



*Reformation*  
**REVIVAL**  
*JOURNAL*

*A Quarterly for Church Renewal*

---

VOLUME 14 · NUMBER 1 · 2005

Although my Lord Jesus Christ excels Moses in glory—as any lord excels his servant—it does not follow from this that the glory of Moses is to be scorned.

DISPUTATION OF ARCHELAUS AND MANES (AD 320)

Although . . . the doctrine of justification is discussed quite rarely in the New Testament, the fact of it is everywhere apparent. God had redefined his covenant people around Jesus. The entire Christian mission is built on this foundation. It is left to Paul, however, to articulate this conviction fully and draw out its implications; and he does so at the appropriate point, i.e., when the question of the identity of the covenant people is raised (Romans 3:21–4:25; 9:30–10:13; Galatians *passim*; Philippians 3:2–11).

N. T. WRIGHT

[There are] two meanings [of *nomos*, the law] among Christians: the Jewish law and the secular sense of “principle” and of natural law. But we are to see that Christians sometimes departed still further from the general interpretation. They used it for Christian teaching—the *nomos* of faith (Romans 3:27) and the *nomos* of Christ (Galatians 6:7). Jesus Christ is indeed the innermost meaning and goal of *nomos*, and there is no dichotomy between Jesus Christ and *nomos*, as if *nomos* belonged to one dispensation and grace to another. God’s word in Scripture is one, and there is an essential unity between the Old covenant and the New.

NIGEL TURNER

## A Reformation & Revival Journal *Dialogue Between P. Andrew Sandlin and John Armstrong on Law and Gospel*



John H. Armstrong and P. Andrew Sandlin recently had a frank dialogue about the subject of law and gospel. Since the articles in this issue grew out of the symposium on law and gospel held in March of 2004, John and Andrew felt a dialogue on some basic questions would be a helpful way to set the stage for reading the articles that follow.

**JHA** — Why did you feel we needed a national symposium on “Law and Gospel?” What motivated you to share in this event and sponsor it with us?

**PAS** — First, John, thank you for the opportunity to dialogue with you about law and gospel and for the ministry of Reformation & Revival (R & R). Your personal friendship and the ministry of R & R have left an indelible impression on me, and I will be eternally grateful.

For years I’ve been convinced that too large a gospel-law

*distinction* is a serious misreading of the Bible, with harmful implications for church life. In 1981 or 1982, I think, I read Daniel P. Fuller's, *Gospel and Law: Contrast or Continuum?*, and was convinced of his basic argument by his rigorous exegesis. He argues that the revelatory law (the Law of Moses) is a law of faith, and that Paul's polemic in Galatians (for example) is not against the revelatory law but against Judaistic interpretations of it.

In his subsequent volume, *The Unity of the Bible*, he suggests that submission to the Law of Moses brings one into eternal life just as does submission to the gospel in the New Testament. This is far from a new synergism of salvation by faith in Christ and human effort. Fuller was an unflinching opponent of any merit theology and believed that salvation is by trust in Jesus alone, especially trust in the Great Physician to tell us what is necessary for our salvation. The law is a law of faith. Fuller abhorred the so-called "covenant of works" idea because it tended to perpetuate the medieval idea of eternal life as at root something women and men can merit. Salvation is all of grace. Interestingly, traditional Reformed theology does see the gospel within the revelatory law, but it sees something else, too: a message of "Do this and live," which conflicts with the message of grace: "Do nothing, for Jesus has done it all." I have concluded that this distinction is false. There are not *two* messages of salvation in the Bible, only one—salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, in submission to his love, his will and his way. Jesus alone is our salvation, and we obey him by trusting him and living a life under his loving care. Obedience is not incompatible with salvation by faith in Jesus alone. In fact, there can be no gracious salvation without that obedience. As the old Calvinists would sometimes say, "We are not saved by good works, but we are never saved without them."

Interestingly, I read the rather stern reviews of Dr. Fuller's thesis by traditional Calvinian scholars like Meredith Kline and Bob Godfrey and noted that, by and large, they attempted to refute him theologically (using their own categories) rather than exegetically. Their sentiment seemed to be, "Well, we

know the Bible teaches a large gospel-law distinction, and if somebody denies it he is undercutting salvation by grace through faith alone in Jesus." It did not seem to occur to these brothers that one could hold a gracious soteriology *without* employing their theological categories. While I can't endorse Fuller's thesis in all his details, I think he generally gets it right.

