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# JESUS CHRIST OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

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*“This is his name whereby he shall be called, The Lord our Righteousness.”*

—Jeremiah 23:6

## Introduction

Man by the fall sustained an infinite loss in the matter of righteousness. He suffered the loss of a righteous nature, and then a two-fold loss of legal righteousness in the sight of God. Man sinned; he was therefore no longer innocent of transgression. Man did not keep the command; he therefore was guilty of the sin of omission. In that which he committed, and in that which he omitted, his original character for uprightness was completely wrecked.

Jesus Christ came to undo the mischief of the fall for His people. So far as their sin concerned their breach of the command, that He has removed by His precious blood. His agony and bloody sweat have for ever taken away the consequences of sin from believers, seeing Christ did by His one sacrifice bear the penalty of that sin in His flesh. He, His own self, bare our sins in His own body on the tree.

Still, it is not enough for a man to be pardoned. He, of course, is then in the eye of God without sin. But it was required of man that he should actually keep the command. It was not enough that he did not break it, or that he is regarded through the blood as though he did not break it. He must keep it, he must continue in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them. How is this necessity supplied? Man must have a righteousness, or God cannot accept him. Man must have a perfect obedience, or else God cannot reward him. Should He give heaven to a soul that has not perfectly kept the law; that were to give the reward where the service is not done, and that before God would be an act which might impeach His justice.

Where, then, is the righteousness with which the pardoned man shall be completely covered, so that God can regard him as having kept the law, and reward him for so doing? Surely, my brethren, none of you are so besotted as to think that this righteousness can be wrought out by yourselves. You must despair of ever being able to keep the law perfectly. Each day you sin. Since you have passed from death unto life, the old Adam still struggles for dominion within you. And by the force of the lusts of the flesh you are brought into captivity to the law of sin which is in your members. The good you would do, you do not, and the evil you would not, that you too often do.

Some have thought the works of the Holy Spirit in us would give us a righteousness in which we might stand. I am sure, my brethren, we would not say a word derogatory to the work of the Holy Spirit. It is divine. But we hold it to be a great cardinal point in divinity that the work of the Spirit never meant to supplant the merits of the Son. We could not depreciate the Lord Jesus Christ in order to exalt the office of the Holy Spirit of God. We know that each particular branch of the divine salvation which was espoused by the persons of the Trinity has been carried out by each one to perfection. Now as we are accepted in the Beloved, it must be by a something that the Beloved did; as we are justified in Christ, it must be by a something not that the Spirit has done, but which Christ has done. We must believe, then—for there is no other alternative—that the righteousness in which we must be clothed, and through which we must be accepted, and by which we are made meet to inherit eternal life, can be no other than the work of Jesus Christ.

We, therefore, assert, believing that Scripture fully warrants us, that the life of Christ constitutes the righteousness in which His people are to be clothed. His death washed away their sins, His life covered them from head to foot; His death was the sacrifice to God, His life was the gift to man, by which man satisfies the demands of the law. Herein the law is honored and the soul is accepted.

I find that many young Christians who are very clear about being saved by the merits of Christ's death, do not seem to understand the merits of His life. Remember, young believers, that from the first moment when Christ did lie in the cradle until the time when He ascended up on high, He was at work for His people; and from the moment when He was seen in Mary's arms, till the instant when in the arms of death He "bowed his head and gave up the ghost," He was at work for your salvation and mine. He completed the work of obedience in His life, and said to his Father, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." Then He completed the work of atonement in His death, and knowing that all things were accomplished, He cried, "It is finished." He was through His life spinning the web for making the royal garment, and in His death He dipped that garment in His blood. In His life He was gathering together the precious gold, in His death He hammered it out to make for us a garment which is of wrought gold. You have as much to thank Christ for living as for dying, and you should be as reverently and devoutly grateful for His spotless life as for His terrible and fearful death. The text speaking of Christ, the son of David, the branch out of the root of Jesse, styles Him **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**.

