

JUSTIFICATION BY THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF 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.—PHILIP. III. 9.

You have heard, verse 8, of the wonderful effect of Christ's excellent knowledge: 'For whom I have suffered.'

Here you have the end why he was willing to lose all, 'to be found in him.' The apostle cared not though he were found without all other things, so that he might be found in Christ. Hence

Obs. Those that have Christ desire above all things to be found in him; are willing to do, endure, to want, to renounce anything, all things; care not in what condition they be found, how low, poor, despised, afflicted, so they may be found in Christ.

Nothing needs explanation but this phrase, what it is to be found in Christ.

Now, this includes three things:

First, Spiritual intimacy in respect of union. A sinner cannot be found in Christ till he be in him. Union is necessarily presupposed, such an union as the Holy Ghost expresses by that of head and members, Eph. i. 22, 23; by that of root and branches. Hence Christ is frequently called a root, Isa. xi. 10, Rev. xxii. 16; by that of vine and branches, John xv. 1. As the branches are in the vine, and thereby receive juice, strength, growth, fruitfulness, so is a believer in Christ; and the union is so intimate, there is such an oneness betwixt them, as both have one name; so much are they in him as they are him, are called Christ, 1 Cor. xii. 12. Now, this it is which is to be desired above all, to be in Christ, united to him, to be looked upon as one of his members, as implanted into him.

Secondly, Judicial account in respect of representation. Christ is a public person as Adam was, represents those that are his as Adam did, and what he doth or suffers in their stead the Lord accepts it as if they had done or suffered it. This acceptance I call judicial account, and this I take to be the principal import of the expression. Then are we said to be found in Christ, when the Lord accounts, accepts what Christ performed

for his elect in way of satisfaction, as if they had performed it. Mind this notion well; for the greatest, the sweetest mystery of the gospel cannot be understood without it.

Christ is by the Father's appointment the sponsor of his people; he doth *vicariam presentiam agere*, they whom he represents are looked upon as present in him, and what he acts doth pass as though they did act it.

In this sense did the apostle desire to be found in him, that Christ might be looked upon as his sponsor, and what he performed might be looked on as undertaken in his stead, on his behalf, and so set upon his account. The Scripture offers us this notion in divers expressions, in special, to instance in no more, when Christ is called a surety, a sacrifice, Heb. vii. 22; when the surety pays the debt, the bankrupt is discharged, as though himself had paid it. Every sinner since the fall is under a double obligation:

He owes the Lord both perfect obedience, and, through his default, the penalty due for disobedience.

Justice will not suffer any man to enter heaven till this debt be paid; nay, in default of payment, the Lord in justice is engaged to cast every sinner into hell, there to pay the utmost farthing.

Man has utterly disabled himself from paying either the one or the other; he can neither obey perfectly, nor satisfy for the least disobedience, and hereupon every son of Adam becomes guilty before God, and liable to eternal wrath, without the least hopes of recovery from and by himself; no more hopes of payment nor of freedom from the penalty than that a beggar should pay an hundred thousand talents.

This is the forlorn condition of every sinner by nature.

But now the Lord, out of infinite love to his elect, accepts of Christ, freely offering himself to be their surety, and to pay that for them which they were never able to pay themselves; and this he did by performing perfect obedience, which was the principal debt, and suffering death and the wrath of God, which was the penalty. Now this surety's payment being accepted for those that believe, they are discharged as though themselves had paid it. And this is it the apostle desires, that he might be found in Christ as his surety, that the Lord would look upon him in Christ satisfying in his stead, and would discharge him upon Christ the surety's payment. To be thus discharged for Christ is to be found in him.

So Christ was a sacrifice, Heb. ix. 26, Eph. v. 2, Isa. liii.

Now the sacrifice was offered in the stead of him that brought it; there was *actio vicaria*, the death of the sacrifice was instead of the death of him that brought it, so that it passed as though the sinner had suffered in the sacrifice.

Thus, those for whom Christ offered himself are looked upon as though they had suffered in him, and in this sense should we desire to be found in Christ as in our sacrifice, as in our surety.

Thirdly, Real efficacy in respect of participation: when by virtue of his being in Christ a believer is secured from what he fears, and hath that procured for him which he most wants; when he hath in Christ acceptance to life, and by Christ is delivered from the curse and threatening of the law; when he obtains the blessings, as Jacob by being in his elder brother's garments, and escapes vengeance, as the malefactor by being in the city of refuge; these were typical, and very significantly shew us what it is to be found in Christ.

To be found in him is to be covered with his righteousness, held forth in the notion of a garment, Isa. lxi. 10, Rev. xix. 8. Every sinner is full

of uncleanness and deformity, the pure eye of God cannot behold him without loathing, nor will he admit any unclean thing into his presence. If he seek a covering of his own righteousness, it helps not, it is but as a menstruous rag, it adds to his uncleanness rather than hides it.

How then shall a wretched sinner stand in the sight of an holy God? Why, the Lord hath made provision; when the sinner returns as the prodigal, the Father bids bring out the best robe, he covers, he adorns him with this; he takes order with a returning sinner, as with Joshua, Zech. iii. 3, 4. A believer puts on Christ, Gal. iii. 27, Rom. xiii. 14, Rev. xii. 1. This is his robe, his garment, and when he is found in it, then he is found in Christ; his person, his services are accepted, the way to heaven is opened for him, the Father delights in him, and blesses him with spiritual, eternal blessings. So that to be found in Christ is to be found in his righteousness, and that the apostle explains himself, 'Not having,' &c.

Then for security from evil: to be found in Christ is as the malefactor to be found in the city of refuge. The man that had slain his neighbour casually was to fly to the city of refuge; if the pursuer overtook him before he was in the city, he had liberty to slay him without mercy; if he found him in the city of refuge, he was not to touch him. Thus here, every sinner out of Christ is liable to the stroke of revenging justice, but when he is found in Christ he is secure, justice then will not touch him. To be found in Christ is to be found as in the city of refuge.

Use. Exhortation. Oh that hereby you would make it evident that you have Christ, by desiring above all things to be found in him! Oh that the same mind might appear in you that was in the apostle, that you might desire it above all, and so desire it as to count all things dung!

And indeed, whether you so account them or no, so they will prove. All your privileges, outward performances, earthly enjoyments, they will no more avail you than dung, they will render you no more acceptable to God than excrements, unless you be found in Christ.

That I may a little enforce this exhortation, consider,—

Except you be found in Christ you are lost; your persons, services, happiness, and hopes of it, all are lost, unless you be found in him.

1. Your *persons*: it is as impossible that any person in the world should escape the wrath of God, out of Christ, as it was impossible any man in the old world should escape drowning, when the flood came and found him not in the ark; some of those perishing creatures might scramble up into some mountain or tree and preserve themselves a little while the waters are low, but they were all swept away ere long who were not found in the ark. So here, there is a deluge of wrath coming upon the world of unbelievers and obstinate sinners, and though some may think to escape by flying to outward duties, and relying upon their privileges and enjoyments, yet those are but a refuge of lies, there is no escaping for any but those that are found in Christ, the deluge of wrath will sweep away every sinner sooner or later that is not found in Christ.

2. Your *services* too are all lost: whatever you do in a way of religion, or in a way of charity, except you be found in Christ doing of it, it is lost, it will never be accepted. Do what you will, it is impossible to please God if he find you not in Christ, in whom only his people are made acceptable: 'Without faith it is impossible to please God,' Heb. xi. 6. Why? Because it is faith that brings a man into Christ, that faith which purifies the heart and life, that faith which runs to Christ out of deep seas of sin and wrath, that faith that will take Christ upon his own terms.

3. Your *happiness*, and *hopes* of it, are lost too: 'There is no name under heaven,' &c. The Lord blesses his people with spiritual blessings in heavenly places; but how? In Christ only, Eph. i. There is no enjoyment of happiness, there is no hopes of it, but for those that are found in Christ: 'Christ in you the hope of glory,' Col. i. Without Christ, without hope in the world. Those who anchor not within the veil, will see their souls and hopes wrecked together. In what condition soever you be found, if found without Christ, you are miserable. Though you be found in health, in plenty, in prosperity; nay, though you be found in a throne, if you be not found in Christ, there is no hopes of happiness, they give no rest.

