

# Calvinism and Our Unrighteousness

Ecc. 7:29

Introduction:

- A. Schemes to allow man to be judged righteous while practicing unrighteousness.
  - 1. Gnosticism.<sup>1</sup>
  - 2. Calvinism.
    - a. Expressed in creed books.<sup>2</sup>
    - b. Expressed in Calvinist's writings.<sup>3</sup>
    - c. Expressed by a brother.<sup>4</sup>
- B. First John was written to counter just such a scheme.

Discussion:

- I. FIRST JOHN EVIDENTLY WRITTEN TO COUNTER GNOSTIC ERROR.
  - A. He frequently used "know". - Gnostic claimed to know, here's how you really know.
  - B. He counters claim that Jesus did not come in flesh. (1:1-4).
  - C. He counters claim that Christians may continue to sin.
- II. FIRST JOHN COUNTERS GNOSTICISM'S AND CALVINISM'S CLAIM OF RIGHTEOUSNESS WITHOUT REALLY BEING RIGHTEOUS.
  - A. The claim of "fellowship with God" without walking is light. (1:5-2:1).
    - 1. "Walking" is course of action, not state of being.
    - 2. Walking in light does not mean sinless perfection.
    - 3. Walking in light involves confessing sins to our Advocate.
    - 4. Ironical that passage is used to teach very error John was countering.
  - B. The claim of knowing God without commandment keeping. (2:3-4)
  - C. The claim of being "in Him" without keeping his word.(2:5-11).
    - 1. Keeping word in general.
    - 2. Keeping command to love brother in particular.
  - D. The claim of being righteous without personal righteousness. (2:28-3:10)
    - 1. Abide In Him to have confidence in judgement. (2:28).
    - 2. Those in him practice righteousness. (2:29).
    - 3. Those in him purify themselves. (3:3).
    - 4. "He who practices righteousness is righteous" and is of God. (3:7,10).
    - 5. He who practices sin is a sinner and is of the Devil (3:4-10).
  - E. The claim of great love without commandment keeping.
    - 1. Love for brethren. (5:2).
    - 2. Love for God. (5:3).

Conclusion:

- A. Calvinism is just warmed over gnosticism.
- B. One is made righteous by blood of Christ when he is redeemed.
- C. One is kept righteous by doing righteousness and confessing his sins.
- D. God does not play like he is righteous - he is righteous (3:7).
- E. God does record accept righteousness of Christ instead of our personal righteousness.
- F. God will judge us according to what we have done. (2 Cor. 5:10)

1. "The word 'Gnostic' is derived from the Greek gnosis, knowledge, and they were so designated because of their claims to superior knowledge.

Gnosticism ... was an admixture of paganism and corrupt Christianity. Basically, the theory regarded evil as an ever-present characteristic of matter, and its advocates were, therefore, unable to accept the doctrine of the incarnation - the assumption of flesh on the part of the Lord - on the ground that they believed it impossible for sinless deity to occupy a material body. They hence argued that the body of Jesus was not real, but an illusion and that the sufferings on the cross were apparent and not actual. The theory, in its practical aspects, was especially pernicious because its devotees were led into a course of conduct essentially wicked and vile in nature. Inasmuch as they regarded their bodies as evil, they concluded that their spirits were independent of them, and thus undefiled by them. They contended that once regenerated, they were pure in spirit, and it mattered not what the body did, since it was inherently evil anyway. They lived lives of unrestrained indulgence, on the ground that a jewel might lie in a dunghill and be just as much a gem as the most costly case! They believed that it was inevitable that their bodies should sin, and they argued that a thorough understanding of these matters left them free to indulge in any course of action they preferred. It was this alleged superior knowledge that prompted them to style themselves gnostics.  
**(A Commentary on the New Testament, Guy N. Woods)**

2. "His perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity. (Art. V. under Declaration of Faith in McConnell's Manual for Baptist Churches.

"All those who truly repent of their sins, and in faith commit themselves to Christ, God freely justifies; not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins and by counting and accepting their persons as righteous; not for any thing wrought in them or by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, or any other evangelical obedience, to them as their righteousness, but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting in him and his righteousness by faith." (Paragraph 48, Cumberland Presby. Confession of Faith).

3. "We may quarrel with the term imputation, but will find it difficult to get quit of the thing this intimated by it. When the righteousness of Christ is said to be imputed to us, the meaning is, that God so places it in our account, that in the eyes of the law we are held righteous, and there for treated accordingly. ... But if we allow the imputation of our sins to Christ, and of Adam's guilt to his posterity, the imputation of the Redeemer's righteousness cannot be consistently denied. These doctrines stand or fall together." (Publisher's Note to Barnes Notes on Romans 4).

"We take the position that a Christian's sins do not damn his soul. The way a Christian lives, what he says, his conduct, or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul... All the prayers a man may pray, all the Bibles he may read, all the churches he may belong to, all the services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all the laws he may keep, all the benevolent acts he may perform, will not make his soul on whit safer; and all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger." ("Do A Christian's Sins Damn His Soul?" by Sam Morris.)

"If I understand what Sam Morris means to be that all our sins are covered by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and if that is what he means, I endorse him. So I will turn right over here and read in Romans, the fourth chapter, 'What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness.' Salvation is imputed, and

righteousness is imputed....Our sins are covered by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the blood never takes a vacation. It is on all the time...I am depending on the blood of Jesus Christ and the substitutionary righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ for my eternal salvation. ... He (Curtis Porter) depends on what he does, and as they sang a while ago, 'Hold to God's Unchanging Hand,' you are doing the holding. I am not holding, God holds me. ... the Lord keeps me, kept by his power, saved by His grace, covered by His blood, and His substitutionary righteousness is given to me...His righteousness is imputed to me; my sins are all counted against him. Unless you get that thought in your mind, you are a lost sinner - unsaved - you are trusting in yourself, depending on what you do instead of depending on the Lord Jesus Christ for your eternal security." (Ben Bogard in Porter-Bogard Debate pp. 364, 365)

4. "While it is possible for a Christian to leave God's grace, I do not believe it is probable. As a matter of fact, I believe that many, if not most, Christians never lose their relationship with God from the day they are baptized into Christ until they finally enter heaven itself. Christians who are in the light of God are continually saved (1 John 1:7). When they sin their sins aren't even charged to them but rather their Lord Jesus who is paying their debt (Rom. 4:8,23-25). That means that as long they are in the light they are forgiven immediately when a sin is committed. Because of their sensitivity and committment they will pray about their sins but the sin is forgiven because that is one of the benefits of being in the light (1 John 1:7)" (J.B., The Highland Announcer, Vol. 11, No. 17, May, '82 via G.O.T. 2/2/86).