Having introduced the doctrine of imputed righteousness, I proceed to map out my subject. First, by way of affirmation; we say of the text—it is so—Christ is the Lord our righteousness; secondly, I shall exhort you to do him homage; let us call him so: for this is the name whereby he shall be called; and thirdly, I shall appeal to your gratitude; let us wonder at the reigning grace, which has caused us to fulfill the promise, for we have been sweetly compelled to call him the "Lord our Righteousness."

## **I. Jesus Christ Is the "Lord Our Righteousness."**

### **A. Jesus Christ is God.**

First, then, He is so. Jesus Christ is the Lord our righteousness. There are but three words, "JEHOVAH"—for so it is in the original—"OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." He is Jehovah. Read that verse, and you will clearly perceive that the Messiah of the Jews, Jesus of Nazareth, the Saviour of the Gentiles, is certainly Jehovah. He hath the incommunicable title of the Most High God. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In his days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is his name whereby he shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**" (Jer 23:5-6).

Oh, ye Arians<sup>1</sup> and Socinians,<sup>2</sup> who monstrously deny the Lord Who bought you and put Him to open shame by denying His divinity, read you that verse and let your blasphemous tongues be silent, and let your obdurate hearts melt in penitence

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<sup>1</sup> **Arians** – those who followed the fourth century heretical teachings of Arius, one of the most popular elders in the church at Alexandria, Egypt. He taught that Jesus Christ was not co-eternal with God the Father, and therefore was a created being, denying the divinity of Christ. This became a major heresy and was condemned as such at the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325.

because ye have so foully sinned against Him. He is Jehovah, or, mark you, the whole of God's word is false, and there is no ground whatever for a sinner's hope. We know, and this day we testify in His name, that the very Christ who did lie in the manger as an infant was infinite even then; that He who cried, cried for very pain as a child, was nevertheless saluted at that very moment as God by the songs of the creatures that His hands had made. He who walked in pain over the flinty acres of Palestine, was at the same time possessor of heaven and earth. He who had not where to lay His head, and was despised and rejected of men, was at the same instant God over all, blessed for evermore. He that sweat great drops of blood did bear the earth upon His shoulders. He who was flagellated in Pilate's hall was adored by spirits of the just made perfect. He who did hang upon the tree had the creation hanging upon Him. He who died on the cross was the ever living, the everlasting One. As a man He died, as God He lives. As Mary's son He bled, as the son of the Eternal God He had the sway and the dominion over all the world. In nature Christ proves Himself to be universal God. Without Him was not anything made that was made. By Him all things consist. Who less than God could make the heavens and the earth? Bow before Him, bow before Him, for He made you, and should not the creatures acknowledge their Creator?

Providence attests His Godhead. He upholdeth all things by the word of His power. Creatures that are animate have their breath from his nostrils; inanimate creatures that are strong and mighty stand only by His strength. He can say concerning the earth, "I bear the pillars thereof." In the deep foundations of the sea His power is felt, and in the towering arches of the starry heavens His might is recognized to the full. And as for Grace, we claim for Christ that He is Jehovah in the great kingdom of His grace. Who less than God could have carried your sins and mine and cast them all away? Who less than God could have interposed to deliver us from the jaws of hell's lions, and bring us up from the pit, having found a ransom? On whom less than God could we rely to keep us from the innumerable temptations that beset us? How can He be less than God, when He says, "Lo, I am with you always, unto the end of the world" (Mat 28:20)? How could He be omnipresent if He were not God! How could He hear our prayers, the prayers of millions, scattered through the leagues of earth, and attend to them all, and give acceptance to all, if He were not infinite in understanding and infinite in merit? How were this if He were less than God? Let Atheists scoff, let deists sneer, let the vain Socinian boast, let the Arian lift up his puny voice, but we will glory in this fact, that He that bought us with His blood is Jehovah—very God of very God. At His footstool we bow and pay Him the very homage that we pay to His Father and to the Spirit.

