

is in their power in the use of means? *Ans.* We dare not say it. But, 1. It is possible. 2. It is probable.*

I shall conclude with two inferences.

Inf. 1. Then as ever ye would escape God's wrath and curse due to us for sin, repent and believe. Come to Christ; turn from your sins unto God. There is no safety otherwise, but this way ye shall be safe. No sin of your's will ruin you, if you believe and repent; and nothing will save you if you do not.

2. Be diligent in the use of the means of salvation. They are laid before you, while they are by the sovereign disposal of Providence, kept from others. Neglect them not, as ye would be found to reject the counsel of God against yourselves. And satisfy not yourselves in the bare use of them, but seek grace and salvation in them from Jesus Christ, they being the appointed means of grace.

OF FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.

JOHN ^v. 12.—*But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name.*

FAITH in Jesus Christ being the main thing required for one's escaping the wrath and curse of God, we come now to speak of it particularly, from these words. In which we have, (1.) The nature, (2.) The fruit of faith, viz. the privilege and dignity of adoption into God's family. Passing the latter, [See vol. i.]

We may take notice of the former, viz. the nature of faith, *As many as received, &c.* Wherein consider,

1. What it is in the general. It is a saving grace, for by it one becomes a child of God, and so an heir of heaven.

2. What it is in particular, (1.) The object of it is Christ, he, his name, his person, with his benefits. The acts of it, saving the sinner, are, [1.] *Receiving* him; this is explained to be *believing*. Now, *receiving* implies an offer of him made to the receiver, which is done in the gospel. [2.] *Resting* on him; for it is not a mere believing him, by an historical assent to his word, but a believing on his name, which imports a fiducial recumbency or relying on him, as one who believes another is said to rest on his word. (2.) The subjects of it are many; not all, but some, namely, the elect of God, quickened

* See all this illustrated in *Human Nature in its Fourfold State, State ii. head 3.* under the title, *Objections answered.*

by the spirit of regeneration, compare ver. 13. 'Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' These receive Christ for salvation; for he offers himself as a Saviour, and the fruit of it in the text is saving.

The doctrine founded on the text is,

Doct. 'Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace whereby we receive, and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel.'

Here we will consider,

I. How faith in Christ is a saving grace.

II. Whence it proceeds.

III. The subject of faith.

IV. The object of it.

V. The saving and justifying acts of it.

VI. The end of these acts of faith.

VII. The ground and warrant of it.

VIII. *Lastly*, Draw an inference or two.

I. I shall shew, how faith in Christ is a saving grace. There are four sorts of faith spoken of in scripture. (1.) Historical faith, which is a bare assent to the truths of God, Jam. ii. 19. 'Thou believest that there is one God; thou dost well. The devils also believe and tremble.' (2.) A temporary faith, which is such an assent, joined with some affection to the truths of God, though unsanctified, like that of the stoney ground hearers, Luke viii. 13. 'who when they hear, receive the word with joy; but these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.'

(3.) The faith of miracles, which is a belief of the Lord's working some miraculous effect by us, or in us, upon some intimation of his word concerning it, 1 Cor. xiii. 2.—'Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains.' All of these may be in reprobates, and none of them are saving. (4.) Saving faith, already described from the text.

It is called saving faith, because all that have it shall certainly be saved for ever, from sin and God's wrath; yea, as soon as one has it, salvation is his, it is in his possession as to the beginnings of it, Acts xvi. 31. 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.'

It saves us, not as an act or work, fulfilling the condition of a new law; for so it is excluded, with all other works, from the causing of our salvation, Rom. iii. 27, 28. 'Where is boasting then? it is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay, but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.' But it saves us as an instrument,

apprehending Christ and his salvation, Rom. iii. 22. 'Even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all, them that believe; for there is no difference.' It is as the looking to the brazen serpent, which saved the stung Israelites; or as the hyssop dipped in blood, and sprinkling the leper, that cleansed him.

II. I come to shew, whence this faith proceeds.

1. It is not from our natural powers, the power of man's free-will. 'No man can come to me,' says Christ 'except the Father which hath sent me, draw him,' John vi. 44. It is not a flower of nature's garden; otherwise one should make himself to differ from others.

2. It is a special gift of God. Hence says the apostle to the Philippians, chap. i. 29. 'Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ,—to believe on him.' It is wrought in the heart by his divine power, 'through the faith of the operation of God, Col. ii. 12. No less power can produce it, Eph. i. 19. It is ascribed, as to the working of it, to the Father, John vi. 44. forecited; to the Son, Cant. i. 4. 'Draw me;' but in a special manner to the Spirit, Gal. v. 22. 'The fruit of the Spirit is—faith; therefore he is called 'the Spirit of faith,' 2 Cor. iv. 13.

