

Mr. Murray's

THREE SERMONS

ON THE

Justification of Believers.

THE JUSTIFICATION OF BELIEVERS BY
·IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS.



BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF
T H R E E S E R M O N S

PREACHED IN THE
P R E S B Y T E R I A N C H U R C H

I N
N E W B U R Y - P O R T,
AUGUST, 1788,

By J O H N M U R R A Y, A. M.
PASTOR OF SAID CHURCH.

Published by request of the SESSION.

THIS IS HIS NAME WHEREBY HE SHALL BE CALLED THE
LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS. *Jeremiab.*

FOR HE HATH MADE HIM TO BE SIN FOR US. THAT WE MIGHT
BE MADE THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD IN HIM. *Paul.*

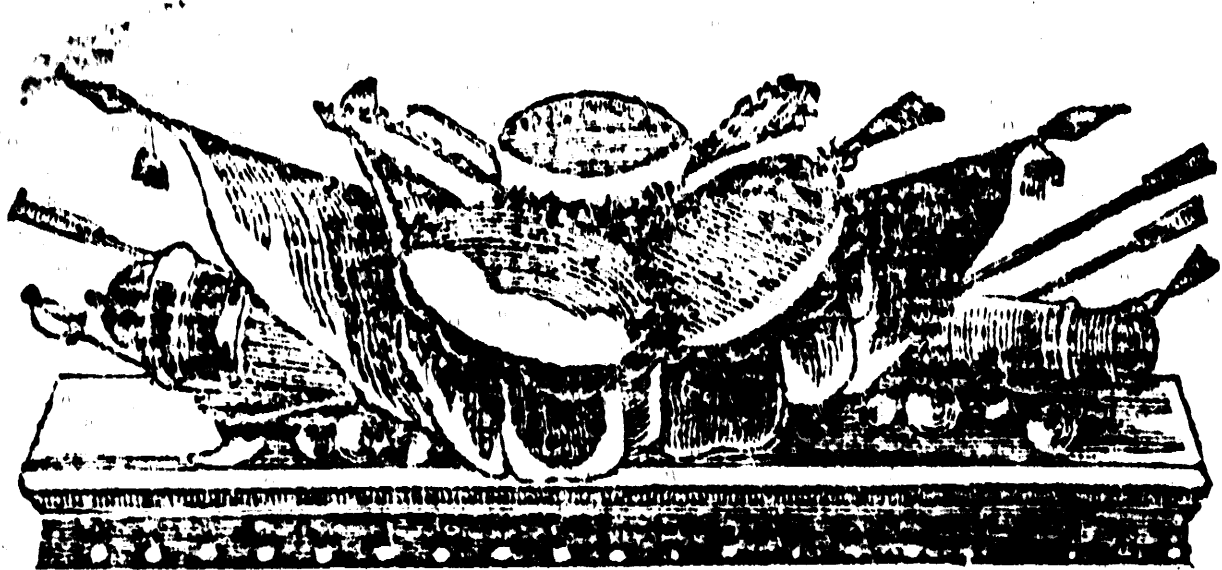
UNUS PECCAVIT, ET OMNES DEFECTUR REI:
UNUS JUSTITIA SOLA REPUTABIMUR JUSTI.

Bernard.

N E W B U R Y P O R T:

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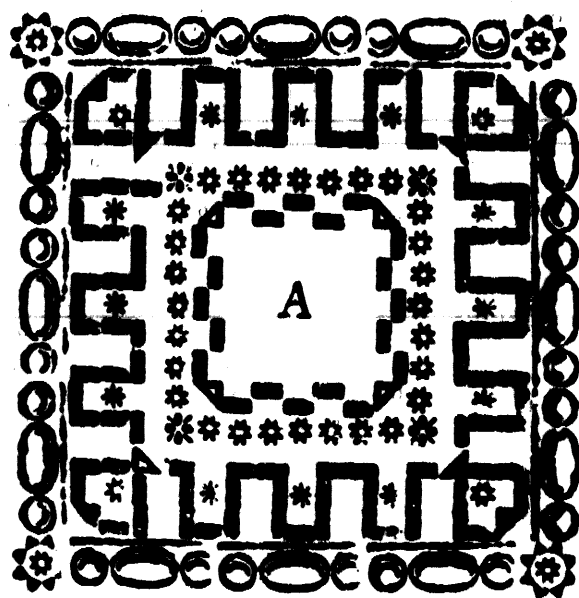
1789



THREE SERMONS, &c.

ROMANS V. 1.

THEREFORE BEING JUSTIFIED BY
FAITH WE HAVE PEACE WITH
GOD THROUGH OUR LORD
JESUS CHRIST.



ALTHOUGH it is certain that all scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for doctrine, fruitful of instruction, and calculated to present the true believer thoroughly furnished to every good work; yet it will not derogate from the honor due to every part of the sacred canon, if we presume to affirm, that, of all the divine books which it contains, none exhibits the whole system of christian religion so completely, as the epistle which has afforded us this text.

THAT

THAT it was really the production of the pen of the apostle Paul, we may be assured, not only by the general consent of the church in all ages(*a*), and the express acknowledgment of the primitive fathers in it; but especially by the style and matter of the epistle itself, so exactly corresponding to that of his other writings, by the inscription which prefixes his name to the work in the same manner as to his other epistles, and by the form of salutation, with which it is concluded in his own hand-writing(*b*)—which he himself has established as his signature in every one of them(*c*).

THE divine authority of it then cannot be called in question. The author himself disclaims the honor of being its inventor: He piously ascribes all the glory to his blessed Master, who spake in him; by the inspiration of whose spirit he wrote, and from whose revelation he received all his doctrine(*d*). Indeed the work speaks for itself. Its mysterious and important subjects no man could unfold, unless God were with him.

OF the fourteen sacred letters written by Paul, this is placed in front. This was not done because it was of more early date than the rest: for it appears to be the last of the seven which he wrote before his imprisonment in Rome; and to have been sent to the converts there,
from

(*a*) Ireneus contra valent. lib. 5. Hieron. Epist. ad Paulin. Eusebius Eccles. Hist. lib. 3. cap. 3.

(*b*) Rom. xvi. 24. (*c*) 2 Thess. iii. 18.

(*d*) 2 Cor. xiii. 3. 1 Cor. vii. 40. Gal. i. 12.

from Corinth, as the author passed through Macedonia on his last journey to Jerusalem, *anno Dom. 57.*

NOR can it be supposed a compliment to the imperial city, or a declaration of the pre-eminence of the church of Rome to all other churches. The superior excellence of the composition itself, justly entitled it to this precedence. ARETIUS, and other ancients(*e*) style it the catechism and confession of faith for the christian church. In writing to churches where he had preached the gospel, he speaks more sparingly of its doctrines. But as the apostle had not yet visited that of Rome—as he knew it was composed both of Jewish and Gentile converts; and especially, as he found the ancient animosities between these two parties still remained there; and, by the insinuations of some seducers, had threatened a schism in that church; while the one part extolled the light and law of nature, and the other insisted on the observance of that of Moses. For these reasons Paul sets himself in this epistle to overthrow the mistakes of both—and on the ruins, to found and raise the whole system of christianity, both as to its doctrines and its duties.

IN the execution of this design, the sacred writer pays strict attention to the rules of method. He takes care, in the first place, to inform the understanding, by refuting the false doctrines of both parties about the grand article of

(*e*) Pareus in loc. Gryneus in Epist. Faustus exercit.

of a sinner's acceptance with God ; and then by explaining the truth of this matter, and confirming it with unanswerable arguments : and having thus cleared his way, he pushes his point home to the heart—and improves it for the purpose of pressing a practice by which the beauty of the christian religion might be displayed in the sight of the world.

HAVING fully proved, in his first three chapters, the lost condition of both Jews and Gentiles ; and the equal impossibility of the salvation of the one by the law of Moses, and of the other, by that of nature ; he proceeds in the fourth, to establish the true and only way of justification for both—by the imputed righteousness of CHRIST received by faith alone. This he illustrates by the case of *Abraham* ; and then shews that all others must be justified in the same way as he was ; by faith in the same CHRIST, who was delivered up to death for our offences, and raised again for our justification(*f*).

WITH this the text stands in immediate connexion : the word *therefore* shews, that the apostle intended it as the conclusion of his argument ; or, at least, as an inference from what he had said : for he immediately advances to a beautiful descant on the happy fruits of justification, and a striking parallel between *Adam* and CHRIST : to shew that the manner in which guilt and death were conveyed from the one, and justification and life from the other, was precisely

precisely the same, viz. by imputation ; and yet that the grace of God had the ascendant in all the comparison : for the righteousness of CHRIST was more efficacious in bringing life to his spiritual seed, than *Adam's* sin had been to entail death upon his natural posterity ; the effect of the one being removeable, and in numberless subjects actually removed already ; but that of the other could, in no instance, be withdrawn from its subject,—but must infallibly remain upon him for ever.

THIS text has been subjected to some mismanagement from the party-spirit of its expositors. The *Socinians*, impatient of any expression so plainly in favor of justification by faith, are for putting the comma after the word *justified* ; that it might then sound as if inward peace only, and not justification was to be obtained by faith. *Ecumenius*, and others, read the words *we have*, in the imperative *let us have peace*(g), and understand it of peace with men ; as if it were only an injunction to the Jewish and Gentile parties, at Rome, no longer to contend about their laws : but this cannot be the true sense of the text ; for the apostle is speaking expressly of peace with God, not with men : and it is expressed in the first person plural, including himself, and we know *he* was none of those that kept up this contention : others, that follow the same reading, suppose it an injunction to all christians to continue in peace with God ; and not to return

B

to

(g) Haymo, Anselme, Lyranus, & Hugo follow the same.

to any lusts which might interrupt it(*b*)—but this does not agree with the plain scope of the sacred penman, which is not so much to exhort christians, as to congratulate them on the advantages they derived from justification by faith in CHRIST: hence the present *Greek* copies, and some of the ablest critics, read the word as we do, in the indicative(*i*).

THERE is yet another reading of the text in which the pointing is so altered as, in the sense, to transpose the words thus, “therefore being justified, thro’ our LORD JESUS CHRIST, by faith; we have peace with GOD. As this teaches the same ideas with our present translation, we shall not stand to examine any objections against it: for, in either way, the text calls us to note

1. A GREAT privilege conferred on true christians, *justification*. 2. The appointed mean of obtaining it, *faith*. 3. A sweet consequence following upon it, *peace with GOD*; and 4. The procuring cause of both, our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

AND thus they suggest the following Doctrine, viz.

· THAT BELIEVERS ARE JUSTIFIED AND OBTAIN PEACE WITH GOD, ONLY THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

ON

(*b*) The Vulgate, Origen, Chrysostom, Theodoret.

(*i*) Erasmus, Ambrose, Theophylact. Pareus in loc. Toletus annot. 1. Beza in loc.

ON this Proposition we mean now to lay hold. It will afford us a natural key to open up a doctrine, which *Luther* once considered as the most important point in divinity—the key-stone of the arch of the system of Revelation—and the grand article with which the Christian church must stand or fall ; I mean the doctrine of the JUSTIFICATION OF SINNERS BEFORE GOD.

AND from it we shall take occasion,

I. To enquire into it's nature.

II. To explain it's causes, and especially how it is through our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

III. To shew in what sense it is by faith.

IV. WHAT connexion is between it and peace with God.

AND then make some Improvement of the whole.

LET us then,

I. *Enquire into the nature of Justification.*

ALTHOUGH this was taught with sufficient plainness in the sacred Scriptures, and clearly understood in the first ages of christianity ; yet, as it was a doctrine that lay near the foundation of CHRIST's spiritual kingdom and his people's comfort ;

comfort ; no article of the christian faith was a greater eye-sore to the grand adversary of both. No sooner, therefore, did the mystery of iniquity begin to work ; than the whole power of the man of sin was employed in corrupting and overthrowing this doctrine. In this design, it must be confessed, he but too well succeeded.—During the ages of midnight darkness, in which Popery so generally involved Christendom, no part of the religion of Jesus was more perverted and obscured than this. And when the glorious morning of Gospel-light dawned upon the church, in the grand *Reformation* from Popery ; LUTHER, CALVIN, ZWINGLIUS, and their colleagues, to whom Heaven had reserved the peculiar honor of being the instruments of promoting that work, were no sooner convinced of the truth respecting this single article, than they found in it a clue to conduct them safe through all the labyrinths of that dungeon, in which the deceitful workings of Antichrist had so long imprisoned them. No sooner did these venerable champions of the truth set the silver trumpet to their mouths, and publish, where they came, this glorious doctrine in its true scripture-dress, than the walls of Antichristian Jericho fell before it—the arms of Dagon were broken ; and the lifeless trunk of idolatry lay prostrate before the ark of God.

It was the prediction of some of these worthies, that after their death, Antichrist would struggle hard to recover his former dominion, by corrupting the faith of Christians on this essential

essential point once more. It was the principal object upon which the strongest efforts of the Popish party were exerted in the Council of Trent, (*k*) to destroy the doctrine of Justification by imputed righteousness, through faith alone : For this they employed afterwards the pen of *Cardinal Bellarmine*, the most learned and ingenious champion their cause could find.

It must be confessed that the advocates of the *Arminian* cause, who laboured so hard to extirpate this doctrine in the *Synod of Dort*, (*l*) were far enough from wishing to be enslaved by papal power again ; yet, as their arguments on this point coincided, in so many parts, with those of the partizans of Rome, it was a known fact that many of the most eminent papists rejoiced in them, and, considering every attempt to corrupt this article, as a promising step towards leading back the protestant Israel to the Egyptian bondage from which they had so lately escaped—they could not but own they wished these ingenious disputants *God speed*.

As this brief history may suffice to shew that this is a doctrine for which much has been done and suffered in the wars of the *Lord*, it may convince us that it will be our reproach if we consent to have it undermined in a time of the general peace of the church.

THAT the word *justify* is compounded of the epithet *just* and a verb which signifies *to make*,
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(*k*) Anno. 1542 to an. 1563.
tinger. Eccles. Hist.

(*l*) an. 1619. Hot-

is no secret to any who is acquainted either with the Latin or English language; and hence, that the literal sense of the word is the same as, *to make one righteous*, will scarcely be denied by any party.

THIS encouraged the papists to contend that, of the two justifications which they maintained, both consisted in the expulsion of sin from the soul and the infusion of the habits of righteousness. To the first justification they said men are brought by a general belief of Divine Revelation—fear of judgments, &c.—And to the second, by resolutions for obedience and the increased study of good works. (*m*)

TO this notion of Justification by the infusion of righteousness into the soul, others have acceded, on the presumption that this is the sense in which the word is ordinarily used in scripture. This, however, we need not fear to say is presumption indeed. For if we examine every book of the sacred canon, we shall not find justification ever used in opposition to a state of depravity, but only to a state of condemnation—nor ever to be understood in a physical, but only in a forensic sense, (*n*) unless it should be supposed that Isa. liii. 11, and Dan. xii. 3. ought to be interpreted as carrying in them something more than a mere declaration of the legal acceptance of *many*. Can it be imagined that an
infusion

(*m*) Becani-theolog: Schol. par. 2. tract. 4. cap. 3.

(*n*) Rom. v. 16, 18, and viii. 33, 34. Prov. xvii. 15. Deut. xxv. 1. Isa. v. 23.

infusion of any real holiness is meant, when it is said that GOD is justified when he speaketh (*o*), that wisdom is justified of her children(*p*)—or that CHRIST was justified ?(*q*) The supposition that to justify, is to make men righteous, by effecting a real change in their nature, does confound two benefits accompanying salvation, which, although conferred on the same subjects and at the same time, are yet really distinct things; I mean justification and sanctification. Blessings which are indeed purchased only for the elect of GOD—and bestowed out of the same free and sovereign grace: yet that a doctrine which allows no distinction between them, cannot be true, will easily appear to him who considers that they do, in fact, differ in these and other circumstances—the first being an *act*, and therefore instantaneous; the last a *work*, and therefore requiring a successive number of acts in a continuance of time; the one producing only a *relative* change, or an alteration of the state of its subject towards GOD and his law—the other constantly effecting a *real* change in the whole nature of the moral agent; this is perfect at once—that gradually progressive, but never perfect in this life—the former being a sentence pronounced *upon* the sinner—the latter a great work wrought *within* him—the one the act of GOD the *Father*, the other the work of GOD the *Holy Ghost*: This only entitles to the inheritance of sons—that qualifies for the enjoyment of it.

THE

(*o*) Ps. li. 4. Luke vii. 29. (*p*) Matt. xi. 19.

(*q*) 1. Tim. iii. 16. Isa. l. 8.

THE word justification then, is to be considered as generally used in scripture as a forensic term ; denoting a judicial sentence issuing from a lawful tribunal, as the result of an impartial trial, whereby the Judge pronounces the subject to be found just, or righteous, in the eye of the law.

THIS sentence sometimes respects particular actions which are impeached—and sometimes it regards the whole moral state of the man—and this not always absolutely, as it stands in relation to the law :—On some occasions it refers to the character, or conduct of other men ; in comparison with whom this is declared righteous in a degree. (r) From this variety in the object, arises a considerable difference in the ways of attaining it :—Sometimes we find it spoken of as dependent on what has been done by the subject himself—sometimes on the witnesses which prove his righteousness in court, and sometimes on the advocate that appears for him.

HENCE justification receives another distinction from the different views in which it considers its subject : it is called *legal*, when it acquits him as he is in himself ; because no impeachment can lie against him, nor any guilt be proved upon him who is perfectly righteous in his own person ; but it is called *evangelical* justification when it deals with its subject, not as he himself deserves, but as he stands in his surety,
CHRIST

(r) 2 Sam. xii. 9. Ps. vii. 8. Job xlii. 8. Ps. cvi. 30, 31. Jer. iii. 11.

CHRIST JESUS. This supposes the man to be in himself a sinner such as the law condemns to death : but one who puts the issue of his trial upon the plea of his being vitally united to a lawful surety, by whom all demands of law and justice have been satisfied in his room, and upon whose righteousness alone he claims to be accepted.

In both cases, justification is the act of a Judge, whose decisions are all founded on the eternal law of his dominions ; and, as the judgments of the Supreme Magistrate of the universe, are all matter of unalterable record, and to be solemnly proclaimed, in due time, before an assembly of the intelligent inhabitants of all worlds, convened for that purpose ; we need not scruple, then, to conclude that they are all worthy of the character of the Judge of all the earth—and as such, that they all are strictly just ; (/) that the sentences they pronounce are infallibly true (*t*) and in every tittle conformed to the law of righteousness. (*u*)

THE doctrine for which we plead, does not suppose God to be blind to the true states and characters of men—nor would it insinuate that he either does or can declare them otherwise than they really are. The infidel is never mistaken for a believer in CHRIST—nor the unregenerate for one whose heart is transformed into the image of God. None is dealt with on ground
C where

(/) Rom. iii. 26. Isa. xlv. 21. (*t*) Rom. ii. 2.
1 John i. 9. (*u*) Exod. xxxiv. 7. Prov. xvii. 15.
Ps. xcvi. 13. Gen. xviii. 25.

where he does not stand—the sinner, out of CHRIST, is not accepted as if he were in CHRIST—nor the believer united to him rejected—as if he were still a stranger to him. The one who, never being united to Christ, must be considered only as he is in himself, is not dealt with as if he had the perfect righteousness which the law requires, nor is the other treated as if he were without that righteousness whose union to CHRIST gives him a valid title to call both himself and his righteousness his own : Thus the judgment of God is according to truth, since it accepts none as righteous, who have not a perfect righteousness to plead ; and rejects none that have it.

JUSTIFICATION, is a transient act of God, as Judge, passed upon the state of a sinner believing in CHRIST ; by which he imputes to him, the righteousness wrought out by CHRIST as his Surety ; on its account, acquits him of the guilt of his own iniquities, frees him from the condemnation legally denounced against them ; and declares him possessed of all that perfect righteousness which the law demands, and thereupon entitled to eternal life.

FROM this definition it appears that the case in question is really a matter of law ; and the Judge, deciding it, is the great Lawgiver himself. This glorious Being, in that consummate wisdom which governs every order of creatures according to the respective natures with which he had created them, enacted, for man's rule of conduct, a perfect law ; worthy of so great an Author,

Author, and the true image of his moral glory.—This was designed to assert the rights of his government, and secure the obedience of his rational creature. To this end it demanded perfect love to God with all the heart, and an uninterrupted course of action expressive of that principle, and enforced this requisition with a sanction which entailed death, in its utmost latitude, on every transgression; as the just punishment of its demerit. (*w*) And, for the encouragement of the subject to persevere in his duty, it pleased the Author of the law to annex to it a covenant that placed him under new advantages; and promised eternal life as the reward of such perseverance. (*x*)

PLACED on this footing, then, it must be evident that perfect obedience to the precept of the law, was the only ground on which man could expect the reward of life. This was what the law required:—and less than that, it could not accept. Nor was this a strictness peculiar to the law of God. No human law did ever call for less than perfect obedience to itself: nor could it indeed, without the manifest self-contradiction of demanding something which, in fact, it did not demand.