Later, I encountered the works of Professor Norman Shepherd and the late Karl Barth (as well as others) who, each in their own way, called into question the *traditional* law-gospel distinction. Then I read in R & R's *Viewpoint* your article taking to task the bumper sticker mantra, "Christians Aren't Perfect, Just Forgiven"; and said to myself, "This Armstrong guy has it right on the money." We later talked about this, as you will recall, and found we were mutually exercised by what we perceived as a mistaken view of law-gospel. As a result of these conversations we decided to bring together some noted scholars and ministers in Chicago for a joint conference (co-sponsored by R & R and my own Center for Cultural Leadership) on the topic. I believe it was a fruitful conference, with plenty of time for dialogue. And it was clearly characterized by charity all the way around. I'm glad that several of the main papers are being published in this issue of the *Reformation & Revival Journal*. They warrant a wide hearing and further serious discussion.

One thing that impressed me, John, about your initial article, "Christians Aren't Perfect, Just Forgiven," was your grasp of the pastoral implications of this issue. You are very gifted theologically and intellectually, but you are no ivory-tower thinker: Your desire is to get right down to the church and press these issues in people's everyday lives. I'd like to hear your comments on the implications of this issue for the church today.

**J H A** — I do think about the pastoral implications of everything we believe, especially these matters, a great deal. If we are right, and I do think we are on to something quite important biblically, the implications for ordinary folks are immense. For

example, I believe the evangelical debate regarding "Lordship salvation" (so-called) is answered in a far more satisfactory way by this approach. When faith is seen as living, active, and the God-given gift by which we obey Jesus as disciples, the end result is that we can no longer speak of faith and obedience in separation (in any practical way at least) from one another. This makes a passage like Hebrews 11 "come alive" in my own mind. To really believe is *to trust and obey*. By the way, much Lutheran, and some Reformed, theology has generally stated this relationship of faith to obedience with little or no reference to obedience. I can no longer read my Bible this way in the light of scores of texts. Practically this means that we speak to those who have visibly taken on the sign of the covenant and professed faith in Jesus with words that urge them to see that they simply cannot profess faith (allegiance and trust) in Jesus without obedience. I am aware that our Reformed critics would say they teach the same, but in reality they do not always make this clear. Reading some of the reactions to our conference and the things I have written has convinced me all the more that this is the case. We have folks saying you can have saving faith, but it must never be understood as directly linked to obedience. Obedience is desirable, important, and the fruit of faith; but it is, at the end of the day, not necessary.

I also believe this approach makes the way that we present the gospel more faithful to the text of the Bible. We are not inviting people to receive the atonement of Jesus by faith and then somewhere, sometime, decide to obey him. We are telling them to "take up the cross" from the get-go. We are saying, "If you would trust him you must begin the journey of trust-obey right now, not later." What follows is not some "second decision" about sanctification later on. This makes, for example, the story of the Rich Young Ruler come alive in a whole new way. Jesus is not simply showing him that he has disobeyed the tenth commandment so that he will see his sin and exercise real faith, but rather he is telling this young man that he must believe on Christ in such a way that he turns from coveting to trusting and obeying Christ. And contrary to

what many who have written and preached about this text, Jesus does preach the gospel to the man when he says to him "Come, follow me" (Luke 18:22b). The gospel here is not "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved" (at least in the exact words used), but I submit the call is exactly the same, and thus the command to "believe" in Acts is the same thing Jesus says here by "Come, follow me." Thus, by this reading we do not get the gospel in Paul and the law in Jesus, but we get law and gospel in both.

Do you think we are in danger of confusing people, rather than helping Christ's flock, by having a symposium like we had last March and now by publishing some of the papers?

**PAS** — Well, I understand the logic of this concern, but some people are already confused, and dealing with the issue head-on is better than not dealing with it at all. We say we believe the Bible. If so, we should be willing to discuss differing interpretations of it. If certain traditional views of gospel-law are mistaken, it's better for people to be confused than confident in their mistaken views. When they are confused they will be urged to go back to the Bible to try to find answers.

Both before and after the symposium we were roundly criticized for inviting a Roman Catholic and an Eastern Orthodox scholar to participate. But our view was that this issue was too vital to be left to a provincial Protestantism. We wanted all the main sectors of the church represented. These men were perfect Christian gentlemen and did not try to evangelize for their cause. They articulated their view and responded to other people's views, just as we asked them to do. By the way, we also invited scholars from the more strictly confessional Reformed tradition, but, for whatever reason, most declined.

John, what is your opinion of how the leading figures from this tradition have responded to the (charitable) challenge to their views?

