Reformation was therefore thoroughly Christocentric. But it seems that Protestant individualism has tended to shift the focus of attention from the "alien" work of Christ to a preoccupation with the individual's own heart. Modern Evangelicalism is obsessed with the believer's inner life. James Davison Hunter dares to call the popular Evangelical doctrine of the new birth and the Spirit-filled life "a *form of narcissism*, and a *form of hedonism*." 81

This concentration on personal peace with God and a satisfying religious experience has serious ethical consequences. It is accompanied by a stress on an asceticism and piety which is strictly personal. Ideally, the person who has withdrawn from the world to cultivate the glowing experience of peace with God will be active to share this experience with others, but too often those who are smugly saved seem to say, "I'm right with God; let the world be damned." Pious souls are encouraged to live in a withdrawn remnant which waits in its esoteric desert for the Lord's coming or the rapture. The cultivation of inward piety by Bible study, prayer and a host of devotional aids— especially endless apocalyptic speculation about end-time events— is all designed to keep the faithful on fire for the Lord. But such piety may easily be an escape from social and ethical responsibility.

Protestant individualism does not do justice to the biblical doctrine of man. Rather than seeing that humans have relationships, the Bible sees that a person is human only in his relationships— with God, with fellow-man and with the world. Fellow-man is not simply an adjunct to one’s human existence. No one is human except in relationship with fellow-man. “Righteousness, life and peace are not, in Old Testament conceptualization, a private possession or condition. Only the community of kindred and folk can assure both.” 82 This helps us understand why the Old Testament prophets poured scorn on their people’s self-centered asceticism and religiosity. In fact, the entire Old Testament places little emphasis on personal asceticism and the cultivation of personal inward piety. The prophets demanded the practice of social justice. Their concern was given its best expression in the teaching of our Lord, especially in his preaching concerning the kingdom of God.

The incarnation of our Lord demonstrates the nature of true humanity. God joined the human race in the person of his Son and made every effort, even to the point of the ultimate sacrifice, to remove every barrier, not only between man and God, but between man and man. When Christ proclaimed the gospel in terms of the kingdom of God, he made salvation very much a community matter. In this new community or kingdom under God’s rule, there is no private reconciliation or forgiveness before God which does not at the same time include a spirit of reconciliation and forgiveness toward the erring brother. We suggest that this includes doctrinal erring as much as moral erring.

It is astonishing that we have not only dehistoricized the New Testament but have individualized great passages which actually have a communal meaning. For example, when Jesus said to Nicodemus, “*You* must be born again,” he used the second person plural (John 3:7, NIV margin)— meaning “You, Israel, must be reborn.” Old Israel received birth in the Exodus. The time had come for the covenantal community to be reborn by a new exodus event (John 3:14-16). A Jew did not become a member of Israel by having his own exodus but by identifying with the one Exodus event. For the Christian, too, there is but one saving event, in which both Adam and Israel became new. A believer is not left to witness to his private born-again experience but to the re-creation of humanity which took place in the exodus of Christ’s resurrection. He is personally regenerated only as he identifies with that communal new birth which God accomplished in Jesus Christ.

So also, great passages such as “Christ in you [plural], the hope of glory” (Col. 1:27) and “You [plural] are God’s temple” (1 Cor. 3:16, RSV) are not referring to some private relationship but to the communal existence of the body of Christ. And as far as Paul is concerned, there is no justified life without community. “Paul knows nothing of solitary salvation; to be ‘in Christ’ is not for him the mystic flight of the alone to the alone.” 83

Many Christian thinkers have been concerned about the lack of social conscience which exists particularly in the conservative or Evangelical wing of the church. The

church has not always expressed the biblical concern for justice for all that are oppressed. The church has often been on the side of the *status quo* and the oppressive power structures of society. Its people have been too preoccupied with getting their souls to heaven to be too concerned about social righteousness.

The tendency of the religions of all time has been to care more for religion than for humanity; Christ cared more for humanity than for religion— rather, His care for humanity was the chief expression of His religion. He was not indifferent to observance but the practices of the people bulked in His thoughts before the practices of the Church. It has been pointed out as a blemish on the immortal allegory of Bunyan that the Pilgrim never *did* anything— anything but save his soul. The remark is scarcely fair, for the allegory is designedly the story of a soul in a single relation; and, besides, he did do a little. But the warning may well be weighed. The Pilgrim's one thought, his work by day, his dream by night, was *escape*. He took little part in the world through which he passed. He was a *Pilgrim* travelling through it; his business was to get through safe. Whatever this is, it is not Christianity. 84

We cannot correct the evils of a religiously embellished egotism unless we grasp the root of the problem. That root is a deficient doctrine of justification by faith. It must be reset in the social context in which it belongs in the New Testament. Here it does not focus exclusively on ourselves but addresses itself to the question of justice for others.