MAN was bound, by the precept, to that conduct which was due from him to God; and God had condescended to bind himself, by the sanction, to the line of conduct which he would pursue

(*w*) Gen. ii. 17. Rom. vi. 23. (*x*) Rom. x. 5. Luke x. 28.

purſue towards mankind;—As, therefore, the man who obeyed had a legal claim to eternal life; ſo, he that failed in one point muſt conſider himſelf as having forfeited that claim; and, on the contrary, as involved in all that guilt which muſt legally inſure the threatened death and all its woes. Nor muſt he expect to find his Judge acting the abſolute ſovereign, diſpenſing with the law, at his mere good pleaſure, and accepting pence of obedience for pounds juſtly due.

No! This were to commit an outrage againſt his own government, which muſt eventually contribute more to bring it into contempt, than all the crimes of its rebellious ſubjects. Where no rights are violated but my own, as a private perſon, I may pardon the injury, and do no being wrong: in this caſe a diſpoſition to forgive, is really an amiable temper. But were ſuch a temper to be indulged by the judge to an indifcriminate remiſſion of all crimes, government muſt be at an end; and all men would concur in pronouncing ſuch a Judge a very hateful character.

THE ſingle buſineſs of the Judge, then, in the matter of juſtification, muſt lie in diſcovering whether the law has been perfectly obeyed or not: if it has, and ſufficient evidence appears to prove it, he has nothing to do but to declare this on the bench—and pronounce the ſubject entitled to eternal life:—if not, he muſt condemn the ſinner to the puniſhment pointed out in the law: and ſhould any ſatisfaction to the
law

law be offered in his stead, which might furnish him with a righteousness sufficient for his justification; it is evident that, in that case, the sentence which pronounced him righteous, must contain in it a pardon of his sins.

THE sanction of the divine law will assure us, that in order to this, the penalty of sin must be fully endured. This was no less necessary to release the sinner from the threatening, than was perfect obedience to the precept, to secure the benefit of the promise. To a sinner, the last was impossible; because perfect obedience to any law could never be rendered by one who had already broken it; and the first must be everlasting; as the breach of infinite obligations must involve infinite guilt;—and that must require infinite punishment; but this is too great for a finite capacity to contain in any given time: the defect of capacity must, therefore, be made up in duration—otherwise justice never can be done—as the punishment of sin could never be adequate to its guilt.

THE criminal, then, condemned to suffer the penalty of the law, can never be the subject of justification; as eternal ages must roll away before his punishment can come to an end.

It follows that the justification of a sinner must be entirely free; since no works of his own can ever satisfy the precept of the law—nor any sufferings of his, the sanction. If ever he is justified, it must be altogether of grace. Yet what has been said may serve to assure us
that

that this sentence must be according to law and justice : a righteousness must be found legally his, which is fully sufficient to answer the demands both of precept and sanction ; thus, and only thus, can mercy and truth meet together ; or righteousness and peace embrace each other in this matter,

Now, that man was a sinner without excuse, the word of God has every where declared. Formed originally in the image of his Maker, he began his course holy and without blemish. To preserve and cultivate this image was all he had to do. And in attending to this duty he found his truest bliss waiting on every step. But—alas ! The mutability of a finite nature was soon discovered even in Paradise. By a voluntary abuse of that natural liberty which was essential to a moral agent in a state of probation, he passed the bound assigned him—he transgressed—he fell !—And how dreadful was his fall ! From duty to revolt—from unstained purity, to pollution unmixed and universal—from delights, akin to those of angels, to wretchedness bordering on the woes of devils. How soon did the gold become dim—how sadly was the most fine gold changed ! The morning stars that sang together at the sight of his pristine beauty, may well be imagined to hang their harps on willows, when they beheld all his native glory laid in ruins.

From things already said, it would appear that a single transgression did suffice to bar the sinner from every ray of hope. But fallen man
was

was become a mass of corruption—altogether an unclean thing(*a*)—darkness reigned in his understanding(*b*)—enmity against God raged in his will(*c*)—his whole heart was alienated from his Creator.(*d*) Nor did his following steps in life bely the inward dispositions of his soul. The fountain was poisoned. The streams could not flow pure. Contemplate the picture of the fallen creature, drawn by the pencil of inspiration—his throat is an open sepulchre—the poison of asps is under his lips—his mouth is full of cursing and bitterness—his feet swift to shed blood—no fear of God before his eyes—he neither understandeth nor seeketh after God—he doeth no good thing—destruction and misery are in his ways, and the way of peace he has not known.(*e*)

PAUSE—reflect a moment on this dismal portrait—and say—can this self-destroyer ever rise from these ruins by his own deeds? Or is there a shadow of possibility of his recovery; unless a surety should be found, who both could and would undertake and effect his deliverance? Nor would the task be small. We have indeed spoken of the sinner in the singular number; as if but one man lay plunged in this gulf of woe. But this was not intended to insinuate that the picture given, found its original in none but the first offender of our race. No! That offender was the father of them all. He was more. He was their public representative too. On his behaviour

(*a*) Isa. lxiv. 6. (*b*) 1 Cor. ii. 14. (*c*) Rom. viii. 7
 (*d*) Eph. iv. 18. Col. i. 21. (*e*) Rom. iii. 10—18.

haviour hung the fate of all his seed—for them he covenanted—and for them he fell—they therefore fell in him—and what befel him in the issue, befel them all. For of the whole race it is said there is none righteous, there is none that doeth good; no, not one.

If the task of him must be arduous who engages as surety for one soul such as these—what shall we say of his who steps forth as the Deliverer of millions more than man can number?

A SURETY is a friend who becomes sponsor for a criminal that law shall be satisfied, or for a debtor that the debt shall be paid. The bonds of his principal he takes upon himself—and stands engaged in his room to see them answered, or abide the consequence.

For the interposal of such a surety, the law indeed made no provision. Yet there was nothing in it to foreclose it. The covenant that placed us at first under a public representative in whom we sunk, seemed obscurely to hint that it might yet be possible that, by another covenant, we might be related to one in whom we might arise. Nor was there ought in the words of the first covenant to prove it impossible that the threatening might be satisfied in the death of a surety, as well as in that of the offender himself. This idea was early suggested by the institution of sacrifices, and with them circulated through all nations, and handed down to every rising age. And when the fulness of time arrived, behold! A surety comes! O the joyful
ful

ful news! The Son of God—equal in all divine perfections with the Father—had early undertaken, in the covenant of redemption, to ransom and deliver God's elect; the flock whom the Father committed into his hands for that purpose, by an eternal counsel, before all worlds. *(f)* In fulfilment of that contract he now emptied himself—assumed human nature into personal union with his divinity, and entered on the stage of this earthly world. *(g)* Born of a virgin, his humanity escaped that stain of depravity which the children of Adam's covenant transmit from father to son, by natural generation. His nature was pure without a spot—and was therefore called *the holy thing born*. *(h)* Nor was his native innocence tarnished by any sinful defect in following life—holy, harmless, and undefiled he remained to the end—and exhibited, through his whole course, a perfect pattern of every virtue. By a complete conformity to every precept of the moral law—he fulfilled all righteousness: thus he finished the work given him to do: till heaven itself confessed it was enough: and the eternal Father declared he was well pleased. This was not done to procure eternal life to his human nature; that was its right—and in a sense its possession from the moment of its being assumed into union with the divinity: as it was assumed for the sake of his people, so it was in their room that in it all this obedience was paid to law by him who was the law's superior. Obedience thus perfect, rendered

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(f) Prov. viii. 23. John xvii. 6. *(g)* Phil. ii. 7, 8.
(h) Luke i. 35.

dered by any man, could not fail of justifying the performer in the sight of God, and insuring to him the eternal life which the law promised in the case. But the infinite dignity with which the divine nature ennobled the whole person of the Mediator, rendered the obedience he yielded, a greater honor to the law than it could have received by the everlasting obedience of all worlds of angels and of men. Theirs at the highest must be still no more than a finite offering—this was therefore as far above it, as infinite being is above dependent limited natures born to-day. It satisfied the law. It did more—it magnified it and made it honorable. It therefore contained enough to merit eternal life for worlds innumerable : Nay, its redundancy of worth could merit for them all a state of bliss infinitely beyond that which law had promised, or from which man fell.

BUT what enhances the wonder, is, this righteous Servant was a sufferer ! That sin and sorrow should be close companions, could carry in it nothing puzzling : for justice required that every transgression should receive a proper recompence of reward. But that, under a perfect moral government, the greatest innocence should be coupled with the severest sufferings : this must non-plus and astonish us ! It was, however, realized as a fact in the person of the humbled Jesus. From the cradle to the cross his whole path through life was marked with blood and woe. He was distinguished as the man of sorrows. Contradictions of sinners met him wherever he went. Temptations and reproaches attended

attended on his every step. Men and devils joined hands against him : and, O ! who can tell it ? in those hands his Father left him ! Nay more, the holy hand of the MOST HIGH seemed to co-operate with the wicked hands that crucified and slew him :—for it pleased the LORD himself to bruise him, and to put him to grief !—This carried the agonies of his mangled body deep to his heart—and far exceeded them with unutterable agonies of soul⁽ⁱ⁾—agonies which ended only in death :—then he bowed his venerable head—gave up his spirit, with his life, into the hands of justice as an offering for sin ; and finished the sufferings of nature, when he paid the last debt which nature can pay. ^(k) Who that believes the equity of the moral government of the world, can think these matchless sufferings were all borne by such matchless innocence, for nothing ? And who, that considers the unspotted perfection of the character of the sufferer, can once imagine these pains were endured as the wages of any thing in himself ?—No wonder angels looked on, astonished at this scene : For in the history of Providence never did they find one step so perplexing, so inexplicable as this :—and inexplicable it must have remained forever—had not GOD been pleased to unfold the mystery—by declaring that he was wounded for our transgressions—that he was bruised for our iniquities—that the chastisement of our peace was upon him, that by his stripes we might be healed : that it was for the transgression of his people he was stricken—because
they

⁽ⁱ⁾ Heb. xii. 3. Mat. xxvii. 46. Isa. liii. 10.
Mat. xxvi. 38. ^(k) John xix. 30.

they all, like lost sheep, had gone astray ; and the LORD laid on him the iniquity of them all. (l) This silenced all objections, and dispersed all the darkneis of this amazing dispensation, and turned it into the glorious lustre of noon-day. This shewed that the holy Sufferer was a *Surety*—that he offered himself to justice in the room of sinners—that having voluntarily undertaken to bear them, the sins of his people were righteously imputed to him—that it was the punishment due to them he suffered—and under it, as a victim in their stead, he offered up his life ; the just for the unjust, that he might bring them to GOD. (m)

VIEWED in this light, every thing in this transaction is reasonable and just. No violence was here offered to law ; man had sinned, and man died the death for it. The truth of the threatening suffered no injury ; death was denounced in all its latitude ; and, in all its latitude it is here inflicted :—Justice received no wrong ; as much penalty was now endured as the sins deserved for which he meant to satisfy. The holy Sufferer was not wronged, since what he offered was all his own, and what he bore he freely undertook to bear : Nor did the Father's honor sustain any loss ; for the Surety undertook not the office without his own commission----and thus all right ends are answered, and all the debt of Christ' redeemed, to the uttermost farthing paid.

LET

(l) Isa. liii. 5, 6, 8. (m) 1 Peter iii. 18.

LET it not seem harsh that sin is here considered as a debt, since Christ himself has frequently called it by that name.⁽ⁿ⁾ Not indeed as if we owed it to any being; but because it was true that, as the innocent creature owed to the law of God the entire obedience of its precept: so the guilty owed, in addition thereto, full satisfaction of the sanction, by the suffering of the whole penalty which his sins deserved.

HAD any sinner completely endured this, in his own person, justice must have stopped its hand, declared itself satisfied, and ordered the criminal to be discharged. But to make the sufferings of a mere creature satisfactory, for reasons already hinted, they must be everlasting: eternal death was therefore included in the threatening of the law; this eternity, however, was not of the essence of the penalty itself—it
rose

(n) Matt. vi. 12. Luke xiii. 4. where the original word which we translate *sinners*, is *debtors*.

The Hebrew CHATA, *sin*, is, in the Syriac, CHORA, debt: Hence the verb CHOB, in the Chaldaic, is both *to sin* and *to be a debtor*. So, in the Lord's prayer, what Luke calls HAMARTIAS, *trespasses*, Matthew styles OPHEILÆMATA, *debts*; and doubtless it is in allusion to this view of sin, that the atonement is usually called LUTRON, from the verb LUO, *to pay*, signifying that it was the payment of a debt in order to the deliverance of the debtor from his imprisonment. So Eustathius on Homer, Iliad 4. affirms, it is called LUTRON, by Syncope, for LUTERION, and means any thing paid to set a prisoner or captive free. Hesychius declares the same of the compound *Antilutron*, and adds the city *Antandros* was so called, because it was given as a *lutron* for the deliverance of a captive, *anti andros dedomenæ*.

rose out of the defect of capacity in the subject. In the person of the suffering surety no such defect could be pleaded: its capacity was competent to sustain the whole weight of sin's punishment at once; the limited time, then, in which it did endure that pain, declared the glory of divine Justice more, and therefore gave it fuller satisfaction than could have been done by the eternal sufferings of all Adam's guilty sons.

To whomsoever of that race these sufferings of the surety are imputed; they cannot fail to insure eternal exemption from all punishment on their own persons. And this is legally done to all that are united to him. The gracious constitution of the plan of salvation has founded such an union between CHRIST and his redeemed, as is but imperfectly illustrated by the nearest kinds of union known in nature: Hence in scripture he is styled the husband and they the spouse(*o*)—he the head and they the members of his body(*p*)—he the vine and they the branches(*q*). By virtue of this union, CHRIST and they are often, in scripture, considered as one mystical person, and sometimes both together are called by the one name, CHRIST(*r*). Union among material things may be effected by contact: but among spirits, it can be only by mutual consent. Love, that makes each party choose the other as the object of his delight; and give his heart to that other in return, can
alone

(*o*) Isa. liv. 5. (*p*) Eph. i. 22. Col. i. 18. & ii. 19.
(*q*) John xv. 5. (*r*) 1 Cor. xii. 12. Col. i. 24.

alone produce union among beings that are rational and free. On the part of CHRIST this disposition towards his people was fully proved in what he had done for them—on their part it is accomplished by faith alone; as it is only by that faith, they choose Christ for their Saviour and beloved, and give their hearts away to him for ever.

Nor does faith less depend on regeneration than this union does on faith: the depraved heart ever resists, objects, refuses the terms proposed in the gospel, until it is renewed after the image of God. It must be created anew in CHRIST Jesus (s). This is the work of the divine SPIRIT in the day of God's power(t). The influences of that SPIRIT are poured out as the chief fruits of the Mediator's purchase for the chosen of his Father(u). The mystic union, then, of which we speak, is founded on the subject's faith in CHRIST :---That is the first fruit of their regeneration---and this is a gift springing from their election of God(w).

BUT however such union is accomplished, it lays a foundation for full communion between the united parties. In weal and woe, the head and members must share together. The debts of the wife are legally charged to her husband; and in all his goods and honors she is entitled to partake.

THIS

(s) Eph. ii. 10. (t) Ps. cx. 3. (u) Rom. viii. 9.
(w) Eph. i. 4.

THIS may shew us, at one view, why the sins of the redeemed were imputed to their surety; why his satisfaction is placed to the credit of their account; and why, on its being so reckoned, it becomes lawful and right for the eternal Lawgiver and Judge to pronounce them justified.

WE have already said that to pronounce this sentence, was the province which the eternal council had assigned to the FATHER(*x*); as in that œconomy, the first person appeared to assert the rights of Deity. It was also hinted above, that, in this business, he acted the part of a *Judge*, and decided perfectly according to law; and that this decision was made by one single act. All acts of Deity are either immanent or transient: The first remains in the eternal mind, where no change can take place, and never comes out, nor effects any changes abroad:--- The other passes from him to some object, on which it produces the effect designed.

ANTINOMIANS rank justification with the former; this was indeed necessary to support their opinion that it was an act eternally passed: nor if the one is granted, the other must follow: but if closely examined, they will find it prove more than they would admit: for all immanent acts of GOD are not only eternal, but essential to his nature; that nature is purely simple, and as incapable of composition as of change; every thing therefore in GOD, is GOD; this notion then
of

of its being an immanent act, will conclude, not only that justification is eternal---but even that it is GOD himself.

CONSTRAINED, therefore, to consider it as a transient act, passing a sentence on a creature which changes his state ; we infer, that it is instantaneous and perfect at once : Nor will this thought forbid us to allow, that in the act of justification are contained two essential parts ; corresponding to the two respects in which the sinner stands related to the law of God : first as guilty, and therefore bound to suffer the punishment deserved by sin ; and secondly as a rational subject of moral government, and so bound to yield perfect obedience to the law ; the fulfilment of both these obligations was necessary to the security of his happiness---the first, to deliver him from eternal death, and the last, to entitle him to everlasting life.

THEREFORE justification declares both these obligations fulfilled---and so pronounces the subject, discharged from the guilt and misery of the one, and entitled to all the bliss of the other.

THE first part contained in justification, then, is pardon of sins(y). This does not imply that the least grain of sin's intrinsic evil is taken from it by the atonement. On the contrary, nothing ever was done that set it in so odious a light as the death of the surety—for, can evil rise higher than to murder the Son of GOD ?(z) Not may

E we

(y) Alting. loc. cōm. p. 240. Wendelin. Theol. p. 300. (z) Romans vii. 13. & viii. 3.

we suppose this sentence removes, from the sinner's nature, the stain with which sin defiled it. No. This is the business of sanctifying grace. Pardon only discharges from guilt ; or the sinner's obligation to suffer punishment. Although this immediately respects the sins that are forgiven ; yet it terminates on the person pardoned : (a) and when it declares his sins already sustained by the surety and fully punished upon him ; it absolves the sinner himself from his previous obligation in law to suffer for them in his own person.

AND, O, what blessings does this idea involve ! Setting the sinner free from guilt, it delivers him from condemnation, for that is only the sentence of law against transgression.—Placed out of the reach of condemnation, the man stands secure from God's wrath ; for that is only JEHOVAH's willing the condemning sentence to be executed. Secured from wrath, he is safe from all the punishment threatened in the law---for punishment is only the execution of what wrath had willed.---And thus pardon delivers perfectly from danger :---for there surely can be no place for that, when there is no guilt present, nor punishment to come. This pardon must, therefore, extend to *all* the sins of the subject thus delivered ; for, if but one sin had been left unpardoned, eternal death must be the wages of that one---and so no blessing could fall to the lot of the sinner for ever.

In the use of this last thought we should proceed with circumspection. To say that sins are
pardoned

(a) Psalm xxxii. 1, 2.

pardoned before they are committed, would not only tend to licentious abuses---but would carry in it the manifest inconsistency of supposing them pardoned, before they were sins---that is, before they could expose the man to condemnation---or any pardon should be needed for them: nor will any thing in scripture, or the analogy of faith, give ground for the assertion. From that source we rather learn, that as one sin unrepented is sufficient to damn the guilty; so no sin is pardoned, before it is repented of---and the sinner has, on its account, fled to the open fountain for sin and uncleanness. Yet, as the pardon bestowed in justification is one of those gifts of which God never will repent---it is a sentence irreversible. So well ordered in all things is the covenant of grace, that, as the first act of saving faith ensures all the subsequent acts, in which the believer shall persevere to the end; so, in the first pardon of sin, is insured continued pardon, whenever the penitent shall come to the blood of CHRIST for it, and in this sense the pardon of one sin applied, ensures the pardon of all sins.

GLORIOUS as these privileges represent this free, full and final pardon of sin to be, they do not prove it to contain the whole nature of justification: for this, more is necessary than mere pardon. That will indeed be sufficient to exempt from danger of punishment; but cannot entitle to any positive blessings. The culprit vindicated from the accusations alledged against him on his trial, or pardoned after being found guilty, is discharged in due course of law: but
 he

he never dreams that this discharge can give him a claim to a reward from his prince. All the righteousness of which this sentence pronounces him possessed, is merely negative: bare innocence, or immunity from crimes, is all that it affirms concerning him. This secures him from the penal sanction of the law. But it goes no farther. The law, which is the standard by which man must be measured on a judicial trial, required a positive, as well as a negative righteousness. It forbade transgression, it is true; but it also enjoined actual obedience. To the former it threatened death: but to the latter only, when yielded in perfection, it, as a covenant of works, promised life everlasting.