The outward means which the Lord usually makes use of to beget faith in one's heart, is the word, the word of the gospel, preached, heard, or read, Rom. x. 17. 'Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.' This is the incorruptible seed which the new creature is framed of, 1 Pet. i. 23. the vehicle of saving influences, Gal. iii. 2.

III. I proceed to consider the subject of faith. It is not all men, 2 Thess. iii. 2. 'For all men have not faith.' They are rare ones who get it, Luke xviii. 8. 'When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth? But they are,

1. Elect sinners; they only obtain it, Tit. i. 1. And they all do obtain it sooner or later, before they go off the world, Act xiii. 48. 'As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.' The subjects of it are those of the O'd Testament as well as those under the New. Hence the apostle to the Hebrews, speaking of the former, says, chap. xi. 13. 'These all died in faith.' The subjects of it also are elect infants dying in infancy, though they have not actual faith; who, though they knew nothing of the matter, like the Israelitish infants, Deut. i. 29. have the seed or spirit of faith. This is the general character of the subject. But,

2. More particularly, elect convinced sinners are the subjects of it, John xvi. 8, 9. 'When he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they be-

lieved not on me.' The plough of the law goes through the heart, in some measure, before this seed be cast into it, Gal. iii. 23, 24. 'Before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith, which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.' So that an unconvinced, insensible sinner, is an unbeliever. But,

3. Yet more particularly, elect, convinced, quickened sinners, are the subject thereof, as appears from the text and the following verse. Regeneration in the order of nature goes before believing, and faith is the first vital motion of the regenerated soul. There is first a passive reception of Christ into the soul, whereby Christ comes into the dead soul, and quickens it, and then actual believing, or active receiving of Christ, is the first motion of the new creature. But most particularly,

4. *Lastly*, Not only the understanding, but the heart and will of such a one, is the subject of faith, where it has its seat; the understanding knowing and assenting, and the will embracing and consenting, Isa. liii. 11. 'By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many,' Rom. x. 10. 'With the heart man believeth unto righteousness.'

IV. I proceed to consider the object of faith.

1. The real object in general is the whole word of God, and therefore no falsehood can be under faith, Tit. i. 2. But the special real object of it is the promise of the gospel, Acts xvi. 31. 'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ,' &c. for therein Christ the Saviour is held forth to a poor sinner. Faith looks to the whole word; it is persuaded of a divine authority in the commands, and an immovable truth in the threatenings and promises. Every promise of the word it looks to, and comes wrong to none, while the believer lives in this world, and it lasts: it is a bee that roves through all these flowers in the garden of God's word. But as it is saving and justifying, it settles upon the promise or offer of Christ in the gospel. And,

(1.) The testimony of the word, concerning Christ's ability to save, is a special object of faith in this case, Mark ix. 33. 'If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.' Sin is a dead weight, which the soul findeth itself unable utterly to hoist up; but the gospel holds out Christ to be able to remove it, Heb. vii. 25. 'He is able to save unto the uttermost.' Faith assents to this too, Ps. lxxv. 3. 'Iniquities prevail against me: as for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.'

This assent in both cases may be mixed with doubting, yet true, Mark ix. 24. 'I believe; help thou mine unbelief.' If the soul have

as much faith of both, as to venture itself on Christ, though the bride sign the contract with a trembling heart, though the doubting will never be commended, the subscription will be sustained.

2. The personal object of faith is,

(1.) General: God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as we profess in the creed, John xiv. 1. 'Ye believe in God, believe also in me.'

(2.) Special; Jesus Christ, as in the text. He is the object of faith, as it saves and justifies the sinner, typified by the brazen serpent in the wilderness, to which the wounded Israelites were to look, and the look was healing, John iii. 14, 15. And Christ's person is the primary object of justifying faith, Isa. xlv. 22. 'Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.' And his benefits, merits, righteousness, &c. are the secondary objects thereof, Phil. iii. 8, 9. 'Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.'

V. I proceed to consider the saving and justifying acts of faith. These are,

1. Receiving him as he is offered in the gospel, as in the text; cordially closing with him, and heartily consenting to take him as he is offered. Hereby the spiritual marriage-tie betwixt Christ and the soul is made. Christ gives his consent in the gospel offer, and the sinner gives his by faith closing with the offer. Now, he is offered in the gospel in all his offices. So faith is a receiving of Christ,

(1.) As a Prophet to be our Teacher, Guide, and Leader, renouncing our own wisdom, Matth. xvii. 5.