Summary: The Way Ahead

For some years leading Christian thinkers have declared that the era of Western Christianity is coming to an end. 85 This must include Protestant Christianity because it also belongs to the era of Constantinian Christianity. Luther and Calvin were sons of the Latin Church. They developed the Reformation doctrine within a given framework and made an enormous contribution. But that framework is no longer adequate.

We must now see beyond the battle lines of the sixteenth century. Some of the arguments on either side of the traditional debate over justification by faith have become obsolete. We must give the issues addressed by the doctrine of justification in the first century pre-eminence over the concerns of the sixteenth century. This will mean the following:

1. We will no longer use the doctrine of justification by faith to support a system of Christian nomism. In practice, the third use of the law has been the means of investing the religious traditions of our denominations or groups with the authority of divine norms by which we not only test our faithfulness to Christ but the faithfulness of other Christians. In the future the doctrine of justification by faith will be used to call all our ways of saying and doing things into question. Wherever the law (i.e., the religion) of a denomination or group is used as an instrument of division, of judging the status of other Christians, or of excluding them from full acceptance, we will use the doctrine of justification by faith to batter down these sectarian walls.

2. The doctrine of justification by faith will not be the means of making a person a Christian in the first place. Paul presented this doctrine to people who had already become Christians.

In classical Protestantism the doctrine of justification is an elaborate and technical dogma. Explaining this doctrine is not the essence of sharing the good news. Many who have heard and believed the Christ-story would fail in a test of Protestant orthodoxy, yet they are Christians in full favor with God, irrespective of their immaturity.

This means that we must distinguish between the gospel proper and its particular application in the doctrine of justification by faith. For, the gospel is an objective, historical, once-and-for-all thing which exists prior to faith and justification. Whoever hears the story of Jesus of Nazareth (gospel) and stakes his existence upon it becomes a Christian. The doctrine of justification by faith alone tells us that he ought to be treated with the status of Christ himself— whether he practices our form of the Supper, baptism and piety or not, and whether he subscribes to our theological formulations or not.

3. The doctrine of justification will no longer support a tendency toward preoccupation with my salvation, my inner peace and my spiritual comfort. It will be a weapon in the hands of those who have forgotten themselves into the kingdom of God. With this weapon they will fight for those whose deprivation of rights is a denial of the gospel.

Notes and References

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the New International Version.

1. See Robert D. Brinsmead, "The Historical Method," *The Christian Verdict*, Essay 2, 1983.
2. Karl P. Donfried, *The Dynamic Word: New Testament Insights for Contemporary Christians* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1981), p. 1.
3. See Nigel Watson, "Justification—A New Look," *Australian Biblical Review* 18 (Oct. 1970): 33.
4. James D. C. Dunn, *Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry into the Character of Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), pp. 244-45.
5. Tom Wright, "Justification: The Biblical Basis and Its Relevance for Contemporary Evangelicalism," in Tom Wright, John Tiller, George Carey and Tony Baker, *The Great Acquittal: Justification by Faith and Current Christian Thought*, ed. Gavin Reid (London: William Collins Sons & Co., 1980), p. 31.
6. J. I. Packer, "Sola Fide: The Reformed Doctrine of Justification," in R. C. Sproul, ed., *Soil Deo Gloria: Essays in Reformed Theology; Festschrift for John H. Gerstner* (Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co., 1976), p. 16.
7. See G. C. Berkouwer, *Faith and Justification*, *Studies in Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1954), pp. 89-90.
8. I.e., grace alone, Christ alone, faith alone.
9. Paul Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought: From Its Judaic and Hellenistic Origins to Existentialism*, ed. Carl E. Braaten (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1967, 1968), p. 230.

