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THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD OR WHAT MUST GOD DO TO BE JUST? BY: C. D. COLE

You sometimes hear preachers and others say that if God did thus and so, He would be unjust. I myself have said that a just God would not do certain things. Now the Bible declares that God is just and righteous. Even Pharaoh said to Moses, *"I have sinned this time; the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked,"* Exodus 9:27. *"Righteous art Thou, O Lord,"* Revelation 16:5. *"And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou are righteous, O Lord,"* Jeremiah 12:1.

This was said by the angel of waters when the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of water and they became blood. Romans 2:5, *"But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God."*

In thinking about this question we must decide whether we will consider God as lawgiver or as a lawkeeper, as ruler or subject. We must either put ourselves under his law or put him under our law. Now God is not righteous by keeping our law, He is under no law. He is the law unto Himself. God's righteousness is a part of His very nature, it belongs to Him essentially and is not the result of obedience to any law save the law of His nature. So all God has to do to be

righteous is to act in harmony with His nature. Whatever God does is right just because He does it.

NEGATIVELY:

1. God does not have to save everybody to be just. To be just, God must give everybody what he deserves. The sinner doesn't deserve salvation, therefore salvation does not flow from God's justice, but mercy.

2. God doesn't have to save anybody to be just. Salvation isn't a debt owed to men. If men get what they deserve apart from mercy no man would be saved.

3. God doesn't have to save all if he saves some, in order to be just. God saves men, but is he unjust because he doesn't save the fallen angel? God saves some men but is he unjust because he doesn't save the devil? God saves some men, is he unjust because he doesn't save all? *"As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised*

thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it,

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PREACH THE WORD

BY: C. D. COLE

"Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine," II Timothy 4:2.

INTRODUCTION: If there is one statement in the Bible that covers the work of a minister it is this one, preach the word. If there is one sentence in the Bible that sets forth the program of the church it is this one, Preach the Word. If there is one thing that distinguishes the work of the church from all other institutions it is this. The church is the one institution charged with the task of preaching the word. **The church is the pillar and ground of the truth.** at home and abroad? Are we proclaiming the truth by lip and life? Are we promoting the truth with our money? Are we walking in the truth? Do we let the word of God regulate our lives? Are we doing the things commanded in the word and shunning the things forbidden and condemned in the word?

I. We are to preach all the word. *"For I have not shunned to declare all the counsel of God," Acts 20:27.*

A. About sin. Every preacher ought to preach so that men will fall out with sin or fall out with him. Blessed is the preacher who has had people to fall out with him because of his preaching against sin. I want it to be said of me, that no man could enjoy my preaching and live in sin: the drunkard, the dishonest, the adulterer, the covetous and the stingy man with the kingdom of God. How can a church prosper financially if the pastor is faithful in preaching against sin? Well, a lot of them would not be prosperous as they are if sin was preached against as it ought to be. A church will prosper financially in proportion to the number of really saved in it who will support a ministry of the word.

B. About God. Glorious

theme! The heart is ravished as it roams the field of His personal perfections. Think of God's power. Power to create vast universe, power to keep together all He has created, power to redeem sinners, power to regenerate, power to punish all enemies. Think of His mercy. Mercy to relieve the miserable and helpless. Grace to meet all our needs, grace to pardon, grace to take us to heaven. Love, Who can describe it? Love for enemies, haters. If we heard more about God from the pulpit there would be more praise from the pew.

C. About man. Sad theme! Man, the acme of creation lying in his own blood! Man, a moral suicide! Man, in need of salvation, and yet spurning and rejecting the offer through Christ. The word does not have one good thing to say about human nature. It declares that every man at his best estate is altogether vanity. Every faculty of man has been ruined by sin. In salvation man is not patched up and made over, he is born again, born from above.

D. About salvation. What a large theme! What a stupendous undertaking! Salvation is a successful work because it is of the Lord. If salvation were a human project it would be a failure. But salvation is of the Lord, in its origin, execution, and enjoyment, for God has an inheritance in the saints. Salvation is of the Lord in its planning and promoting. Planned by the Father, purchased by the Son, and promoted by the Spirit. Salvation is God's recovery program. Sinner friend, you better look into the matter to see if you are one of the beneficiaries.

E. About service. Saved to serve. Christ is more than a fire escape from hell. He is both Lord and Christ. He is the nobleman gone into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to

return. To His servants, he says, "Occupy till I come."

Preach the word on all subjects. Don't choose a subject that the Bible doesn't deal with.

II. We are to preach the word all the time. This is a permanent program. Our text says, "In season and out of season." There is no closed season for preaching the word. In season, when it is easy; out of season, when it is difficult.

III. We are to preach the word in all places. Paul said, *"So, much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also,"* Romans 1:15. We have no right to pick out certain people and places where the word is to be preached. All doors God opens are to be entered. From the standpoint of our responsibility there are no favored races or countries. Preach the gospel to every creature, foreign missions also.

IV. We are to preach the word in reproof, rebuke, and exhortation with all longsuffering and doctrine.

Reproof - bring to the proof. We need preaching that will test men's profession, bring to the light their motives. The word is a critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And faithfully preached will bring to light the hidden things of men's lives. Spurgeon would often have men and women come to him and accuse him of personal attack on them, when, in fact, he knew nothing of them. The wicked flee when no man pursueth.