But what course shall we take to be found in Christ?

1. If ye will be found in Christ, you must not be found in your sins. You must not be found in love with any sin, you must not allow yourselves in the practice of any; you must hate it, you must depart from it, else there is no coming at Christ, no being found in him; these are utterly inconsistent, as light and darkness; you cannot be found in both at once. 'What fellowship,' &c., 2 Cor. vi. Joshua's filthy garments must first be taken from him, before he could be clothed with change of raiment. Lot could not possibly be in Zoar until he left Sodom. The manslayer, if he would stay in the place of guilt, where he had shed blood, could never be found in the city of refuge. It is as impossible you should be found in heaven while you are in hell, as that you should be found in Christ while you continue in sin. If any sin be so endeared to you by pleasure, advantage, custom, or interest, that you will not leave it, you thereby abandon Christ, and can never expect to be found in him, or near him, unless only at his left hand. They do but delude themselves, if there be any truth in Christ, who hope to be found in Christ, and yet will be found in the love and ways of sin. It is a disparagement to Christ, for any to name him who will not depart from iniquity; and can such hope to be found in him? 1 John i. 6.

2. You must have no confidence in your own righteousness. The apostle joins these both in his doctrine and practice, ver. 9. If you would be found in Christ, you must lay aside all conceits of any sufficiency in your own righteousness to justify or save you; those that lead you to this draw you from Christ. It was such conceits that kept off the Pharisees from Christ, and made it less feasible for them to be found in Christ than the publicans; and against this is that parable directed, Luke xviii. 9. This cut off the Jews from Christ and his righteousness: Rom. x. 34, 'In the Lord have we righteousness, in the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified,' Isa. xlv. 24, 25. But this self-confidence will make men say, 'We are lords,' Jer. ii. 31. This makes Christ of none effect, discharges them from being found in him, or finding any advantage by him, Gal. v. 4. An expectation to be justified by conformity to, or observation of the law, tends to disannul and abolish Christ; such are fallen from the doctrine of grace, which doctrine teaches that we are justified freely by another righteousness, Rom. iii. This renders the death of Christ a vain and needless thing, Gal. ii. 21. Christ was obedient unto death, that we might have righteousness in him to justify us. If we can have such a righteousness by our observance of the law, he died in vain and to no purpose, we might be as well without him.

8. Put on Christ. He that will be found in him, must put him on, Rom. xiii. 14. Desire the Lord to plant faith in your souls, for by this

only is Christ put on. This is coming to him as to a city of refuge, John vi.

4. Walk in Christ, 1 John ii. 6. Those only will be found in Christ who walk in the steps and ways of Christ; those ways of holiness, humility, self-denial, meekness, contempt of the world, activeness for God, wherein he walked, Eph. ii. 10; for those are neither the causes nor conditions of justification, either as begun or continued, yet they are the inseparable companions or effects of that faith by which we are justified at first, and by which our justification is continued.

'Not having my own righteousness,' &c. You have heard (1.) Of the dignity of the knowledge of Christ; (2.) Of the efficacy of it, it made him suffer the loss of all things; (3.) The end why he suffered, that he might win Christ, be found in him; (4.) The way how he would be found in Christ: [1.] Negatively, 'not having,' &c.; [2.] Positively, 'But the righteousness of the faith of Christ.'

The negative expression is that which I shall now insist on; and that I may clearly ground a particular observation, explain,

First, What he means by righteousness. It is a conformity to the rule of righteousness, such a conformity as is found in man since the fall; and that either inward, in respect of the temper and motions of the soul; or outward, in respect of the actions of his life, religious or moral. He concludes all acts in his soul, or conversation, that had a show of righteousness, which seemed to answer the law of God.

Secondly, Hence he calls it that 'righteousness which is of the law,' because the law is the rule of righteousness; and any motion or act is more or less righteous, as it comes nearer to the law, or less answers.

Thirdly, 'His own righteousness.' His own in opposition to that other righteousness, which he calls the 'righteousness of faith,' 'of Christ,' 'of God;' for though this was his too, as it is every believer's, yet not in the same way. That which he calls his own; for this was his by personal performance, but that of Christ was not his personally; but in respect of God's gracious acceptance, imputing it to him, accepting the performance of a surety for him, as though it had been his personally.

Fourthly, 'Not having;' that is, not having confidence in it, not relying upon it, as that for which the Lord will pardon, accept, save me. The gospel hath revealed another ground to rely upon for this, and had discovered the insufficiency of his own righteousness for this purpose; and therefore he renounced this in point of confidence, not otherwise. You must not think the apostle accounted a personal righteousness or observance of the law unnecessary, he endeavoured it in himself, he urged it upon others, to bring their hearts and lives to an accord with the law, the will of God; and pressed holiness, which is nothing but a conformity to the law, as that 'without which no man shall see God.'

Thus far he retained his own righteousness as excellent in its own place; but he renounced it in point of confidence when it took the place of Christ's righteousness; when it was urged as that which could justify, make acceptable in God's sight, and give him a title to heaven. These are the privileges and offers* of the righteousness of faith; and therefore in this respect he disclaims his own legal, personal righteousness. Hence the

Third Obs. Those that would be found in Christ must renounce their own righteousness: they who have attained the excellent knowledge of

* Qu. 'offices'?—Ed.

Christ will not rely upon it, rest in it, or make it the ground of their confidence.

The apostle in this respect counts it loss, calls it dung; and those that have truly learned Christ will be like-minded. Though personal righteousness, observance of the law, be necessary and useful in other respects, yet in point of confidence it must be renounced, it must in no case be relied on; it is commendable and advantageous in its own place, when made use of for those ends, and in that way which God requires; but if it be relied on, it may prove dangerous, pernicious; it will be found a broken reed, deceive the soul that puts confidence in it.

The reason is, because personal righteousness of any man since the fall is defective, and comes far short of that righteousness which should be the ground of our confidence.

That only may be relied on, 1, which fully answers the rule of righteousness; 2, which can give title to life; 3, which can make satisfaction for sin; 4, which can render us acceptable in God's eye; 5, which will justify us in the sight of God: such a righteousness it must be. But now no man hath such a righteousness of his own as will do any one of these, and therefore it must in no case be relied on. To shew particularly, no man's personal righteousness, take it at the best since the fall,—

1. Doth answer the rule of righteousness; for the law of God, which is the rule, requires perfect obedience, perfect both in respect of habit and act, both in respect of parts and degrees: but the best righteousness of any fallen man is imperfect; imperfect both these ways, therefore can scarce so be called righteousness; it is but a sinful and unrighteous righteousness; it is crooked, and comes not up to the rule; it is defective, unanswerable to the purity of the law: and hence the church acknowledges her righteousness is but as a menstruous cloth, Isa. lxiv. 6.

Four reasons:

Reason 1. *Omnis justitia humana injustitia esse convincitur.* All man's righteousness is detected to be unrighteousness, if it be strictly examined, James iii. 2. There are many sinful flaws in all, in the best, in the most righteous. The apostle includes himself, 'We offend in many;' whereas, if we did but offend in one point, that would be enough to deface our righteousness, to make it another thing than the law requires; to denominate us guilty rather than righteous, James ii. 10. He that transgresses but in one point, would by the sentence of the law be found guilty of all, rather than righteous, Job xv. 15.

Reason 2. Obedience, if it be sincere and universal, it may evidence a title, but it can give none: 2 Tim. i. 9, 'He saves us,' i. e., gives a title to salvation; but how? 'Not according to our own works,' our own righteousness; 'but according to his grace in Christ.' If we had it, were entitled to it by our own righteousness, we had it not by grace; these are still opposed as inconsistent. If we had it in ourselves, we had it not in Christ.

Reason 3. It cannot satisfy divine justice, it can be no compensation to his laws and honour, violated by sin; it can be no vindication of his holiness and justice. There is that in our best righteousness which exposes us to more severity, and makes us further obnoxious to justice; that which may provoke him, instead of appeasing or satisfying.