THE judicial trial of which justification is the result, is a trial for life. The important question put to issue, is, not only whether the law finds the man a criminal, and cannot be satisfied without condemning him to die; but, also, whether he has a legal title to that eternal life which it had promised to perfect obedience; and this title is affirmed in the sentence which justifies. In order to this, it is requisite he stand right in the eye of the law; his rectitude must equally respect both its parts: it must satisfy the precept as well as the sanction. The sentence of which we speak, is not an approbation of the party simply---but with relation to the eternal rule of righteousness prescribed to him: to this rule it declares him fully conformed. To accept him without this, would not be to justify him according to law---but only to trample on the law, in order to show the criminal fa-
vor

vor. Mere pardon of sin may shew that the sanction has been satisfied, or the punishment which it had threatened, fully inflicted.---But this restores nothing but bare innocence.---It places him only where Adam stood before he fell : i. e. where he is not liable to punishment, because he had not sinned to deserve it :---yet not entitled to life, because that perfect obedience was not yet performed, to which alone this life was promised. Now, as mere innocence did not justify Adam, until he had actually paid the debt of obedience ; so mere pardon leaves us still to work out a righteousness of our own, before we can enter into life.

A SECOND part is therefore essential to justification ; that is, to pronounce the party possessed of the perfect righteousness which the law demanded ; and as such, actually entitled to the eternal life it promised.

THAT this cannot be declared in favor of any for whom this righteousness is not found, must follow, from its being done by a judgment according to truth : that it cannot be found where it is not, the omniscience of the judge must oblige us to conclude---That it is not inherent in any sinner, is evident from his being such. Nor does the doctrine we would support infer, that God must suppose the sinner has wrought out a perfect righteousness for himself, when he justifies him ; if, on that ground only, man could obtain this sentence in his favor, the whole human race must perish for ever.

BLESSED

BLESSED be **GOD**, the gospel plan necessitates the adoption of no such absurdities, while it holds up to sinners the firmest ground of hope. We have already seen a **SURETY** finishing all the righteousness required---finishing it in a manner infinitely superior to what the law demanded, or ever could have received from mere man, if he had remained holy forever : and finishing all this, not for himself, but in the room and stead of those whom he suffered death to redeem. We have seen him condescending to be called the **LORD** our righteousness(*b*)---because he was made of **GOD** to his people, righteousness, as well as redemption ; and they were made the righteousness of **GOD** in him(*c*).

THE man for whom the surety yielded this perfect obedience, then, will surely need no other to constitute him righteous in the eye of the precept of the law, and give him a title to the promised reward(*d*). The vital union between **CHRIST** and believers, of which we have already spoken, will prove that it was for them this debt was paid ; as it gives them a claim to call himself, with all his mediatorial fulness, their own(*e*). That faith to which the gospel called them, did expressly choose this righteousness for theirs, and absolutely renounce all pleas from any other(*f*) : This righteousness was offered them as the gift of **GOD** ; and when their hearts were bowed to accept it on his own terms, his goodness and his truth forbad him to withhold the

(*b*) Jer. xxiii. 6. (*c*) 1 Cor. i. 30. 2 Cor. v. 21.
 (*d*) Isa. liv. 17. (*e*) Isa. xlv. 24. (*f*) Phil. iii. 9.

the offered benefit: he gave it in the moment of their first believing, as freely as he offered it: It was found wrought for them, offered to them, and accepted by them; it was therefore an act of faithfulness, as well as grace, to make it over to them---to accept it for them, and to call it theirs. And then, arrayed in this robe they must be accepted. The LORD is well pleased for his righteousness sake---as it has magnified the law and made it honorable(*g*).

Not indeed as if the LORD imagined the obedience of CHRIST was their act. No, the acts of every man are his own: and cannot be done by any other: and the LORD views every thing as it really is: he sees the sinner to be far from righteousness---therefore he brings near his own(*b*):---he knows the righteousness of the surety was wrought for him;---therefore imputes it to him.---He sees him united to CHRIST, and therefore he treats him as one of his members. He brings the best robe and puts it on him; and, clothed therein he is made accepted in the Beloved(*i*). Accepted, as if he himself had performed that obedience to the law, the debt which it is found his surety has paid for him: and therefore actually possessed of a covenant-right to the promised life.

As this right is founded solely on that righteousness—it is completely vested in him who has a right to call it his own:---It is, therefore,
as

(*g*) Isa. xlii. 21. (*b*) Isa. xlv. 12, 13. (*i*) Eph. i. 6.

as perfect in the first moment of believing, as it ever will be: Education may qualify a son for the actual possession; but his right to the inheritance is as valid on the day of the birth, as when the heir is arrived at mature age.

BETWEEN a state of justification and its opposite, there can be no medium; all that are not in the one, must therefore be in the other. In perfect acts there are no degrees: it may then be safely concluded that as all who are not now condemned, are justified, at this moment---so all that are justified are perfectly so:---It will follow also, that all who partake this high privilege, enjoy it equally; the weakest true believer being as perfectly justified as the strongest: a touch of the hem of CHRIST's garment, will effect this cure as completely as the firmest grasp(*k*). The faith which receives CHRIST at all, receives him wholly---for CHRIST is not divided(*l*): So he that has an interest in his righteousness at all, is interested in the whole of it: the justification of all believers, then, being on the same ground, the privilege must equally belong to them all. The evidences of their being thus privileged, may depend on the degrees of the faith they exercise---and therefore may be as various as these:---but the privilege itself depends not on faith's degrees, but sincerity: it must then be equal in them all.

THE believer's right to eternal life being thus recognized perfect, by the Judge that justifies him;

(*k*) Acts, xiii. 30.

(*l*) 1 Cor. i. 13.

him ; no following obedience of his can contribute any thing to increase it. Nor does he need to work one moment in order to acquire this benefit. Justification has, at once, set him free both from the precept and the penalty of the law, as a covenant. He is no longer under it in that view(*m*). The possession of no kind of works of his own, can thenceforth commend him to the favor of GOD ; nor can he be rejected for the want of them(*n*).

YET, freedom from the law, as a covenant, has not delivered him from its authority as a rule. This is a thing impossible in itself : Since no creature ever can become independent, all creatures must ever remain subjects---and all rational subjects must be under rational law. The salvation freely bestowed by CHRIST, instead of dissolving the believers' obligations to holiness, has greatly enhanced them. Convinced more than ever of the dignity of the law, by the honor done it in the obedience of CHRIST, they feel more sensibly their own obligations to regard it. Struck with the lustre of its resemblance to the moral beauty of their beloved LORD, they bind it to their hearts as a law of love. Love is now the spring of more cordial obedience than could have formerly proceeded from fear, or hope of reward. Obedience
now

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(*m*) Rom. vi. 14.

(*n*) Rom. iii. 28, and iv. 5.

now is not their task, but their privilege---their refreshment---their delight. Their faith worketh by love(*o*). That ingenuous principle will be daily crying, what shall I render unto the Lord? To glorify him will thenceforth be their ultimate aim. And to this end, holiness, like an unbroken thread of gold, shall run through the web of their whole lives and conversations.

WHILST the believer thus goes on in the line of duty, he works not for life, as his reward; but from life, as his spiritual principle; and justification may assure him that the same free grace, which has accepted his person, will not fail likewise to accept his works; and on the same foundation too. God is said to have had respect to Abel's offering;(*p*) but that honor was paid first to Abel himself. Nor can it be imagined that any services will be acceptable, while he is rejected who tenders them: As, therefore, the doings of the unbeliever cannot please God---since himself assures us, without faith that is impossible(*q*): So, when we are told a farthing cast, by the hand of faith, into the LORD's treasury, shall not be despised; nor a cup of cold water thus given lose its(*r*) reward; we cannot avoid the conviction that the same *beloved* that had first commended themselves to the divine acceptance, has also procured this favorable estimation of their works.

NOR

(*o*) Gal. v. 6. (*p*) Gen. iv. 4. (*q*) Heb. xi. 6.
 (*r*) Mark xii. 42. Matt. x. 42.

NOR is this the only benefit inseparably connected with that sentence that confirms our title to eternal life. A right to heaven implies, a right to all the means necessary for attaining the possession of it. Justification, therefore, no sooner declares the one, than it actually conveys the other.

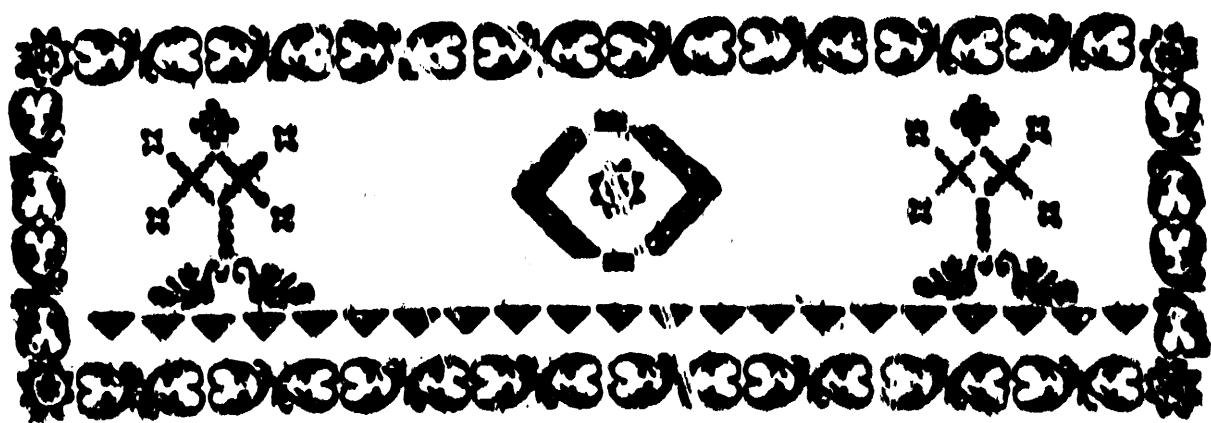
THE man that is justified, was indeed once an enemy to God; but now he is reconciled (f)--- peace, established, grows into near friendship--- the glorious friend puts on the bowels of a father; and the pardoned sinner is, at the same time, adopted among the children of his family, and taken into the father's bosom: On this adoption succeeds the communication of all the graces that should adorn the heir of glory, and fit him for the full enjoyment of it. The spirit of adoption, therefore, takes possession of him, as his temple; there he abides for ever; (t) and hence it is that the work of sanctification is effectually carried on; and the sanctified soul, filled with comfort, rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory; (u) hence the frequent, sweet glimpses of the light of God's countenance: The earnest of the future crown, often conveyed in the way of sensible communion, and all the anticipations of the glory to be revealed; by which this divine Comforter supports the work of grace he had begun, and brings it on, by gradual advances, until all corruptions are

(f) Col. i. 21. (t) Gal. iv. 6. (u) 1 Pet. i. 8.

are finally slain---all graces grown ripe---and the believer arrived at the measure of the stature of the perfect man in CHRIST : (w) and having thus been made to persevere in holiness to the end of life, he is then crowned with the full possession of that eternal inheritance to which justification announced his title.

(w) Eph. iv. 13.

END OF SERMON FIRST.



S E R M O N II.

R O M A N S V. 1.

THEREFORE BEING JUSTIFIED BY
FAITH WE HAVE PEACE WITH
GOD THROUGH OUR LORD
JESUS CHRIST.

TH E things which have been spoken in explaining the nature of justification, under the foregoing head, may help to point out the ground on which some of the principal questions yet before us may find their answers. - On that part of the subject it was thought necessary to dwell more particularly ; because the great controversy between us and Papists and Arminians on the one hand ; and Antinomians, under all their various forms, on the other, so far as it respects the doctrine of justification, arises from different explanations of that article.

PROPOR-

PROPORTIONED to the degrees in which men have differed in their views of its nature, have been their diversity in assigning its causes. To investigate these aright, would be in a great measure to remove the grounds of controversy on this point. In the execution of that part of our task, it is presumed we may derive some aid from what has already been said. To attempt it therefore shall be our next business. And this will bring on the Second Head proposed for consideration, which was

To explain the causes of justification; and especially how it is through our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

ON fundry points in divinity, all causes may be reduced to the efficient. But in the doctrine now before us, there has been less diversity of sentiment on that and the final cause, than those that are called the impulsive, meritorious, material, and formal. Less pains will therefore be needed in our attention to the two first mentioned causes, than the rest.

1. *The efficient cause* is, on all hands, agreed to be the LORD JEHOVAH himself. That very being who is the Author of the law which man had broken; whose holiness binds him to hate sin perfectly; and whose justice cannot accept any, upon a plea short of perfect righteousness: He alone is the Judge of all the earth; fully possessed of power to save or to destroy: and he it is that justifieth the ungodly(*a*). What-
ever

(*a*) Rom. viii. 33. Isa. xliii. 25. Isa. iv. 12.
Rom. iii. 6. and iv. 3.

Every external act is ascribed, in general terms, to God, is common to all the persons in the holy Trinity—Undivided in essence, they are united in will, and joint agents in every work of Deity. *(b)* In the business of justification, therefore, they all act a part. The Father was especially active in drawing the plan of men's salvation—in giving the Son to be their Redeemer—in accepting of what he did and suffered in their stead—in imputing it freely to the believer, and in judging him righteous on its account *(c)* The Son, as God, is the co-efficient cause with the Father; having power equally with him to bind or to loose, to remit sin or to retain it *(d)*. As Mediator, he wrought out the whole of that righteousness by which the believer is justified *(e)*—he is the Author and Finisher of that faith which embraces it *(f)*, and is appointed to be the final Judge, whose decisive sentence shall fix the fate of men and angels at last *(g)*. The HOLY GHOST convinces men of a state of sin and condemnation—strips them of all dependence on their own righteousness—discovers that of CHRIST—changes their hearts—infuses into them the habit of faith—draws it out to exercise in receiving CHRIST; and so applies his righteousness to them for justification *(h)*. It is his province also to bear witness to their acceptance and adoption; and so to seal them to the day of redemption *(i)*. Thus it appears

(b) John v. 19. *(c)* John iii. 16. 2 Pet. i. 17.
 Rom. viii. 33. *(d)* Mat. ix. 5. *(e)* Dan. ix. 24.
(f) Heb. xii. 2. *(g)* Acts x. 42. *(h)* John xvi. 8.
 Col. ii. 2. John i. 12, 13. *(i)* Rom. viii. 16.

appears that all the sacred persons in the Trinity had an efficient hand in this matter, according to the wise œconomy established in the covenant of redemption.

It must, however, be added, that if we consider this matter with strict precision, it will appear, that this œconomy established it as the distinct office of the Father, to pass the justifying act. (*k*)

2. THE final cause, that is, the great end which the efficient had in view, is generally granted to be the glory of God ; or the clear display of the lustre of his moral perfections. This must indeed be allowed to be his ultimate end in all his works. It would be unworthy of him to aim ultimately at a less end, when he might have aimed at a greater: the greatest end must respect the greatest being:—and that Being is himself. It is therefore quite in character for JEHOVAH to make all things for himself (*l*). The absolute independence of his nature forbids the thought of his deriving any happiness from the existence of creatures: that could not, then, be his end in bringing them into being ; and, if not, it must follow, that there is no tolerable sense in which he can be said to have made them for himself, excepting that which affirms it was for a display of his glory to objects without him.

By

(*k*) Rom. iii. 26. 2 Cor. v. 19.
Ps. cxlv. 10.

(*l*) Prov. xvi. 4.

THERE is nothing in his nature which it would be his dishonor to have publicly known. By how much the more of him is discovered to his creatures, by so much the more worthy of the highest love, veneration and obedience he appears to them all. No created intellect can penetrate into the divine essence by any force of its own—all discoveries of God must be made by himself; and nothing can be known of him beyond what these shall reveal.*(m)* The perfection of his nature is happiness to himself: it is also the source of all felicity to creatures. With the knowledge of him, true blessedness is diffused through the world: to spread the discoveries of God, is to enlarge the circle of human happiness:*(n)* this, then, is a deed worthy of divine goodness. It is a deed done both by the works which he performs, and the word which he reveals; it must, therefore, be the great end of both. And of both, the justification of which we speak, is the crowning point. Nothing, among all the works of God, illustrates his glory so much as this act, considered in its connection with the plan on which it is built.

HERE mercy is magnified, in pardoning the sins of many, for the righteousness of one; and justice is glorified in not sparing that one, although a beloved Son, because he was found a surety for sinners.*(o)*

WISDOM is displayed in finding out a way to punish the sin, and yet pardon the sinner; to
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make

(m) Job xi. 7. John i. 18. *(n)* John xvii. 3.
(o) Romans viii. 32.

make sin's wages to be sin's destruction ; and to bring the greatest good out of the greatest evil. (d)

THE holiness of God shines out illustriously in this work ; (e) which so clearly shews that sin is as much the object of his hatred, as his darling Son is the object of his love ; since here it is manifest, that he cannot but punish it, were it only imputed—and that to his well beloved, in whom is all his delight. Indeed every section of Deity is honored in this work : mercy and truth meet together ; righteousness and peace embrace each other in it : and every person in the Godhead comes to view, by this wondrous dispensation. The Trinity was a mystery which no other work of God had unveiled to man :—but in the plan of justification through CHRIST, we see the Father loving us—laying our help on his own Son, and drawing us to him, and then pronouncing us righteous for his sake : (f) The Son humbling himself by incarnation and obedience unto death ; shedding his blood to atone for our guilt and wash our sins away—giving up his life and soul a ransom to redeem ours, and purchase for us eternal bliss—and then offering and conveying all freely to us without money and without price. (g) And the Holy Ghost applying CHRIST and his benefits to our souls—creating us anew as temples for himself, and then taking up an everlasting abode in our hearts. (h)

As

(d) Eph. iii. 10. (e) Exod. xxxiv. 7. (f) John xvi. 27. Rom. v. 8. (g) Phil. ii. 7, 8. Zech. xiii. 1. Heb. xii. 24. 1 Tim. ii. 6. Isa. liii. 10, & lv. 1. (h) 1 Cor. iii. 16, and vi. 19. 2 Tim. i. 14. John xiv. 16, 23.

As the glory of God, therefore, is more eminently discovered by this than all his other works, so it cannot be doubted that it was planned and effected ultimately for that end.

3. But if we enquire after the *impulsive cause* of a sinner's justification on this plan, we shall never be able to discover any other than self-moving goodness and grace no less sovereign than it is free.

THE self-sufficiency of the eternal God was enough for his own happiness—else he must have been infinitely miserable from eternity—that misery must have been really infinite—as it was the misery of an infinite being; and eternal too, since an eternity had been spent, before any other being had existence. His happiness arose all from himself; and was no less perfect than his being. He could not need the being of creatures, since he could have created them when he pleased—and yet was pleased to spend an eternity without them: and if he needed not their beings, he needed not their blifs; since that was only an appendage of it. Whatever felicity creatures might partake, could certainly contribute nothing to increase that of their Maker; because that which is perfect cannot be made better by additions; and more especially because all their happiness is derived from his: that is the fountain, and these are the streams. God could not, then, be moved to justify any sinner, because he could not do without him. Nor was there any merit in the creature, to draw out this token of divine regard.

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WE have seen, on the former head, that fallen man was far from possessing any inherent righteousness to recommend him to God's favor ;(i) that, on the contrary, he was really destitute of all moral goodness, and actually full of all moral evil : that, as a breaker of the law, he was guilty of death, and might be plunged into hell as justly as the angels already chained there.(k) Every thing found in him was calculated to excite God's indignation : but nothing could be found to move his love. Nor was it moved towards man by the sufferings of the Redeemer. No. It was the previous motion of this love that gave the Son of God to suffer(l). It follows then, that it was moved by nothing without that bosom where it dwelt. It moved itself. It moved unsolicited ; for no created mind could think of asking such a favour as this gave. It moved unbought—for no price purchased it. It therefore moved freely. And hence all its works were freely done : and all its gifts were bestowed *gratis*.(m) For this reason it is called grace. And with sovereign freeness it has both begun and finished the glorious fabric of man's salvation. Of this the foundation was laid by grace, long before the birth of time, in the free election of the subjects of salvation—

(i) Isa. xlv. 12, 13. (k) Ps. cxxx. 3, & cxliii. 2, (l) John iii. 16. Rom. iii. 2, 3, & iv. 24. Eph. ii. 8. Tit. iii. 5—7.

(m) DOREAN, the Greek word which we translate *freely*, answers in the Septuagint to the original Hebrew CHANOM, Ps. xxxv. 7. which the Greek scholiast interprets by ANEU AITIAS, *without a cause* : yet this word is always used by the Apostle on this subject—See Rom. iii. 24.

vation—it was grace that did then give them over to CHRIST, as his peculiar charge—and CHRIST to them as their Redeemer : (n)—it was grace that accepted a Surety in the room of them on whom the debt originally lay—it was grace that brought the Saviour to put himself in that humble, but arduous place : (o)—it was grace that made the gospel-call effectual to persuade them to faith in him (p)—it was grace that changed their hearts and united them to Christ—that produced in them that love by which faith works and proves its truth—that repentance which grows out of this love—together with those fruits of holiness in which the work of sanctification is gradually carried on to the end (q)—and, at the end, it is grace too that sets the cope-stone on the building. (r) And thus it appears, that from first to last, the whole work of man's salvation is altogether of grace ; of grace unobliged, sovereign and free. (s)—What else can then be the impulsive cause of the sinner's justification ? Was it free grace that provided the justifying righteousness—and bestowed faith to apprehend it ? And what but the same grace imputes it to them—and declares them righteous on its account ?