*"Blessings more than we can give, Be Lord for ever Thine."*

## **B. Jesus Christ is our righteousness.**

But the text speaks about righteousness too—"Jehovah our righteousness." And He is so. Christ in His life was so righteous, that we may say of the life, taken as a whole, that it is righteousness itself. Christ is the law incarnate. Understand me. He lived out the law of God to the very full, and while you see God's precepts written in fire on Sinai's brow, you see them written in flesh in the person of Christ.

*"My dear Redeemer and my Lord,*

*I read my duty in Thy word,*

*But in Thy life the law appears*

*Drawn out in living characters."*

He never offended against the commands of the Just One. From His eye there never flashed the fire of unhallowed anger. On His lip there did never hang the unjust or licentious word. His heart was never stirred by the breath of sin or the taint of iniquity. In the secret of His reins no fault was hidden. In His understanding was no defect; in His judgment no error. In His miracles there was no ostentation. In Him there was indeed no guile. His powers being ruled by His understanding, all of them acted and co-acted to perfection's very self, so that never was there any flaw of omission or stain of commission. The law consists in this first, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart" (Deu 10:12). He did so. It was His meat and His drink to do the will of Him that sent Him. Never man spent himself as He did. Hunger and thirst and nakedness were nothing to Him, nor death itself if He might so be baptised with the baptism wherewith He must be baptized, and drink the cup which His Father had set before Him.

The law consists also in this, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Lev 19:18). In all He did, and in all He suffered, He more than fulfilled the precept, for "He saved others Himself He could not save." He exhausted the utmost resources of love in the deep devotion and self-sacrifice of loving. He loved man better than His own life. He would sooner be spit upon than that man should be cast into the flames of hell, and sooner yield up the ghost in agonies that cannot be described than that the souls His Father gave Him should be cast away. He carried out the law, then, I say to the very letter; He spelt out its mystic syllables, and verily He magnified it, and made it honorable. He loved the Lord His God, with all His heart, and soul, and mind, and He loved His neighbors as Himself. Jesus Christ was righteousness impersonated. "Which of you convinceth

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<sup>2</sup> **Socinians** – followers of the sect founded by Faustus Socinius, 16th century Italian theologian, who denied the deity of Christ and denied that the cross brought forgiveness of sins.

me of sin?" He might well say (Joh 8:46). One thousand eight hundred years have passed since then, and blasphemy itself has not been able to charge Him with a fault.

Strange as it may appear, the most perverted judges have nevertheless acknowledged the awful dignity of His character. They have railed at His miracles; they have denied His Godhead; but His righteous character I know not that they have dared to impugn. They have hatched jokes about His generation; they have made His poverty a jest, and His death has been the theme of ribald song; but His life has staggered even the most unbelieving, and made the careless wonder how such a character could have been conceived even if it be a fiction, and much more, how it could have been executed if it be a fact. No one that I know of has dared to charge Christ with unrighteousness to man, or with a want of devotedness to God. See then, it is so. We do not stay to prove His righteousness any more than we did to prove His Godhead. The day is coming when men shall acknowledge Him to be Jehovah, and when looking upon all His life while He was incarnate here, they shall be compelled to say that His life was righteousness itself. The pith, however, of the title, lies in the little word "our"—"Jehovah *our* righteousness." This is the grappling iron with which we get a hold on Him; this is the anchor which dives into the bottom of this great deep of His immaculate righteousness. This is the sacred rivet by which our souls are joined to Him. This is the blessed hand with which our soul toucheth Him, and He becometh to us all in all, "Jehovah our Righteousness."