Reason 4. There is that in it that may procure loathing, rather than acceptance, Hab. i. 18. There is a mixture of evil in our own righteousness, the Lord cannot behold it; but he will see iniquity in it, which his

pure eye cannot look on with acceptance, Dan. ix. 18. Daniel, and the people of God who prayed with him, ventured not to present their supplications for their own righteousness; they durst not presume to expect their prayers would be accepted for their righteousness, but for his great mercies. Those great mercies for which they presented their supplications, that they might be accepted, include Christ, through whose mediation and righteousness a way is opened for those mercies; and without which no sinners under the law, or under the gospel, would be capable thereof. It is not in ourselves, not in our own righteousness, but in Christ, that any are accepted, Eph. i. 6.

Reason 5. As touching the righteousness of the law, he was blameless, unspotted. But this was before conversion, no wonder if he did not expect to be thereby justified. Ay, but after conversion too, when what he had and did was from grace, he had no confidence in his own righteousness, that it would justify him, how exact, how eminent soever it was, Acts xxiii. 1. His righteousness was universal, in all good conscience; it was sincere, it was before God that he thus lived; it was continued, uninterrupted; he had thus lived to that very day. But did he rely on this to justify? No, 1 Cor. iv. 4. He was not conscious to himself that he had been unfaithful or unsincere in anything, yet would he make no account that thereby he should be justified. Here is an evangelical righteousness, an unspotted, a sincere, an universal, a constant righteousness, an apostolical righteousness, of an extraordinary quality and degree, both as to the habits and acts of it, such as transcended that of the other apostles: 'He laboured more abundantly than they all, suffered more abundantly than they all;' yet was he not hereby justified. Now if such a righteousness could not justify, what personal righteousness can be found in the world that may be counted a justifying righteousness? Well might he lay it down as a general rule, Gal. iii. 11, and ii. 16.

It will be yet more evident, that our own righteousness cannot justify us, by two or three particulars.

(1.) Our own righteousness answers not the demands of the gospel, no more than those of the law, and so falls short of every rule of righteousness, and therefore cannot justify us with respect to any. The gospel calls for perfection as well as the law, it abates no degree of holiness which the law required, it allows us not to love God less, to fear, trust, serve him less than the law would have us. It is true, the gospel has pardon for imperfections, which the law had not; but we are as much obliged to perfection under the gospel, as under the law, and cannot be justified by that which falls short of what we are obliged to.

(2.) Our own righteousness cannot justify itself, much less can it justify us. It needs another righteousness to justify it, being many ways faulty; otherwise it is, and will be under the condemning sentence of the law, Ps. cxxx. 8. If there be iniquities in our righteousness, it cannot stand in judgment, it cannot be justified, it needs another righteousness, by virtue of which it may have pardon.

(3.) It cannot justify us in our own consciences, much less can it justify us before God. There is no man's conscience, if it be not senseless, but will see something to be condemned in his own righteousness. Now God is greater than our consciences, he sees more therein that is worthy of condemnation, 1 John iii. 21.

2. It cannot entitle any man to life, nor give right to happiness; this is evident from the former. The first charter man had for eternal life runs

upon these terms, 'Do this and live;' that is, perform perfect obedience, and thou shalt have eternal life. It is only perfect righteousness, obedience, that gives a man title to heaven; whereas, that which is defective (as the best is since the fall) leaves a man under the curse, Gal. iii. 10. There must be a better provision than man's personal righteousness, before he can be free from the curse, so far is he from procuring eternal happiness.

8. It cannot satisfy the justice of God, it cannot make a recompense for the least sin. Nay, suppose it was perfect, it is most imperfect: perfect obedience cannot satisfy for the least disobedience. 'O my God, incline thine ear, and hear; open thine eyes, and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name: for we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies,' Dan. ix. 18.

If a man could perform perfect obedience without sin, yet this being his duty, and that which he owes, this would not satisfy for any former sin; for the payment of one debt is no satisfaction for another.

4. It cannot render him acceptable in God's eye. The Lord will accept no man till satisfaction be tendered; this agrees not with his justice, and no man's personal righteousness can satisfy justice, as appears by the former. No man since the fall is or can be accepted upon his own account, and men's personal righteousness being stained with sin, is so far from rendering the performance acceptable, as the performance itself cannot be accepted without the mediation of a better righteousness than that of the law, of which here, Eph. i.

5. It cannot justify the performance before God's tribunal. The apostle clears this by his own example: if any man might expect to be justified by his own righteousness, he much more; for 'as touching the righteousness of the law he was blameless;' he lived in all good conscience towards God, &c. He was not conscious to himself of any gross misdemeanour or neglect: 'I know nothing,' &c., 1 Cor. iv. 4. He lays it down as a general rule, Gal. iii. 11, and chap. ii. 16.

Use; of exhortation. If you desire the comfort and happiness to be found in Christ, take heed of relying upon your own righteousness. There are two ways whereby Satan leads the greatest part of the world to destruction. The one is, the open way of profaneness and ungodliness; the other is, the retired way of self-confidence. If that great enemy of souls cannot prevail with men to run with other* excess of riot, when he sees some through religious education, or common workings of the Spirit, to have escaped the gross pollutions of the world, he attempts their ruin another way, by possessing them with a conceit of the sufficiency of their own righteousness, tempting them to neglect Christ by resting in themselves. And though this way be fairer than the other, yet ordinarily it proves more dangerous, because those that are entered into it are not so easily convinced of it, and brought out of it; publicans and sinners are more easily brought to Christ than Pharisees. The word to which the apostle compares self-righteousness tells us thus much. He calls it *συνβάλα*, which is rendered to you dung; but some critics observe, the word signifies such costive excrements as the power of physic doth hardly purge out of the body.

It must be an extraordinary power that will work a man that is civilized, and hath the form of godliness, to deny himself, and renounce his self-righteousness; and yet nothing doth more cross the great and glorious designs of God in the gospel, nothing is more dishonourable to Christ, and more affronts him; nothing more dangerous to the soul of sinners, than to

* Qu. 'others to'?—Ed.

rely upon their own righteousness for pardon and salvation. And therefore, if you would not be found fighters against God in his most gracious contrivement of man's happiness ; if you would not be contemners of Christ and the grace of the gospel ; if you would not be found accessory to the destruction of your own souls, take heed of depending upon your own righteousness, take heed of making anything the ground of your confidence but Christ and his righteousness. And that you may the better escape this snare of the devil, let me discover those several dresses wherein Satan presents this self-righteousness, that he may the more easily entangle the more in a soul-deceiving confidence therein ; and few that know Christ will find but they either have been, or are upon the borders of it, if not further in some of these by-paths.

1. Some rely much upon a natural righteousness, that which we call good nature ; if others persuade them, or they can persuade themselves that they are of good dispositions, mild, candid, gentle, ingenuous, kind and peaceable temper, they rest here, and are apt to conclude, the Lord will not be so severe as to cast so good nature (though there be nothing more than nature in them) into hell.

2. Some rely upon a positive righteousness, and observance of some rites and circumstances in religion. They are baptized, and accounted members of the church, and partake of ordinances, and come under church order, submit to this or that form of ecclesiastical government, and adhere strictly to some outward observances prescribed by God, or perhaps received by tradition from their superiors or forefathers. Here they ground their hopes of heaven. This was part of the Pharisees' righteousness, and that in which their false teachers grounded their confidence, which the apostle here opposes, and overthrows elsewhere, when he tells us, 'The kingdom of God comes not by observation,' &c., Luke xvii. 29 ; Rom. xiv. 17. And Christ raises it : 'Except your righteousness,' &c., Mat. v. 20.

3. Others rely upon a moral righteousness, because they have some care to observe the duties of the second table, because they are just, sober, temperate, liberal, love their neighbours, do no man wrong, give every one his own ; hence conclude they are sure of heaven. Whereas if this were a sufficient ground of confidence, we might conclude many heathens in heaven, such as never knew Christ, nor heard of the gospel. If such righteousness be sufficient, then Christ died in vain, as the apostle concludes to like purpose, Gal. ii. 21.

4. Others rely upon a religious righteousness, their outward performances of some religious duties. Because they pray, and hear the word, and read the Scriptures, receive the sacraments, converse with those that are religious, and in some sort observe the Sabbath, upon this are confident that they shall die the death of the righteous, and it shall be well with them in the latter end. But even this support the apostle rejected as rotten ; 'though he was one of the most religious sort among the Jews, and blameless as to his outward performance of religious duties, yet he durst not be found with this righteousness alone ; he disclaims all confidence in it.