**JHA** — Sadly, I have watched many excellent men pull away from the dialogue, put labels on those who disagree, and in

general turn this into the next great issue for reformation in our time. I believe this is done out of a great desire to protect the church from error, and they genuinely see this as serious error. I can respect that. What I do not respect is the unwillingness to dialogue, show respect, and in general treat vast numbers of men and women as godly people who have a real difference that calls for us to work this out. If you become locked into a period of time, say the sixteenth century, and see that as the "golden age" of all theology, you tend to end up with this approach. Luther and Calvin cannot be wrong about anything, they are our fathers in the faith. And since so many folks never said this the way we are now trying to say it, that makes it wrong, *ipso facto*. For the life of me I wonder what happened to *sola Scriptura* in this kind of approach. We have created our own *magisterium*, the sharp-edged points of a theology that quite profoundly separate law and gospel and will hear of no other options biblically or theologically.

Over the past few years, we have seen conferences here and there which suggest that justification by faith alone, understood in the way Luther put it essentially, is "the heart of the gospel." How do you respond to this Andrew?

**P A S** — This is one of those rather obvious cases where an "accident" of history has been transformed into a dogma of theology. Certain sectors of the late medieval church in the West (and it's vital to remember that the Latin church has always been more heterogeneous than many Protestants have assumed) really did obscure the gospel of grace in Jesus by tying up salvation with all sorts of ecclesial works. The grace of God in Christ's death and resurrection was often pushed to the background, and man's responsibility and obligation to the church were catapulted to the foreground. The Reformers correctly recovered the unique place that faith plays in appropriating justification—one's right standing before God. In fact, as Alister McGrath has shown, Luther was quite innovative, holding that justification is *exclusively* forensic. No one in the history of the church had said that *before* Luther, according to Dr. McGrath.

The Reformers were children of their own times (aren't we all?) and tended to vest judicial matters with momentous significance. The medieval world was quite taken with "justice" (we think of the elaborate judicial rules for the feudal system of life), and it's not surprising that the Reformers would put most of their theological eggs in the soteriological basket of justification, the most judicial feature of salvation.

This is not the biblical emphasis, however. It's interesting that Paul never makes a big deal about justification except in a very polemical context. In Galatians, his point is not to set forth the meaning of justification by faith alone, but to attack those who have turned the faith into a Judaic, law-centered religion (which, by the way, represented a serious misreading of the Old Testament). Justification is a part of the picture, *but not the heart of the picture*. This, as you well know John, has become the central point made by much of the polemical response to our thoughts on law and gospel.

If Saint Paul were here today, and we posed the question, "What is the heart of the gospel?" I am confident he would *not* reply with, "Justification by faith alone." His answer would be more like, "The death and resurrection of Jesus by which God is reconciling the world to himself." The Lordship of the risen Christ is the burden of the New Testament message. In his atoning death and victorious resurrection, Jesus vanquished the power of Satan and evil and thereby liberated sinners as bond slaves and made us his own glorious bond slaves. The gospel at its heart is about Lordship, not justification (which is only a part of it). The late Oscar Cullmann and, more recently, N. T. Wright, both renowned conservative New Testament scholars, have made this point rather convincingly.

John, if we think that the gospel is at its heart justification by faith alone, doesn't it seem to you that we end up holding that we're saved by what we believe about justification rather than by trusting in Jesus?

**J H A** — Exactly. That was the point I sought to make above about the pastoral implications of this theology. If we are not careful, we end up, and this has happened in much of

fundamentalism, and in some Lutheran circles, saying you are saved by trusting Jesus, which means to have a moment, or time, when you exercise faith in Jesus, and then, if you are convinced by God and others, you then begin to obey "everything [he] commanded" (Matthew 28:19–20).

Recently I got a mailer for an event that put it this way: "To deny, ignore, or misinterpret this doctrine (i.e., *sola fide*) can be eternally fatal." When you look over the program the intention seems to be that an error on the very point we are making is fatal and damning. How do you respond to this kind of statement?