(2.) As a Priest, renouncing all merit and confidence in one's self, duties, and sufferings, and betaking one's self to Christ, his obedience and death, for all, Isa. xlv. 24. 'Surely shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.'

(3.) As a King, renouncing all strange lords, and receiving him for absolute Governor in the soul, and over the whole man, yielding to bear the yoke of his commands, and the yoke of his cross. Isa. xxvi. 13. 'O Lord our God, (says the church), other lords besides thee have had dominion over us: but by thee only will we make mention of thy name.'

2. Resting on him as he is offered in all his offices too, Isa. xxvi. 3, 4. 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.' 2 Chron.

xvi. 8. 'Thou didst rely on the Lord.' The soul has a burden of weakness and ignorance, and therefore rests on him as a Prophet; a burden of guilt, but rests on him as a Priest, laying the weight on his blood; a burden of strong lusts and temptations, but rests on him as a King.

This receiving and resting has a most special eye to the priestly office of Christ, faith in his blood. It is a looking to him as lifted up on the cross, Isa. xlv. 22; eating of his flesh, and drinking of his blood, John vi. 53; and submitting to his righteousness, Rom. x. 3.* This receiving and resting upon Christ for salvation is in many places called believing in, or trusting on, Christ as our Saviour.†

* See the nature and acts of faith more largely opened and illustrated in the author's View of the Covenant of Grace, head 6. The way of instating sinners personally and savingly in the Covenant of Grace.

† Now, in order to illustrate the nature of faith, considered as believing in or trusting on God, and the way of a sinner's justification in his sight, it may not be improper to insert here the two following notes on Gen. xv. 6. 'And he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness,' taken from the author's manuscript work on the first twenty-three chapters of Genesis, above referred to, p. 232.

'Now he trusted in Jehovah, i. e. Now Abram trusted in Jehovah, (who was the Lord promising, as well as the Lord promised), not only believing his word spoken to him at this and other times, but also resting in him, and relying upon him, for all contained in the promise, and especially the salvation of the Messiah, which was the chief thing in it. The whole verse is a parenthesis, in which Moses occasionally shews how Abram entertained the promise, from the first time it was made to him. Now, saith he, Abram trusted in Jehovah, viz. all along and so at this time, Rom. iv. 3. Gr. For, what saith the scripture? Now Abraham believed God. Jam. ii. 2. And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, Now Abraham believed God. Comp. the preceding and following verse of this chapter. This is the first place wherein faith is expressly spoken of. *V'he'min*, and he trusted. The formal signification of *H'min*, is to trust: for so it may be rendered every where; and so our translators do render it, Judg. xi. 20. Job iv. 18. xv. 15, 31, and xxiv. 32. marg. Mic. vii. 5. All believing is trusting; but all trusting is not believing, as will appear anon. Accordingly *H'min* is more extensive than believing; for the object of it is a thing; as well as a rational agent, the only proper object of believing. Thus, wonderful works, Psal. lxxviii. 32. one's life, Deut. xxviii. 66. and Job xxiv. 32. and a heast, Job xxxix. 12. are, by this word, said to be trusted in, which cannot well be said to be believed in. The construction of the word natively leads to this notion of it. It is ordinarily constructed with to, as Gen. xlv. 26. He trusted not to them, or in, as here. He trusted in Jehovah: sometimes with a noun simply, and an infinitive, as Judg. xi. 20. 'Sihon trusted not even Israel to pass in his bounds.' And finally, as *H'min*, *Emeth*, *Omnah*, *Emun*, &c. are akin, as branches of one root; so are the words, he trusted, truth, a truth, trueness, &c.; answering unto them in our language. The Greek *pisteuo*, in the New-Testament use of it, is of the same import, signifying to trust: for so it may be rendered every where; and so it must be rendered in several texts, as John ii. 24. Jesus did not trust himself to them. Rom. iii. 2. They were trusted the oracles of

VI. I am to shew, what is the end of these acts of faith. It is for salvation, Christ's whole salvation. (1.) Salvation from sin, Matth. i. 21. 'He shall save his people from their sins.' (2.) From wrath, 1 Thess. i. ult. 'Which delivereth us from the wrath to