### **C. By faith we receive our justification.**

You will now observe that there is a most precious doctrine unfolded in this title of our Lord and Saviour. I think we may take it thus: When we believe in Christ, by faith we receive our justification. As the merit of His blood takes away our sin, so the merit of His obedience is imputed to us for righteousness. We are considered, as soon as we believe, as though the works of Christ were our works. God looks upon us as though that perfect obedience, of which I have just now spoken, had been performed by ourselves,—as though our hands had been busy at the loom, and though the fabric and the stuff which have been worked up into the fine linen, which is the righteousness of the saints, had been grown in our own fields. God considers us as though we were Christ—looks upon us as though His life had been our life—and accepts, blesses, and rewards us as though all that He did had been done by us, His believing people. Accordingly, if you will turn to the thirty-third chapter of this same prophet Jeremiah, and look at the sixteenth verse, you will see it written, "This is the name wherewith she shall be called, the Lord our righteousness." I know that Socinus in his day used to call this an execrable, detestable, and licentious doctrine: probably it was, because he was an execrable, detestable, and licentious man. Many men use their own names when they are applying names to other persons; they are so well acquainted with their own characters, and so suspicious of themselves, that they think it best, before another can express the suspicion, to attach the very same accusation to someone else. Now we hold, you know, that this doctrine is not execrable, but most delightful, that it is not abominable, but Godlike, that it is not licentious, but holy: and let others say what they will of it, we will repeat the praise which we have been singing—

*"Jesus, Thy perfect righteousness*

*My beauty is, my glorious dress"*

*and we will wait the day when all things shall be tried by fire, for we feel confident that—*

*"Bold shall we stand in that great day,*

*For who aught to our charge shall lay,"*

*when we are clothed with the righteousness divine?*

Imputation, so far from being an exceptional case with regard to the righteousness of Christ, lies at the very bottom of the entire teaching of Scripture. How did we fall, my brethren? We fell by the imputation of Adam's sin to us. Adam was our federal head; he represented us; and when he sinned, we sinned representatively in him, and what he did was imputed to us. You say that you never agreed to the imputation. Nay, but I would not have you say thus, for as by representation we fell, it is by the representative system that we rise. The angels fell personally and individually, and they never rise, but we fell in another, and we have therefore the power given by divine grace to rise in Another.

The root of the fall is found in the federal relationship of Adam to his seed; thus we fell by imputation. Is it any wonder that we should rise by imputation? Deny this doctrine, and I ask you—How are men pardoned at all? Are they not pardoned because satisfaction has been offered for sin by Christ? Very well then, but that satisfaction must be imputed to them, or else how is God just in giving to them the results of the death of another, unless that death of the other be first of all imputed to them? When we say that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to all believing souls, we do not hold forth an exceptional theory, but we expound a grand truth, which is so consistent with the theory of the fall and the plan of pardon, that it must be maintained in order to make the gospel clear. I think it was this doctrine which Martin Luther called the article of standing or falling of the Church. I find a passage in his works which seems to me to refer to this doctrine rather than to justification by faith. He ought certainly to have said, "Justification by faith is the doctrine of standing or falling of the Church." But in Luther's mind, imputed righteousness was so interwoven with justification by faith, that he could not

see any distinction between the two. And I must confess, in trying to observe a difference, I do not see much. I must give up justification by faith if I give up imputed righteousness. True justification by faith is the surface soil, but then imputed righteousness is the granite rock which lies underneath it; and if you dig down through the great truth of a sinner's being justified by faith in Christ, you must, as I believe, inevitably come to the doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ as the basis and foundation on which that simple doctrine rests.

And now let us stop a moment and think over this whole title—"The Lord our righteousness." Brethren, the Law-giver has Himself obeyed the law. Do you not think that His obedience will be sufficient? Jehovah has Himself become man that so He may do man's work: think you that He has done it imperfectly? Jehovah—He who girds the angels that excel in strength—has taken upon Him the form of a servant that He may become obedient: think you that His service will be incomplete? Let the fact that the Saviour is Jehovah strengthen your confidence. Be ye bold. Be ye very courageous. Face heaven, and earth, and hell with the challenge of the apostle. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" (Rom 8:33). Look back upon your past sins, look upon your present infirmities, and all your future errors, and while you weep the tears of repentance, let no fear of damnation blanch your cheek. You stand before God today robed in your Saviour's garments, "with his spotless vestments on, holy as the Holy One." Not Adam when he walked in Eden's bowers was more accepted than you are—not more pleasing to the eye of the all-judging, the sin-hating God than you are if clothed in Jesus' righteousness and sprinkled with His blood. You have a better righteousness than Adam had. He had a human righteousness; your garments are divine. He had a robe complete, it is true, but the earth had woven it. You have a garment as complete, but heaven has made it for you to wear. Go up and down in the strength of this great truth and boast exceedingly, and glory in your God; and let this be on the top and summit of your heart and soul: "Jehovah, the Lord our righteousness."

