

Chapter 8

**Showing how True Godliness, after this,
traveled toward the city of Jerusalem; how near it
lay a small village called Religion, in which dwelt
one Mr. Legalist, at whose door he knocked,
and why he was not welcomed.**

Having thus far happily escaped with his life, Godliness thought it was now high time to leave those regions. He had traveled through them for a long time and had suffered many hardships, being vilely scorned and despised wherever he went. He resolved to travel into some other country among people, if such could be found, who were not so abominably wicked, or at least not such open and obvious enemies to him as others had been.

He thought within himself that it might be best to bend his course toward Jerusalem. Previously, he had wandered along the borders of Assyria, Edom, spiritual Sodom, and Egypt. As it turned out, before entering Salem, he noticed a village lying near the city. He learned that the name of the town was Religion, a place much frequented by all true sinners, for so the inhabitants of Jerusalem are called.

Now as he made his way there, and being informed that one Mr. Legalist lived at the town's end near Mount Sinai, he resolved to give him a visit. Immediately, Godliness came to his door, where he knocked with great earnestness. Mr. Legalist, being inside, answered.

Mr. Legalist: Who is at my door?

Godliness: Sir, a stranger to you, though your very good friend, and one who would gladly lodge in your house.

Mr. Legalist: What is your name?

Godliness: Sir, my name is True Godliness.

Mr. Legalist: I am greatly surprised that you should say you are a stranger to me, for I have been acquainted with you for a long time and know you so well.

Godliness: Sir, you are greatly mistaken, for I am sure you do not know me, nor have you ever yet been truly acquainted with me.

Mr. Legalist: What? Do I not know True Godliness? This is strange! Do not you and I speak together every day?

Godliness: Sir, I am not the person you take me for. There are one or two others who sometimes go by my name, and it is likely you may be acquainted with them. Tell me, what is his behavior? What I mean is, what doctrine does he teach you? By that, I will know who he is.

Mr. Legalist: Why, sir, he teaches me to keep the commandments of God, to live a righteous life, and to do to all men as I would have them do to me.

Godliness: Oh, sir, that is my friend and honest neighbor Morality. He is one whom I love very much. I am sure it is a great misunderstanding on your part to take him for me. He will not say his name is True Godliness, though we are alike in some things. I also teach the same doctrine you mentioned, yet we differ greatly in many other things. On this we agree: First,

he says you must keep God's commands; I say the same. Second, He says you must be righteous; I say likewise. Third, he teaches that you must do to all men as you would have them do to you; I say the very same, for it is my Master's own doctrine.

Mr. Legalist: Why, then, sir, in what way do you differ?

Godliness: He teaches you to seek justification by doing, but I teach justification only by believing. He teaches it by keeping the law, or by living a sober and honest life; I teach it by God's free grace through the merits of Christ.

Mr. Legalist: What is that you say, friend? Are we not required to keep the law of God?

Godliness: No, sir, not as a law of works. You are to keep it as far as you are able, but only as it is the law of Christ. You must not look for righteousness and justification from law-keeping in any sense, for that was the very stumbling block on which the Jews of old fell and were broken to pieces. You have sinned and daily break the law, and the least transgression exposes you to the dreadful wrath and curse of God.

Mr. Legalist: I know I cannot keep the law perfectly, but I will, by God's help, do what I can. And where I, through weakness, do transgress the law, God is merciful, and I trust He will forgive me.

Godliness: Forgive you? Why, He has said He will by no means clear the guilty.^a Furthermore, we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God.^b

^a Ex. 34:7

^b Rom. 3:19

Mr. Legalist: What are you saying? Will God not forgive me, for I am a repentant man? Oh, what a

horrible doctrine this is! I believe He will not forgive the unrepentant, and it is only such guilty ones the Scripture speaks of.

Godliness: Do not be mistaken, sir; all are guilty. All have broken the law or the first covenant. All are under sin and wrath. Your repentance will not do. God will not forgive anyone, no matter who they are, unless they believe in Jesus Christ and take hold of the merits of His blood. For just as no human will be justified by works of the law,^c so God will not pardon your sins, despite your repentance, as a simple act of His mercy, unless you flee to Him through Christ, who has satisfied His justice. What you say makes Christ's glorious undertakings empty and unnecessary, and so casts a great reflection on the wisdom of God in sending His Son into the world.