God, i. e. trusted with them. So 1 Cor. ix. 17. 1 Thess. ii. 4. 1 Tim. i. 11. How *H'min*, being in *Hiphel*, comes to signify to trust, is best accounted for by allowing the phraseology to be elliptical, the conjugate noun being understood. So it is q. d. *H'min emunah*, He trusted a trust, or trusting: and the sense of that is, He exercised trust or faith; as to plant forth plaut, and to seed seed, Gen. i. 11; is to bring forth plant, and seed, or to yield them. The *ellipsis* of the conjugate noun is usual, as in *Hizriang*, *Hiskil*, &c. chap. iii. 6; and of it there is a double indication in this text. One is the pointing of this word with a distinctive. Comp. 1 Kings xxi. 14; They sent forth (sup. a messenger) unto Jezebel. Isa. i. 17; Plead (sup. the plea) of the widow. The other is the pronoun it, in the latter hemistich, which relates to trust or faith. Now, to trust to is to believe: and accordingly the object of it is always a person, as chap. xlv. 26. forecited; or else a word, as 1 Kings x. 7; I trusted not to the speeches, Isa. liii. 1; Who hath trusted to our hearing, i. e. word heard: the which comes all to one; the word or speech being always pronounced by a person, and the person believed in respect of his word. To trust in, is not only to believe a competent object; but to rest in and rely upon, the person, word, or thing trusted, firm and sure, for the effect for which he or it is trusted. Thus Achish trusted in David, 1 Sam. xxvii. 12; not only believing his word, ver. 10; but resting and relying on him, as one trusteth on a friend, (Mic. vii. 5.) "saying he hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him, therefore he shall be my servant for ever." So the people brought through the Red Sea, trusted in Moses, Exod. xiv. ult. relying on, and committing themselves to, his conduct: And on the same occasion, they trusted in God's speeches, Psal. cvi. 12; relying on them with confidence. And this the unicorn cannot be trusted in (i. e. relied upon) for bringing home one's seed, Job xxxix. 12. That the apostles Paul and James, in the passages above cited, retain the Seventy's reading of this text, Now Abraham trusted to God, will not evince a perfect identity of the phrases trusting to, and trusting in God; since it is undeniable, that the inspired penmen, in many passages of the Old Testament, adduced by them in the New, do not act the part of rigid translators: but it will evince them to be one in effect. From what is said, it appears, that according to the scripture phraseology, or language of the Holy Ghost, (1.) The nature of faith in general lies, in trusting, trusting a person, word, or thing. (2.) The nature of saving faith, lies in trusting, that is, resting in, and relying upon the person, word, and thing, (proposed to it in the promise,) as firm and sure, for the effect for which it is trusted. (3.) Trusting in the Lord is by the appointment of God, and the nature of the thing, necessarily connected with trusting to him; comp. Isa. liii. 1. John iii. ult. (4.) It is not by the habit, but by an act of faith, a sinner is justified.

And he reckoned it to him, righteousness, i. e. And God, even Jehovah the Son, see the note above, p. 379 sig. (1.) in whom Abram trusted, (hem. 1.) did treat that act of faith or trust in him, which Abram exerted, as if it had been fulfilling of the law, in which one could stand righteous before him, reputed and counting it to him for that effect, and justifying him, thereupon, in his sight. *Vajjahh'sch'bheha*, And he reckoned it. Of *Hhaschab*, to reckon. Accordingly *Hhischscheb* (Pih.) is fully to reckon, as Lev. xxv. 50. Psal. cxliv. 3. John i. 4. and *Hithhaschscheb* (Hithp.)

come;’ from the guilt, defilement, dominion, and indwelling of sin. So it is for justification and sanctification. And faith receives and rests on him alone for all these, Gal. ii. 16. ‘Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus

only once occurring, doth manifestly signify to reckon one’s self, Num. xxiii. 9; behold a people * * * in (i. e. among) the nations shall not reckon itself; i. e. a people which, &c. This word is used, (1.) For counting and reckoning, as in matters of money, 2 Kings xxii. 7; it would not have been reckoned with them; the silver, Lev. xxv. 50; and he shall fully reckon with his acquirer. (2.) For reputing or counting, as the Latin *Habeo, duco*, as Neh. xiii. 13; they were reckoned faithful. (3.) For regarding, prizing, making a valuable account of a person or thing. So it is used, Isa. ii. 22. xiii. 17. xxxiii. 8. and liii. 3. Thus, reckoners of his name, Mal. iii. 16; are those who valued and made a becoming account of it. (4.) For judging, thinking, or accounting so and so of a thing, as Isa. x. 7; his heart will not so reckon, viz. that he is the rod, staff, and sent, of God, ver. 5, 6; concluding concerning it, as John. i. 4; it fully reckoned; for to be broken, i. e. fully laid its account therewith. All these agree in the common notion of reckoning, which speaks a view of a thing in several particulars, and a practical judgment formed thereupon. And hence, I think, it is that the word is used, (5.) For contriving or devising, as artists do a piece of work, as Amos vi. 5; they have reckoned (i. e. devised) to them instruments of song. *Tz’dakah*, righteousness, *Tzedek* and *Tz’dakah* are both immediately derived from *Tzadak (Kal)*, of which see the note above, p. 379. and accordingly signify righteousness: but with this difference, that *Tz’dakah* founds an acting, as if one might say, righteousing; *Tzedek*, a quality, the principle or result of the former. Hence expound, Dent. xxiv. 13; to thee it shall be righteousness, (*Tz’dakah*), i. e. a doing or acting righteously, a righteous action, a good work, a conforming to the law. An evidence of this difference is, that *Tz’dakah* is often used in the plural number; but *Tzedek* is never. For the former points at a thing, under the notion of a righteous action, or good work, of which kind there are many; but the latter, at a thing, under the notion of a quality, viz. righteousness, which is but one, whatever be the number of the actions which it results from, or is productive of. Thus, Judg. v. 11; the righteousnesses of Jehovah, are his righteous acts or works, Isa. lxiv. 5; all our righteousnesses are filthy rags, i. e. our good have been as filthy rags. So Isa. xlv. 24; only in Jehovah, to me he said, [are] righteousnesses and strength, i. e. only in Jesus Christ are good works, that will answer the demands of the law. Howbeit, the word is thus taken objectively, acting for an action or work. On the other side, balances of (*Tzedek*) righteousness, stones of righteousness. Lev. xix. 36; are balances and weights conform to the standard. Thus these two words, frequently occurring, howbeit their signification may come to one in effect, yet they do, in their formal notion, represent the thing under different *scheses*. Accordingly the righteousness of Christ imputed to believers, is expressed by each of them. His righteousness (*Tzidkatho*) is declared and preached, Psal. xxii. ult.: and he is Jehovah (*Tzidkenu*) our righteousness, Jer. xxiii. 6; the former proposing his righteousness, as the fulfilling of the law; the latter, as conformity to the law, arising therefrom. As the word *Ihaschabh* is used for devising, chap. vi. 5. it is sometimes constructed, as here, with *L’* to or for, denoting the party for whom the thing is devised, as Amos vi. 5; or the end for which, as Gen. i. 20. But since faith cannot be said to be devised righteousness, that sense of the word, which at best is but

Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ; that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.' So it is a going out of one's self to Christ for all.

secondary, can have no place here. But for clearing the import of this weighty expression used in the text, according to the scripture-phraseology, it will be worth the while to inquire into the several phrases, formed with the word *Hhaschabh*, in the notion of reckoning which is the formal notion of it. I. A person is said to be reckoned with others, i. e. classed with them, and the same account made of him as of them. Thus, Psal. lxxxviii. 5. the Psalmist was reckoned with them that go down to the pit, his case accounted hopeless, even as theirs. II. To reckon one person or thing as another, is to make a like account of them as of the other, and so treat them after the like manner. Thus Job's friends thought they were reckoned as beasts, Job xviii. 3; and he himself thought, he was reckoned as an enemy of God, chap. xix. 11. and darts are reckoned as stubble by the leviathan, chap. xli. 21-29ths. So Num. xviii. 27. Psal. xlv. 23. Is. v. 28. and xl. 15. Hos. viii. 12. III. To reckon one thing for another, is to account it to be that thing: Job xxxv. 2. Hast thou reckoned this for judgment, i. e. reckoned this to be judgment. So Judah reckoned Tamar for an harlot, Gen. xxxviii. 15. Eli, Hannah for a drunken woman, 1 Sam. i. 13. Job according to Elihu, reckoned God for his enemy, i. e. to be his enemy, Job xxxiii. 10. Thus to be reckoned for righteousness, Psal. cvi. 31. is to be reckoned to be righteousness. So this third phrase falls in with, and is equivalent to the IV. here used by Moses. That is, two terms being proposed, the one is said to be reckoned the other, as faith reckoned righteousness. Concerning this phraseology, *Obs.* 1. It is used of reckoning a thing, which in reality and in very deed it is, antecedently to the reckoning. Thus the teasurers were reckoned faithful, Neh. xiii. 13. as indeed they were; and for that cause Nehemiah put them into that office: the houses in unwalled villages were to be reckoned upon the field of the land, Lev. xxv. 31. as they were indeed, not being separated from the field by a town-wall: a fool holding his peace is reckoned wise, Prov. xvii. 28. and so he is in that point; the fruitful field shall be reckoned for a forest, Is. xxix. 17. and so it really is now, and is truly so reckoned; namely, the Jews, sometime God's people, but now rejected. The land of the Ammonites, saith the text, Deut. ii. 20. would have been reckoned a land of giants, i. e. formerly it used to be so reckoned: and justly, for the giants, adds the text, dwelt therein in old time; however, it neither was so, nor was it so reckoned in Moses' time. The Emims would have been reckoned giants, ver. 11: and justly so; for they were tall as the Anakims, ver. 10. The scope of the two last passages is, to confirm the Israelites in the faith of their conquest of Canaan, notwithstanding of the Anakims there. For this cause Moses shews them, that the Zamzummims were driven out before the Ammonites, and the Emims before the Moabites, though both the one and the other were reckoned giants. But if they were not really what they were reckoned to be, these instances were nothing to the purpose they are adduced for. And thus the fact of Phinehas was reckoned for righteousness, Psal. cvi. 31; i. e. reckoned a righteous action, pleasing to God; which it really was, hereby done in faith: and hereby it is declared to be so, for an obvious reason, viz. that otherwise men would have been apt to have condemned it. It is without cause alleged, that the text says, It was reckoned, righteousness for generation and generation; which it was not, being his own personal deed, and not the deed of any of his posterity. For the text stands thus; And it was