**P A S** — John, I don't wish to be insulting, but I consider this view nearly preposterous. Salvation is by grace, not by knowledge. Could the primitive Christians have understood or articulated *sola fide*? Before the resurrection, it's not even clear that most of Jesus' disciples understood that he was the Son of God! Salvation does not occur because of what goes on *in our minds today* but because of what went on at the cross and from the empty tomb 2000 years ago. The Bible tells us that we will be saved if we trust in Jesus—and this includes casting our life entirely on him. *Understanding is not our central obligation: faith and obedience are.*

Recently my son-in-law was converted. He was reared an atheist and knew nothing of Christianity—not the doctrine, not the terminology, nothing. When a dear friend prayed with him and asked him (he had been reading the Gospel of John!), "Will you trust Jesus?" he replied, "Yes, I need to get on the right path." He prayed a simple prayer from the heart, "Jesus, please save me." What a beautiful thing it was! He was baptized a week later and publicly professed that he belonged to Jesus. To those who say that he needed to be more "educated" before conversion, I reply that they know nothing of the conversions of the New Testament, almost all of which were just about the same as my son-in-law's—simply faith in Jesus and a commitment to follow him.

What rationalists we sometimes are!

**J H A** — Do you believe, in reaction to the Roman Catholic teaching at the time of the Protestant Reformation, that what God never meant to be separated, namely, obedience and faith, were separated in some ways?

**P A S** — To some degree, yes. Now, while Calvin and Luther agreed substantively on justification, *Calvin saw union with Christ as the central soteric fact*. Bruce McCormack makes the point that Calvin was a little confused on this issue. On the one hand, he wanted Luther's exclusively forensic justification, but on the other hand, he held onto aspects of a "realistic," ontological sacramentology in the *Institutes*. So, we are justified by faith alone (imputed righteousness), but the benefits flow to us only as we're in vital ontological union with Jesus, a union intensified at the Lord's Supper, which doesn't smack of forensicism at all.

But more to the point: Calvin got around the problem posed by the severing of faith and obedience in *sola fide* by holding that both justification (faith alone) and sanctification (faith and obedience) are *benefits of union with Christ* (1 Corinthians 1:30). You get both when you are united to Jesus. The problem is that if justification (imputed righteousness) is *activated by faith* as its instrumental cause, we must ask how faith got there in the first place. Calvin insisted that faith is God's instantaneous gift to the regenerate heart, but if regeneration has occurred, then the process of sanctification has begun, albeit briefly. This is the Achilles heel of the traditional Reformed *ordo salutis* ("order of salvation"), one that Roman Catholics have not been reluctant to exploit. For if all the benefits flow from union with Christ, and faith alone activates that union, we have to ask how faith gets there in the first place; and if it gets there by regeneration, which *activates sanctification*, then God justifies one in the process of sanctification.

If, however, faith is God's gift to those united to Christ by the new birth, we are free to say that faith is an act of obedience of the regenerate individual that at once *reflects* sanctification and appropriates justification. This "obedience of

faith" (Romans 1:5; 16:25–27) is just that: obedience. It is not passive; it is active. Nobody reading Hebrews 11, as you said earlier, would arrive at another conclusion. Faith is a gift, but it is a gift that's exercised. When a woman is regenerated, she acts in faith to trust Jesus and then goes on to perform other acts of obedience (never perfectly in this life) which spring, like faith itself, from her regenerate condition. The Westminster Confession is quite correct, therefore, to identify faith as the *sole instrument of justification*, but never as a *naked gift*—it carries with it all other graces (like repentance and obedience). Norman Shepherd has been most helpful to stress this point.

The New Testament construction of faith apart from works (Romans 4, Galatians 3, Ephesians 2) assures that man cannot contribute to his salvation, particularly not the works which separated Jew from Gentile in the old covenant era. Faith rests in the accomplished work of Jesus. The gospel is not a message of human achievement or merit. Our obedient faith and attending graces flow from the regenerate heart, which is God's gift conferred by the Holy Spirit on the ground of Christ's atoning death and victorious resurrection.

**J H A** — What exactly was the specific error that Luther and Calvin were reacting against? How does Rome's error differ then from your understanding of the gospel? (Does Rome hold several positions on this matter, or do Roman Catholic teachers differ among themselves in how they understand this matter today?)

**P A S** — Well, Rome has *never been uniform* on these points (even the Decrees of Trent were a consensus document), but the major understanding went something like this: at baptism God implants the seed of justification (which for Rome included what Protestants separate out as justification, sanctification and regeneration). As the one baptized is by that baptism united to the church, persists in the sacramental system, and remains faithful to the church, he will be justified in the final day. Justification can be gained and lost, can ebb and flow, and is due to man's active cooperative effort.

Now the Reformers held that we are justified (declared legally righteous, which for them was the main issue) by faith alone, a gift of God, solely on the ground of Jesus' redemptive work. Justification is God's work in Christ, not man's.

