

been opened on the cross of Christ. Christ had done what man could never do. He had fulfilled the law perfectly. God was ready to accept Christ's perfect righteousness as a substitute for the righteousness which man was required to present to him, but could not. The conditions of acceptance were no longer sacraments or outward acts, or lame and impotent efforts after a moral life, but faith in what Christ had done; a complete self-abnegation, a resigned consciousness of utter unworthiness, and an unreserved acceptance of the mercy held out through the Atonement. It might have been thought that since man was born so weak that it was impossible for him to do what the law required, consideration would be had for his infirmity; that it was even dangerous to attribute to the Almighty a character so arbitrary as that He would exact an account from his creatures which the creature's necessary inadequacy rendered him incapable of meeting. But the impetuosity of the new theology would listen to no such excuses. God was infinitely pure, and nothing impure could stand in his sight. Man, so long as he rested on merit of his own, must be for ever excluded from his presence. He must accept grace on the terms on which it was held out to him; then, and then only, God would extend his pity to him. He was no longer a child of wrath: he was God's child. His infirmities remained, but they were constantly obliterated by the merits of Christ. And he had strength given to him, partially, at least, to overcome temptation, under which, but for that strength, he would have fallen. Though nothing which he could do could deserve reward, yet he received grace in proportion to the firmness of his belief; and his efforts after obedience, imperfect though they might be, were accepted for Christ's sake. A good life, or a constant effort after a good life,

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