VII. I come now to consider the ground and warrant of faith. This is the gospel-offer, (1.) The sinner has his invitation, Isa. lv. 1. 'Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money: come ye, buy and eat, yea come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.' (2.) The declaration of God's

reckoned to him for righteousness: for generation and generation; even to perpetuity; i. e. it was reckoned to him righteousness: [it was reckoned so] for generation and generation; even to perpetuity: a token of which was the priesthood's being continued in his family, from generation to generation. *Obs.* 2. This phrase is used of reckoning a thing what in very deed it is not, neither prior to the reckoning, nor posterior to it. And in this case, it either, 1. Bears a mistake, which takes place only where the reckoner is capable to form a judgment, but withal is fallible. Thus did Judah's reckoning of Tamar bear a mistaken judgment, Gen. xxxviii. 15; Eli's of Hannah, 1 Sam. i. 13; the Jews of Christ, while they reckoned him stricken, smitten of God, Isa. liii. 4; i. e. an object of God's peculiar hatred, while he was indeed his beloved Son. And such would be the judgment of one, who would reckon the deep hoar hairs, Job xli. 24-32ds. which without question it is not. Or else, 2. The meaning is no more, but that the reckoner treats the thing as if it were that other thing. And thus it is always in three cases. (1.) In the case of agents incapable of forming a judgment. So the leviathan reckons iron for straw, Job xli. 19-27ths. which doubtless it is not; but he treats it as if it were straw. (2.) In the case of fallible judges, in points not liable to mistake. Thus Laban's own daughters were by him reckoned strangers, Gen. xxxi. 15; and Job a stranger by his own domestics, Job xix. 15; and Zion's sons, earthen pitchers, by the enemies, Lam. iv. 2; in all which cases, there could be no mistaking of the persons reckoned for such persons and things; but these persons were so treated as if they had been taken for such persons and things. (3.) In the case of the infallible Judge. So Isa. xl. 17. the nations are reckoned of him less than (Tohu, Gen. i. 2.) emptiness; not that they are so in very deed; for they are creatures made the sixth day, after (Tohu) emptiness was no more: but that he can so treat them, and annihilate them as easily. Thus Job says, God reckoned him for his enemy, Job xiii. 24: not that he thought God judged him to be his enemy indeed; on the contrary, he was resolved to maintain his way, as to the main of it, before the Lord, ver. 15; and says expressly, chap. x. 7. Thou knowest that I am not wicked; but his meaning is, that God treated him as if he had been an enemy; and Elihu found fault with him, even for that, chap. xxxiii. 10. *Obs.* 3. This phrase is used of reckoning a thing what it is not indeed considered in its own nature, but yet in effect is; which last bears the ground of the reckoning. Thus he who gives a flattering blessing to his neighbour, hath a curse reckoned to him, Prov. xxvii. 14. The blessing is not in itself a curse; yet it is a curse in effect, as having the same effect, as if he had cursed his neighbour: and so, on that ground it is reckoned to the flatterer a curse. V. and lastly, To reckon a thing to a person is to set it down on his score, to put it down on his account, as really his, antecedent to the reckoning; if ill, to answer for it, if good, that he may claim, or have the benefit of it. Examples of the former, Lev. xvii. 4. Blood shall be reckoned to that man; i. e. the guilt of blood shall be put on that man's account, as really his, and he shall answer for it: he hath shed blood, saith the text, and that man shall be cut off Psal. xli. 8-7ths. Upon me they would reckon, evil to me, i. e. charge it on me as my fact and deed, and make me answer for it. So a curse is reckoned to the flatterer, Prov. xxvii. 14. Thus Shemei says to David, Let not my lord reckon iniquity to me, 2 Sam. xix. 20-19ths;

good pleasure in their so doing, John vi. 29. 'This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.' And, lastly, his peremptory command, 1 John iii. 23. 'And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.'