It's critical to grasp that the problem with Rome was not that it wanted to *unite* faith and obedience. The problem was that it *wanted to unite them in a synergistic way*. It has placed the entire plan of salvation into the hands of the priesthood in the church. The sacraments are not merely vehicles of grace but the medicine of eternal life—Christ's very incarnational life imparted. As we continue in the church (Christ's Body) we continue in salvation. So, faith and obedience are united in the life of the church, with which man cooperates in his justification.

On the other hand, the problem with Protestantism was not that it exalted faith in Christ's redemptive work alone as the sole instrument of justification apart from mediating institutions. The problem was that it (often) *evacuated faith of its biblical content and accompanying graces*. It was so fearful of returning to the ecclesial synergism of Rome that it leaped into an antinomianism that isolated faith from works, which the Bible does not do.

I must mention that the Reformers were not anti-church. They would have abhorred the modern distaste for the church. But the church for them did not play the soteriological role that it did for Rome.

Karl Barth's view is most instructive. He was an unflagging exponent of God's grace, opposing the priestcraft of Rome. He felt that it domesticated God's grace, made it "manageable" to the church and humanity. Conversely, he insisted that law was a form of gospel and that the latter is something one must obey, not merely receive. The Protestants do not like him because he unites gospel and law. Rome doesn't like him because he removes gospel and law from the hands of the priesthood. I think Barth is essentially right.

**J H A** — When you use the word *obedience* in terms of the gospel of God's grace, do you refer to a predisposition toward the performing of all the actions, behaviors and attitudes that

God commands, or do you refer to *actually carrying* them out? Please explain then how law and grace actually relate in terms of what God does and what we do.

**P A S** — God regenerates us, but he does not believe for us, or repent and obey for us. I sometimes hear folks say, “Jesus does it all; I do absolutely nothing.” The sentiment is sincere, and I appreciate its monergistic tenor, but it’s not biblically correct. We don’t endanger monergism by insisting that men must believe and repent and obey if they are expected to be justified on the final day.

Our hope rests solely on what God has accomplished in Christ’s redemptive work. God preserves his own, but he motivates them to trust and obey.

**J H A** — I have heard it said this way, Andrew: “How much obedience is necessary for justification?” Are you saying then that we must do a certain amount, and then God says, “OK, you’ve done it. You’re in.”

**P A S** — No way! Our justification is *not suspended on what we do* but on what Jesus has done. But the call to follow Jesus is not chimerical. He works in us to will and do his good pleasure, but we do work out our own salvation. In short, justification is *not* a substitute for obedience. We are justified by Christ’s death and resurrection, but this justification is part of a “package” that includes sanctification and holiness, without which none shall see the Lord. This is one problem Shepherd sees with the stress on Christ’s “active obedience” as an aspect of the ground of justification. If Jesus obeyed in his life *on my behalf*, and if his law-keeping life (in addition to his death and resurrection) becomes mine, *why do I need to obey?*

Conversely, “My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness” dictates a life of faith and obedience.

**J H A** — Can you describe how faith *produces* obedience? In what way is the believer really righteous? Some say that if you

and I are teaching that final justification depends on faith in Christ *plus a lifelong performance of good work*, and thus not simply on the blood of the covenant (1 Corinthians 1:30) and the indwelling Holy Spirit (Philippians 1:6), what is the *good news?*

**P A S** — The good news is that God in Christ’s death and resurrection is reconciling the world to himself (2 Corinthians 5:14–21). All who place faith in him will be gloriously and matchlessly converted, revealing that obedient faith is a living, active faith that *necessarily* issues in good works. Those who do not persevere in good works do not possess a faith that justifies (James 2).

What does justification “depend” on? Well, it all depends [!]. The ground of justification is the finished work of Jesus—nothing less or more. Jesus saves us; we do not save ourselves. The outworking of justification depends on an obedient faith, without which none will be justified.

**J H A** — Are “the works of the law” (in Paul) Jewish efforts to make oneself righteous before God, or does this very important term refer to something else?

**P A S** — My view is that “the works of the law” refers to Jewish attempts at self-salvation. (There is varied opinion on this point and much more work to be done I think.) I believe that “the works of the law” are a perversion of the gracious, revelatory law of Moses. Paul opposes “the works of the law” with every fiber of his being but endorses the revelatory law, which is gracious and life-giving in that it discloses the Messiah, by whom alone we can be saved.

**J H A** — Do you think Paul had a major quarrel with the law? Does he put law over *against* grace, or to put it another way, does he make law and gospel opposite forces in the covenantal arrangement?