NOR is this to be regarded as the empty rant of human fancy—or the mere dictates of an hypothesis : the Holy Spirit has ordered the uniform language of scripture, so as fully to confirm

(n) Rom. xi. 5. Eph. i. 4. John xvii. 6. (o) Eph. v. 25. (p) Isa. i. 18. 1 Cor. i. 24, 26. (q) 2 Thes. ii. 16. Eph. i. 6, & ii. 5, 7, 8. (r) Zech. iv. 7. (s) 2 Cor. xv. 10.

firm it. To this end it is so often declared that justification is a gift conferred on the ungodly who worketh nothing to procure it^(t)—that it is not of works, lest any man should boast—that all works of the law done by the sinner, either before or after it, are excluded from any share in the matter—that we are justified freely by grace—and not only justified, but that, when finally saved, we shall have it to say that it was by grace we were saved, through faith, and that not of ourselves—it was the gift of God.^(u) Nay, the apostle considers it so entirely as a work of free grace, that he utterly rejects the surmise of works joining issue with grace in this affair: he affirms the partnership between them to be impossible—as the giving the least credit to the claims of either, instantly destroys those of the other: if it be of grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace, &c.^(w)

I AM not insensible that Arminians of considerable note have objected that the works, against which the apostle argues, are to be understood only of those of the ceremonial law. But this objection has been so well answered by many writers, and particularly by the late worthy President *Edwards* ;* that I deem it superfluous to add any thing in this place on that subject.

4. THE *meritorious cause* of a sinner's justification, comes next to be considered: and this deserves

^(t) Rom. iii. 24. and iv. 5. ^(u) Eph. ii. 8, 9.
 Rom. iii. 27. ^(w) Rom. xi. 6.

* Sermons on Justification.

deserves particular attention ; because justification is an act of justice, as well as of grace. The doctrine of merit makes so great a figure in the church of *Rome* ; that, on the point now in hand, Protestants have generally abandoned the name. It properly signifies *desert* : and supposes the reward it meets with to be no more than a *debt*, to which it has a just claim. In this sense no created being could merit at the hand of God. Every creature is dependent for his being and his all. But he that merits, must not be beholden to God for any thing. God must be debtor to him—and continue so, until the merited reward be paid : and when it is, the receiver is nothing obliged to him for the payment ; as that contained only what was his due. Merit, in this view, may take place between man and man : Equal by nature, they may oblige one another ; and deserve compensations at each other's hands. But creatures hold all, by mere gift from their Maker. When the highest angel, then, has paid to God all he has—he has laid him under no obligation to thank or reward him—he has only returned to him what was his own. Perfect obedience from the purest seraph—or the complete conformity of innocent Adam to all commandments in the law, could have furnished no absolute merit to either : nor founded a just claim to any positive reward at God's hand on that score.

THE merit of which we speak, is called merit of *condignity* ; and that all creatures must disclaim it, is evident from what has been observed : Nor is it usual for the most legal spirit to indulge the
fancy

fancy of attaining happiness in that way. There is, however, a merit of *paſſion*, improperly ſo called, which conſiſts in ſuch qualifications as entitle men to a reward—not ſo much becauſe they deſerve it by their own intrinsic worth ; as becauſe they conſtitute a condition to which God has been pleaſed to promiſe it.---It is on this kind of merit the legalift builds all his hopes, from his ſincere endeavours—his repentance, and his reforms : and on this the Papiſt founds his expectations of bliſs on his penances—pilgrimages—prayers of the ſaints, and papal indulgencies. And equally vain are the hopes of both ; firſt, becauſe they reſt on things which do not contain the perfect obedience required in the firſt covenant ; nor the faith demanded in the ſecond, in order to acceptance ; and ſecondly, becauſe they are all performed by ſtrength derived from God ; and none of them is produced by power of their own.

THE plan of juſtifying ſinners, invented by the *Neonomians*, is quite unknown to the BIBLE. It is built on the fiction of a new law, ſubſtituted in the room of that eternal ſtandard of rectitude, which had ever required perfect obedience in order to acceptance with God, and fixed a curſe and condemnation on a ſingle defect : This they found a ſtandard too high for the doings of imperfect creatures ; and preſuming it unjuſt to require of them what they could not perform ; they fancied a merciful remedy, provided in conſequence of CHRIST's death ; by repealing this rigorous exaction ; and, in its ſtead, appointing a milder rule, which only requires repentance
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for errors past, and sincere endeavours after an honest, though imperfect, compliance for the time to come.

CONCERNING this theory, it might suffice to reply, that the scripture is silent: But it must be added, that the principles established by the sacred books, contradict every part of it. There we find that the law of God can no more be changed, than the nature of its Author: that heaven and earth shall pass away before one tittle can be altered or abated in it. That God, at first, made man upright; with sufficient abilities for perfect obedience: and that, in demanding such obedience, he required no more than he had a right to insist on, and no more than man was able to perform---and, if the creature foolishly sought out many inventions, and thereby disabled himself for his duty; he, not God, was to blame for this.---The Lawgiver had done nothing to forfeit his authority: and the subject, surely, could not forfeit it for him:---and, therefore, he had as good right to require perfect obedience now as he ever had: If, indeed, he must never demand of his creatures more than they are, in the fullest sense, able to pay; then it will follow, that the more enslaved to any lust a sinner is; the less right his Maker has to call him to forsake it;—or to condemn him for continuing in it; since it must be owned, that the less able is the man to resist the propensity to indulge it: On this score, the greatest sinner must have least to answer for:—and one altogether sinner can have nothing required of him: he has sinned him-
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self innocent : nothing now being his duty, nothing can be his sin : he has risen above the reach of the Lawgiver : and so, must be beyond the commission of the Judge :—for where no law is, there can be no transgression :—and where there is nothing commanded, there can be nothing condemned. In a word, the opinion we now implead, is such as cannot stand, without the downfall both of scripture, and of the moral government of the world together.

ON this ground the notion of this remedial law is built ; and, the foundation failing, the superstructure must fail with it.

Is it not manifest, that, for God, by an act of mercy, to appoint a new law, is to set aside the old ? If, in this way, he may accept of repentance as a satisfaction for sin, why may he not dispense with the necessity of any satisfaction at all ? Why then could not the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of the heifer, under the law, make a sufficient atonement ? Why could not thousands of rams and ten thousand rivers of oil avail, as a peace-offering ?—nor the fruit of the body procure pardon for the sin of the soul ? Why must the Son of God become incarnate—and bleed---and die ?

BUT I forbear. I will not suspect all the abettors of this opinion, among whom the pious, and excellent BAXTER was not the least, as ever once intending to rank themselves with the advocates of the SOCINIAN cause ; yet I must confess, that, when once this tenet is admitted,
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I see not where to stop, short of that abyss of absurdity.

To avoid it, therefore, we must conclude that, since justification is the act of a Judge, the sentence must be passed according to law: and there must be, of course, a righteousness found for the subject, in which the law is satisfied: As that subject is a sinner, this righteousness cannot consist in any repentings---tears---or endeavours of his own: Nothing but what is perfect can avail here. It must then be the righteousness of another. This could not be furnished by any man: because they were all in the same predicament:---nor by any other rational creature; for all such owed to God all their obedience for themselves: not one of them had ought to spare to guilty man.

It remains, then, that it can be afforded to him only by the man that was GOD'S FELLOW; and therefore

THE meritorious cause of a sinner's justification before God is, and can be nothing else than the CHRIST—the *Theanthropos*, humbled down into the sinner's place—and, in his stead, yielding obedience unto death: that is to say, the only thing that merited for man the high privilege of which we treat, is CHRIST's assuming the character of his surety—and, as such, doing all that was necessary to discharge his whole debt; for the innocent that debt could be nothing less than perfect obedience to the law:—and for the guilty it must comprise like-
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wife the complete suffering of all the penalty due to sin. For the full payment of both, CHRIST, in the covenant of redemption, became Sponsor in behalf of his people. The whole of that obedience and suffering, then, by which he fulfilled that ancient engagement, must constitute the merit which procured this benefit for them. But, in order to its doing so, it must be viewed in connexion with the dignity of his person, as God-man—the importance of his office as Mediator, as Prophet, Priest, and King of his redeemed—the perfection of his execution of that office—and the high worth of the offering made by the whole. Considered in this connexion, that offering rendered to the law of God its due; it yielded the obedience of a divine subject; and so it magnified it, and made it honorable: it paid to the justice of God its due also; while it endured all the penalty which that attribute could inflict: and thus it made *satisfaction* to both, for all demands that lay against the people he redeemed: in that satisfaction the LORD was well pleased: here was the sacrifice in which JEHOVAH smelled a savour of rest. It made peace. Hence it is called the propitiation, *(a)* the ransom that delivers men from the pit, in which there is no water, *(b)* the price of their redemption *(c)*—the purchase of the souls redeemed, and of all the bliss intended for them. *(d)*

TERMS

- (a)* Rom. iii. 25. Heb. ix. 5. 1 John ii. 2. Rom. v. 18.
(b) Matt. xx. 28. Mark x. 45. 1 Tim. ii. 6. Zech. ix. 11.
(c) Luke i. 68. & ii. 38. Heb. ix. 12. 15. Gal. i. 4.
 1 Cor. i. 30. *(d)* Acts xx. 28. Eph. i. 14. 1 Thess. v. 9.
 1 Cor. vi. 20. Eph. i. 7. Col. i. 14. 1 Peter i. 19.

TERMS all, used by the spirit of **GOD**, in more texts than the margin refers to—and used surely in some most important sense. The strength of them could not be justified, by supposing they meant nothing more than that **GOD** is rendered reconcileable by what **CHRIST** has done. No! They speak not of peace with **GOD** as hereby made possible---but as actually ensured. To say that the Most High is, or can be rendered any thing which he has not always been; is to deny the immutability of his nature; and to think him altogether such an one as ourselves. Had not the **LORD** been reconcileable before, he surely would never have given his Son to be a sacrifice—for that would be to assign to him a task impracticable.

BESIDES, for **CHRIST** only to effect this for his people, would not be for him to be the Peace-maker between **GOD** and them; but only to pave the way for them to make their peace themselves, by their own endeavours, repentance and faith: his righteousness would, thus, be but the footstool upon which their own would mount the throne.

Nor will it be easy to reconcile, to the obvious meaning of these texts, the doctrine which affirms that **CHRIST** made this incomparable sacrifice, merely to purchase for the Deity a right to save any sinner whom he pleased. To talk of **CHRIST**'s dying to purchase for **GOD** any thing which was not his before; must needs sound harsh in christian ears: as it seems to represent him as the Saviour of **GOD**, rather than
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of men—and as offering his life as the ransom of his Father, rather than of his creatures. To say that he had not a right to have elected and saved as many as he pleased ; seems hardly consistent with the idea of the potter's having power over the clay : if he had not a right to save them, where was his right to take such a measure as the death of his Son to effect that purpose ? That this was necessary to accomplish the salvation of the elect, we have already observed ; and that it has done it in a way perfectly honorable to God, will necessarily follow, from CHRIST's being their Surety, and paying down his life as the ransom of theirs : but until it be proved that he stood in this relation to the reprobate as well as to them—it cannot be made to appear, that he purchased or procured for God any more right to save them, than he would have possessed, if CHRIST had never died.

It is not a faint proposal of a vague, uncertain, possible salvation, which the texts above cited, make to the redeemed. Nor do they leave us to fear that the LORD JESUS will be found a weak, though a well-meaning, Saviour. No ! They speak of the redeemed as actually bought with a price ; and of their eternal happiness as a purchased possession—reserved, as well as prepared in heaven ; and openly set forth the precious blood of CHRIST, as the meritorious price by which it was obtained for them.

NOR does this doctrine militate against the idea of salvation's being as much the gift of
 GOD'S

God's free grace as we have stated it above. To the Surety that purchased it, indeed, no grace was shewn: it was not with mercy, but with justice, that he had to do: no abatements were made in his favor; the innocent victim remained a prisoner, until he had paid the uttermost farthing. But, though all was dearly bought by him, the redeemed themselves paid nothing for it: to them it all comes freely; and not the less freely because it cost the giver so dear: he who freely bestows a valuable estate which cost him nothing on one who never deserved it and never can, may be said to discover great grace in the gift: but he that gives him, with equal freeness, a possession which he had purchased at great expense, manifests grace still greater.—What then, if it had cost him the life of his son, his only son? O! ye heavenly hosts, what say ye to this? Does this thought depreciate, in your eyes, the freeness of the grace that gave you your All? Nay, does it not enhance, and exalt it more than all other considerations?

5. LET US NOW proceed to enquire into the *material cause* of justification. By this term is understood that which is the matter on which the sentence is directly and primarily passed: the matter or thing immediately respected in it; and which forms the ground or reason why the person is justified or declared righteous. This is distinguished from the object of the foregoing enquiry, as a part is from the whole. There the question was, what is it that has meritoriously deserved all the blessings which the covenant of grace ensures to God's elect here and hereafter?

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here, the thing we enquire is, only, what is the reason that a sinner is declared righteous by the Supreme Judge of all? The answer to the former did accordingly extend our views not only to the obedience which CHRIST performed, and the suffering he endured, expressly in the room of the sinner; but also to the humiliation of his assuming man's nature---the obscurity of his birth---the meanness of his appearance, together with the worth of his person, and the weight of his office-character: but, in answering this, our eye must be fixed directly on that which the law of GOD required from the sinner now under judicial trial: and that is nothing else than satisfaction to the precept by a perfect obedience—and to the sanction by the full suffering of the penalty denounced against sin.

FROM the nature of justification, as already explained, we learnt, that the subject of it was supposed to be brought before the Judge, to be tried on the article of his title to eternal life. On this trial that man must expect to be cast, who has nothing to plead. To a charge brought against him by his fellow men, in a human court, he might plead innocence: But this is a plea which no sinner can make at the tribunal of GOD. The case is plain. GOD had given to man a perfect law and demanded his obedience to it. To this obedience, when completely rendered, he had promised life: and death eternal was threatened to every sinful defect therein.

By this law the culprit's fate is to be decided, if its demands are satisfied, his right to the life
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It has promised will admit of no dispute: but, if not, he falls directly under the penalty. The question, then, is narrowed to that single point; has the man fulfilled the righteousness of the law? The man is a sinner. The answer must then be in the negative. The Judge is righteous and will by no means clear the guilty. The condemnation of the sinner, then, is the natural consequence of his guilt. He cannot be justified without a legal righteousness. This must be such as satisfies both the precept and the sanction. To escape the punishment awarded to sin by the one, it must appear that what he pleads, as his righteousness, has actually borne it; and to prove his title to the reward promised, it must appear that his righteousness contains the perfect conformity to the other, required as its condition. Evidence of the former acquits him from guilt, and secures him from punishment—and proof of the other, confirms his title to the life in question.

SUCH a righteousness is indeed to be found in the obedience and sufferings of JESUS CHRIST. These together comprise the whole suretyship-righteousness that he wrought out for men. They are very usually distinguished by divines into his active and passive obedience; and whatever impropriety the critic may spy in the term *passive* obedience—since all obedience carries in it the idea of activity;—and even in death, CHRIST was, in a sense, an agent—as he voluntarily made the offering for sin, and laid down the life which none could take away by force; yet the distinction is not useless. For neither of
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these two parts could have been sufficient matter for a sinner's justification, without the other: not the active obedience alone, because all that would be required of the innocent—and if it were found wrought out for the sinner; still it remains necessary that the punishment deserved by his sins, be endured; before law, or justice, can consent to his enlargement.

Not the passive obedience alone—that can only satisfy the threatening, and so absolve the sinner from his guilt, free him from his danger, and place him where he was before he fell; but this is no part of that obedience to the precept which was the condition of eternal life. Both parts, therefore, were necessary; for, to be justified, it is not enough not to be unjust: it is requisite we be found actually just too: nor should the active and passive parts of the righteousness, that is the matter of it, be separated on this question: the passive should not be robbed of the honor of meriting life—nor the active, of the honor of satisfying justice. Both unite in forming the one perfect righteousness of CHRIST, wrought out in the name of his redeemed: and that one righteousness, being absolutely perfect, is plenary satisfaction to both parts of the law—and being found truly pleadable by any man at the bar of GOD, as his righteousness, forms the *matter* for which he stands justified there.*

THAT

* AMES, in his *Marrow of Divinity*, lib. 1. cap. 25. p. 608. sums up the judgment of orthodox divines, in words which, for sake of my English reader, I translate thus: “ It is most manifest, that it is, by and on the account of

THAT CHRIST did eternally possess, as **GOD**, an essential righteousness of nature which was infinite, because divine, is readily acknowledged: That was indeed a pre-requisite, necessary to qualify him for discharging the office of a surety for fallen man. But it was not this—but that which he finished in his state of humiliation; that is, the matter by which the sinner is justified: The one he possessed for himself: The other he wrought out for his people. Of that there can be no appropriation to any creature: This may be appropriated to all, in whose room it was vicariously performed. And some appropriation of it was necessary for the purpose of justification—otherwise it must either justify all, or none. But in what way this is made, is a question that deserves our most serious attention; and to answer it, will lead us to the

SIXTH and last enquiry on this head—namely, that which respects *the formal cause* of justification. By this term, I mean only the manner in which the material cause is applied to the use of justifying sinners: or how it becomes theirs, so as to be the direct ground of **GOD**'s declaring them right in the eye of his law.

THE best dainties on the royal table cannot preserve the subject, who never tastes them, from
perishing

of the satisfaction of **CHRIST** alone, that we are absolved from the curse of the law, accounted righteous and received into favor." He adds, that this was the doctrine of **CHRYSOSTOM**, **BASIL**, **THEODORET**, **AMBROSE**, **AUGUSTINE**, **HILLARY**, and all the old divines, both Latin and Greek.

perishing by famine : Nor will all the riches, in the imperial treasury, release from prison the bankrupt who cannot call them his own. Just so, it may be truly affirmed, that, however glorious the righteousness of CHRIST was in itself, or how infinite soever its merit in the view of JEHOVAH ; yet, had the divine plan provided no way for its application to sinners, it would have been equally presumptuous and unavailing for any of them to have asked, or hoped for justification on its account. The most sovereign remedy can never cure the patient to whom it is never applied.

IN order to our justification, it is no less necessary that the justifying righteousness be applied to us, than that it have been wrought for us. Until it is pleadable by us, it cannot avail for us. It cannot be pleadable, in a court of law, as the matter of our justification, unless it can be made to appear to be legally ours. No part of it was performed by ourselves ; it cannot, therefore, be admitted as a righteousness inherent in us. It has been noted that this was all wrought out and finished by CHRIST. Whatever acts compose it, then, must all be considered as acts done only by him. Nor can they be thought the doings of any other. The eye of omniscience cannot fail to see every thing as it is. If the justification for which we contend, consisted only in GOD's thinking those things to have been actually done by us, which were performed by CHRIST alone ; or those sins to have been committed by him which we alone committed, we might safely affirm, that such justification never
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will be granted to any sinner. This would be *putative* sin and righteousness indeed ; being both fancifully supposed, where neither did really belong : Nor could we complain of all the ridicule of *Bellarmino* and his Popish abettors as slander or injurious ; if such absurdities were really woven into this doctrine. But it is quite foreign to all this ; and the language it speaks, directly the reverse. It considers none as righteous who are not such ; and justifies none, until they are found such. It is true, it justifies men by the righteousness of the Saviour : but that is because it finds that righteousness wrought for them—offered to them as a gift—accepted by them, and so made properly theirs.

THIS depends upon some things done without us, and some wrought within us. Under the former we considered God's giving his Son to us (*a*) and us to him : (*b*) this was absolute and eternal. 2. CHRIST's working out a righteousness for us, and so meriting our justification and eternal life. 3. God's accepting it as sufficient, and 4. offering it to us in the gospel : this was indeed done in time ; but was all without us.

UNDER the latter head we reckon God's spirit being sent down into our hearts by virtue of CHRIST's purchase—to regenerate us—to infuse the habit of faith and draw it out to act. 2. Our actually believing, or accepting CHRIST the offered gift, (*c*) and God's uniting us to him
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(*a*) John iii. 16. 1 Cor. i. 30. Isa. liii. 10.
 (*b*) John vi. 39. & xli. 9, 11, 12, 19. (*c*) John i. 11, 12.
 Acts x. 43. Rom. i. 17. & iii. 22, 25, 28. Gal. ii. 16. &
 iii. 6, 7, 8, 26. & v. 6. Phil. iii. 9.

by that means ; and then having his righteousness, together with himself, made over to us, we are viewed as righteous in our righteous Head : his righteousness is imputed to us, and we are treated as entitled to it.

THE form of justification, then, is this, IM-PUTATION. This word has been supposed to be a metaphor, taken from a known practice among merchants ; who charge the debt of one to the account of another, who has voluntarily become sponsor for the payment ; and discharge the principal upon receiving payment from the surety.—From commerce, the idea has been transferred to judicial transactions, and the debtor is discharged in open court, when legal proof is made that his obligations are fulfilled by his proxy. And the same principle has been extended to the most solemn business of nations : the hostage who delivers himself in pledge for the faith of his country, must expect to suffer for her fault, when she has been found violating her engagements to an offended potentate : the procedure, in all these cases, is on the principle of imputation : that principle is adopted in scripture ; and not a little of divinity turns upon it.