I shall conclude with a very few inferences.

he owns his crime, and do not remember that which thy servant did perversely, *ibid.* but he begs that the king would not put it on his account, and make him answer for it. And thus David describes the blessedness of the justified man, that the Lord will not reckon iniquity to him, *Psal. xxxii. 2.* i. e. that he will not put his iniquity on his own account, and make him answer for it; the putting it on the Surety, and his answering already for it, being already sustained at God's bar. Examples of the latter: 2 Sam. iv. 2. *Beeroth*: it would have been reckoned upon Benjamin; viz. as truly theirs, to have the benefit of it, for indeed it did belong to Benjamin, *Josh. xviii. 25*; though the Philistines violently possessed it, 1 Sam. xxxi. 7. So it is said of another plot of ground, It would have been reckoned to the Canaanites, *Josh. xiii. 3.* namely, as really theirs; and therefore it remained to be possessed by Israel, *ver. 1.* And thus, *Num. xviii. 27.* Your heave-offerings shall be reckoned to you; i. e. put on your account, as your own offerings, and you to receive the benefit of the same. On the other hand, He that offereth a peace-offering, and eateth of it on the third day, it was not to be reckoned to him, *Lev. vii. 18.* i. e. put on the account of his service to God. *Psal. xl. 18-17ths.* I [am] poor and needy, my LORD will reckon to me; i. e. The Father would put the poverty of the Mediator on his account, and reward him for it. And thus the deed of Phinehas was reckoned to him, put on his account of acceptable service, and graciously rewarded, for the sake of the Mediator. Thus far of the phrases formed with *Hhaschabh* to reckon. Now, the scope and design of Moses in the text, is to shew to all, and particularly to the Jews, the way how a sinner is justified before the Lord, namely, by faith in the Messias without the works of the law. Having given an account, how Abram entertained the promise, viz. that he trusted in Jehovah, he discovers on that occasion, how he became righteous before God, namely, by that trust: that every one may see in him, as in an exemplar, how a sinner is justified in God's sight. That this is the scope of the words, is put beyond question by the apostle, *Rom. iv.* From what is said, it appears, that, according to the phraseology of the Holy Ghost, and the scope of this passage, the following positions are established. *Pos. I.* The only righteousness wherein a man can stand before the Lord, is the fulfilling of the law, or a conformity to the law refuting therefrom. For such is the scripture-notion of righteousness in the case of men. *Pos. II.* The sense of this passage is not, That God reckoned Abram's trusting, or believing for a righteous and worthy action, as he did the fact of Phinehas, *Psal. cvi. 31.* For it is the righteousness of Abram's person, not the righteousness of an action, of his that is here aimed at. The deed of Phinehas was what could not have missed, by some at least, to have been reckoned a rash and sinful action, if God himself had not declared his approbation of it: but Abram's trusting in Jehovah was what could never be liable to any such misconstruction, among those who believe Jehovah to be God. But the sense is, His faith was accounted righteousness for his person in the sight of God. *Pos. III.* Faith's being reckoned or accounted for righteousness, which is the phrase of the *Septuagint*, retained by the apostle Paul. *Rom. iv. 3.* is equivalent to, and of the same sense with, Moses' phrase in the text, viz. faith's being reckoned righteousness. This is clear from what is said on the third and fourth phrases compared.

Inf. 1. Faith is a precious thing, 2 Pet. i. 1. Not to be sworn by, but sought of the Lord. It saves the precious soul, and wraps it up in precious promises.