10. The first use of the law was said to be its function of restraining sin in society.
11. This was the major thesis of Samuel Bolton, *The True Bounds of Christian Freedom* (1645; reprinted, London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1964).
12. Walter Marshall, *The Gospel-Mystery of Sanctification* (London: Oliphants, 1954).
13. *Verdict* championed this classical Protestant doctrine for ten years. Its numerous articles on justification by faith clearly demonstrate that the classical Protestant doctrine of justification leads logically and inevitably to an exaltation of the law as the Christian's rule of life. If Luther and the great Lutheran theologians were *Verdict's* mentors in the matter of justification, Calvin and the great Reformed theologians were its mentors in the matter of sanctification.
14. Gerhard O. Forde, *The Law-Gospel Debate: An Interpretation of Its Historical Development* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1969), pp. 3-9.
15. From the Greek word *nomos*, meaning law.
16. See E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), pp. 33, 236, 238. "The best title for this sort of religion is 'covenantal nomism'" (p. 236). See also Richard N. Longenecker, *Paul: Apostle of Liberty* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), pp. 79-83.
17. Forde, *Law-Gospel Debate*, pp. 186, 188.
18. See Krister Stendahl's influential essay, "The Apostle Paul and the Introspective Conscience of the West," in Krister Stendahl, *Paul among Jews and Gentiles and Other Essays* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1976), pp. 78-91.
19. See Robert D. Brinsmead, "Sabbatarianism Re-Examined," *Verdict* 4, no. 4 (June 1981); idem, "Jesus and the Law," *Verdict* 4, no. 6 (Oct. 1981); idem, "The Heart of New Testament Ethics," *Verdict* 5, no. 1 (Jan. 1982).
20. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, p. 490.
21. See Richard N. Longenecker, "The Pedagogical Nature of the Law in Galatians 3:19—4:7," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 25, no. 1 (Mar. 1982): 53-61.
22. See Morna D. Hooker, *A Preface to Paul* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 29, 72-3.
23. The Latin for "the third use of the law."
24. Nicholas Thomas Wright, "The Messiah and the People of God: A Study in Pauline Theology with Particular Reference to the Argument of the Epistle to the Romans" (Ph.D. diss., University of Oxford, 1980), p. 296n.
25. See Alan Richardson, *The Bible in the Age of Science* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), pp. 122-41; C. Ernest Wright, *God Who Acts* (London: SCM Press, 1952); Oscar Cullmann, *Salvation in History* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1967); idem, *Christ and Time: The Primitive Christian Conception of Time and History*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964); Will Herberg, *Faith Enacted as History: Essays in Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976); Wolfhart Pannenberg, ed., *Revelation as History* (London: Macmillan Co., 1968).
26. "The historic character of human existence demands an appreciation of narrative which shapes an ethics of virtue" (Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Social Ethic* [Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981], p. 5).
27. *Ibid.*, p. 10.
28. E. W. Ives, *God in History* (Tring, Herts, U.K.: Lion Publishing, 1979), p. 91.
29. "The Torah, as James Sanders interprets it, is not just a law code but 'essentially a story.' It is in the context of the narrative structure of the Pentateuch that Israel's ordinances, commandments, and statutes have their meaning" (George W. Stroup, *The Promise of Narrative Theology: Recovering the Gospel in the Church* [Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981], p. 82).
30. See Deut. 26:1-10.
31. See Ps, 103:6, 7.
32. See Exod. 22:21-23; Deut. 23:5-16,
33. See Exod. 20:1, 2; Lev. 26:13; Deut. 5:15.