IMPATIENT of this doctrine, the Papists, in the council of Trent, thundered out their anathema against the word *imputation*, and all who should use it on the subject. And some Protestants have carried their generosity to excess, in conceding that the term is not really scriptural. None, we presume, will contend against the
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the term, who are hearty friends to the idea which it expresses. And very poor indeed would be his employment who would stickle for a word, against those that agree with him in all parts of the doctrine signified by it. Yet as we have no word fitter to express the true nature of this doctrine, than the word *imputation*; it might be suspected, that, giving up the term, was only a prelude to a direct renunciation of the notion of justification itself.

FAMILIAR enough to the sacred writings are both name and thing. The idea is deeply inswrought in all its principal doctrines. Sometimes we find it applied to sin, and sometimes to righteousness. (*d*) Sometimes it relates to a man's own actions; (*e*) and sometimes to those of another, reckoned in law to his account. (*f*) Of the former class was the famous deed of Phineas—and to the latter, belong the imputation of the first sin of *Adam* to all his seed—of the iniquities of all the redeemed to the suffering Surety—and of his righteousness to all who are justified. Various indeed are the words used by our translators of the Bible, to express this idea: *reckon, repute, count, esteem*, and the like, are employed for this purpose, as well as *impute*: but as these are all synonymous terms; so it is acknowledged on all hands, that they are only various translations of one original word. That word literally signifying to *impute*: by whatever other words it is rendered we may affirm, that, wherever it is found, we find the obnoxious term

(*d*) Ps. xxxii. 2. Rom. iv. 6. (*e*) 2 Tim. iv. 16.
Rom. iv. 4. (*f*) 2 Cor. v. 21.

term *imputation*: That it is, therefore, a scriptural one, no careful reader of the Bible can seriously deny. The places to which the margin refers you for a proof of this, are but a small part of the texts which might be cited for that end: yet these will shew this word used no less than eleven times in one single chapter; (g) and very frequently elsewhere.

IN one of them the word (ELLOGEI) *impute*, is translated by—*put that on my account*. And this is a plain exposition, or periphrasis of the meaning of the term: as the passage itself is
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(g) Rom. iv. 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 22, 23, 24; as our opponents on this point have often been found among the learned, the English reader will excuse a note here taken from the original word in the Greek.

THE compound verb ELLOGEOO which the Latins render by REOR, IMPUTO, SUPPUTO; and the middle verb LOGIZOMAI, which Paulus Tarnovius supposes synonymous with PSEPHIZOO, SUPPUTO, CONCLUDO; both are derived, through several intermediate derivatives, from LELOGA, the præterite middle of the root LEGOO which signifies to *speak*, to *state*, to *reason*: and from them comes the noun ELLOGISMOŌ, a *reckoning*—the foot of an accompt—or a charge on a book of accompts, &c. No violence then can be supposed to be offered to the literal sense of these words, when the one is rendered *impute*, and the other *imputation*: and that this is the sense in which it is used in scripture, will easily appear to him that shall take the pains to consult & compare Philem. 18, Rom. v. 13. Rom. viii. 18. 1 Peter v. 12. Rom. ii. 3. & ix. 8. & iii. 28. 1 Cor. iv. 1. 2 Cor. x. 11. Phil. iv. 8. 2 Cor. v. 19. and iii. 5. Mark xi. 31. & xv. 28. 2 Tim. iv. 18. Heb. xi. 19. &c. with the expositions of *Erasmus*, *Beza*, *Pareus*, and *Vorstius* on the places: and that the scripture has not forced the words into a sense foreign to that in which they are used by the ancient Greek classics, may be sufficiently seen in Aristophanes in Vesp. Aristot. econ. 2. Plutarch in Cæsar, Xenoph. Pæd. 2. and in many places of Demosthenes & Thucydides, & even Homer himself. Il. 22.

an illustration of the doctrine ; it is in the 17th, 18th and 19th verses of Paul's epistle to Philemon—"Receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought ; put that on my account. I, Paul, have written it with my own hand. I will repay it." Thus doth CHRIST commend the believer to his Father. This clearly explains the idea of imputation. And, now, that it may appear that this is the way in which God justifies the sinner ; viz. by imputing the suretyship-righteousness of CHRIST to him, on his believing, let us candidly consider the following arguments :

1. JUSTIFICATION is a judgment according to truth ; because it is pronounced by a Judge whose knowledge is infallible and whose veracity is infinitely above temptation. By what has been offered, on the first head, it appears that the direct import of that sentence is, to declare its subject to be found righteous. It follows, then, that the thing declared must be strictly true.

2. THE righteousness on which this sentence is grounded, must be found belonging to the subject ; for, otherwise, it could never be pleaded as the matter of his justification. It must, therefore, be found, either inherent in him ; as something resulting from dispositions and acts of his own ; or imputed to him, as being the real work of another ; but reckoned to his account, and pleadable in his behalf, as fully, as if it had been wrought by himself in person.

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THERE can be no third way, in which any man can be found righteous ; since the acts of another cannot be infused into him.

Now, every thing in the character of the sinner will prove he can have no inherent righteousness to justify him before God. That which does it, then, must be imputed to him.

3. THIS righteousness must be judged to be agreeable to the divine law : for we have seen that this is the standard by which the man is to be tried ; and the promise of life, in the first covenant, was made only to conformity to that standard. This conformity must be perfect. The standard itself is such. . Every defect, or degree of non-conformity to it, is sin(*b*).—The Judge who perfectly approves the law, cannot avoid disapproving, as perfectly, every deviation from that rule. Hence it appears, that no righteousness can justify before him, but one, that is perfect(*i*). But none such can be found inherent, either in sinners or saints, in the present life.(*k*) It remains, then, that if they are not justified by a righteousness *imputed*, they cannot be justified at all.

4. AGREEABLY to this remark is the current language of divine revelation. There, the words put into the mouths of justified persons, by the SPIRIT of GOD, are, “Not by works of righteousness that we have done :” The great Apostle could say, if any man had whereof to
glory

(*b*) 1 John iii. 4, 5. 17. (*i*) James ii. 10. Gal. iii. 10.
(*k*) Rom. iii. 10.

glory, he had more: yet, on this subject, he disclaims all hope from any other quarter; unless he can be found in CHRIST, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness of another, as the matter of his justification; even that which is through the faith of CHRIST(*l*). Now, sinners at this day can be justified only in the same way as were the sinners in the days of the Apostle; since it is the same God that justifies the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith(*m*). If these were justified by the righteousness of another; so must those be also.

It has, however, been already proved, that there is no other way in which the righteousness of another can become ours, unless by imputation. It must therefore be granted that he who is justified by the righteousness of another, is justified by an *imputed* one.

5. To this it may be added, that the persons on whom the blessing of justification is conferred, are found to be in themselves sinners and ungodly(*n*)—if ungodly, then they are without any righteousness inherent in them: when they are justified, they are declared righteous: this sentence must, therefore, be founded on the imputation of another's righteousness to them; for it could not be true in any other way.

6. HENCE it is that the bible so frequently contrasts the righteousness which justifies with that

(*l*) Phil. iii. 9. (*m*) Rom. iii. 30. (*n*) Rom. iv. 5.

that which is inherent in ourselves—the one is perfect—but the other is the reverse; for no man liveth and sinneth not(*b*). This is within us—but that is without us—it is not infused into our natures—no. It is unto all and upon all that believe:(*c*)—inherent righteousness is the aggregate of works of our own—but that which justifies us, is a righteousness without works(*d*). It must therefore be derived from the works of another reputed as ours: But this is, in the fullest sense, an imputed righteousness.

7. To the same purpose we are so often reminded that, after justification, men continue to sin, as long as they live. If this is true, there is no righteousness inherent in them, even when they are become the subjects of sanctifying grace, that can stand the test of God's law, or afford matter for their justification at his bar. Can it then be imagined that they possessed any such righteousness, in their natural state, which they have not attained in a state of grace; or that a merit can be ascribed to them in their worst condition, which could not truly be affirmed of them, at their best?

8. If no righteousness were found belonging to the believer, the sentence which acquits him of guilt, and accepts him as righteous, would not in fact be a justification: it would be only a force upon the law. It has therefore been argued above, that a righteousness was found ours, when this sentence was passed. But it is certain, that, if that of CHRIST was not, there was
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(*b*) 1 Kings viii. 46. (*c*) Rom. iii. 22. (*d*) Rom. iv. 6.

nothing else to constitute a righteousness for us. To be justified for any other, then, would be the same as to be justified without any : and this would be not to be justified at all.

9. ACCORDINGLY, the sacred writings openly state the righteousness of CHRIST, as that for which men are justified(*e*)—their sins pardoned—themselves accepted—made the righteousness of God &c.(*f*)—and if this is a true state of the case, that righteousness must be imputed to them, since we have seen that it could not become theirs in any other way.

10. IN confirmation of this conclusion, we are assured that the obedience of CHRIST makes us righteous in the same way as the disobedience of Adam made us sinners(*g*)—but that was by imputation—therefore so is this.—This idea I have had opportunity to open and defend in this place, on a former occasion ; and for that reason shall not treat it particularly here.

11. IN like manner we are taught, that, in the same way that CHRIST was condemned for our sins, we are justified for his righteousness.(*b*) He who knew no sin of his own was made sin for us—the Father imputed our sins to him, or placed them to his account, so that he was held responsible for them—and hence God is said to have laid on him the iniquities of us all.—Just so, we who have no righteousness of our own

(*c*) Acts xiii. 39. (*f*) 2 Cor. v. 21. (*g*) Rom. v. 19.
(*b*) 2 Cor. v. 21.

own, are made the righteousness of God in him; but our sins became his, only by imputation; and, therefore, his righteousness is made ours in no other way. That they did become his, in a legal sense, is evident from the sufferings which bruised him, and the death that cut him off:—These were appointed as the wages of sin: under a right moral government, they could not be inflicted on any but the guilty: They fell, in all their weight, on CHRIST. Either he was guilty, or not. If not, they were undeserved; and to inflict them was unjust. But an act of injustice could never be done by the hand of the holy and righteous JEHOVAH—He it was that bruised our glorious Surety. *(i)* All he suffered then was justly inflicted: if so, it was all deserved. That he had not incurred it by any demerit of his own, has been already proved from the holiness of his nature and the purity of his life: reason and scripture, therefore, concur in assuring us, that the MESSIAH was not cut off for himself—it must then be for the sins of others *(k)*—their sins must be found to be his; otherwise he could not justly suffer for them: they could not be his by inhesion—they must therefore become his by imputation only: for this there was sufficient ground in his voluntary susception of them and engagement to answer for them. This solves the justice of God in condemning and punishing the innocent Saviour. But that justice can be solved in justifying the guilty, only in the same way as in condemning the innocent: this we have now seen, can

(i) Isa. liii. 10.

(k) Dan. ix. 26. Rom. iv. 25.

can only be done by the imputation of sin—and therefore, that only by the imputation of righteousness.

THIS is a doctrine very adverse to human pride. It has therefore never wanted opposition. Against it, *Papists* and *Arminians*—*Socinians* and *Pelagians* have united their efforts. It was, however, the doctrine to which the church of GOD, in the first ages of christianity, did firmly adhere; and with an open testimony to it, in her hand, she came out from the Egyptian darkness of popery. That GOD justifies believers, only by imputing the righteousness of CHRIST to them, was the favorite theme of LUTHER^(l) and of CALVIN.^(m) And, from the public *confessions* of faith, agreed on by the body of the churches of the reformation, it appears, that, however they differed from one another in some other matters; yet, in boldly maintaining this, they all heartily combined.

THESE are, to this day, in the hands of the public; and access to them is easy to all; therefore, to avoid prolixity, we shall wave the trouble of long quotations from them, and only refer to a few places in the margin, where their sentiments on the subject are solemnly declared.⁽ⁿ⁾
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(l) Vide Luther's Commentary on Galatians, p. 120, 203, 407, &c. &c.

(m) Calvin's Epistles, passim. Calvin's Institutions, p. 344—357. lib. 3. cap. 11.

(n) The *Bohemian Confession*—articles 2, 3, 6, 7. The *Argentinian*, chap. 3. The *Polish* and *Lithuanian*, art. 4. 7. 9. The *Belgic*, art. 20, 21, 22, 23. The *Gallic*, art.

In all of them we find the same doctrine which the fathers taught : (o) The same, too, which was held by the synods and councils of greatest fame, in the church, in every age. (p)

THE candid hearer, it is hoped, will not imagine this reference designed to impose the creeds and confessions of national churches, or the judgments of synods or Fathers upon any man, as authorities decisive in matters of faith. No ! That honor is reserved for the words of inspiration alone. All beneath these, are liable to error : and it is unworthy of a Christian to pin his faith on the sleeve of a fallible mortal, or any number of them. Instead of pretending to utter oracular dictates, wise men publish their sentiments only to shew to their brethren in what sense they understand matters of faith ; without
any

13, 18, 19, 20, 22. *Helvetic*, art. 11, 12, 13, 15. *The English*, art. 11, 20. *The Scotch*, art. 4, 8, 9, 12. *Czengerine*, art. 10. *The Augustan*, art. 20. *The Saxon*, art. 4. *The Wirtembergie*, art. 5. *The Palatine*, p. 8.

(o) Ambrose de Virgine, lib. 3. torn. 1. de pœnitent. lib. 2. cap. 8. de fuga cap. 7. Augustine de tempore, Serm. 68. De spiritu et litera, tom 3. cap. 8. Decivitate Dei, lib. 7. cap. 31. Jerome against the Pelagians, lib. 2. Justin Martyr in Tryphone. Basil Homil. de humilitate. Cyril on John, lib. 4. cap. 51. lib. 9. cap. 78. Chrysostom on Romans homil : 5, 17. on 2 Corinth. homil 11, Athanasius in passione Salvator, & Epist. ad Galatas. Hilary de Trinitate lib. 9, 10. Gregory Nyssen. on Canticles, orat. 2. Tertullian de baptismo. v. 17. Irenæus lib. 4. cap. 37. Epiphanius in Anchorato c. 3. Cyprian's Epist. to Demetrianus. Bernard serm. ad fratres. &c.

(p) From that at Carthage, A. D. 285, to that at Dort, A. D. 1619, and even to that at Cambridge in New-England A. D. 1648, and that at Philadelphia, A. D. 1787.

any claim of authority to obtrude them on other men ; who have equal right with them to judge for themselves : And it is only to exercise the same kind of charity to their sister churches, that all the churches, in a nation, have joined to publish confessions of their faith—these quotations, in this place, are adduced, therefore, to shew that the doctrine we mean to support, is not a novel invention ; but a doctrine which the visible church, in every land and age, believed to be founded on the authority of scripture.

SENSIBLE that this head has been carried to a greater length than was expected, we shall dismiss it, with the addition of this memorandum ; that, in every place, where the imputation of CHRIST's righteousness has been affirmed to be the form of the sinner's justification, it was intended no less of his active obedience, than of his sufferings. Nor was this less necessary in the matter than these : all must be imputed which the law requires : and of this, active obedience to its precept was the principal part :—nothing but a *real* righteousness can be accepted here—and action is especially included in the very idea of this : it was for sinners that Christ performed his obedience, as well as endured his sufferings : eternal life was promised in that law, not to suffering, but to doing—and we are expressly told, that it is by the obedience of one that many are made righteous.(a)

It is objected to this, that Christ's active obedience was due from his human nature for
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(a) Romans v. 19.

itself : to what has been already said in reply, we would only add in this place, that, as Christ was under no obligation to put himself under the law, or undertake a course of obedience to it : so, after he had undertaken it, obedience and suffering were equally his business : in both he acted equally in his own right : as the humiliation itself, to which he submitted, was on our account ; so were all the steps taken in it ; and therefore his obedience : to deny this, would, indeed, reduce him to the rank of but half a Saviour ; for we have seen that suffering only removes the guilt—but entitles to no reward : for that a positive obedience is still wanting :—The man then, who is left without this, is not saved at all.

SHOULD this doctrine seem to any to represent sinners as holy and righteous as Christ himself, and therefore fit to become Saviours too ; it might be observed, that this objection is not a new one : it was urged by Bellarmine long ago. To obviate it, we need only reflect, that it has been already shewn that it is not Christ's essential righteousness, as he is God, which is the matter on which we are justified : that matter lies all in what he did and suffered on earth, in order to his satisfying the law : now, if all this was wrought for us, and we are accepted on its account ; it may safely be allowed that it will, as fully set us free from the curse—and as really make us accepted and righteous before God, as himself : yet it will not follow that we, like him, were GOD-MAN—or a holy thing born—naturally above the law—and subjected to it voluntarily.

voluntarily, not for ourselves, but for others—to give righteousness to them, and make them sons of God.

AND if it be objected, that the scripture teaches that we are justified by faith, and therefore not by imputed righteousness, the answer will open our way to the

III. HEAD of the subject: in which it was proposed

To shew in what sense justification is said to be by faith.

THAT this is affirmed in the text, we not only acknowledge, but joyfully maintain. Nor is it the language of this text alone. It is echoed by passages without number in the sacred volume. Did time permit us to consult them separately, it is presumed we should find nothing among them all, subversive of the doctrine of the foregoing head.

FAITH, in the most general sense, is only believing a truth upon the credit of some testimony. The knowledge it acquires, is distinguished from that of experience, which is derived from the senses; as well as from science, which arises from reasoning or demonstration. And faith itself receives the distinct denominations of *human* and *divine*, from the nature of the witness on whose testimony it relies; as that is either God or man. In the business of religion, it is divine faith that has the chief concern. Yet, even that

that is again distinguished into very different kinds.—Thus we hear sometimes of an *historical*, or *speculative* faith ; which consists merely in a rational assent to the truth of the facts reported, and doctrines taught in the word of God ; yielded in the same manner as to any other credible history. Sometimes we are told of the *faith of miracles* ; that is, a strong persuasion of the power and will of God to effect something earnestly desired ; which, yet, is out of the line of the ordinary powers of nature. Much has been said too concerning a *temporary* faith, like that of the stony-ground hearers ; which, tho' it rests not in mere speculation, but animates the affections, and produces such joys and delights, in the matters of religion, as lead to a conduct so fair and plausible, that the subject appears, to himself and others, to be a christian indeed : yet it endures not to the end : It vanisheth like the morning dew. This shews that it had no real root in the heart. It therefore interests the man in no share in the great salvation. But, on the contrary, leaves him where he will find his last state worse than his first.

BEYOND all these, the scripture often insists on a faith that is connected with justification and eternal life ; by which a convinced sinner, stripped of all dependance on any righteousness of his own, gives such credit to the testimony which God has given in the gospel concerning his Son, and the plan of salvation through him ; as is accompanied with a full consent of heart to that plan—a free and deliberate choice of CHRIST in all his offices—a resolute renun-

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ciation of every other hope—an unreserved dedication of the whole man to CHRIST's service and disposal, and a confident resting the whole weight of all our salvation on his righteousness alone.

THIS faith, too, is considered distinctly with respect to the act of believing itself—to the habit from which that act flows, and to the object on which it terminates.—Thus faith is spoken of, in the first sense, when it is commanded—as have faith in GOD : believe also in me, &c. (*b*)—In the second, when it is called “a gift—a grace—or like precious faith :” (*c*) These, and such like terms, are to be understood of the habit of faith.

IN natural things, it is granted, that habits are only a facility of performing acts of a certain kind, acquired by many repeated acts or exercises of that sort : In habits of this kind, no particular principle is necessarily supposed to pre-exist. But it is not so in habits that are spiritual and supernatural : Here the habit must precede the act : The tree must be made good, before its fruit is such. (*d*) Habit, in this sense, is an inherent, permanent quality, infused into the soul by the spirit of GOD. It is sometimes called a *power*, as it enables to its respective acts, and prevails over all opposition made to the performance of them : and sometimes a *principle*, as being, in a sense, the substratum, the ground, foundation, or spring, from which proceed all acts of its own kind. (*e*)

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(*b*) Mark xi. 22. John xiv. 1. (*c*) Eph. ii. 8.
2 Peter i. 1. (*d*) Matt. xii. 34. (*e*) Heb. v. 14.

It is from habit, in this view, that the act of faith already mentioned must issue. We can see no good reason to suppose that they are not coeval in respect to time : for to say a man has true faith, and yet is not a believer, would be to speak contradictions ; as really as if we should say, the man had life and yet did not live. But in the order of nature, the habit is first infused, and then the act is exerted : The first is the grace itself—the last is its exercise : This is immanent, that is transient :---The one is the will---the other the actual volition : In the former, the soul is passive, as the vessel that receives the water poured into it : In the latter, the soul, excited thereto by the Spirit of God, is itself active : for, as it may be said that CHRIST did not believe for us, although he bought this grace, and it is conveyed out of his fulness ; in like manner it may safely be affirmed, that, although the holy SPIRIT gives the ability for it, and even draws the habit out to exercise ; yet faith is not his act, but ours.