Pos. IV. The righteousness of Christ, though righteousness in the strictest propriety, greatest reality and perfection, antecedently to the imputation or reckoning of it, may, according to the scripture, be imputed for righteousness to us : for, in the phraseology of the Holy Ghost, a thing is said to be reckoned or imputed for what it is really, as well as for what it is not ; as appears from the instances adduced, *obs.* 1. on the fourth phrase. *Pos.* V. Since faith, or the act of believing, is not in itself righteousness for a person, before God, antecedently to the imputation of it, for that righteousness : which is manifest from that it doth not, in itself, exactly answer or fulfil the law, the eternal rule of righteousness : and since God, the infallible Judge, whose judgment is always according to truth, is the party imputing it for righteousness ; therefore faith, or the act of believing, imputed to sinners for righteousness, neither is at any time, nor is made by the imputation, nor by any gratuitous acceptance, the very formal righteousness for which a sinner is justified in the sight of GOD. It is no more so than Laban's daughters were really strangers to him, Gen. xxxi. 15 ; or Zion's sons earthen pitchers, Lam. iv. 2 ; or the nations really less than emptiness, Isa. xl. 17 ; though they were so reckoned. *Pos.* VI. Upon the same grounds, faith is therefore said to be imputed for righteousness ; not that God judgeth it to be the righteousness of a person before him, but because he treats faith as it were that righteousness ; namely, justifying the person who hath it, pardoning all his sins, and accepting him as righteous in his sight, immediately upon his act of believing. Even as the Leviathan treats iron as straw, Job xli. 24. though he does not judge it to be straw ; and Lahan treated his own daughters, Gen. xxxi. 15 ; and Job's servants their master, Job xix. 15 ; as if they had been strangers ; and Zion's enemies, her sons as earthen pitchers, Lam. iv. 2 ; though surely they did not judge them to be so. And even as God treats the nations as if they were less than emptiness : Isa. xl. 17. though he infallibly knows they are more than emptiness ; and as Job thought himself treated of God, as if he had been his enemy, Job xiii. 24 ; while in the mean time he knew, that God did not judge him to be an enemy to him. *Pos.* VII. Though faith is not really and in itself the righteousness of a guilty man before the Lord : yet being so in effect, to wit, relatively and instrumentally ; for as much as it lays hold on, presents, and pleads the righteousness of Christ, it is on good grounds, said to be imputed for righteousness ; even as the flatterer's blessing is reckoned a curse, Prov. xxvii. 14 ; as being so in effect. *Pos.* VIII. and last. The righteousness which is the relative and object of faith, viz. the righteousness of Christ, is reckoned or imputed to believers, as really theirs, as well as their faith ; theirs, I say, antecedently to the imputation of it at God's bar ; though the former is not indeed inherent in them, as the latter is. This is evident from the true sense of the fifth phrase, reckoning a thing to a person, established by the instances of it above adduced. Christ's righteousness becomes ours, by faith uniting us to him : from which union immediately results a communion with him in his righteousness ; which being legally found at the bar of heaven, that perfect righteousness is reckoned or imputed to us, set down on our score, put on our account, as really ours : even as the guilt of blood is reckoned to the man, Lev. xvii. 4 ; as really his guilt ; and as the plot of ground, Josh. xiii. 3 ; was reckoned to the Canaanites, as really theirs, or belonging to them, &c. And thereupon we are justified on the account of that righteousness truly being and reckoned to be ours.

2. It is a most necessary grace ; for it is that which brings Christ and the soul together. And without it, it is impossible to please God, Heb. xi. 6.

3. It is of perpetual use while here ; it is an eye, hand, and foot to the soul, Psal. xxvii. 3 ; and at death it does the last office to the man, supports him when all other comforts fail, Heb. xi. 13.

4. *Lastly*, Seek faith to have it wrought, actuated, and strengthened in you ; and for that cause, diligently attend ordinances, the preaching of the word particularly ; for ‘ faith cometh by hearing,’ Rom. x. 17.

OF REPENTANCE UNTO LIFE.

ACTS xi. 18.—*Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.*

REPENTANCE is an inseparable companion of faith, so that the soul blessed with faith in Christ will be also endowed with repentance towards God.

This is a conclusion drawn by the believing Jews from the account Peter had given them of what passed with respect to his receiving the Gentiles into Christian fellowship, with which they rest satisfied, namely, *That God had given repentance to the Gentiles.* Where consider,

1. A blessing granted ; *repentance unto life* ; so called, to distinguish it from legal repentance, and the sorrow that is unto death. This true repentance is unto life ; for, by God’s appointment, it must go before eternal life ; and whoso have it shall be sure of that.

2. The parties to whom it was granted ; *the Gentiles*, those who were once without hope and without God in the world.

3. The author of it, *God*. It is his gift, as well as faith is. He works it in the heart.

The doctrine of the text is,

DOCT. ‘ To those whom God designs for life, he gives repentance unto life. They come all through this strait gate who enter into life.’

Or, ‘ Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavour after, new obedience.’

Here I shall show,

1. What are the kinds of repentance.