34. See Robert Banks, *Jesus and the Law in the Synoptic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), pp. 39-45.
35. See Exod. 20, 34; Deut. 5.
36. For an excellent discussion on the Decalogue in the Old and New Testament, see A. T. Lincoln, "From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical and Theological Perspective," in D. A. Carson, ed., *From Sabbath to Lord's Day: A Biblical, Historical, and Theological Investigation* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), pp. 355-78.
37. See Exod. 20:1, 2; Deut. 5:1-3,
38. See John Richard Sampey, art. "The Ten Commandments," *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, ed, James Orr (1939; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974), 5:2944B.
39. See Robert D. Brinsmead, "Myths about the Ten Commandments," *Verdict Report* 1, no. 6 (Oct. 1982).
40. D. R. De Lacey, "The Sabbath/Sunday Question and the Law in the Pauline Corpus," in Carson, *Sabbath to Lord's Day*, pp. 185, 169.
41. See Ragnar Bring, "Preaching the Law," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 13, no. 1 (Mar. 1960): 3-5.
42. See James B. Torrance, "The Covenant Concept in Scottish Theology and Politics and Its Legacy," *Scottish Journal of Theology* 34, no. 3 (1981): 225-43.
43. See Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, pp. 85-7.
44. J. H. Oldham, "Part III: The Function of the Church in Society," in W. A. Visser 'T Hooft and J. H. Oldham, *The Church and Its Function in Society*, vol. 1, *Church, Community, and State* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1937), pp. 235-36.
45. See Severino Pancaro, *The Law in the Fourth Gospel: The Torah and the Gospel, Moses and Jesus, Judaism and Christianity According to John* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1975), p. 535n; Eldon Jay Epp, "Wisdom, Torah, Word: The Johannine Prologue and the Purpose of the Fourth Gospel," in Gerald F. Hawthorne, ed., *Current Issues in Biblical and Patristic Interpretation: Studies in Honor of Merrill C. Tenney Presented by His Former Students* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975), pp. 128-46.
46. See Pancaro, *Law in the Fourth Gospel*, pp. 452-87; Epp, "Wisdom, Torah, Word," pp. 128-46.
47. See Markus Barth, "Jews and Gentiles: The Social Character of Justification in Paul," *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 5, no. 2 (Spring 1968): 253.
48. "The battle Paul waged was against Jewish-Christians who wished to impose the Law upon Gentile converts to Christianity" (Pancaro, *Law in the Fourth Gospel*, p. 529).
49. See W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism: Some Rabbinic Elements in Pauline Theology*, 4th ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), pp. 114-18, 348; Banks, *Jesus and the Law*, pp. 71-2,
50. For an excellent summary of the Sinai/Pentecost association, see Max M. B. Turner, "The Sabbath, Sunday, and the Law in Luke/Acts," in Carson, *Sabbath to Lord's Day*, p. 150n.
51. See Martin Hengel, *Acts and the History of Earliest Christianity* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), pp. 71, 75, 99-100, 104-5, 110; Leonhard Goppelt, *Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Times* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977), pp. 61, 69.
52. In fulfillment of Isaiah 2:1-3.
53. Markus Barth, *Ephesians: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary on Chapters 1-3*, The Anchor Bible (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1974), p. 277.
54. See Robert Jewett's comment on the meaning of Romans 12:3 in Robert Jewett, *Christian Tolerance: Paul's Message to the Modern Church* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1982), pp. 61-2.
55. See James Whyte, "Protestant Ethics and the Will of God," in G. R. Dunstan, ed., *Duty and Discernment* (London: SCM Press, 1975), pp. 111-22.
56. Barth, "Jews and Gentiles," p. 256.
57. Quoted by James Luther Adams in "Law and the Religious Spirit: Rudolf Sohm," in James Luther Adams, *On Being Human Religiously: Selected Essays in Religion and Society*, ed, Max L. Stackhouse (Boston: Beacon Press, 1976), pp. 196-97.