Rebuke - means to chide and blame and condemn. Bible preaching will condemn the wicked. No preacher is such an enemy to human souls as the man who can make people feel good in their sins. Painful but profitable.

Exhortation - means to plead and urge and beseech. There must be a beseeching and pleading note to our preaching. We should not be indifferent as to

THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH

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whether people keep the word we preach.

Longsuffering - patience. Preachers of the word need to exercise patience. They will meet with disappointments and trials; very apt to have more enemies than friends. Christ said that tribulation and persecution would come because of the word. Paul wrote Timothy to be a partaker of the afflictions of the gospel. No preacher should wish to be more popular than the Word. Friends for the truth's sake are the only ones that will last. If some support me because they like me personally, or because I have befriended you in one way or other, I can hardly hope your support will last. I might without knowing it give you some slight offense and lose your support. I might not always be as cordial as I should. I might not visit you as often as you feel I should.

Doctrine - The preacher of the word will be a doctrinal preacher. He will fatten his own soul in the pastures of the great doctrines of grace and then he will try to fatten his brethren and sisters. He will work in the fields of His Lord and try to get others to join him.

CONCLUSION: What do you expect from your pastor? Do you want him to be a preacher of the word? Do you want him to be at home in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation? Do you want him to live the word as well as preach it? You have the right to expect all these things from your pastor. Now your pastor expects something from you. Do you want him to expect anything from you in this program of preaching the word?

"For the law of the Spirit of life

in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."
Romans 8:2.

INTRODUCTION: We are told that sin is the abominable thing that God hates. And no wonder when you understand what sin is: it is the transgression of the law of God. Sin is an attempt to overthrow the government of God. So God has to be against sin to remain God. Sin challenges His supremacy.

If God did not hate sin he would not be holy; if he did not punish sin, he would not be a righteous Judge.

This whole universe is built on law and order, which means there is a personal Creator and Ruler. There is law for inanimate matter, for irrational creatures like the beasts; and a law for man, the acme of God's creation. But note this difference: the law for plant life and for irrational creatures is written in their very natures--in the constitution of their being. There is no external command governing the life of the rose and lily--the only law they know is inside of them. There is no external command governing the horse and dog--the only law they are under; that divine law is inside of them. But when you come to man, he has a law of command outside of him by which he is to be governed. To be sure he has the law of nature written in his constitution but this is not to govern his moral actions. Adam in Eden had the law of desire; there was something in him that called for food, but there was a law outside of him that told him what food he could have. The animal has no law but the law of desire, but man has a law outside of him that is to regulate his desires.

Now sin was the

transgression of this outside law--the law of God's word which was to determine what he could have. Sin transferred authority from outside to inside. Sin put the throne in man, and has taken it out of God's hand. Sin has created a new judge which we call conscience. Conscience is something in man that acts as a judge of what he does--it passes upon man's moral actions.

WHAT KIND OF A JUDGE IS CONSCIENCE?

Conscience itself is sinful. Anything inside of us that controls our actions is sin. We have no right to have a judge inside of us. God is our judge.

Sin itself is subject to law--there is a divine law operating in sin--the law of sin and death. Sin operates according to a divine principle. It is this law that makes sin an issue in death. There is no law of sin and life. Law operates so that sin deadens the conscience. Conscience is a judge that can be bribed. You may commit a certain sin the first time and conscience will smart--conscience will kick against the sin. But the next time, conscience will ease up and after a while you can do the same thing over and over again without a quiver of conscience. That's why conscience cannot be a safe guide for moral actions. The man who needs the most conscience is always the man who has the least. The worse the man is the less conscience he has, so that if we want to speak of a man as being very bad, we say he is without conscience. Sin operates under a law that the more you sin the more you want to sin, until one gets past feeling, that is, there is no conscience to condemn him. The law of sin and death is the law of sowing and

reaping. You sow one sin and reap a crop of sins.

Deeds are not done **with**, when they are done. Sin brings its own

wages--its own retribution. When we sin against God and others, we sin more against ourselves. The mightiest effects of a man's actions is on his own inward life. Habit strengthens inclination. One sin calls for another. Sin committed is written on the heart. *"The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars."* Jeremiah 17:1. It was easier for Peter to deny the Lord three times than once. It is easier to commit murder the third or fourth time than the first. It is this law of sin that makes us slaves to habit. What we call habit is simply this law of sin in operation. It is the law of sin for sin to grow. Every criminal is the result of this law. A man begins by stealing a small object and ends up by being sent to the penitentiary for theft.

This law of sin operates in every life whether saved or lost. The principle of sowing and reaping is the same with the saved and lost. The law of sin is the increase.

Let a saved man stay away from church. The first time he feels bad, but after awhile he is past feeling.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS...

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Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? Romans 9:13-24. Saving one man does not put God under obligation to save another man. Salvation is not a matter of justice, it is of grace. Now if men deserved salvation and God saved one man and didn't save another he would be unjust, because he would be failing to give one man what he deserved.

When we enter the realm of salvation we get out of the realm of justice, we are on mercy's ground when we talk about salvation.