**P A S** — May it never be (Galatians 3:21)! Apart from Christ, Paul sees the law as perverse. The function of the law is never

to justify. It does, however, relate the directly to the One who does justify (see Romans 4, 9, and 10, where Paul cites the Old Testament law to buttress his view of a gracious justification). Properly understood, the law is *not legalistic*.

**J H A** — Stephen Westerholm, a prominent critic of some of the things that we have said in this issue of the *Reformation & Revival Journal*, has written that “students who want to understand Paul but feel they have nothing to learn from Martin Luther should consider a career in metallurgy.” How do you respond to such a statement?

**P A S** — I agree with it. I would add that “students who want to understand Paul but feel they have nothing to learn from Clement and Leo and Anselm and Barth should consider a career in taxidermy.” We need to hear the *entire catholic church*, not just one sector of it. This really bothers me about sectarians both East or West, Protestant, Latin, or Anabaptist. We must account for how the entire church interprets Paul and the rest of the Bible and not just write off “the other guys” as heretics.

**J H A** — All serious Protestant Christians agree (or should agree) that good works are *a necessary aspect of genuine faith* and thus of salvation, righteousness, sanctification, and justification. Isn't it equally clear that good works are the result or fruit of salvation (of the indwelling Holy Spirit), a fruit of savingly believing on Christ, and a result of being saved in order to do good works (Ephesians 2:10) and not, strictly put, a *condition* for salvation?

**P A S** — It all depends on what we mean by “condition.” Even traditionalists like Ursinus make this distinction. If condition means “in order to get,” then the answer is no. If it means, “cannot get without,” the answer is yes.

No Protestant would say faith is not a condition of salvation in some sense (“Yes sir, you can be saved without faith, since Jesus alone saves us.”). Well, what about repentance

(Acts 26:20; Romans 2:4)? What about good works (James 2)? We must clarify the sense in which we use the term “condition.”

**J H A** — Many pastors and Bible teachers will say to you, “I have been teaching and preaching a gospel of salvation by grace alone through faith alone apart from works. My message has been that salvation does not depend on works and is not sustained or kept by works (but by a faith that works because works necessarily follow salvation). In so teaching and preaching have I been leading hundreds astray?” If final justification depends on faith in Christ plus a lifelong performance of good works and not on the blood of a completed work by Christ (1 Corinthians 1:30) and the indwelling Holy Spirit who most assuredly will work in us (Philippians 1:6), what is the good news that we preach?

**P A S** — I may not say it quite that way, but you are not leading hundreds astray. The gospel is the good news that Jesus died and rose for sinners and that all who come to him in faith will be saved. Coming to him in faith includes casting yourself on him and not relying on yourself and surrendering to his rule.

To those who say, “I want Jesus but I want my sin, too; I want a get-out-of-hell-free card,” we reply, “We're sorry, but you cannot be saved.” Salvation dictates repentance.

**J H A** — Finally, for all of us this discussion comes down to this: “What must I do to be saved?” The Word of God supplies a clear answer: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved” (Acts 16:30-31; Romans 10:9-13). How do you finally respond to this most basic question in light of all that you have said about law and gospel?

**P A S** — I say, I agree with Paul. A gospel that places our hope in anything or anyone other than Jesus is false. A gospel that leaves man unchanged and makes no demands of lifelong obedience is equally false. Pox on both!

We do not now deal with the Law any further than [to remark] that the apostle here teaches clearly how it has been abolished—by passing from shadow to substance. That is, it has passed from figurative types to the reality, which is Christ.

TERTULLIAN

If the New Perspective is leading to a revision of our understanding of “justification” as a richer and deeper notion than some overly forensic concepts popular in Protestantism, so much the better—if it is biblical. . . . The New Perspective offers the possibility for recovering a shared tradition of justification as having covenantal and eschatological, as well as forensic, aspects.

MICHAEL B. THOMPSON

Now, in truth, there is no such thing as a New Perspective on Paul. The work of Sanders on Paul is relatively limited, and other New Testament scholars disagree with him—and with each other—on a multitude of points. It is thus more accurate to say that what we now have is, for better or worse, a New Perspective on Judaism.

TIM GALLANT

Thus in all these essential points—the meaning of “righteousness,” the role of repentance, the nature of sin, the nature of the saved “group,” and, most important, the necessity of transferring from the damned to the saved—Paul’s thought can be sharply distinguished from anything to be found in Palestinian Judaism.

E. P. SANDERS