THAT this faith is produced in us by the operation of the SPIRIT of God, is very plainly declared in scripture. That its acts are one of those kinds of exercise for which men are qualified by the vital principle of holiness, created within them in regeneration, is no less evident. This principle is called the *new man*—as containing all the parts of that moral image of God which man lost in the fall, and which is restored only by a new creation. When this is bestowed, the seed of all divine graces is sown in the heart at once. But that which is first brought to spring
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up into exercise, is the faith whereof we speak ; That no other grace can be acted before faith, may be concluded ; because, if they should, they could not be pleasing or acceptable to God. (f) But to say that any gracious exercises of regenerate hearts are unacceptable and displeasing to their heavenly Father, would prompt the question, what profit, then, is in their regeneration ? And yet it cannot be denied, that all such exercises as have not faith implied or contained in them, lack one thing necessary to their pleasing God.

WHATEVER acts of sinful men expect acceptance without faith, must be considered, indeed, rather as affrontive, than pleasing to the Most High. They do not fulfil the law ; because all the goodness in them is defective in the principle acting—the end aimed at—the manner of performance, and the imperfection of the whole : and they do not comply with the gospel—but, on the contrary, do, in fact, slight its great and chief command ; which binds sinners to come to CHRIST that they may have life—to receive him, that they may become the sons of God—or to believe in him, that they may find life through his name. (g) No such exercises, therefore, can be pleasing to God : and to claim his acceptance of them as they stand, must affront his Majesty ; as all such claims must carry an implication that it may be hoped that God himself is not perfectly holy and just, and so can be pleased with unrighteousness :

(f) Heb. xi. 6. (g) John v. 40. & i. 12. & xx. 31.
1 John iii. 23.

ousness : it attempts to set a de the law as a rule ; while it affects to reconcile the Lawgiver himself to what is not conformed to it. Every such attempt contains an atheistical denial of the Divine Omniscience, in trying to impose on him a mere outside for real holiness—or of his immutability and justice, in presuming to abate his demands, as too rigorous and austere.--- Nor do these claims less obviously tend to dishonour the gospel than the law—aspiring at acceptance without faith, they slight the divine plan and all the perfections of God that shine there, in the face of CHRIST :—they aim to vacate the end of CHRIST's death(*b*)—trample on his blood as some common or unholy thing, and do despite to the Spirit of grace, in rejecting his testimony—that, without that blood shed, there can be no remission of sins,*(i)* and that it is only by faith that saints have access to the grace wherein they stand.*(k)*

HENCE it appears, that any repentance—love—humility—resignation or hope, that can be exercised before faith, can avail nothing towards securing justification before God. Nor can they have more efficacy in promoting the work of sanctification ; since they are unable to support the soul, in its progress in that work, by native energy of their own ; and cannot go out of themselves for that foreign aid, which it is the business of faith alone to draw down from heaven, and rely upon, in every step. They could, therefore, have no real virtue or goodness in them, unless mingled with faith in Christ:
without

(*b*) Isa. liii. 5. (*i*) Heb. ix. 22. (*k*) Rom. v. 2.

without this, every one of them would degenerate from the appearance of a grace, into a palpable exercise of corruption. Without faith, any fear of God which could be experienced, would represent him as a tyrant—would urge the soul to flee from him as far as possible, and fill it only with the spectres of hideous darkness and destruction. Without faith, repentance would be despair, and anticipate the gnawings of the worm that never dies—humility, without it, would be mere dejection of mind—and resignation, no better than Stoical stupidity--than the pride of an heathen hero--or the sullen hardness of an Indian savage :—Hope, without faith, would be presumption, and love itself, either forced or feigned.

AND, as such exercises of heart could not contain any thing spiritually good in themselves ; so neither could they avail for happiness to their subjects. Indeed, without faith, the best religious education will finally but condemn—and knowledge increase the many stripes :^(l)—morality itself will feed our self-righteous pride^(m)—shining gifts be but as sounding brass—and loud professions as tinkling cymbals.⁽ⁿ⁾ If faith is wanting, all our zeal is hypocrisy—all our joys factitious, and all our comforts delusive. Where this grace is not, praises would be but empty compliment—the word of God itself could not profit—and the sweetest promises become a dead letter.^(o) In a word, without faith, ordinances would not avail us---our

M christian

(l) Luke xii. 47, 48.

(n) 1 Cor. xiii. 1.

(m) Matt. xix. 20.

(o) Heb. iv. 2.

christian circumcision would be turned to uncircumcision(*p*)---and receiving the Holy Supper, would be eating and drinking damnation to ourselves(*q*)---the Sabbaths of the LORD would be a weariness to us—the ministers of the gospel a favour of death unto death, and the death of CHRIST to us would be worse than in vain.(*r*)

SINCE, then, no other exercise could please God or profit us, without faith—we may safely infer that, in regenerate souls, none precedes it. In order to their partaking of that righteousness which has fulfilled all commands of the law, the *Holy Spirit* leads them, immediately on their regeneration, to that faith which complies with the terms of acceptance offered in the calls of the gospel. On the spiritual eye, formed in the new birth, is instantly poured the light of spiritual illumination. This presents CHRIST's person, characters, and work, and the whole plan of salvation, in such colours as the new taste esteems beautiful, fit and worthy of all acceptation: and, hence, the whole heart falls in with it: eagerly it flies to this refuge, embraces the offered Redeemer, and gives the heart away to him.

THUS the soul is united to CHRIST; and becomes not only his spouse, but even a member of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones;(*s*) and being found united to him, it is immediately entitled to call his suretyship-righteousness its own; for CHRIST and that ever go together: To this righteousness it leans for acceptance with
GOD

(*p*) Rom. ii. 25—29.

(*q*) 1 Cor. xi. 29.

(*r*) Mal. i. 13. Amos viii. 5. 2 Cor. ii. 16. Gal ii. 21.

(*s*) Eph. v. 30.

GOD the Father : he imputes it to the soul that pleads it ; and, on its account, pronounces the sentence of justification in both its parts on the believer.

BETWEEN this faith, then, and justification, there is a certain and immediate connexion ; a connexion infallible and indissoluble ; a connexion founded in God's eternal purpose, and the blood of the Redeemer--a connexion publicly proclaimed in the gospel—established in the covenant of grace---ratified by the immutable oath of God that cannot lie---and experienced by every believer since the beginning of the world. (1) Hence it is that justification by faith is a doctrine so frequently and so fully taught in the gospel.

NOR can this be said to be inconsistent with justification by the imputed righteousness of **CHRIST**. It rather confirms it. For *faith*, in this connexion, is used in that which was mentioned above as the third sense, into which saving faith has been distinguished. Namely, by a *metonymy* very familiar to the sacred books. (u)

In this figure the act is put for its object—faith thus stands for the testimony believed ; and the act of trust for the object in which that trust is reposed : as that object is **CHRIST** and his righteousness ; or **CHRIST** performing that righteousness, hence this is called *faith* in an objective sense ; and, in that sense, faith is said to justify ;

(1) John iii. 16, 18. Acts xiii. 39. Heb. vi. 17.

(u) Phil. iv. 1. Cant. viii. 4. Rom. viii. 24. Tit. ii. 13. Gen. xxxi. 53.

justify ; just as buying the field may be said to make us rich, when it is only the pearl of great price deposited there, that enriches indeed : In the same metonymical sense faith is sometimes said to be *imputed* ; because its object, or the righteousness in which it trusts, is so ; in this way it is called our righteousness, as the eye is the light of the body.

THIS honor is peculiarly reserved for faith, not for any intrinsic worth of its own. No : that is inconsistent with our state as sinners : all the worth is only in the object which faith apprehends. Nor can it justify by its own virtue, or innate efficacy ; this is done only by the virtue of what it receives ; as the virtue that healed the stung Israelite was not in his eye, but in the brazen serpent to which it looked : Nor was the power that stopped the bloody issue, in the finger of the patient ; but only in him whose garment she touched. Faith derives not this connexion merely from its being a qualification wrought in us by the SPIRIT ; for that would be to confound justification with sanctification ; which we have already shewn to be two blessings really distinct in the nature of things : nor yet from its being an act performed by us. The Arminians at the synod of Dort, contended that the words of the Apostle in Rom. iv. 3, 5, 9, which speak of faith's being counted for righteousness, fully prove that, by the gospel-covenant, the act of believing is accepted instead of that perfect obedience which was required by the law. (w) But to this the orthodox replied, that the

(w) Remonstr. Confession, cap. 10 and 18.

the sixth verse declares the righteousness, there said to be imputed, to be a righteousness without works ; and, therefore, it cannot consist in faith, which is a work of ours :---Besides, that the same chapter assures us, that the same thing which was imputed to *Abraham* for righteousness, shall be also imputed to all that believe : (x) If that was merely *Abraham's* act of faith ; then *Abraham's* faith, not their own, must actually be imputed to all other believers---and be the matter of their justification before God. To this it may be added, that, as faith is a duty required in the gospel, our obligation to it is founded in that eternal law, which binds man to obey whatever God, at any future time, shall command. In this light, it is not only a work of ours, but a work of the law ; and, if it is, then it cannot be our justifying righteousness ; for the scripture has again and again declared, that, by the deeds of the law, no flesh living shall be justified. (y) That, in this matter, faith and works stand widely distinguished ; as does faith also, and that righteousness by which men are justified. (z)

FROM this distinction it follows, that faith does not justify on account of any virtues or works of obedience which flow from it--or which might be, in any sense, said to be contained in it as their principle : that true faith is a working grace, is manifest from the declaration, that the faith which is alone, producing no good works, is dead ; as well as from the examples of its

(x) Ver. 22, 23, 24. (y) Gal. ii. 16. Rom. iii. 27, 28. Eph. ii. 8, 9. (z) Rom. i. 17.

its fruits, in the lives of all the believers recorded in scripture :--- Yet, it is no less manifest, that, in the matter of our justification before God, it may be said to act *alone*, without the co-operation of any work of the law, or of any other grace of the gospel : If this, however, were not the case ; if it were joined with other virtues or fruits of obedience, and respected chiefly on their account, we could not properly be said to be justified by faith ; since faith itself is one thing, and the obedience flowing from it, quite another,

MANY sound divines have objected to faith's being said to justify as a *condition* ; because, strictly speaking, nothing can stand as the condition of a man's justification, but an obedience which is perfect. As this was the only condition required in the law ; the gospel, instead of substituting another in the room of it, comes to declare that condition fulfilled by CHRIST, the Surety, and to offer that satisfaction to our acceptance, which it assures us has been accepted by God the Father : faith accordingly accepts this, and thus makes it our own : Faith may be safely considered here as a *conditio sine qua non* : as this application of CHRIST's righteousness is not made to any until they believe ; and hence every believer is said to be in a state of condemnation, and to have the wrath of God abiding on him : (a)---but this is very different from faith's being the very righteousness imputed--or standing in the new covenant, instead of the perfect obedience required in the old.

NOR

(a) John iii. 36.

NOR does it seem accurate to say, that faith is the *instrument* of justification ; it cannot properly be said to be God's instrument, or the matter applied--for that is nothing but the righteousness of CHRIST : nor the mean of drawing men to it, for that is the gospel : it cannot be called the instrument of our accepting that righteousness ; since it is that very acceptance itself ; and the act of seeing cannot be the instrument of seeing.

ON the whole, faith is considered, in the matter, rather as the *mean*, on our part, appointed by sovereign grace, for accomplishing our union to CHRIST ; or, as some choose to express it, the bond of that union, from which results a claim to the righteousness of CHRIST, as well as to that imputation which reckons it ours.--- Hence, although we are never said to be justified *for* faith ; we are very often said to be justified *by* it : that is, by it, only as it goes out for, and appropriates that righteousness which alone can justify ; this is the garment which CHRIST wrought for us---faith puts it on---but never contributed the least help towards the making of it. Convinced that the least sinner needs no less than this, faith sees that the greatest needs no more ; that the infant of an hour cannot be saved without it---and the sinner an hundred years old cannot perish, if he has it : that it must cost all this to redeem one guilty soul--and to ransom ten thousand worlds, would cost no more.

FAITH is also well assured that justification is altogether *free* ; yet does it not dream itself to be

be thereby rendered needless :---A gift is never thought the less free, because there must be a receiving hand, as well as a giving one, employed in the act which makes it ours : especially if the giver provides the hand, as well as the gift which it receives. Viewing the matter in this light, faith comes to buy without money and without price : far from pretending to do what it cannot ; or to give what it has not gotten to itself, it is glad to come empty handed. Regarding all pretences to justification by our own righteousness, as standing in opposition to that of CHRIST, faith abandons these as filthy rags : and, in this view, counts our righteousness as worse, even than our unrighteousness :---As this only strikes at God's law---but that also annuls his grace : the one made us need the physician ; but the other keeps us incurable by him.

REJECTING, therefore, nay, detesting all claims of favor on that account, faith goes out from the sinner himself ; and seeks and takes all his righteousness from another : it exerts the whole disposition of the new creature on this blessed object. It is the eye by which that creature beholds CHRIST, *(a)* and its lip to kiss the Son and plead his righteousness for acceptance with the Father *(b)*---It is its ear to hear his voice in the calls and promises of the gospel *(c)*—its hand to receive, and its arms to embrace him in the gracious offer. *(d)* Faith is its knee to bow to him as King *(e)*—its tongue to speak his praises—its feet to run in the paths of his command-

(a) John vi. 40. *(b)* Ps. ii. 12. *(c)* John v. 25.
(d) John i. 12. *(e)* Phil. ii. 10.

commandments—and its wings to fly away, at last, to his arms. And, thus, the believer is said to be justified by faith, just as the husbandman lives by his plough—or the soldier by his sword.

For this office faith seems to be peculiarly fitted; not only because it has, in some respects, less of the man's own in it, than any other of his acts:—but, especially, as it is its very nature to disclaim all merit in itself and in every other act, which he ever shall perform: its constant aim is to ascribe all to free, sovereign grace—to draw its all from that source—and never to venture to draw near to God, unless leaning on that righteousness which he values more than the spotless obedience of all his angels. It views—confesses and treats all things according to truth; God and his law it considers as holy and just—and sin as infinitely evil. The sinner it views as void of all merit—and CHRIST as a Saviour to the uttermost. Renouncing all claim to God's acceptance, on account of such things as have no value in the eye of the law, faith brings no vain oblations: Its claims, at once, honor that law—obey the gospel, and fulfil its ends. It pleads only that righteousness with which God is well pleased; with which his justice is satisfied, every divine attribute displayed, and the whole law magnified and made honorable.

HENCE we see the reasonableness of the scripture doctrine, that we are justified by faith alone: that is, by faith, to the equal exclusion of legal works and evangelical graces, from having any

share with it in this matter. (f) This is the doctrine that exalts free grace to the highest—that secures the honor of our whole salvation to the great Surety—and lays the sinner where it best becomes him to lie, low in the dust at his feet. It cannot fail, then, of being a doctrine pleasing to God, and dear to all who love him. To assert it, was accounted the glory of Apostles and Prophets; and to receive it, the temper of all who are built on their foundation; and whose hope regards JESUS CHRIST himself as its chief corner stone: That Rock of ages, on which whoever builds, shall find that the gates of hell never can prevail against him.

To support this doctrine, the chief arguments of the Apostle PAUL, in all his epistles, bend their principal force. Nor have we found any thing, in all the sacred writings, inconsistent with the view of it here given. This last assertion does not mean to wink out of sight the spirited reasoning of the Apostle JAMES on this subject: (g) nor his pointed declaration, that a man is justified by works and not by faith only.

THAT there is nothing in all that passage which militates against the doctrine of his brother PAUL, who had written before this sacred author, must be granted by all who believe the writings of them both to be the word of God. Scripture cannot contradict itself: for all truth must be consistent. If the terms *faith* and *justify*, in this place, are to be understood in the same sense,

(f) Gal. ii. 16. and iii. 11. and v. 5. Rom. i. 17. and iii. 2.

(g) James ii. 14—26.

sense, as in those of PAUL, which treat on this subject; it cannot be denied, that their sentences are flatly contradictory to each other. It follows, then, that one or other of these words must be understood differently in the places compared. If our opponents say, the diversity must lie in the word *faith*, which PAUL uses in a figure, and JAMES in its literal sense; and if we, on the other hand, say, *justify* is used by PAUL with reference to the tribunal of heaven; and by JAMES, in relation to the judgment of our fellow men—that the former is treating of the justification of the sinner's person; whereas the latter speaks only of the proofs which evidence the truth of his faith; and, so, justify his profession of it in the eye of other christians, or of the world. This difference of interpretations will not involve us in more difficulty than our opponents; while the doctrine which we thereby learn is the doctrine of the whole Bible; whereas theirs appears destitute of foundation, or countenance in that volume. This apparent difficulty, however, is among those which have been most frequently handled by divines both from the pulpit and the press; the topic of its solution is, therefore, so commonly understood, that to press it further, on this occasion, seems unnecessary and useless.

To pass on, then, it must be obvious to the considering mind, that, if faith's influence in the justification of sinners before God has been here stated according to truth; it cannot be reduced to the rank of a mere evidence of their title to that blessing. That true faith contains,
in

in it, material proof of this, is readily granted. But that it is more, must follow from its standing *alone*, in this article ; no other grace or duty being admitted to share with it : but, in the business of manifesting God's love to us, and proving that we are really justified ; every other grace stands forth as well as faith ; and answers the same purpose always as fully as that :—and sometimes with more clearness too ; as it is by their testimony we often obtain certainty of the real existence of faith itself.

BESIDES, if faith justifies, only as an evidence, then a sinner's justification must ever bear proportion to the evidence of it which he receives : and hence it must follow, that all the justified are not equally so : yes, that the same believer is much more justified at one time than at another ; and sometimes not justified at all : as experience shews that this evidence is in different degrees in different subjects ; and, in the same subject, at different times.

To save us from such absurdities, the scriptures assure us, that faith has more concern in justification, than that of a witness. It is that by which we have access to the blessed state of the justified. (g) By it we receive both grace and righteousness. (h) This was a gift designed for us from eternity, it is true ; but it was no more conveyed to us then, than our beings ; which were decreed as early :—This gift was offered in the gospel ; but it was not really ours, before we received it : and that reception was only by faith.

(g) Rom. v. 2.

(h) Rom. v. 13.

faith. The whole current of revelation will, therefore, keep us in countenance, in what, we hope, is now sufficiently proved, that faith is the appointed mean of our union with CHRIST ; and, therefore, of our interest in his righteousness, and justification by its merit.

BUT this will constrain us to advance another step, and conclude, that the justification here spoken of, was not actually bestowed on any sinner from eternity. The contrary is indeed supported by *Antinomians* with all their might. That seems to be their leading error, and fundamental of all the rest in their scheme. It originated in a mistaken idea of the nature of that act of God which justifies. Supposing it an *immanent* act, it is not strange if they could not distinguish between it and the divine decree ; for we have already seen, it would, in that view, be no easy matter to draw the line between it and the divine essence ; and then the eternity of the act was a natural consequence : --- But, from the palpable absurdities with which this notion is loaded, we have already proved the justifying act to be *transient* : and if it is, the foundation of their whole theory must fail. — Of justification, we have also observed, pardon of sin to be an essential part : but this we have shewn, supposed the sin found to have been actually committed ; since, otherwise, there was no object on which the pardoning act could take place : if so, that act could not be eternal ; for sin could not be, till the sinner existed : Moreover, if sin must be found before it is pardoned ; by a parity of reason, we may conclude,

conclude, that sinners must exist before they are justified.---To impute CHRIST's righteousness to men before they exist, is to impute it to a mere non-entity—that is, to a mere nothing:---But to impute it to nothing, is the same thing as not to impute it to any thing; which is, not to impute it at all. Hence it follows, that, if men were actually justified from eternity; they themselves must have been coeternal existents with God: and, if coeternal, they must be coessential with him; since more eternal substances, or essences, than one, are clearly impossible in the nature of things.

THAT GOD did actually purpose, from eternity, to bestow this gift on all his elect, in time, the scripture amply confirms: But designation and possession are different things. He also purposed eternally to bestow existence on creatures: yet creatures did not actually exist so early:—God's mere purpose, gives being to nothing without his power. To blend these two things, would involve us in endless confusions. As well might it be argued, that all that shall ever be born are actually brought forth already; because their birth is already designed: yes, and that they are dead too: nay, that the last judgment is actually past: all the elect already in heaven—and all the rest really plunged into the burning lake, for the same reasons!!

BUT scripture has offered no more ground for such *deliria* than has reason itself. There we find the justification of men foreseen and foretold,

told, as a thing *future*; (*i*) which surely could not be with respect to a matter eternally *past*.—There justification is stated as *posterior* to effectual calling; for whom God called, them, and them only he justified. (*k*) There faith is often pointed out as absolutely prerequisite to this—and, hence, we are said to be justified *by faith*, and *through* faith; but never *before* it: There this gift is expressly limited to all that believe. (*l*) Some, who once were in a state of condemnation, are said *now* to be justified; (*m*) and others are said to have believed that they might be justified. (*n*) There every unbeliever is represented as in a state of condemnation—abiding in death ---lying in sin---a child of wrath which abideth on him. (*o*)---This is the character given them in the word; and the spirit of God, in all their legal convictions, bears his testimony, in their consciences, that all this is true.