5. Others rely upon a negative righteousness. Because they are not so unrighteous, not such idolaters, atheists, not such apostates or heretics, not such swearers or Sabbath-breakers ; because they are not drunkards nor adulterers, not murderers or oppressors, not covetous, proud, or ambitious, therefore it shall go well with them. This was the Pharisees', as in the parable ; but it was far from justifying them, Luke xviii. 11, 14.

6. Others rely upon a comparative righteousness, their being or thinking

themselves to be more righteous than others, because they do more in a way of religion, of justice, of charity, than others who have like engagements ; whatever their principles be from which, or the ends for which they do it, conclude for this they shall be saved. This is like that of the labourers sent into the vineyard early in the morning. They expostulate about their wages, as though they had deserved some extraordinary reward in having borne the burthen and heat of the day, Mat. xx. 12. There is a sad intimation, that though these were called, yet they were not chosen, ver. 16, Mat. vii. 22.

7. Others rely upon a passive righteousness. Because they have suffered for the truth, being jeered, reproached, persecuted for some way of religion, therefore they are confident that for these sufferings they shall be saved and pardoned. But the apostle here sheweth the vanity of this confidence, for who had suffered more than he, who had suffered the loss of all things for Christ ? He makes not his sufferings, but Christ, the ground of his confidence ; he durst not be found, not in his sufferings for Christ, except he might withal be found in Christ : that he desired above all. Nor would he rest in anything but in Christ : ' Not having his own righteousness ; ' he counts it loss so far as it was unuseful and insufficient, he counts it dung so far as it invades Christ's prerogative, so far as it would usurp the place and office of his righteousness ; it was no better than dung when it would supplant and dishonour the righteousness of God.

(1.) Man being made a rational creature, and so made capable of moral government and obedience, he was necessarily subject unto God as supreme governor, who, that he might rule him according to his nature and capacity, gave him a law by which he was to be ordered in all things, and according to which he was to be judged. To enforce this law, he added a penalty in case of transgression, the import of which is this, that if he rebelled, he should be miserable here and hereafter, Gen. ii. 17. To enjoin man not to eat of the tree of knowledge, to obey him herein and in all other particulars, he was obliged by the law of nature ; and the penalty is death, which is elsewhere called the curse, Deut. xxvii. 26, Gal. iii. 10.

(2.) Man transgressed this law. Our first parents disobeyed God, and we in them, Rom. v. 12. Hereby the image of God, wherewith he was created in holiness and righteousness, was lost, and the nature of mankind universally corrupted, and all so inclined unto sin, that they sin actually as soon as they are capable of acting, and continue to sin while they are in the state of nature, and all are concluded under sin, Rom. iii. 9, 10, &c. ' All are become guilty before God,' ver. 19. ' All have sinned.' This the apostle premises before he delivers the doctrine of justification, ver. 23. Thus it was with all the world after the flood, and so it was with the old world before, Gen. vi. 5. All are sinners from the womb and from the conception, Ps. li.

(8.) Sin being entered into the world, the Lord was concerned not to let it go unpunished. It is enough for our purpose, which is out of question, that it was the Lord's will and determination to punish all sin. But there seems to be a sufficient proof, that it was not from the mere pleasure of his will that he should be punished, but there was a necessity for it, from the nature and perfections of God, and from his relation to man as his governor, and from the law enacted as the rule of his government. The Lord is obliged, not only by his truth and unchangeableness, but by his wisdom, holiness, and justice, to punish sin.

His truth engages him to it. He threatens it in his law, and if he will

rule according to law, it must be inflicted. His truth is obliged for the executing of the threatening, and to make good what he had declared to be his resolution.

His *unchangeableness* makes it necessary. He did determine from eternity to punish it. The event shews that it was eternal purpose, and the counsel of the Lord must stand : he is not as man.

His *wisdom* makes it necessary. The end and designs of his law and government would be lost, his law would appear to be powerless and insignificant, his government would be rendered contemptible, the authority of the one, and the honour of the other defaced, if sin is not punished.

The *holiness* of God requires it. Sin is contrary to him ; he hates it. If he will shew himself to be what he is, 'an holy God, of purer eyes than to behold evil, and who cannot look on iniquity,' Hab. i. 13, it is necessary to shew his hatred of it by punishing it : Josh. xxiv. 19, 'he will not forgive,' that is, he will punish, because he is holy, where, as in other places, the necessity of punishing is grounded upon his holiness.

If the Lord be necessarily an holy God, it will be necessary to hate sin ; for hatred of sin is essential to holiness, and cannot be conceived or apprehended without it. Now to hate sin is *velle punire*, necessarily includes a will to punish it. It is essential to holiness to be displeased with sin. Now as the love of God is our chief reward, so God's displeasure is the chief punishment of it. If then it be not necessary that he punish sin, there will be no necessity that he be displeased at sin. It will be arbitrary to the holy God to be pleased with sin, if it be arbitrary not to punish it. We might conceive that he may as well be pleased with sin as displeased with it, which is intolerable to say or imagine.

Finally, His *justice* obliges him to punish it ; for suffering is indispensably due to sin, and the sinner justly deserves it, and justice requires that everything, every one, should have his due, that every disobedience receives a just recompence of reward, Heb. ii. 21, Rom. i. 32, 2 Thes i. It is righteous with God to give to every one according to his work.

An earthly governor cannot without injustice decline to punish the violation of righteous laws, unless in case he can otherwise secure the end of government. The ends of the divine government are his honour, the authority of his laws, and the good of his subjects. His honour and majesty must be vindicated, the authority of his laws (wherein the interest of the world is so much concerned) must be asserted ; and sin, seeing it entrenches upon all, unless it be punished, how can they be vindicated or asserted ?

And there is more necessity that a compensation be made to the laws and honour of the supreme Governor of the world, by how much his person and majesty is higher, and the dishonour greater, his laws more advantageous to the world. Here the necessity of a vindication by punishment rises higher, and appears to be greater in all respects.

It is true a private person or a magistrate, as to his own particular concern, may in some cases remit injuries, without any prosecution, he may do it as the offended party ; but as a governor he cannot justly do it when the interest of government is concerned [in] it, and the public would suffer thereby. Now in reference to God, it is plain the universe would suffer if these rights of his sovereignty and honour were not vindicated, the assertion thereof tending so much to the good of the whole.

And the Socinians confess that it is repugnant to justice for a private person to relinquish his right in case of some injuries, and the injury they

instance in, viz., notorious defamation, is not more intolerable to man than sin is to God. And therefore to think it is not necessary for the great God to vindicate his rights by severity against sin is altogether unreasonable.

In short, the honour of the divine perfections cannot be secured or vindicated unless sin be punished; therefore it is highly necessary that sin should not escape without punishment.

(4.) Since there is such necessity that sin be punished, and the Lord so highly concerned to inflict the penalty due to sin, either the sinners themselves must bear the penalty, or some other for them; if the sinners themselves must bear the punishment, no flesh could be saved, all mankind must be eternally miserable, for it is the penalty expressed by death and curse.

If some other bear the penalty for them, it must be such a person, and in such a way, that will be as satisfactory to justice, and as full a *salvo* to the divine perfections concerned in his law and government, as if the sinners themselves suffered it.

The design of the law must be secured, and the ends of divine government attained, and the justice, holiness, truth, and wisdom of God vindicated and manifested, as much as if the penalty was inflicted upon the transgressors themselves.

(5.) It was Christ that undertook this, and the way wherein he effected it was by suffering in our stead.

This is it which we are concerned to maintain; Christ suffered in our stead; for if he did not, the punishment due to sin is not inflicted (since his bearing the punishment due to our sin, and his suffering in our stead is all one), neither we nor any for us undergo it.

Thus sin, as to all that are saved, will go unpunished every way, and so the ends of government are neglected by the infinite wise and righteous Governor of the world, and the glory of his wisdom, truth, justice, and holiness are by himself exposed and left to suffer without any *salvo*. If we be saved in a way that will not secure the honour of the divine perfections, salvation will be effected in a way not consistent with the honour of God. But no salvation can be expected on these terms, and therefore either none will be saved by Christ, or else it is upon the account of his bearing the penalty of the law in their stead.