58. Richard E. Gade, *A Historical Survey of Anti-Semitism* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1981).
59. Roland H. Bainton, *The Travail of Religious Liberty: Nine Biographical Studies* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1951), p. 55.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
61. Jewett, *Christian Tolerance*, p. 143.
62. Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 9.
63. In one small Australian city there are at least five different Pentecostal groups. Each is certain of the “truth” and is also certain that the others are of the “devil,”
64. Emil Brunner, *The Divine Imperative: A Study in Christian Ethics* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1947), p. 73.
65. For an excellent comment on this shift from an objective to a subjective focus, see Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975), p. 14.
66. “According to Acts 11.20, the Jewish Christians driven out of Jerusalem, who first used Antioch as a base from which to embark deliberately on a mission to the Gentiles which took no account of the Jewish law, came from Cyrenaica and Cyprus, areas which from the time of the Ptolemies on had a large and completely Hellenized Jewish Diaspora. . . . Thus the ‘Hellenists’, driven out of Jewish Palestine, were gradually forced to go beyond the circle of full Jews and also to turn to Gentiles who were interested in Judaism; in other words, they paved the way towards a mission to the Gentiles, which in the end had to mean disregarding the law. . . . Antioch was the first great city of the ancient world in which Christianity gained a footing ... The complete breakthrough to an open mission to the Gentiles first took place in the freedom and openness of the capital, and as a result of the stimulus provided by the Hellenists who had been driven out of Jerusalem and were not completely at home there, so that from now on the observance of the Torah was of virtually no significance at all. Now a mission to non-Jews became an independent task and no longer happened sporadically in particular isolated cases; it was not limited to the ‘godfearers’, but in a fairly systematic way was now directed towards all the Gentiles. . . . The universalist christology of the ‘Hellenists’, who now saw the risen and exalted Jesus as the Lord of all men, rather than as the exclusive Messiah of Israel, exercised pressure towards a universal mission without the limitations of the law.... The programme of a mission to the whole ‘world’ put forward by Paul in Rom. 10.18 and 15.7ff., by Mark in 13.10, by Luke in Acts 1.8 and in the missionary command of Matthew 28.18f.-was gradually developed from the ‘Hellenist’ mission in Antioch which was carried on apart from the law” (Hengel, *Earliest Christianity*, pp. 71, 75, 99-100, 104-5, 110).
- “As well as the Church in Israel whose path we have pursued up to this point, a Church arose remarkably early outside the Jewish nation, a Church which no longer kept the Mosaic Law. Just as the former emerged from Jerusalem, so, the latter emerged from Antioch, on the Orontes, at one time the capital city of the Seleucid Kingdom. This magnificent Hellenistic city had approximately 300,000 inhabitants, 30,000 of whom were Jews. It was here, according to Acts xi.19-21, that several of the Hellenists who had fled from Jerusalem turned directly to the Gentiles with the Gospel and brought them to faith. . . They baptized the believing Gentiles without circumcising them and were able to live together with them by ignoring the objectionable regulations of the Law. . . . After the conversion of the Samaritans, who were already circumcised, there follows the conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch who could not be circumcised and thus could not be accepted into Israel (Acts viii.36; Deut. xxiii.1), of Cornelius an uncircumcised ‘God fearer’, and finally of the Gentiles in Antioch. They all came to faith, and on the basis of their faith the missionary had to grant them participation in the eschatological salvation just as Jesus once had done for the Centurion and the Syro-Phoenician woman (Matt. viii.10, xv.28). They were accepted by means of baptism as members into the redeemed community, without circumcision and without subjection to the Law”. (Goppelt, *Apostolic and Post- Apostolic Times*, pp. 61, 69).
67. F. W. Dillistone, “The Recovery of the Doctrine of Justification by Faith,” in G. W. H. Lampe, ed., *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith* (London: A. R. Mowbray & Co., 1954), p. 38.
68. See Markus Barth, “Justification: From Text to Sermon on Galatians 2:11-21,” *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 22, no. 2 (Apr. 1968): 154.
69. Barth, “Jews and Gentiles,” pp. 257-58.
70. See Karl P. Donfried, “Attempts at Understanding the Purpose of Luke-Acts: Christology and the Salvation of the Gentiles,” in Robert F. Berkey and Sarah A. Edwards, eds., *Christological Perspectives: Essays in Honor of Harvey K. McArthur* (New York: Pilgrim Press, 1982), pp. 112-22.

71. See Turner, "Sabbath, Sunday, and the Law," p. 149n.
72. See Karl P. Donfried, ed., *The Romans Debate* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1977); Paul S. Minear, *The Obedience of Faith: The Purposes of Paul in the Epistle to the Romans* (Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson, 1971); J. Christiaan Beker, *Paul the Apostle: The Triumph of God in Life and Thought* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1980), pp. 59-93.
73. See especially Wolfgang Wiefel, "The Jewish Community in Ancient Rome and the Origins of Roman Christianity," in Donfried, *Romans Debate*, pp. 100-119; Minear, *Obedience of Faith*, pp. 9-12.
74. See *ibid.*
75. Dillistone, "Justification by Faith," p. 38.
76. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
77. E. R. Achtemeier, art. "Righteousness in the OT," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. George Arthur Buttrick (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962), 4:83.
78. Gottlob Schrenk, art. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. and ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964). 2: 212.
79. Barth, "Jews and Gentiles," pp. 241-42, 255-57.
80. *Ibid.*, pp. 242-45, 257-59, 262-63, 266.
81. James Davison Hunter, "Subjectivization and the New Evangelical Theodicy," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 21, no. 1 (Mar. 1982): 44.
82. Barth, "Jews and Gentiles," p. 252.
83. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*, pp. 86-7.
84. Henry Drummond, *The Programme of Christianity: An Address* (New York: James Pott & Co., Publishers, 1892), pp. 13-14.
85. See Douglas John Hall, *Has the Church a Future?* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1980), p. 36.

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