BUT what can be said to these things, if the same persons were actually justified from eternity? Shall the abettors of that notion presume to charge the HOLY SPIRIT of truth, as bearing witness to a falsehood? Or, will they rather affirm, that the same person may be actually justified, and actually condemned—by the same Judge, at the same time?—But, here let us stop. Enough has been said to prove this principle
pregnant

(*i*) Gal. iii. 8.

(*k*) Rom. viii. 30.

(*l*) Rom. iii. 30.

(*m*) 1 Cor. vi. 11.

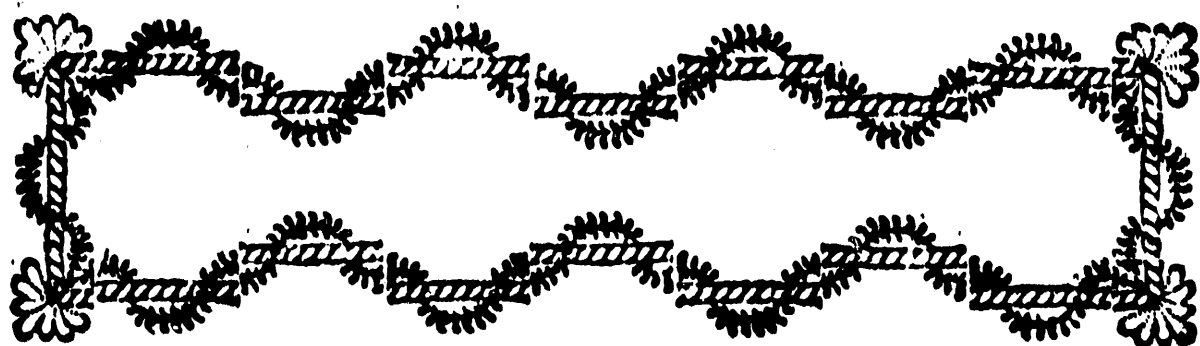
(*n*) Gal. ii. 16.

(*o*) 1 John iii. 8. 14.

Gal. v. 21. Eph. ii. 1, 2, 3. John iii. 36.

pregnant with absurdities ; and to shew that actual justification and faith are two things, which the wise and immutable counsel of God has so closely joined together, that neither earth nor hell shall ever be able to put them asunder.

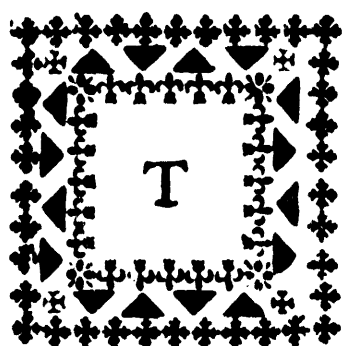
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S E R M O N III.

R O M A N S V. 1.

THEREFORE BEING JUSTIFIED BY
FAITH WE HAVE PEACE WITH
GOD THROUGH OUR LORD
JESUS CHRIST.



H R E E previous questions having been discussed relating to justification ; and some answers returned, in which it was intended to illustrate its nature---its causes, and the influence of faith in it ; our way is now laid open for considering what was proposed for the subject of the

IVth. HEAD. Scil.

What connexion there is between it and peace with GOD.

PEACE is an amicable agreement which terminates a controversy between contending parties. It speaks a disposition to concord on both sides. Formality in making it, supposes an antecedent

cedent breach between the parties. Solemnity in its proclamation, seems to imply that the previous controversy had proceeded to an open war. It declares, at the same time, that the cause of dispute is removed---past wrongs redressed, and both parties satisfied that hostilities should immediately cease. Mutual acceptance of its terms, when duly ratified, imports a stipulation of fidelity in the discharge of the offices of friendship.

THE infinite goodness of God the Creator assures us, that he produced no jarring parts, among his works, to disturb the harmony of the whole. In the created universe, as it came from his forming hand, all was consistency and order. Peace and concord reigned in all.

WHEN the Maker stooped to become also the ruler of his work, his creatures saw his goodness was not less immutable than it was infinite. Like the sun, in the centre of the system, it shines with beams uniform and unaltered. It keeps its place unmoved, and sheds its rays on all within its sphere. It never can be angry with what pleased it once.

BUT all goodness is hostile to evil : infinite goodness is infinitely so ; and this antipathy is as unchangeable as goodness itself ; for therein does its very essence lie.

ALTHOUGH the nature of the Creator was unchangeable--that of creatures was not so. To make a creature naturally such, would be to make him God. Mutable natures were capable of
error :

error : error easily leads on to crime : this opens into a mazy labyrinth, where the wanderer is lost. Straying from the sphere on which unchanged goodness is ever shedding down its light, the sinner comes into the place which lies directly under its frowns : just as the place of our dwelling, on this globe, is brought, by its diurnal revolution, sometimes into the path of the sun's rays---and sometimes into a situation which excludes them ; although the sun itself never shifts his place, and never ceases to shine on all around within his fixed sphere.

It may then be said, that creatures, as such, are pleasing and beloved to their Maker ; and yet, as sinning creatures, they are rejected and abhorred, without implying any change in him. The change lies wholly in themselves : and sadly has it taken place. Rebelling against God, man broke the peace : He took arms against his rightful Sovereign.(a) He hung out the flag of defiance ; and declared open war. He departed into the empire of darkness ;(b) and, by the enmity of his heart, was spurred on to make his opposition to the Father of lights as lasting as his being.(c)

THE sinner's distance from God increased with his rebellion. His every passion rose to forbid the thought of peace.

WILL it, then, be dishonor to the great Law-giver, to say he was offended with his revolted subject ?

(a) Isa. i. 2.
Jude 13.

(b) 1 Cor. ii. 14. 1 Thess. v. 5.
(c) Rom. viii. 7.

subject?---Yes, that he was angry with him every day? Nay! It is his glory to stand inflexibly on the side of his own law; and to treat the ingrate who has dared to trample on it, with the indignation he deserves. Its precept was armed with his authority: and his power must now arm his justice for the execution of its sanction.---Hence, the word of God has proclaimed war against sinful man. The bow of divine wrath is bent against him---the arrow of vengeance is on the string. All creation stands ready, at the Judge's nod, to co-operate in the infliction of the rebel's doom. Clouds gather over his head apace. Heaven frowns from above; and the red thunderbolt is on its way. Earth groans beneath the load of the wicked cumberer of the ground. Hell yawns to devour the guilty wretch. And every element, and every insect waits but for commission to drive him down to merited destruction!

WHITHER, alas! can the condemned rebel flee? Darkness cannot conceal the criminal. God is every where. Unbounded space can open no asylum where his enemies can be protected. (*d*) Resistance is vain. The arm of vengeance is almighty: (*e*) Nor will justice ever relent before the threatened penalty is all inflicted: and the two-edged flaming sword of vengeance cannot return into its sheath, until justice speak the word, *I am satisfied*.

THERE is not, therefore, nor can there be, any peace from God to the wicked man, until
then:

(*d*) Ps. cxxxix. 7, 8. Job xxxiv. 22. (*e*) John ix. 4.

then : Iniquity has separated between him and his God. *(f)* The wrath of the Most High is revealed from heaven against him. *(g)* Every divine attribute would oppose a composition with him, without a satisfaction. Could holiness consent to seem so like him, as to admit him to communion with JEHOVAH ? *(h)* Had not his justice awarded the punishment due to sin ? and can it suffer its own sentence to be annulled in favor of the offender ? *(i)* Did not eternal truth pronounce that punishment to be death ? And shall its verdict be forgotten by the Judge ? Would it not be, in effect, to deny himself, if God should patch up a compromise with sinful man, to the prejudice of any of his perfections ? *(k)*

BUT bless the LORD, O my soul ! and all ye angels of light resound his praise ! His wisdom descried a way in which all these obstacles could be removed with honor. He had an only SON. In him a Mediator might be found equal to the task. This Day's-Man did wisdom chuse. And, glory to the great IMMANUEL ! Most cheerfully he undertook the Surety's charge. He pitied our ruin. *(l)* He ran to our relief. Down to a world involved in the curse of God he meekly descended ; and there was made a curse for us. *(m)* Bound with the cords of his own love, he was led as a lamb to the slaughter ; and the LORD, by his own consent, laid on him the iniquities of us all. *(n)* To the point of the drawn sword of justice he freely opened up his

(f) Isa. lvii. 21. and lix. 2. *(g)* Rom. i. 18.
 Deut. xxvii. 26. *(h)* Ps. l. 22. *(i)* Rom. i. 32.
 Gen. iii. 3. *(k)* 1 Tim. ii. 13. *(l)* Ps. xl. 8.
(m) Gal. iii. 13. *(n)* Isa. liii. 6.

his innocent bosom. There did the flaming weapon enter. Deep was the stroke! It cut its passage through his heart. He sunk! He fell! Hark! As he falls, earth groans!—See while he is giving up the ghost, the heavens appear in mourning—the sun itself is clad in black! The rocks are rending—the graves are opening, and all creation trembling in convulsive throes! IT IS FINISHED, cries the dying victim.(o) Sheathed is the sword of justice, in my vitals, and quenched in my heart's blood is its flame. Father, forgive them; and here let vengeance take its will of me.—IT IS DONE, the Father graciously replies—I AM WELL PLEASED. The sinner's debt is paid. Deliver him from going down to the pit—for here I have found a ransom!(p)

COME, then, my fellow sinners; and with me behold that heavenly visage marred—that lovely face mangled with wounds and streaming with its own gore! See that holy bosom heaving in agonies—that loving heart throbbing in death! There was the purchase of your peace. Angels looked on astonished: But when the veil was withdrawn; and the end of the LORD was seen—“Hark! the accents of the extatic choirs—glory to God in the highest! on earth peace! and good will to men!” Where, then, is our gratitude!—and where our sensibility! if we can refrain from striking in with their song, and from striving to out-sing them in their highest strains!

HERE

(o) John xix. 30.

(p) Job xxxiii. 24. Isa. xlii. 21.

HERE was the foundation of the sinner's peace most firmly laid. Here the counsel of peace, held in eternity, saw its plan most gloriously brought to effect. (q) Here the peace-offering was made: the price of peace paid down. The resurrection which released the Surety from the prison of the grave, declared the satisfaction complete. The gospel blows the silver trumpet to call the attention of all nations to the proclamation of peace.----Of this peace it makes a gracious offer; upon terms worthy of God and fit for men. Listen, ye despairing sinners, to the reviving message! Publish it on the house-top, ye heralds of the PRINCE of Peace: It is the still, small voice; the LORD is in it. (r) "Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money, come, buy and eat ---wine and milk, without money and without price!---Incline your ear, and come unto me---hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you! (s) Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth; for I am God; and there is none else! (t) Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (u) Let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely: (w) for him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out. (x)" O ravishing sounds! O divine Redeemer! What shall we render unto thee for love so wonderful! For goodness and grace thus

(q) Zech. vi. 13. Col. i. 20. John xiv. 17.
Isa. lvii. 19. 2 Cor. v. 18, 19, 20, 21.

(r) 1 Kings xix. 12.

(s) Isa. lv. 1—4.

(t) Isa. xlv. 22.

(u) Matt. xi. 28.

(w) Rev. xxii. 17.

(x) John vi. 37.

thus surpassing all understanding---thus baffling all praise ?

How pleased and joyful should we embrace these sweet proposals ! Can we yet find a plea for refusing, after all this, to close with these terms of peace ? What can excuse our once more rejecting this bleeding, dying, loving Saviour ?---Tell it not in Gath---although the Saviour and his purchased benefits, together, are a good of infinite value---although that good is offered freely, as the gift of sovereign grace ---though we are perishing through want of it, and must surely sink to endless woe, if we be found in death without it : yet, such is the enmity of our hearts against God ; such the obstinacy of our unbelief---we refuse it all ! Nor can all the force of argument prevail with us to accept the great salvation ; until our hearts are created anew.

WHAT praises, then, are due to the HOLY SPIRIT ! Vile as are these hearts of ours, he has not disdained to take it for his part of the saving work, to deal with them : yes, to enter into them ; and there to work the whole good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.

FOR the execution of this design, he condescends, at the appointed time, by what mean he pleaseth, to rouse the stupid conscience from its guilty slumbers—to call up its attention, and fix it on the great concerns of an eternity at hand : To apprize the sinner of his real case,
this

this gracious Monitor lays before the awakened conscience, God's holy law. Viewed in all its spirituality and perfection, it shews the line of duty which God required man to follow ; and, by that means, points to those things in heart and life, where transgression lies. Thus it holds up to the sinner's eyes, a mirror, in which his own face may be truly seen. Convinced of the sins of practice, the man is taken by the hand, and led through the labyrinths of the deceitful heart. Astonished with discoveries of depths of wickedness within, hitherto unknown, he proceeds in the search—trembling as he goes : while every step detects some new abomination, greater than any he had seen before. Painfully his eyes are fixed on this ungrateful picture of himself, when Sinai's thunder strikes his ear. Hark ! the solemn, dreadful sound : *Cursed is every one that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them !* To me—to me, that curse belongs—the frightened soul replies, on my devoted head this threatened vengeance falls ! Nor falls it unjustly—Never was doom more fully deserved.—My heart—my life—my every day is full of evidence that all this is justly mine. How ? Where ? To whom shall I flee ? What shall I do ? But why talk I of doing ; when I am undone ? Nor power, nor will for doing any good, remains in me. I cannot lift a wish—nor raise an eye—nor take a step ; unless in such a way as deserves a new destruction ! Angels and men are alike unable to deliver me. The whole creation disclaims the power of holding me, another moment, from sinking into the regions of endless horror, and absolute despair.

BUT here the celestial Dove begins to wave the olive-branch. Light breaks into the benighted prisoner. A ray of hope is darted into his gloomy dungeon. The Holy Spirit unseals the volume of gospel-grace ; and there unfolds the glorious plan, which heaven had concerted, before the world began, for the recovery of man foreseen as fallen. Struck with surprise at the unexpected news, the fainting soul revives :--- filled with astonishment at the wonders of the contrivance—she traces out the footsteps of wisdom and of love, in every part. Arrested, more especially, with the heroic deed of the Redeemer—she pauses——Fixed in the contemplation of the glories of his person—his offices—his obedience, and cruel death—and, at last, cries out, well might his name be called **WONDERFUL** : all wonders meet and dwell in him. Here I see an helper able to save to the uttermost. Enough is suffered—enough is done : Here is a remedy exactly fitted to my desperate case ; and one sufficient for ten thousand worlds !

Now does the evil of unbelief begin to appear : the evasions and excuses of the reluctant heart are now felt to be as wicked as they are unreasonable. The salvation offered, contains enough to remove every possible objection against our quitting every other hold, and closing with its terms. Why, then, O why should sinners still object—still scruple to venture their all upon it ; and still halt between two opinions ?---- By various ways, unspeakable to me, the Holy Spirit carries on the siege he had laid to the heart : Now exciting some eager longings after
CHRIST,

CHRIST, and then affording a dawn of hope. Sometimes striking a deeper wound—and sometimes pointing to the balm of Gilead to heal it.

At length, in some unknown moment, he puts on that power which cannot be resisted : and, as he listeth, breathes into the dead sinner the breath of life, and he becomes a living soul. The gospel-net immediately incloses the new-born creature, and the cords of love compel him to come in. The struggle ends. All objections are silenced---obstacles vanish, as clouds before the rising sun. Resistance ceases. The doors of the heart are opened---the keys are delivered up to the conqueror ; and the soul falls willingly into the Saviour's hands : freely submits to his authority ; resigns up its all to his disposal ; embraces him in all his saving offices, and chearfully devotes itself to his service.

THE great work is now done : the SPIRIT, having brought the soul to faith in CHRIST, does himself form the vital union between it and him ; and as the same spirit that was in CHRIST without measure : he now takes up his dwelling in the believer's heart. Thus the life of the great Head is transfused through all the members ; and the same mind is in them that was also in him.

On this union is founded their title to his communicable riches : On it also depended his obligation to discharge their debts. It is found that he has actually discharged them ; and this payment being now reckoned, by his Father, to the
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the credit of their account—in virtue of it they are released from guilt and wrath : they are presented to JEHOVAH in their Surety's righteousness ; and therefore accepted as right in the view of his law. And now the storm is over ; The winter is past. The clouds are scattered ; and the thunder-bolts laid by. God is thus reconciled to the believing sinner. Peace is proclaimed in heaven ; and, in the gospel, God confirms it by an oath : “ This is as the waters of Noah unto me ; for as I have sworn that these waters should no more overflow the earth ; so have I sworn that I would no more be wroth with thee.”

Thus God, in justification, declares himself reconciled, and at peace with the sinner. Thus, at the same time, in that act by which sanctification is begun ; the HOLY SPIRIT subdues our enmity and reconciles our hearts to God. This is the reconciliation of both the contending parties ; and that was necessary to a solid peace. And that it is really effected in this case, we see from its consequences : For, on the one hand, God has laid aside the remembrance of the man's offences, and received him into a covenant of friendship ; the gates of his palace are open to him ; and free access to the royal presence is granted him at all times. And on the other, the renewed and believing heart is really at peace with God in CHRIST. It loves him supremely in every character, word and work. Its cordial approbation of all things found in himself, produces real complacency in every thing on which he has been pleased to stamp his image ; and, therefore, the heart delights both in the name
and

and day of the LORD. With every part of his worship, his ordinances and his providences : yes, even with his very rod the soul is reconciled and at peace.

HENCE war is instantly proclaimed against sin, as his avowed enemy :—The coat of mail is buckled on, which the Captain of salvation has procured for all who enlist under his banner. Sincerely intent on pleasing GOD in all things—the reconciled soul loves what he loves, and hates what he hates : It labors for growing conformity to him in all things ; and honestly aims, with a single eye, at his glory in every step it takes. Accordingly, its meanest duties are accepted with GOD, on the same footing as the soul itself. *(a)*

THIS peace is real, as soon as we believe : and, founded on that covenant, which is everlasting—well ordered in all things, and sure, it is perpetual, and can never end : for faithful is he that hath spoken the gracious word—the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed ; but my kindness shall not depart from thee ; neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed. *(b)*

BUT it is not always immediately known to its happy subject. Hence real believers are often heard complaining, that they walk in darkness and have no light—that they go mourning all the day—and that the Comforter, who should relieve

(a) 2 Cor. viii. 12. Eph. i. 6.

(b) Isa. liv. 10.

relieve their souls, is far from them. *(c)* Hence they doubt their interest in redeeming love—dread the hour of death; and, through that fear, are subject to bondage: *(d)* afraid to profess the religion of CHRIST—and dare not venture to its sealing ordinances. And, hence, also, the same free and sovereign grace which has provided the great salvation for them, has engaged the Holy Spirit to witness to them their covenant-title to its benefits—and at the seasons when he sees it most expedient—he comes and bears his witness with our spirits, that we are the sons of God. *(e)*

ENLIGHTENED to discern the importance of GOD's favor, the consciences of believers cannot rest, without some evidence of interest in it: for this the sincere heart is daily engaged in self-examination:—searching the scriptures, it perceives the sweet promises recorded there, to be adapted to supply its every want *(f)*—it sees the tempers and exercises of heart described, to which these promises respectively were made: then, looking inward upon its own motions and affections towards the objects there represented; reflecting back on exercises past, which it never could forget; and finding, on the comparison, that they fairly correspond with those which the oracles of truth have declared entitled to the promises; it draws the conclusion that its peace with heaven is secured. *(g)*

THIS

(c) Isa. l. 10. Psalm xxxviii. 6. Lament. i. 16.

(d) Heb. ii. 15.

(e) Rom. viii. 15. 15.

(f) 2 Pet. i. 4.