But by Christ's suffering in our stead all is secured, justice is satisfied for them, sin hath its deserts, that which is due to it, and which justice requires should be inflicted for it; his holiness is demonstrated, for what clearer evidence, that he is of purer eyes than to behold it, that he perfectly hates it, than by punishing it in his own Son, when he appeared but in the room of sinners. His truth is manifested, when the Lord of life must die, rather than what the law denounced shall not be executed; his wisdom is no way impeached, the ends of government fully attained, the law vindicated from contempt, the authority of the great lawgiver upheld, and the children of men deterred from sin, when the Son of God must suffer for it.

I need not here give an account of that abundant evidence we have in Scripture that Christ should suffer in our stead, only this in short: the several notions whereby his death is represented to us in Scripture, make it plain that he suffered and died not only for our good, but in our stead.

His death is held forth as a *punishment*, as a *ransom*, and as a *sacrifice*.

His death was a *punishment*: 'He was wounded for our transgressions;' he died for our sins; that is, he suffered what our sins deserved, that we might not suffer; and this is the very thing that we mean by his suffering in our stead.

His death was our *ransom*, Mat. xx. 28. He paid that in our behalf which justice required of him, and this is to pay it in our stead.

His death was a *sacrifice*: he died that we might escape that death which was the penalty of the law transgressed by us. As the life of the sacrifice went for the life of the sinner for whom it was offered; this is to die in our stead, as the sacrifice died instead of the offender.

(6.) Christ's sufferings were accepted for us, and accepted as suffered in our stead. None who believe he suffered will question but his sufferings were accepted; nor will any deny that they were accepted as suffered in our stead, but those who against all evidence of Scripture deny that he suffered in our stead. (1.) The ground of his death and suffering; (2.) The end and design of them; (3.) Their full sufficiency for their end; (4.) The dignity and quality of the person suffering; everything, in a manner, which occurs therein tends to make this unquestionable among all Christians.

It was the will of the Father, expressed in the form of a covenant between Father and Son, that the Son taking our nature should thus suffer, Ps. xl. 6-8, Heb. x. 5. The Father promises that these sufferings should be accepted, Isa. liii. 10, 11. The Son, upon assurance of the Father's acceptance, submits to the sufferings.

He suffered all that in justice was required, that way might be made for our acquitment.

His sufferings were a full demonstration of his truth, wisdom, holiness, justice, yea, of his mercy too; the Lord was hereby every way transcendently glorified, and that which thus glorifies him must needs be highly acceptable.

He that suffered was not only man, but God, of the same essence, power, and will with the Father. His sufferings and blood was the sufferings and blood of him who is God, and therefore of infinite value, and so most worthy of all acceptance, such as could not in justice but be accepted. The Lord was herewith fully satisfied, and that which fully satisfied him was unquestionably accepted.

(7.) Since Christ's sufferings were accepted for us, it is undeniable that they are imputed to us (this is the conclusion which necessarily and unavoidably follows from the premises); for such acceptance of them for us, and imputation of them unto us, is the same thing. To impute Christ's sufferings to us, is nothing else but to accept them for us, as suffered in our stead. Hence, [1.] let me give some account why I express imputation by acceptance; [2.] to shew that they are the same thing, and nothing else meant by the one than by the other.

[1.] What others means here by imputation I express in these terms, accepting thereof as done in our stead, for us; but they are clear and proper (and help to state this point more advantageously), and to distinguish this from other sorts of imputation. Imputation in general is to account a thing to belong to us. This general is specified and differenced by three severals, all here comprised, viz., the state of the thing imputed, the ground of the imputation, and the quality of what is imputed.

First, As to the state of the thing imputed, they are either ours, or not ours, personally. That is denoted in the words 'for us.' He endured it

for us, not we for ourselves; and so the imputation of Christ's sufferings is accounting of that to belong to us which is not personally ours.

Hereby it is distinguished from the imputation of things which are personally ours. Phinehas's act was imputed to him for righteousness; it was his own act personally, Ps. cvi. 81; and so Rom. iv. 4.

Secondly, As to the ground of the imputation, that is here Christ's suffering in our stead; that is the ground why his sufferings are accounted to belong to us. So the imputing of his sufferings is the accounting that to belong to us which he suffered in our stead. Thereby it is distinguished from those imputations which are injurious or groundless, from such also as have other or different grounds from these.

Thirdly, As to the quality of what is imputed; it is either good for us, or evil. The sufferings of Christ are good for us; that is denoted in the word *accepted*, and serves to distinguish of* the imputation of that which is evil. The imputation of that which is good is called the accepting of it for us, as the imputation of that which is evil is called the laying it to our charge, 2 Tim. iv. 16; so that I express the imputing of Christ's sufferings to us by the accepting thereof for us, to distinguish it from the imputation of that which is evil. To impute that which is evil to us, is to charge it on us; to impute that which is good to us, is to accept it for us.

Thus, as the imputation of evil to us is distinctly expressed by laying it to our charge, so the imputation of that which is good is distinctly and properly expressed by accepting it for us. Both the charging of the evil, and the accepting of the good, is the accounting it to belong to us, which is the common notion of imputation.

[2.] Hereby the other thing propounded is manifest, viz., that to impute Christ's sufferings to us, and accept them for us, is the same thing. But let us clear it a little more. Take imputation in its full extent, and it is the accounting of a thing to belong to us, and dealing with us accordingly. These two things it includes, and it is all we mean by it. Now a thing may be accounted to belong upon several grounds; that particularly belongs to us which is done or suffered in our stead, which is the case before us. And in this case, to accept for us what is suffered in our stead, is to impute it to us; for to accept it as suffered in our stead, is to judge it to belong to us, and to deal with us answerably in respect to the advantages thereof; and this is all that imputation imports.

Thus, when a friend pays a ransom for a captive, if it be accepted for the captive, it is imputed to him; for to accept it for him, is to account it to belong to him, being paid in his stead, and to deal with him accordingly, by discharging him.

Thus, when a propitiatory sacrifice was offered for the sinner, the accepting of it for him was the imputing of it to him; for, being accepted in his stead, it was accounted to belong to him, and he had the advantage of it for atonement, Lev. i. 4. He laid his hand upon the head of it, to signify that it was to suffer in his stead, and it made atonement for him; so that, being accepted, it was accounted to belong to him, and he fared according; atonement was made by it; where it is plain in those sacrifices accepting and imputing are all one, and so they are expressed by Lev. vii. 18, where not to accept is explained by not to impute; and there is sufficient warrant by accepting to understand imputing in other places where it is applied to sacrifices, Ps. xx. 8, Isaiah lvi. 7.

* Qu. 'it from'?—Ed.

Hereby it is clear, that to accept Christ's sufferings for us, as suffered in our stead, and to impute them unto us, is the very same thing ; so that those who grant his sufferings are thus accepted for us, can in no wise deny that they are imputed to us, unless they will be so absurd as both to grant and deny one and the same thing ; so ridiculous as to grant it in one expression, and deny it in the other, which doth express the very same thing. There are no small advantages I may expect from thus stating the question.

(8.) Hereby it appears that none can deny the imputation of Christ's death and sufferings but those who deny his satisfaction (and so subvert the foundation of the gospel) ; for since the imputation of his sufferings to us, and accepting of them for us, are one and the same thing, if they be not imputed to us, they are not accepted for us, as suffered in our stead. If they be not accepted for us, as suffered in our stead, he did not suffer in our stead ; and if he did not suffer in our stead, he did not make satisfaction, for by satisfaction nothing is to be meant but the suffering the penalty of the law in our stead ; so that this draws deep, and tends directly to undermine the foundation of Christianity. I would they who make bold to deny the imputation of Christ's sufferings, would shew us, things thus stated, how it is possible to secure his satisfaction. I am confident that Socinus himself, if he had not denied the satisfaction of Christ, would never have denied the imputation of it to us, as before explained ; for even a Mahomedan hath so much respect for Christ, as not to deny but what he undertook in our stead was accepted of God as accomplished in our stead.

Let me say farther, that as the case is stated, we may force any who grant the satisfaction of Christ, to acknowledge the imputation of it, even those who oppose it so passionately, and are possessed with the greatest prejudices against it, if they can but procure leave of their prejudice and passion to use a little reason when they are masters of much ; if they do but discern the true notion of the things in question, when it is clear and obvious ; nay, if they but understand themselves and the matters they contend about, while some of them are ready to charge the clearest, the greatest lights of the protestant world with ignorance or inadvertency.

