

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Question. Please harmonize if you can [Prov. 17:15](#) with [Rom. 4:5](#). The first reads: "He that justifieth the wicked and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord." The second is: "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

Answer. Strictly speaking, no man can justify another, *i.e.*, to make or truthfully pronounce him conformable to God's law. Yet it is quite a common thing for men to pronounce that right which is wrong, and thus they attempt to justify evil and evil doers. And the same disposition which leads them to do this, leads them also to condemn the just. Because they prefer evil, they attempt to deceive themselves and others into the idea that wrong is right and right is wrong. This is an abomination to the Lord.

But while God condemns man's attempt to thus justify the wicked, the second text shows that he can and does justify the wicked. How? Certainly not in the same way he has just condemned --by excusing wickedness, or attempting to make it appear right, and remitting the penalty which he had justly pronounced against it. No, but God devised a way by which he could be just, and yet the justifier of sinners who believe in Jesus ([Rom. 3:26](#)), viz.: By giving his only begotten Son who "for the joy set before him," became our willing substitute. Our sins having been laid upon or imputed to him ([Isa. 53:6](#)) if we believe on him, his righteousness will be imputed to us; and thus we are justified. Sin having been cancelled by the Redeemer, the sinner will in due time be made actually perfect.

Question. Was the prize of the high calling ever presented as an incentive to entire consecration? Is it not rather a spiritual truth revealed to the newly begotten creature--a truth which the natural man cannot receive?

Answer. We so regard it. Paul urges consecration to God on account of the mercies of God as displayed in their justification ([Rom. 12:1](#)). When the natural man out of gratitude and love surrenders his whole being to God, he does not understand that the will of God is the complete surrender of his humanity, nor does he understand how the new creature develops into his Lord's likeness. Truth relative to his high calling is unfolded to him by degrees.

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