^c Rom. 3:20

Mr. Legalist: How do you prove that?

Godliness: Do you not say that you will do what you can to keep the law, and that where you sin God will, in His mercy, forgive you? Now if God accepts your obedience in keeping the law, and forgives all your shortcomings as a simple act of His mercy, and if by this you are justified and accepted by Him, then why did He send Jesus Christ into the world to die the cursed death of the cross? If righteousness and salvation are attainable this way, then it is evident that Christ died in vain. For could not God have done all this if Christ had never come? You are a wretched creature; therefore, look to Christ, or you are ruined.

Mr. Legalist: Why do you speak to me of Christ? Do you take me to be a sinner like other men? Am I like this publican?^d I have lived a holy and blameless life all my days, and therefore I shall be justified.

^d A great Legalist spoke this not long ago.

Godliness: I am ashamed of you. It is clear that you have a low esteem for Christ.

Mr. Legalist: No, sir, do not misunderstand me either. I do not think my righteousness justifies me in any way other than through the merits of Christ.

Godliness: Sir, you err exceedingly. It is not your personal righteousness—no, not even through Christ’s merits—that justifies you, but the personal righteousness of Christ Himself, received by faith alone. Alas, you have now exposed how much of a stranger you are to me. It seems you are one of those “just men” who never went astray, or one of the “righteous ones” whom Christ did not come to call. However, I always declare and testify that all men will perish without faith in Christ. Does not Scripture clearly say, “Whoever does not believe will be condemned”?^e And again, “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.”^f Sir, “There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”^g And finally, “For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”^h

^e Mark
16:16

^f John 3:36

^g Acts 4:12
^h 1 Cor.
3:11

Come, allow me into your house, and I will expel these dark clouds and teach you another kind of doctrine. I will help you to be holy, but not to depend upon it; to be righteous, but not to trust to it. I will lead you to say, “In the Lord I have righteousness,” and that He is made by God to be righteousness for us. I tell you plainly: I cannot speak peace to you unless I enter in. You must cast out of your house those helpless and unprofitable servants you keep.

Mr. Legalist: What servants would you have me cast out?

Godliness: First, you must put Moses out. Have you not read that he was not to remain in the house forever? You must then cast out Mr. Mischief, Good-Opinion, and Self-Righteousness. Truly, in a word, you must move your dwelling farther away from Mount Sinai. Look around you and leave quickly, for I see dreadful flashes of lightning; the mountain looks to be entirely on fire. And listen—do you not hear it thunder, Legalist? God is angry with you, sir. There is no seeing His face except through a Mediator.

Mr. Legalist: What! Must I throw holy Moses out of my house?

Godliness: Yes, sir, you must. Do you not remember that those who said they were Moses' disciples cast out the poor, blind man who received my dear Master? It is not Moses nor Elijah, but Jesus only, who must dwell with you. And you must also cast out Blind-Zeal, Ignorance, and Legal-Heart, for these are dangerous fellows. In their place, I will put True-Zeal, Right-Faith, Broken-Heart, and Good-Understanding. And let me tell you, sir, if you do not quickly expel these from your tabernacle, you will be ruined and perish in your sins. Despite your great hope of heaven, they will soon thrust you down into hell, for publicans and harlots enter heaven before you.

At this, he became very angry. He gave True Godliness harsh words, calling him a libertine and an antinomian—names that True Godliness rejects and despises just as much as Mr. Legalist does. Mr. Legalist added that he was certain that the one he had already received into his house was True

Godliness and said, "You are but an impostor." Then, in a great rage, he demanded that True Godliness leave his house.

Seeing that Mr. Legalist was so wedded to his own opinion that there was no hope of gaining entrance into his house, Godliness left him and traveled a little farther into the town. Being told that one Mr. Baxterian lived not far off, along with several others who were thought to be sound Christians, he went their way.

Sad case, most noble Prince! What travel still
From place to place, and there is none that will
Thee yet embrace? What! Not in such a town!
Doth Legalist thus basely tread thee down!
Nay, of all men, I see there's cause to fear
He never will, bless'd Prince, to thee adhere.
What! Slighted by professor and profane!
Where's then the man who will thee entertain?
Some men are blind, and therefore perish do;
And those who think they see, these perish too.