That Christ satisfied for us they grant ; no protestant, no papist, no Christian, none but Socinians question it. Well, if he satisfied for us, he suffered in our stead ; if he suffered in our stead, his sufferings were accepted as suffered in our stead ; if they were accepted for us, they are imputed to us, for we mean nothing else in the world by imputation but this acceptance.

This they grant, and cannot but grant, and must yield the very thing we contend for, while they will have the world believe that they deny it, and write bitter discourses against it, as though they were in such a transport as not to understand what they do or say.

That I do not misrepresent them will be hereby evident ; ask dissenting protestants, such who have forsaken the doctrine of the Church of England, and of all reformed churches in this point, whether the righteousness of Christ be imputed to us ? No, by no means, will they say ; and some of them have the discretion to smut it with black invectives, as a dangerous doctrine, of I know not what pernicious consequence ; well, but ask them again, Did Christ suffer in our stead ? Was what he suffered accepted as suffered in our stead ? This they will readily grant, as being maintained by the whole Christian world against the Socinians. The papists themselves will not have the face to deny it, how much, how satirically soever they

write against the imputation of Christ's righteousness; now where is the reason and ingenuity of those men, papists and others, when they presume so much upon the strength and the clearness of their reason? They grant the sufferings of Christ in our stead accepted for us, yet deny they are imputed to us, when the accepting of them for, and imputing of them to us, are the very same thing; they both grant and deny one and the same thing, only expressing it in differing terms; and these terms differing only in the sound, when in truth they are of one and the same import.

This is not to deal like men of reason; it is no more reasonable than to grant that this is a living creature, but to deny it to be an animal; or to grant they have received twenty English shillings, but to deny they have received one pound sterling. The Socinians are more impious, and bid more defiance to the gospel, in denying the imputation of Christ's satisfaction, because they deny he made any satisfaction; but those are more repugnant to reason, who grant that he made satisfaction, but deny that it is imputed.

If they will use their reason, they must either fall into the detestable error of Socinus, and deny both, or submit to the doctrine of the gospel, and acknowledge both; both must stand or fall together; and both must be denied, or both must be acknowledged.

(9.) Hereby it appears that there is abundant evidence in Scripture for the imputation of Christ's suffering for us; there is as much ground to confirm and establish us in the belief of it, as there is for the most, the greatest points of the Christian faith; for truths that depend upon mere revelation, have more ground in Scripture. Those testimonies which are usually alleged and insisted on as direct proof thereof, are but a very small part of its confirmation; they are but, as it were, some few drops, in comparison of a full stream of Scripture, wherewith it is enforced: all those multiplications of divine testimonies, which prove the satisfaction of Christ, against the Socinian, are full evidences of the imputation thereof.

For the satisfaction of Christ being proved, none can or will deny the Lord's acceptance of it; and so the imputation of it being the same thing with that acceptance, will be thereby out of question.

So that all those sorts of scripture, almost innumerable, which signified that he suffered in our stead, are just proofs that his sufferings are imputed to us; all those texts which declare, he died for us; was delivered for our offences; that the Lord laid our sins on him; that he bare our iniquities; was wounded for our transgressions; was made sin; made a curse for us; that he gave himself, his life, a ransom for us; that he redeemed; bought us with a price; obtained redemption; that he was a propitiation, made atonement or reconciliation; made his soul an offering; gave himself a sacrifice; offered himself without spot, &c. These, and all of the same import, more than can be soon or easily reckoned up, do declare that he suffered in our stead, and so are sufficient proofs that his sufferings are imputed; for it being proved that he suffered in our stead, that his sufferings are imputed, *i. e.*, accepted for us, must and will be granted without other proof.

For it cannot be denied that Christ's sufferings are imputed to us, if they be accepted for us, because they are both one. It cannot be denied that his sufferings are accepted as suffered in our stead, if they were suffered in our stead. For none will have the face to question the acceptance of Christ's sufferings as they were suffered.

Therefore it being proved that Christ suffered in our stead, all is proved

that can be denied; that which evidences Christ to have suffered in our room makes all evident which needs any proof in this question.

Now a great part of the Bible makes it evident that he suffered in our stead, and no less than all this evidence there is for the imputation of his sufferings, since it is carried by the same evidence beyond all reasonable denial, and needs no other testimonies to clear it.

(10.) Hereby the vanity of what is objected against this imputation of Christ's sufferings will be manifest; to instance in two or three which are counted considerable.

[1.] It is objected, that the Scripture doth nowhere express the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us; it is not said anywhere in Scripture, that the death or sufferings of Christ are imputed to us.

Be it so, that these very words are not found in any place in Scripture, yet the thing we mean thereby is found in hundreds of places, wherever we find that Christ died or suffered for us. Wherever we find any expressions signifying that he suffered in our stead, which any but the Socinian can see in all parts of Scripture, there the acceptance, or which is all one, the imputing of his sufferings, is held forth.

For his sufferings and the acceptance thereof do so clearly and necessarily involve one another, that one of them cannot be apprehended or believed without the other; we cannot believe that he suffered, without believing that his sufferings were accepted, and so without believing that they are imputed, since they are the same thing.

Let me only add this, it is dangerous reasoning from the want of some words to the want of the thing; such reasonings may overturn our faith, and leaves us no gospel. If we must not believe the imputation of Christ's sufferings, because those words are not in Scripture (I mean in any one place together, for that they are not in several is not pretended), we must not believe the satisfaction of Christ, nor the merits of Christ, no, nor the incarnation of Christ, because those words are not in Scripture.

[2.] It is objected, that there is no evidence of this in the Evangelists, that Christ nowhere delivered this doctrine concerning the imputation of his righteousness or satisfaction, neither in his sermons nor private discourses with his disciples; that since Christ is faithful in the discharge of his prophetic office, this point would never have been omitted, if it had been necessary to be believed.

Ans. The premises discover this to be a great mistake; for Christ so delivered this doctrine in his sermons and discourses, as to leave nothing therein questionable. There is abundant evidence in the evangelists of all that need any proof in this matter. For as it is stated, nothing can be questioned, but whether Christ suffered in our stead. If this be not denied, all that we assert is and must be granted. Now there is full evidence for this from Christ's own words, in all the evangelists; and so clear, that none can avoid it, but those who, with the Socinians, shut their eyes. Let me point at some few: Mat. xx. 28, 'Gave his life a ransom.' The same words in the evangelist, Mark x. 48. And so Mat. xxvi. 28, 'This is my blood,' &c. That also, Mark xiv. 24, and Luke xxii. 19, 'This is my body,' &c.; the 20th verse, 'blood shed for' &c. So in the other evangelists, John i. 29, 'the Lamb of God;' John xv. 13, 'laid down life for friends;' John x. 11, 'life for sheep.'

Now if we will understand these phrases, either according to the common usage of Scripture, or the common sense of mankind as to such expressions, the meaning of them must be, that Christ died and suffered in our

stead. And this being proved by Christ's own words, recorded by the evangelists, all is sufficiently thereby proved that we intend. Nothing more concerning the imputation of his sufferings need any proof, because there is nothing of it that is or can be denied.

[8.] It is objected, that if Christ's sufferings be imputed to us, then we must be reputed to have suffered what he suffered, and then we must be accounted to have satisfied justice ourselves, and consequently to be our own saviours and redeemers.

Ans. From imputation in the sense fore-explained, it cannot with any reason be inferred that we suffered personally, but only that Christ suffered in our stead. And from thence it cannot be inferred that we ourselves made satisfaction, but only that Christ in our stead satisfied divine justice. And so in short the foundation of this fallacy being removed, the rest of the consequences fall.

Thus much for the imputation of Christ's death and sufferings, commonly called his passive righteousness; the truth whereof I hope is rendered so plain and firm, that it cannot (as I said) be denied by any, but such as will deny Christ to be a Saviour and Redeemer in the style and sense of Scripture.