You will remember that in Scripture, Christ's righteousness is compared to fair white linen; then I am, if I wear it, without spot. It is compared to wrought gold; then I am, if I wear it, dignified and beautiful, and worthy to sit at the wedding feast of the King of kings. It is compared, in the parable of the prodigal son, to the best robe; then I wear a better robe than angels have, fully they have not the best; but I, poor prodigal, once clothed in rags, companion to the nobility of the stye—I, fresh from the husks that swine do eat, am nevertheless clothed in the best robe, and am so accepted in the Beloved.

Moreover, it is also everlasting righteousness. Oh! this is, perhaps, the fairest point of it—that the robe shall never be worn out; no thread of it shall ever give way. It shall never hang in tatters upon the sinner's back. He shall live, and even though it were a Methusaleh's life, the robe shall be as if it were woven yesterday. He shall pass through the stream of death, and the black stream shall not foul it. He shall climb the hills of heaven, and the angels shall wonder what this whiteness is which the sinner wears, and think that some new star is coming up from earth to shine in heaven. He shall wear it among principalities and powers, and find himself no whit inferior to them all. Cherubic garments and seraphic mantles shall not be so lordly, so priestly, so divine, as this robe of righteousness, this everlasting perfection which Christ has wrought out, and brought in and given to all His people. Glory unto Thee, O Jesus, glory unto Thee! Unto Thee be *hallel*s forever; *Hallelu—Jah!* Thou art You—"Jehovah, the Lord our righteousness."

Having thus expounded and vindicated this title of our Saviour,

## II. I Would Now Appeal to Your Faith.

Let us call Him so. "This is the name whereby he shall be called, the Lord our righteousness." Let us call Him by this great name, which the mouth of the Lord of Hosts hath named. Let us call Him—poor sinners!—even we, who are today smitten down with grief on account of sin. I want this text to be fulfilled in your ears and in your case to-day. You are guilty. Your own conscience acknowledges that the law condemns you, and you dread the penalty. Soul! he that trusteth Christ Jesus is saved, and he that believeth on Him is not condemned. To every trustful spirit Christ is "the Lord our righteousness." Call Him so, I pray thee. "I have no good thing of my own," sayest thou? Here is every good thing in Him. "I have broken the law," sayest thou? There is His blood for thee. Believe in Him, He will wash thee. "But then I have not kept the law." There is His keeping of the law for thee. Take it, sinner, take it. Believe on Him. "Oh, but I dare not," saith one. Do Him the honor to dare it. "Oh, but it seems impossible." Honour Him by believing the impossibility then. "Oh, but how can He save such a wretch as I am?" Soul! Christ is glorified in saving wretches. As I told you the other day, Christ cures incurable sinners; so I say now, He accepts unacceptable sinners. He receives sinners that think they are not fit to be received. Only do thou trust Him and say, "He shall be my righteousness today." "But suppose I should do it and be presumptuous?" It is impossible. He bids you, He commands you. Let that be your warrant. This is the commandment, that ye believe on Jesus Christ whom He hath sent (Joh 6:29). If you cannot say it with a loud voice, yet with the trembling silence of your soul let heaven hear it. Yes, Jesus, "All unholy and unclean, I am nothing else but sin, yet I dare with fervent venture of these quivering lips to call Thee, and to call upon Thee now, as the Lord my righteousness."

