

The Free Gift Of Eternal Life

Alexander Carson | Added: Apr 30, 2018 | Category: Theology

Man's salvation is of pure grace or favour, without any degree of merit on the part of man, or any regard to his conformity to law, yet this grace operates in such a manner that the pardoned sinner may exclaim before the universe, who shall lay anything to my charge? At the same moment he looks up to God as a guilty sinner, and yet looks to the tribunal of God as a completely righteous person. Though polluted in himself, yet in Christ he is whiter than snow. He prays for pardon at the same moment that he considers himself owing nothing to justice. This is a thing that the wisdom of the world cannot conceive. It looks to mercy, and wishes it to save at the expense of justice. When it looks to justice, it contemplates not the righteousness of the believer through faith, but the excellency of personal character. It dare not hope that mercy would do all, nor that justice can be completely satisfied. It hopes that mercy will dispense with what justice has not received. Divine wisdom unites mercy and justice in the salvation of the believer. Some hold such an idea of the righteousness that entitles the believer to heaven, as is injurious to the character of God. It attends indeed to the demands of justice, but lessens the glory of the riches of divine grace. The death of Christ is supposed to do away the guilt of the believer's sins, and His life of active obedience to the law is supposed to be for the purpose of meriting heaven. Now, if this makes God merciful in giving His Son for these purposes, it reflects on His grace, by representing Him as giving happiness by purchase. Why does He require any purchase for heaven? If the sins of His people are removed by the atonement of Christ, what is there to prevent Him from giving heaven to them freely? And heaven He does give to them freely. Eternal life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ. Jesus had not to live a life of obedience to the law in order to merit heaven for His people, for the Father gives this freely to all those whose sins are remitted by the death of His Son. Had the obedience of Christ's life been the purchased of the glory of His children, God would have required a price for that which He might have given freely. For, what is to prevent Him from freely glorifying those who are cleansed of their sins? If, then He requires a purchase for that which might be given freely, the glory of His grace is tarnished. The holy life of Jesus was absolutely necessary, that He might be a Lamb without spot in His sacrifice for our sins. But it is through His sacrifice alone believers are justified, and being thus justified, eternal life is freely bestowed on them as heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. It is by faith in the atonement of Christ that believers receive their inheritance as well as their pardon (Acts 26:18). There is certainly a distinction between justification and glorification, and it cannot be said to be impossible for men to have been cleansed of their

sins, without being made heirs of such an exceeding weight of glory as is promised to the followers of Christ. All that a completely righteous man can ask is the happiness of Adam in his state of innocence. But with what is possible we have no concern; we know who has said, whom He justifieth them He also glorified. He hath saved His people from their sins, that He might show forth the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness towards them in Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:7). Though pardon does not necessarily imply glory, this is no reason why glory must be purchased. The pardoned are glorified to show forth the riches of divine grace.

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