I proceed to the imputation of his active obedience, or, as it is called, his active righteousness. This, I confess, seems not of so great importance as the former, nor the denial of it of so dangerous consequences; for there are some who are zealous assertors of Christ's satisfaction, and walk with a right foot in other truths of the gospel, who take occasion to dissent here, and to declare it publicly; yet, because I apprehend it to be a truth of some moment to the honour of Christ and comfort of believers, and this discovered in the gospel, and in the text particularly, and asserted by the community of protestant divines, from whom I would not be tempted to straggle, and wish others would not upon slender grounds, especially in our present circumstances, wherein papists make so great an advantage of stragglers, and make it the matter of no little triumph, when they see any part of the common protestant doctrine deserted by its professors. Therefore I shall endeavour to make this also evident in the same method as I did the former, and hope to do it so as to satisfy dissenters; such, I mean, as dissent for want of evidence, or out of some sense that this truth is or may be abused; not those who oppose it out of ill design, or affectation of singularity, for in such there may be something too hard for light otherwise convincing.

First, Christ performed perfect obedience for us. He was born of a woman, and made under the law, for the same purpose, and on the same account, as the apostle signifies, Gal. iv. 4. He was born of a woman for us, and not for himself, and so he was made under the law, substituted* to it for us, and not for himself.

The Socinians will not deny, but that his obedience was for us, that is, for our good, only they will not have it meritorious for us. As they will have no satisfaction in his sufferings, so no merit in his obedience.

But herein they are opposed by all sorts of Christians, both protestants and papists. The papists, who arrogate a meritorious excellency to their own obedience, how defective soever, cannot deny it to the perfect obedience of Christ. As for protestants, to instance only in such whose concurrence may be less expected, those who will not have Christ to have performed obedience in our stead, yet maintain his obedience was meritorious for us,

* Qu. 'submitted' or 'subjected'?—Ed.

both his obedience to the moral law, and to the law of Moses, to the special law of mediation. He perfectly fulfilled all that was required of him in the covenant of redemption, and so deserved what is promised in that covenant, the sum of which we have, Isa. liii. And he perfectly fulfilled all that was required of man in the covenant of works (as to the substance thereof, and the duties common to all), and so deserved for us what was promised in that covenant, viz., to live.

Thus his obedience was meritorious, *jure pacti*, in respect of that covenant, whose conditions he exactly performed; but this is not all, it is but merit in a large sense, such as some divines will have Adam's obedience capable of, if it continued perfect.

Christ's obedience performed for us was meritorious not only thus, but also *jure operis*, in respect of the value of the performance, the divine nature deriving an infinite value upon what the human nature performed in our behalf; so that on this account it deserved, and was truly worth the life and blessedness procured by it for us; they do acknowledge that it is infinitely meritorious.

Yea, those of our divines who are most reserved in asserting what is due to the active obedience of Christ, do grant that his obedience, in respect of the condescension of it, was meritorious. Now there was active obedience in condescending; it was his Father's will that he should condescend, he complied with his will, so that there was condescending in every act, and thus there was merit in every act of his obedience.

Indeed, I should be sorry to find any protestant divines denying the merit of Christ's active obedience, for thereby his whole undertaking will be divested of its meritorious excellency. If there be no merit in his obedience, there will be none in his sufferings; for penal sufferings, as such, do not merit, as is confessed on all hands, they are not meritorious but as there is obedience in them. And therefore if his obedience be not meritorious, there will be no merit in his sufferings, and consequently none in his whole undertaking.

And his satisfaction will fall with his merit, for that only is satisfactory which is meritorious; so that, when there is no merit, there is no satisfaction.

This then we may take for granted, as being generally acknowledged, that Christ fulfilled the law, performed perfect obedience on our behalf, so that it was meritorious for us.

Secondly, Christ performed perfect obedience in our stead, not only for us, for our good, but *vice nostrum*, in our place or stead.

This, as to what I intend, is of more consequence than the former, and will clear the whole business before us, if we can but clear it. If we can gain this one point, we shall go near to carry all that we desire; and, if I mistake not, it may be easily done. Indeed, there are divers who stick at this, those who acknowledge that Christ's obedience was for us, and that it was meritorious for us, will scarce grant that it was performed in our stead; but if they take notice what we mean thereby, they will not, they cannot stick at it.

A duty is said to be done in another's stead, when that is performed for for him which he was obliged to do himself.

As when one pays a debt for another which he himself was bound to pay, it is truly said to be paid in his stead.

Or when one is obliged to do some work, but is some way or other disabled for it, another undertaking to do it for him, doth it in his stead. So

Christ fulfilling the law for us, which we were obliged to have done ourselves, he truly and properly did it in our stead.

This seems clear, past all denial; no more is required that it be done in our stead, but that what we were bound to do ourselves be done for us. That it was done for us, all grant; and that we ourselves were obliged to do it, none can deny.

Nor can it be denied that he performed it for us but for that end for which we should have performed it, that is, that we might have life; so that he did for us what we should have done, not accidentally, but out of design; for it is acknowledged that his end and design in performing perfect obedience was to merit life for us, that is, purchase for us a title to heaven.

All that I find objected against Christ's obeying in our stead is only this: if he performed obedience in our stead, we shall be thereby exempted from obedience ourselves, as his sufferings in our stead did free us from sufferings.

But this which is alleged to enforce the objection serves to dissolve it. By Christ's suffering in our stead we are freed from suffering anything for that end for which he suffered, that is, for satisfying of divine justice; so by Christ's obeying in our stead we are freed from obedience, for that end for which he performed obedience in our place, that is, that we might have title to life. For these ends for which he suffered and obeyed, it is not required of us either to obey or to suffer, for he alone satisfied justice by the one, and he alone purchased title to life by the other.

For other ends we suffer afflictions and death, not to satisfy divine justice; and so for other ends we are as much obliged to obedience as if he had not obeyed for us, but not to purchase a title to life, not for that end.

In short, I cannot see how those who will have Christ's active obedience to be satisfactory or meritorious for us, can reasonably deny that it was performed in our stead, since they must grant all that is requisite thereto; for no more is necessary that it be done in our stead, but that what we are obliged to do be done for us. That it was done for us they assert; that we ourselves were obliged to do it, they cannot deny.

Thirdly, What Christ performed in observance of the law, is accepted in all points as he did it. What he performed was accepted; what he performed on our behalf is accepted in our behalf; what he performed in our stead is accepted as done in our stead.

This is clear and unquestionable, no Christian will deny anything of it. Those that make Christ to be what he is, that believe he is the beloved Son of God, in whom he is well pleased, which was declared by a voice from heaven, Mat. iii. 7, that the Father is transcendently pleased, fully satisfied both with Christ's undertaking and the accomplishment of it; that believe the divine dignity and excellency of his person, and the infinite virtue of his performance; that it was the Father's will and pleasure that Christ should do this, and do it exactly in all points as he did, Heb. x. 7; that the will and design of Christ in this was one and the very same with the will and design of the Father, John v. 80 and iv. 84; that it was a covenant and agreement between them that this should be thus done, and thus done should be accepted; that it was the pleasure of the Lord which was in Christ's hands, and that he had promised it should prosper and succeed, and be effectually accepted, Isa. liii. 10, 11;—those that believe these severals, or any of them, cannot in the least doubt but his obedience was accepted for those persons, and in that capacity in which it was performed; will not question but if it was performed on our behalf, and in our

stead, it is so accepted. A Socinian, I had almost said a Mahomedan, will not deny the acceptance of what Christ performed, so far as they admit his performance. There needs no more proof in the case, if so much as is premised be needful of a thing past denial.

Thus far we have gone upon clear and undeniable grounds; there remains but one thing more, and that must pass as clear as the rest with all men of reason, and be as far from being denied, and that is the conclusion.

Fourthly, Hence it follows, that the active obedience of Christ is imputed to us. This cannot be gainsaid, the former being granted. If Christ performed such obedience on our behalf, and that be accepted for us, then it must be imputed to us; for to be imputed to us is nothing else but to be accepted for us, as performed on our behalf and in our stead. Those who cannot deny that he performed this obedience in our stead, and that it was accepted for us, must grant that it was imputed to us, unless they will be so unreasonable as when they admit the premises to deny the conclusion.

I mean nothing by imputation but what is included in that acceptance which themselves grant. When a surety's payment is accepted on behalf of the debtor, it is imputed to him. If Paul had paid what was owing to Philemon, or satisfied for the injuries done him by his servant Onesimus, Philemon's acceptance of that payment or satisfaction on behalf of Onesimus would have been the imputation of it to him; for imputation here is nothing else but the accepting of what another doth for us, instead of that we should have done ourselves. I shewed this before by instances in such things whereby the satisfaction of Christ is held forth in Scripture, and gave you a plain text, where imputing and accepting are terms of the same import.