And you who have passed from a state of trembling hope into that of lively faith, I beseech you call Him so. Let your faith say, as you see Him suffering, bleeding, dying, "Thus my sins were washed away." But let not your faith stay there. As you see Him sweating, toiling, living a self-denying laborious life, say, "Thus the law was kept for me." Come up to the foot of Sinai now, and if you see its lightnings flash, and hear its thunders roar, be brave, and say like Moses, "I will ascend above those thunders, I will stand enwrapped within the storm-cloud, and I will talk with God, for I have no cause for fear, there

are no thunderbolts for me; for me no lightning flash can spend its arrow, I am perfectly, completely justified in the sight of God, through the righteousness of Jesus Christ." Say that, child of God! Does yesterday's sin make thee stammer? In the teeth of all thy sins believe that He is thy righteousness still. Thy good works do not improve His righteousness; thy bad works do not sully it. This is a robe which thy best deeds cannot mend and thy worst deeds cannot mar. Thou standest in Him, not in thyself. Whatever, then, thy doubts and fears may have been, do now, poor troubled, distressed, distracted believer, say again, "Yes, He is the Lord my righteousness."

And some of us can say it yet better than that: for we can say it not merely by faith, but by fruition. We remember well the day when we first called Him "the Lord our righteousness." Oh, the peace it brought, the joy, the gladness, the transport! Since then we have proved it to be true, for we have had privileges we could not have had if He had not been our righteousness. We have had the privilege of reconciliation with God; and He could not be reconciled to one that had not a perfect righteousness. We have had access with boldness to God Himself, and He would never have suffered us to have access if we had not worn our brother's garments. We have had adoption into the family, and the Spirit of adoption, and God could not have adopted into His family any but righteous ones. How should the righteous Father be God of an unrighteous family? Our prayers have been heard, and we have had gracious answers, and that could not have been—for He could not hear the prayer of the wicked; He could not have heard us—if it had not been that he seemed to hear Christ crying through us, and to have seen Christ's merits in us, and therefore granted the desire of our hearts. We have had in daily rich and sweet experience, such manifestations of fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, that to us it is a matter of fact as well as a matter of faith, a matter of praise as well as a matter of profession, that Jesus Christ is "the Lord our righteousness."

Brethren, your divinity must be experimental or it will not profit you. I would not give a straw for your theology if you learned it merely out of a college, or out of a system of man's teaching. No, no, we must prove these things to be true in our lives. I can say it, and I must say it—the testimony is not egotistical—I know there is a comfort in the faith of Christ's imputed righteousness which no other doctrine can yield. There is something that a man can sleep on and wake on, can live on and die on, in the firm conviction that he is received by God as though the deeds of Christ were his deeds, and the righteousness of Christ his righteousness. Take away his filthy garments from him, set a fair mitre on his head, array him in fine linen. O, Joshua, priest of the Most High, thou man greatly beloved, come thou forth now in thy garments and offer acceptable sacrifice, seeing thou wearest the garments of Jesus, our great High Priest. Let us, then, call upon His name and extol Him in our worship as "the Lord our righteousness."

And now let the whole universal Church of Christ, in one glad song, call Jesus Christ the Lord their righteousness. Wake up, ye isles of the sea; shout, thou wilderness that Kedar doth inhabit; ye people of God, scattered and peeled, banished among the heathen, vexed with the filthy conversation of the idolaters, from your huts, from the destitute places that ye inhabit, sing, "The Lord our righteousness!" Let no heir of heaven be silent at this hour; let every soul be stirred. Though tempest-tossed and half a wreck, yet, mariner in Christ, say, "Thou art the Lord my righteousness." Though cast down into the deep dungeon, thou despairing soul, yet say, "The Lord my righteousness." Let no one of the entire believing family keep back his song but together let us sing, "The Lord our righteousness." And you, ye spirits that walk in white, ye glorious ones that "day without night circle his throne rejoicing," ye saints that ere His day beheld Him, and died, not having received the promise, but having beheld it afar off,—Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses, and Samuel, and Jephthah, and David, and Solomon, and all the mighty host, sing ye, sing ye, sing ye unto Him today; and let this be the summit of your song, "The Lord our righteousness." Our spirit bows before Him now. Sweet fellowship beyond the stream! We clasp our hands with those that went before; and while the cherubim can only say, "Holy, holy, holy; He is righteous," we lift up a higher note, and say, "yes, thrice holy, but the Lord our righteousness is He." Let none, then, of all His saints in heaven and in earth, refuse to call Him "the Lord our righteousness"

### **III. I now conclude, in the third place, by appealing to your Gratitude.**

Let us admire that wonderful and reigning grace which has led you and me to call Him, "The Lord our righteousness."

