

## Introduction to Christian Theology V: The Christian life— Documentation

Our first parents fell into open disobedience because already they were secretly corrupted; for the evil act had never been done had not an evil will preceded it. And what is the origin of our evil will but pride? For "pride is the beginning of sin." And what is pride but the craving for undue exaltation? And this is undue exaltation, when the soul abandons Him to whom it ought to cleave as its end, and becomes a kind of end to itself. This happens when it becomes its own satisfaction....The devil, then, would not have ensnared man in the open and manifest sin of doing what God had forbidden, had man not already begun to live for himself....By craving to be more, man became less; and by aspiring to be self-sufficing, he fell away from him who truly suffices him.

--Augustine, *The City of God* 14.13

What is justification? It is the declared purpose of God to regard and treat those sinners who believe in Jesus Christ as if they had not sinned, on the ground of the merits of the Savior. It is not mere pardon. Pardon is a free forgiveness of past offenses. It has reference to those sins as forgiven and blotted out. Justification has respect to the law, and to God's future dealings with the sinner. It is an act by which God determines to treat him hereafter as righteous--as if he had not sinned. The basis for this is the merit of the Lord Jesus Christ, merit that we can plead as if it were our own. He has taken our place and died in our stead; He has met the descending stroke of justice, which would have fallen on our own heads if He had not interposed.

--Albert Barnes

When I was a child I often had toothache, and I knew that if I went to my mother she would give me something which would deaden the pain for that night and let me get to sleep. But I did not go to my mother—at least, not till the pain became very bad. And the reason I did not go was this. I did not doubt she would give me the aspirin; but I knew she would also do something else. I knew she would take me to the dentist next morning. I could not get what I wanted out of her without getting something more, which I did not want. I wanted immediate relief from pain: but I could not get it without having my teeth set permanently right. And I knew those dentists: I knew they started fiddling about with all sorts of other teeth which had not yet begun to ache. They would not let sleeping dogs lie, if you gave them an inch they took an ell.

Now, if I may put it that way, Our Lord is like the dentists. If you give Him an inch, He will take an ell. Dozens of people go to Him to be cured of some one particular sin which they are ashamed of (like masturbation or physical cowardice) or which is obviously spoiling daily life (like bad temper or drunkenness). Well, He will cure it all right: but He will not stop there. That may be all you asked; but if once you call Him in, He will give you the full treatment.

That is why He warned people to 'count the cost' before becoming Christians. 'Make no mistake,' He says, 'if you let me, I will make you perfect. The moment you put

yourself in My hands, that is what you are in for. Nothing less, or other, than that. You have free will, and if you choose, you can push Me away. But if you do not push Me away, understand that I am going to see this job through.

*CS Lewis, Mere Christianity*

#### THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

256. Why did God give the Ten Commandments?

God's holy Law is a light to show me his character, a mirror to show me myself, a tutor to lead me to Christ, and a guide to help me love God and others as I should.

(Deuteronomy 4:32-40; Psalms 19; 119:97-104; Romans 7:7-12; 13:8-10; Galatians 3:19-26; James 1:21-25; 2:8-13)

*--ACNA catechism*

#### VII. Of the Old Testament.

The Old Testament is not contrary to the New: for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to Mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and Man, being both God and Man. Wherefore they are not to be heard, which feign that the old Fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the Law given from God by Moses, as touching Ceremonies and Rites, do not bind Christian men, nor the Civil precepts thereof ought of necessity to be received in any commonwealth; yet notwithstanding, no Christian man whatsoever is free from the obedience of the Commandments which are called Moral.

*--39 Articles*

“So, Jeremiah, if you're worn out in this footrace with men,  
what makes you think you can race against horses?  
And if you can't keep your wits during times of calm,  
what's going to happen when troubles break loose  
like the Jordan in flood?

*--Jeremiah 12:5, The message*