(g) 2 Pet. i. 10. 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

THIS verdict of our own hearts, will not suffice, however, to give us rest in every case: it must be ratified by the superior evidence of the HOLY SPIRIT :—and, in giving it, that blessed Agent shines first on the word, to bring its sense, as well as certainty, full into view : (g) secondly on his work already wrought within us—to shew its nature, and prove it all his own : (b) and thirdly, on our faith to enable us with assurance to draw the comfortable conclusion that the beloved is ours, and we are his. This enables the man to argue—“He that believeth shall be saved---but I believe—and therefore salvation is surely mine. He that hungers and thirsts after CHRIST and his righteousness, shall be filled—that is my own exercise—therefore my final satisfaction is sure. (i)

SWEET is the composure which ensues.—The peace of GOD was real before.—But now it is felt and tasted and cannot be denied. Secure against all future harm, the believer now may sing the requiem, return into thy rest, O my soul, for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee. The LORD is my salvation, whom shall I fear? The LORD is my strength, of whom shall I be afraid? (k)

HAPPILY brought to feel his peace with GOD, the believer is at peace with all innocent creatures. Secured against all real harm, he is
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(g) John xiv. 26. Luke xxiv. 45. Ps. xxv. 14.
(b) Ps. xc. 16. Eph. i. 13. 2 Cor. i. 22. Eph. iv. 30.
(i) 1 John v. 13. John xx. 31. Mark xvi. 16. Matt. v. 6.
(k) Ps. cxvi. 7. and xxxvii. 1.

not afraid of evil tidings—he dreads not the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor the destruction which wastes at noon :(*l*) To his real hurt the sun shall not smite him by day—nor the blasting damp by night. He is in league with the beasts of the field.(*m*) Yes, assured that all things shall work together for his good, he can possess himself in sweet tranquility, tho' clouds and darkness are gathered all around—although the fig-tree shall not blossom and there is no fruit in the vine—though the labor of the olive shall fail—and the fields should yield no meat—though the flocks should be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, yet he can rejoice in the LORD as his GOD ; he can joy in the GOD of his salvation.(*n*) Yes, he will not sink into slavish fear when the awful day cometh wherein the earth itself is removed, and the mountains carried into the midst of the sea : death itself shall but confirm this peace—and the last judgment sublimate it into joys immortal and full of glory.(*o*)

It is true, the most favored subjects of this happy privilege will find, that, so long as they sojourn here below, trials and afflictions abide them. Yet, even in this vale of tears, their least comforts are better than the riches of many wicked ;(*p*) it comes to them in the channel of redeeming love, has in it the taste of God's covenant-favor—and contains the nature of an earnest of eternal bliss : Nay, their every trouble

(*l*) Ps. cxii. 7. & xci. 6. (*m*) Ps. cxxi. 6. Job v. 23.

(*n*) Hab. iii. 17, 18. Rom. viii. 28.

(*o*) Ps. xlv. 1, 2, 3, and xxiii. 4. (*p*) Ps. xxxvii. 16.

trouble works their good :—while it humbles them in the dust, and weans their hearts from the shadows of time ; it excites their faith, and resignation, and helps to stretch their wings for the flight, to that blessed home where rest is ever to be found.

It must, however, be remembered still, that, though the believer's peace with God is a blessing never to be withdrawn ; yet the sweet sense of it may be interrupted. It often is. The Sun of righteousness does not always shine upon them. Their beloved has withdrawn himself and is gone.^(m) They are kept at a cold and awful distance—without sensible access to his presence—without wonted consolations from his love—he frowns on their very attempts to serve him : he seems to be writing bitter things against them : in their distresses, he seems like a stranger—under sore temptations he stands aloof—as if he cared not for them—and they are ready sometimes to cry out, that his mercy is clean gone—and he will remember his loving kindness no more.⁽ⁿ⁾

NOR does this mournful case become the experience of any believer, without a good reason :—this gives opportunity to grace, it is true, to display its sovereignty in giving and withholding favors at its pleasure—and its power too, in preserving the poor mourner in the deeps—and not suffering him to perish, when the weeds were wrapped about his head : it will also naturally enhance the delight taken in the re-
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turning

(m) Cant. v. 6.

(n) Job xiii. 26. Ps. lxxvii. 8.

turning light of God's countenance. But one thing is especially an end in view in all God's dealings of this kind; that is, to teach us the difference between spiritual peace and carnal security—to shew that it cannot be maintained without holiness—and he that would enjoy so great a favor, must seek it by ways that please the LORD. The comforter is the spirit of holiness. He will not smile on sin—if his children go astray—he will make them taste how bitter a thing it is to depart from the LORD their God:—if their hearts grow cold, and their devotions dead and formal—he hides his face and they are troubled. (o)

THE man that has ever tasted the sweets of this peace, and felt the woes of their suspension; will prize the privilege highly, and labor to preserve it carefully---hence he will watch his heart---and scan his own conduct with critical exactness: will repent quickly of every cause of God's displeasure: will daily flee to his ancient refuge, by renewed acts of faith;---and pray without ceasing;---resolving in the mean time, to follow the LAMB, though he lead him out in a dark way, which he cannot understand. (p) And he who thus waits on the LORD shall renew his strength. His own experience shall convince him, that, though darkness and sorrow may endure for a night; yet, in the morning, shall joy arise:---for light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart: (q) and, however checquered the lot of saints may be

(o) Jer. ii. 19. Ps. xxx. 7.

(p) Rev. xiv. 4.

(q) Ps. xcvi. 11.

be, while here below, how thick soever their way may be found hedged up with thorns ; yet it will remain an eternal truth that their path is like the morning-light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. (r)

BUT here the time constrains me to stop. The doctrine advanced being thus far opened and confirmed—the way is now clear for some

I M P R O V E M E N T.

It must, I think, be confessed that the important theme, offered in our text, is fruitful of as much matter of improvement as any other in the BIBLE. But the necessary length of the several heads into which it has been divided, will restrain me from touching the greatest part of what might naturally be suggested here—and will compel me only to touch as lightly as I can, that which cannot be wholly omitted.

AMID the reflections which naturally offer themselves here, the inseparable connexion between justification and sanctification deserves, in the first place, our particular attention.—That they are distinct parts of salvation, has been sufficiently evinced. But it is nevertheless a truth, that neither can be found, where both are not. Sanctification is glory begun. And scripture affirms, that whomsoever God has justified, them he has also glorified. Justification is immediately annexed to faith. Faith is the act of the new heart : In the creation of that heart,
sanctification

sanctification is begun : To expect the enjoyment of GOD's favor, then, without sanctification, is, not only to contradict the scripture, which affirms, that, without holiness, no man shall see the LORD ; but it is an expectation contradictory to itself ; as much as if we looked to possess the whole of any object, and yet never to obtain some of its essential parts : Or, as if we expected to be saved, without salvation—or by mere purchase, without the application.

REFLECTION 2. The doctrine of grace, then, can never lead to any licentiousness—for, although justification finds men ungodly, it never leaves them such—it makes them *sons*, and so secures to them the indwelling of the spirit of adoption, which will surely make them *saints*. If faith be *alone* in the moment of justification, it remains *alone* no longer : the just man lives by it : it works by love, and so inclines to keep all GOD's commandments : It purifies the heart—and hates, and flees from sin, more than hell itself.

REFLECTION 3. How inestimable, then, is that price which paid for this unspeakable benefit ! The blood of the Lamb ! O my soul, here was enough to pay all thy debts ; and to procure a fund of every good, sufficient to live on to all eternity ! And, if so, how certain must be his absolute divinity ! He could offer nothing of his own, greater than himself. If himself, then, were less than a being infinite in dignity : his oblation could not have been sufficient to
satisfy

satisfy infinite justice ; and much less to purchase additional blessings, boundless in their value.

AND how transcendent was that love which bestowed the glorious inheritance---the price which purchased it ! yes, and the Purchaser himself ! And all this on creatures so unworthy as we ! On creatures so unable to qualify themselves for the favor---so unwilling to receive it ; and so incapable of being willing, unless made so in a day of GOD's power ! O the height---the depth---the length---the breadth of this matchless love ! It passeth all understanding !

REFLECTION 4. Vain are the fancies of such as go about to set sinners to work their own way to life ; and point to certain doings, or endeavours of their own, by which to obtain that willingness to receive CHRIST by faith ; which can only be produced in them by the infinite power of the HOLY GHOST. Equally fruitless will be the efforts of all such, as, being convinced of their lost estate, as sinners, dead in trespasses and sins ; labor for a holy, penitent, loving and obedient heart, before they dare venture to come to CHRIST for life. This is no less strange than for the sick to make themselves whole, before they go to the physician for their cure ; or the dead to try hard to live, before they are made alive.

REFLECTION 5. How impossible is justification, without faith. Although no man is justified *for* it, yet we have seen that none is, nor can be, actually so before it. Until we believe,

we are no better than children of wrath---condemned already---and the wrath of God abideth on us. Not one of our sins has ever yet been pardoned.---Not one of our offerings has ever been accepted :. --The curse of the offended Lawgiver is at our door, and there is but a step between us and hell !

REFLECTION 6. How carefully then should we guard against a false faith : whether it lie in a bare historical belief of truth revealed ; or the hasty assurance that CHRIST has died for us in particular. The first is all the faith of the secure : and what woeful case is his who has no other faith than this bare belief ! However easy he may swim down the tide of the times ; he will surely be cast away at last ! All his faith will fail him, without securing him one promise, or affording one gleam of light, to help him through the dark valley.

YEA, it will enhance his future condemnation : every truth he has assented to, is matter of his final confusion ! Thou believest, O man, that there is one God ! why then hast thou not loved him, and devoted thyself to his service ? Thou believest that JESUS has brought in a full salvation ; why, then, dost thou not accept it ? Will it not be more tolerable for the nations bound up in ignorance incurable, than for such as you, who hold the truth in unrighteousness ? Ye cannot plead as they, "I never heard of these things : or, at least never saw reason to think them true." Out of thine own mouth, shalt thou be condemned. Of all mankind, thou wilt

wilt have least excuse! Thy sins are against light. Thy indifference to religion, is kept up in full view of its truths. O *Capernaum*! What can be pleaded for thee, when the world shall behold thee sink down to hell? Better never to have known the truth, than thus to treat it with haughty contempt.

BUT against whom do I exclaim? Is there cause of all this lamentation here? O, sirs, what would I not give to have any reason to think that this is not all the faith, all the religion, of the greatest part that now hear me!

AMIDST all your advantages, knowledge, and professions, if the great Judge were now to come, where would he find any faith better than this? Surely not among them who make light of religion; who mind it not at all; or only by the by; whose hearts are unaffected with it: whose main pursuits are the world, and the flesh; no! The walls of their houses are as holy as their hearts.

O THAT such souls would awake! see their case, and flee to CHRIST now, ere it be too late!

WHAT shall we say, then, to those that have not even arrived thus far? Instead of assent to the plainest truths, some take a pride in being thought objectors?---They will not take pains to examine; but spare no pains to evade the force of conviction---and to refute, or at least bring into disrepute, every distinguishing doctrine in the Gospel.---These men feed on a re-
past,

past, peculiar to themselves. Their toil is all to make their own bonds and fetters strong! Go on, ye profane; laugh, ye enemies of the cross of CHRIST: But, know, this shall ye have at his hand, ere long, ye shall lie down in sorrow! Yet, oh, that such would but pause and look forward a little! Is it your interest, my dear friends, to be deceived? or mine to help you to be so? Why will ye not be as much in earnest for this, as ye are about the baubles of fools?

THE second sort of faith here mentioned, is the faith of Antinomians—and upon it, we must say, how dangerous is the whole religion of the presumer! According to his faith, so is it with him as to all other graces. Every exercise is an inverted pyramid. No scheme has ever appeared in the world that makes more thorough work of putting darkness for light. Self is the only God it adores: it is, in suberviency to this idol, to its pleasure, and to its interest, that God must act in all! It is for its sake he must be loved, feared, and obeyed. In short, the whole system springs from, and tends to self. On this foundation are built its faith, love, hope, joy, holiness, and every exercise. Take this away, and you have taken away its God; and what has it more?

No wonder that humility, and self-denial, make no figure in this religion.—It is founded in a confidence that disdains to wait for any evidence from scripture, sense, or reason:---all its exercises are food only for spiritual pride---
and

and fuel for every lust of the flesh. Here lies the scylla of the evangelical hypocrite ! shun it, or perish !

Do ye believe that CHRIST has died for you in particular ? This some may believe upon good ground : but, let me ask, for what reasons you have drawn this conclusion ? Is it from a vain conceit of an universal salvation ? This we have elsewhere confuted already, and the whole scripture joins to overthrow it : or is it because you imagine it your duty to believe this ; and that believing it, will make it true ? Of all kinds of a faith of miracles, this would be the most miraculous : Sooner may your believing yourselves to be Kings, or Emperors, effect your advancement to that dignity.—Thus, as easily might the ass transform himself into an angel.—Fancy, in this way, becomes the true philosopher's stone indeed ; if the nature of things is thus obedient to its mandate.

THE true christian can take up with nothing less than scripture evidence in the matter : nothing less than that work of the SPIRIT of GOD which sets his own seal on the heart ; stamps it into his own image, and makes it holy as himself is.—Is this evidence your own ? Are the ordinary exercises of your hearts agreeable to the taste of heaven ? Then may ye find enough in the word to assure you that CHRIST and salvation are yours. Then may ye rejoice—and praise—for the unspeakable gift. If this is your case, I need not caution you to be humble, and watchful. It will be your very nature to please and honor GOD ; every thing con-

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trary to this, your souls will abhor.—But, then, the faith that your religion began with, was not this assurance. No; you were first made willing in a day of God's power. Ye were changed; ye embraced CHRIST: ye loved God for his own beauty; ye hated sin; devoted yourselves to CHRIST: the Spirit of adoption was given you: and thence ye received the witness of God.

Go on, dear saints, go on believing---loving---and rejoicing---all is yours! Ye shall never perish: none can pluck you out of the hands of the LORD! O, commend his love and grace to others, by all the charms of humble, holy lives.

BUT, the man who has no other religion, save only the persuasion that he is one of God's children; what words can express his danger? Buoyed above fear and doubt---he blesses himself; whilst all the curses of a broken law are levelled at his head! He flatters himself none is so dear to God as he; and, lo! every act he does, every profession he makes, and every thing in him is an abomination to the LORD. He passes along, hugged in his security; when the law thunders, 'tis all for others:---when duty calls, he is above that:---when judgments come, he wishes the ungodly would be wise enough to attend to them:---but himself is never brought to view, except when the joys and comforts of religion are to be distributed; and of these he calls a double share his own.---Conscience, long baffled, is, after many a fruitless effort to awake him, at last laid asleep itself. The man proceeds, undaunted to the last; and perhaps expires

pires in a selfish extasy---fondly expecting to enter shortly, triumphant into glory.

WHEN, alas ! the vision vanishes ! The whole fabrick, baseless, shrinks and fails ! He launches into an unalterable state ; is waked from his dream, and finds---all was delusion ! And it cannot now be remedied !---He plunges headlong into the bottomless abyfs : Shrieking out, *O the horrible disappointment ! O the fatal mistake !*

PAUSE, my soul, pursue him no further, come not into their secret ; and unto that assembly be not thou united.

BUT, ye sons of men, take warning ; examine your state ; look well to the reasons of the hope that is in you : for, yet a little while, and he that shall come, will come, and will not tarry : his fan is in his hand, and he will shortly and thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner---but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.

EXAMINE, then, most seriously examine, whether your faith be better than a fancy.

By it, judge of your justification ; and your peace with God. Before faith, 'tis no uncommon thing to find men saying peace---peace to themselves. But let me ask, what have such to do with peace ? God himself has spoken none to men in this condition. No ! Before faith, they are really in a state of war. Look up to God---there all is anger and just vengeance :
Look

Look into your own hearts, there all is enmity and hardness ! Be not deceived, God will not be mocked : As ye sow you must expect to reap. Without faith, what can reconcile you to God ? Not all your prayers, tears, resolves : not all your repentings, reforms, or self-applauding thanks : Not all your duties, moral or religious ; with all your glittering shew---your peace is but a lying dream !---Awake, but a moment, and you will not need to be told that your danger is great, near, urgent : that a slender, brittle thread is all that is to be broken ; and, in a moment, you sink into “regions of horror---doleful shades---where peace and joy can never come.”

REFLECTION 7. But where art thou, O poor, contrite heart, that trembles at the word ? Where is the man who has felt his need of CHRIST and his righteousness : has renounced all trust in any of his own ? Where he, who has seen and owned the justice of the sentence which condemned him ; has fallen at the feet of sovereign grace, and humbly accepted the righteousness of God by faith ? I salute him this day, as an heir of glory. Behold ! The filthy garments are taken off, and God has clothed him with change of raiment : Has put the best robe upon him : He shall soon be brought before the King of Kings—all glorious within, and all his raiment of wrought gold ! No longer shall he lie among the pots. The hour is at hand when he shall put on the silvered wings of the dove—on those wings, be wafted up to the heavenly palace, and there shine as a sun in the kingdom of his Father !

HAIL,

HAIL, happy soul ! thou hast washed thy garments, and made them white in the blood of the **LAMB**. There is the blessed fountain opened for washing away all sin and uncleanness :—Sprinkled with this water of life, though thy stains had been crimson, thou wilt be presented pure—without spot or blemish ; and whiter than the virgin-snow !

ARISE, then, my dear Sirs—arise, and shew yourselves the friends of the great Bridegroom. Adore the matchless grace that moved the eternal Father to give his only Son to you. Spread far and wide the praises of the All-glorious Redeemer, who gave his life and soul up for your ransom. Can your hearts ever cease to burn with love & gratitude to this infinite Lover ? Can your tongues ever weary of his praise ? Can your time be taken up in pursuing shadows---or contending for straws, when a crown of immortal glory hangs just over your heads ? O my brethren, sweet and safe is the bosom on which you lean ! Rest there secure---and give your cares and terrors to the winds. There no weapon formed against you can hit and hurt. From this bosom no foreign force can tear you. Who can separate you from the love that reigns within it ? Here you may bid defiance to all the storms of time---yes, to the drawn dagger of the king of terrors---and to all the dreadful thunders of the audit-day ! O, then, rise, and rejoice in this tower of safety ! Rise, and praise the love that built it for you ;---and drew you into it for refuge. Live by faith, as the only way to maintain your peace : Live holy, as the only way to prove it well-founded.—Live contented

tented—resigned—and happy in your God, as the only way to commend your religion to the surrounding spectators. Tempt not strangers to think you serve an hard Master. Let not every thing which troubles or wounds you, be thought to have broken off your peace with God : trust him in the dark : wait on him in every mean of grace : weary not of ordinances. Associate only with the friends of CHRIST.—Be not conformed to this evil world. Live like pilgrims and strangers on the earth.—Set your faces stedfast towards the Zion that is above. Cast your burdens on the LORD, as often as they come on : take up your cross : be not ashamed to own your LORD before men ; in every ordinance and in every company. Rest not in any past degrees of grace ; aspire at attainments still higher : go on your way rejoicing : march from strength to strength unwearied : Press forward to the mark, for the prize of your high calling. Rise up, and catch hold of your eternal crowns ! and lo ! He cometh, who will bring you home to Zion, with songs and with everlasting joy upon your heads. There shall all your hopes be exceeded, and God shall wipe away every tear from your eyes ! While your enraptured spirits, perfected in bliss, shall join with seraphic choirs in the never ceasing anthems of “ Worthy is the LAMB, that was slain, to receive glory and honor, and wisdom and power, and blessing ; for he was slain and hath redeemed us unto God ! For he hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests, to reign with him forever.”

BUT, ah ! the hapless crew, who never have accepted the gospel-terms of peace ! What words ? What tears of blood can sufficiently lament

lament their doleful case? Soon—very soon, must all their joys vanish—and all their hopes expire. Soon must they be parted from the children of peace for ever. There is no peace, saith my God, to them. Awful words! Methinks I see them stand shivering on the brink of the dreadful gulph—their hearts throbbing—their eyeballs rolling—their teeth gnashing—and their trembling voices beginning the eternal shriek! whilst the lip of justice is pronouncing their final doom—and the hand of vengeance is chaining them to the rock of never—never—never ending torment and despair!

O WRETCHED fellow-sinners, let me expostulate with you!—Why have ye loved darkness? Hated reproof? Squandered away your days, and lost for ever all your————

BUT I forbear! Shield me, dear Jesus, from the dismal spectacle! Who can endure everlasting burnings?

YET, O my friends, since that dreadful hour is not yet arrived with you; whilst the door of mercy is not yet shut—nor the last sands in your life-glass run down; suffer me to cast the gospel-net around you, once more. Suffer me to cry aloud in your ears, as for the last time. Awake! Awake! what meanest thou, O sleeper! Behold, the Judge is at the door! O make haste, for heaven's sake, haste! flee from the wrath to come! Come away from these paths of death and danger! See the gates of righteousness yet standing open—the arms of Jesus extended to receive the chiefest sinner here that flees to him for rest! Here is a righteousness that can hide all your shame! Never rest, till faith has put the blessed garment on.

THIS faith must be your act:—though an act performed by strength not your own. It is the result of free sovereign grace. It is the hand of the HOLY SPIRIT that must change your hearts—and make you willing in the day of his power. O wait on him, then, for this high favor! Wait on him in every mean of grace. Read the word; hear it; pray for faith, wherewith to mix it, that so it be not a favour of death unto death. But O! be entreated to consider. Let nothing divert you from this: Look into your state: See your nature, and look forward to the consequences: And let me adjure you by all that is sacred—by all that is dear—by all the joys of heaven—by all the terrors of hell—by the serious concerns of a dying hour—by the solemn realities of a judgment-day—by the worth of your souls, and the weight of eternity! Never give sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids, until you have closed with CHRIST by faith; embraced him in all his offices, and given yourselves away to him. Without this, you must expect all the horrors of eternal war with JEHOVAH: and with it, your own experience shall re-echo the sweet declaration in the text; as a felt, and indisputable truth—*Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our LORD JESUS CHRIST*: and, that this may be the experience, and this the lot of us all, may GOD of his infinite mercy grant, through the redemption of his Son, and to the sacred name of the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, the one, living and true GOD, whom we adore as our GOD, be all the glory, honor, and praise, world without end.

A M E N.