When I look back some ten or twelve years upon a foolish boy, who cared little for the things of God, who was burdened with an awful sense of sin, and thought that He never could be pardoned—a lad so often driven to the borders of despair that he was fain to make away with his own life, because he thought there was no happiness on earth for him—I can only say for my own self, Oh the riches of the grace of God in Christ, that ever I should stand not only conscious that He is the Lord my righteousness, but to preach Him to you! Oh God, thou hast done wonderful things! Thou saidst by the mouth of Jeremy, "This is the name whereby he shall be called." I call Him so this day from my inmost soul. Jesus of Nazareth! suffering man! glorious God! Thou art the Lord my righteousness!

If I were to pass this question round these galleries, and down below, oh, what hundreds of responses would there be from such as joyously obey the summons of gratitude! And among those about to be added to the Church (I am sure they would permit me to tell, for the honor of the glorious grace of God), there are very many who are special instances of that grace which has sweetly constrained them to call Christ their righteousness. Some of them, according to their own concession before us at the Church meeting, were not only reveling in drunkenness, one until he had well nigh drunk away his

reason by thirty years of habitual intoxication; but others of them were unclean and unchaste, till they had rioted in debauchery, and gone to the utmost lengths of crime.

There be many in this place to-day, who would not, though they would blush for the past, refuse to tell, to the honor of redeeming grace, that once they had committed every crime in the catalogue except murder; and if they have not committed that, it was nothing but the sovereign grace of God that restrained them. Some members of this Church have sinned in every part of the world—have sinned in every quarter of the globe—have committed every form of lust and vice—and if you had asked them ten years ago whether they should ever be in a place of worship, they would have repelled with an oath what they would have thought an insult, and would have cursed you for supposing that they should so degrade themselves as to profess the faith of Christ. Brothers and sisters, I should not be surprised if you were to stand up now and say, “Yes, still Jehovah Jesus is the Lord our righteousness.” Oh!—

*“Wonders of grace to God belong;  
Repeat His mercies in your song.”*

Who would have thought that the lip of the blasphemer should fulfill that very prophecy—that the tongue that could scarce move without an oath should, nevertheless, glorify Christ,—that the heart that was black with accumulated lust,—the mouth which must have become a very sepulcher, breathing forth deadly miasma,<sup>3</sup> has now become a place for song, and the heart a house for music, while heart and tongue say, “Yes, He is the Lord my righteousness this very day!”

It would be a wonder if God should vow that the devils should yet sing his praise; but I do not think it would be a greater wonder than when he makes some of us sing his glorious praise. Brethren, you and I know that there is nothing in freewill doctrine; for in our case, at any rate, it was not true. Left to ourselves, where should we have been? What could Arminianism<sup>4</sup> have done for us? Oh, no! it was irresistible grace that brought us to call Him “the Lord our righteousness.” It was that divine “Shall” that broke in pieces our will. It was that strong arm that broke the iron sinew of our proud neck, and made us bow, even us, who would not have this man to reign over us. It was His finger that opened the blind eye; for once we could see no beauty in Him. It was His breath that thawed our icy heart; for once we felt no love to Him—

*“But now, subdued by sovereign grace,  
Our spirit longs for his embrace;  
Our beauty this our glorious dress,  
Jesus the Lord our righteousness.”*

And this shall be our glory here, and our song forever—*“The Lord our righteousness”!*



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<sup>3</sup> **miasma** – thick, vaporous atmosphere or emanation.

<sup>4</sup> **Arminians** – those who believe that God’s election of individuals was based on His foreknowledge of their accepting or rejecting Christ by their own free will. Originated by Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609), Dutch theologian, born in Oudewater, The Netherlands, who rejected the Reformers’ understanding of man’s depravity and God’s sovereignty.