

Conclusion

I hope, reader, that this glance at Wright's teaching has demonstrated that when the doctrine of justification by faith is changed, the Church becomes more important than salvation; 'belonging' becomes more important than 'believing'; and, above all, the biblical doctrine of conversion is degraded. Wright, arguing for the New Perspective view of justification, has played havoc with conversion. In time, his doctrine will play havoc with souls. He is not alone, of course. Whoever, for whatever reason, and on whatever basis, tinkers with justification by faith, that man and his doctrine are a threat to the biblical doctrine of conversion. And when conversion is degraded, the consequences to countless men and women will be horrendous. They are horrendous.

I come closer to home. As I have argued, incipient Sandemanianism is plaguing us, and Sandemanianism stifles conversion. As a word, 'Sandemanianism' may be largely unknown; but not, I am afraid, as a deadening experience. Things have to change. We cannot go on in this withered state. Nevertheless, since the desolation caused by Sandemanianism is not my main concern here, I leave it there.

I turn, instead, to address the way our diminished sense of justification seriously weakens our view of conversion, and our preaching for it.

I contend that many of us believers today are suffering from a woefully inadequate view of the fullness of God's grace in free justification by faith in Christ. This has to be put right. We must get to grips with this glorious biblical doctrine, and let it get a grip of us – our heart, mind and will. And then, having a renewed sense of the wonder of our own justification in Christ, we must state the glorious truth to others, clearly and unequivocally, preaching it with heartfelt passion, contending for it with unwavering tenacity, offering Christ and all his benefits as warmly, as freely, and as widely as we can.

And, in light of all this, we have to insist on personal conversion. Eternal consequences hang upon it – especially for those who hear us. But not only for them. If we fail to carry out

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Christ's commission, *we* too shall have to answer to our master (Ezek. 3:18-21; 33:7-9).

For the truth is stark: unless a sinner trusts Christ, he will perish eternally in his sin. But the gospel is amazing: the moment a sinner turns from his sin, forsaking all his own efforts to make himself right with God, and casts himself in faith upon the Lord Jesus Christ, pleading his blood and righteousness, he is at once and for ever washed from his sin and accounted righteous in God's sight. He is from that moment in Christ, and is, therefore, beyond all condemnation. Outside of Christ, however, there remains nothing but condemnation.

Two short passages of Scripture must suffice. Reader, if you have not yet trusted Christ, in light of these words, I urge you to do so at once. Feel the warmth of God's invitation to you – yes, to you. Yield to God's invitation and command, even now. Do so at once:

Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed in the name of God's only begotten Son... Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him (John 3:14-18,36, NIV).

God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. For he made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in him. We then, as workers together with him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For he says: 'In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you'. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation (2 Cor. 5:19 – 6:2).

It is all here. God sees the sinner lost, ruined and helpless in his sin. Staggeringly, even though sin has violated his holiness, out of his great love for sinners, and in his infinite grace, God sent his

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Son into the world, not to condemn sinners, but to die for them, in their place. And now God, through his servants, pleads with sinners – pleads with you this very moment, even as you read these words – to come to him and receive this full and free justification wrought by Christ. And he assures you that all who trust in Christ and his atoning sacrifice are for ever right with God. More, he assures *you* that if *you* trust the Saviour, he will receive *you*, and save *you*. If you will not trust Christ, however, you will perish. And, I must tell you, reader, to refuse God's offer of mercy in Christ is the highest sin of all.

I have not been tackling the New Perspective and the conversion of sinners for the fun of it. I could not have been handling a more serious subject. As I close let me ask you: Are you converted? Have you seen yourself as a ruined, hopeless sinner, and have you fled to Jesus for refuge (Heb. 6:18)? If you have, you are justified, utterly for ever free from condemnation, and as such you have peace with God (Rom. 5:1). If not, however... if not, you are yet in your sins.

I cannot leave it there. I must take it further. I plead with you, do not leave it there! Come to Christ! Come now! Your need is immense, but Christ's love, grace and power are infinite. He is willing to save you. Are you willing to come to him and receive his salvation? Come, I urge you, come to Christ. Come without delay!