Nor need I give any further account than I have done why I express imputation by acceptance, a term not so usual on this subject, only this,

Imputation in general is an accounting of that which is not personally ours to belong to us as if it were ours, or the setting it on our account; and thus either that which is evil, or that which is good, may be accounted to belong to us. When that which is evil, and * done by us, is set on our account, the imputing of it is expressed by charging it on us; so our sins are said to be charged on Christ, imputed to him: Isa. liii., 'The Lord laid on him,' &c; laid them to his charge, imputed them to him. And this was the ground why our sins were set on his account, laid to his charge; it was because he became our surety, and undertook to suffer in our stead the punishment due to sinners; the Lord accepting of this substitution, is said to be made sin for us, 2 Cor. v. 21, to impute our sins to him. He accounted our sin to belong to him, though he was not guilty of any sin personally.

As in the other case, when that which is good, and performed by another, is accounted to belong to us, the imputing of it is expressed by accepting of it for us; and so his obedience is accepted for us, that is, imputed to us. And the ground why it is set on our account is, because he performed it in our stead and on our behalf.

Now, they who cannot deny but Christ's obedience was accepted for us, must grant the thing we mean by imputation; and who can give any rational account why they should decline the word? Those who see the definition belongs to it, why should they deny it the name? Why should

* Qu. 'not'?—Ed.

not he who is a rational creature be called and pass in their account for a man? And further, those who cannot but allow the grounds of this imputation, viz., Christ's performing in our stead, I cannot see how they can reject that which clearly and necessarily results from it. For anything I can perceive, this doctrine, as stated here, cannot be opposed without offering some violence to one's reason. If I much mistake not, neither protestants nor papists can deny the principle upon which I proceed; and so there is hopes, that if the principles were sedately and impartially considered, there might be no longer a controversy among Christians.

Fifthly, Let me clear what I have insisted on from an exception which it seems liable to; and there is but one that I can discern, after I have looked carefully every way to discover what weakness there may be in it, or what inconvenience may follow from it; and it is this, If imputing of Christ's righteousness to us be the same thing with accepting it for us, then it must be imputed as soon as it is accepted, and it was accepted as soon as it was performed. It will hence follow, that we are justified at the death of Christ, and so we shall be justified before we believe, yea, before we have a being; whereas the Scripture speaks of no justification but only of believers, and will have none to be justified but by faith, in no wise without or before faith.

This is the charge which the principle I insist on is subject to in appearance; but it is only in appearance, and may soon and easily be discharged.

It is true and evident in Scripture, that none are actually justified before or without faith; and whatsoever is inconsistent with this doctrine of the gospel cannot be maintained. But that principle which I insist on doth not at all clash with this evident truth; and this will be apparent, if you take notice, that the acceptance of Christ's obedience, active or passive, may be considered in two different notions. It is accepted as from him, and it is accepted as for us; it was accepted as from Christ, as soon as it was performed, but it was not accepted for us till we believe.

It was accepted absolutely as performed by Christ as soon as it was finished, as being the full performance of all that any law, or covenant, or justice did require of him, and being fully worth all that he designed to obtain hereby; but it is not accepted with relation to particular persons, for application to them, and to instate them actually in the privileges and advantages of it, till the terms agreed on in the covenant of redemption be fulfilled; that is, till they believe. I will endeavour to make it clear by this comparison: as if one undertakes to pay the debt of another, upon terms required of him who contracted the debt, when the surety pays the full sum that is owing, it is accepted as to him, but it is not accepted as to the debtor; he hath not an acquittance, a discharge, till he performs the terms agreed on; so here Christ undertakes to pay what we owe to the law, but it is required that we believe on him; that is the terms agreed on.

As soon as Christ had performed all that was due, it was accepted as to him, no more was required on his part; but it is not accepted as to us, so as we should be actually acquitted, and receive the benefit of it, till we believe, and so comply with the terms agreed on.

Now it is acceptance as to us that I call imputation, and then Christ's righteousness is not imputed but to those that believe; and so there can be no occasion to infer from hence, that any are or can be justified before or without faith.

Sixthly, Hereby it appears evidently that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, and not only the effects of it. There are many that say,

the righteousness of Christ itself is not imputed to us, but only as to the effects of it.

The Arminians acknowledge that the righteousness of Christ may be said to be imputed to us, because he thereby merited that our faith or obedience should be accepted for our justification, as if it were, though it be not, a perfect righteousness.

The papists grant that Christ's righteousness may be said to be imputed to us, because thereby he purchased, as other benefits, so inherent holiness, which with them is our justifying righteousness.

The Jesuits, Vasquez, Bellarmine, and others, expressly own the imputation of Christ's merits or righteousness in this sense.

So others among us grant that Christ's righteousness may be said to be imputed to us in this sense, and no other; but because he thereby purchased pardon of sin, and title to life, in which, they say, consists that righteousness which justifies us, they will have us justified not by a righteousness which Christ performed for us, but by a righteousness which by his performance he purchased for us.

Not by his own righteousness, but by that which is the effect of his own.

All these admit not of any imputation of Christ's righteousness in itself, but only in its effects and benefits.

But it is plain, by what is premised, that the obedience of Christ itself is imputed; for to be imputed to us is nothing else but to be accepted for us, as performed in our stead. But the obedience of Christ was performed in our stead, and is accepted for us, therefore his obedience itself is imputed to us.

Indeed, either the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us or nothing; for the effects of it, viz., pardon of sin, and title to life, &c., are not imputed to us, because it cannot be said with any tolerable sense, that right to life, or pardon of sin, were performed in our stead, or accepted for us as so performed.

Besides, that which is imputed to us is not personally or subjectively ours; but the effects of Christ's righteousness, our faith, our inherent holiness, pardon of sin, title to life, are ours subjectively and personally; we are the subjects of them, as we are not of that which is only imputed to us; and to say these effects of it are only imputed to us, is to deny all imputation of it.

But I have hopes that the premises being impartially and duly considered, as they should be by the lovers of truth, none that are unquestionably Christians (for whether the Socinians be so is a question), will scruple to grant that Christ's obedience is itself imputed, since it cannot be denied but that it was performed in our stead, and accepted for us, as it was performed in the sense explained; and no more but this is intended when we say Christ's righteousness is itself imputed to us.

Seventhly, It remains that I should answer some objections that are made against the imputation of Christ's obedience. I shall take notice of two or three that are counted most considerable.

Obj. 1. If Christ fulfilled the law for us as our surety, and so we be judged to have kept the law perfectly by him, then we must be accounted never to have sinned, and so Christ's death will be needless, and many other consequences must follow.

Ans. The main consequent here, upon which all the rest are founded, is the same. If we be judged to have perfectly kept the law by Christ as our surety, then we must be reputed not to have sinned. The inference

is to be denied, because plainly the Lord may account us to have kept the law by our surety, he fulfilling it in our stead, and yet judge that we have transgressed it as to ourselves. He may judge that we are righteous on Christ's account, and yet that we are transgressors on our own accounts.

As on the contrary, he made him sin for us, that is, imputed our sin to Christ, when he himself never transgressed the law.

Their inference would hold, viz., that we had never sinned if the law had been fulfilled by us personally; but it holds not at all, since it is only fulfilled for us by another. All that can be inferred is only this, not that we have not sinned as to ourselves, but that we sinned not in our surety.

They may as reasonably conclude, that because the bankrupt hath discharged the bonds, and paid all by his surety, therefore he must be reputed not to have been in debt, as that we must be esteemed never to have broke the law ourselves, because Christ discharged what the law required of us in our stead.

Obj. 2. Christ's death and suffering freed us from all punishment, both pain and loss, and so from the loss of heaven, and consequently procured for us a title to heaven; and therefore there is no need of his active obedience, that we may have a title, and so no need of the performance or imputation of it for this end.

Ans. Those who argue thus, do hold that his active obedience was meritorious, did deserve heaven for us, and so procured a title to it, will not have any to conclude from hence, that his death and sufferings were needless for that purpose; what they will answer to it, will answer your own argument. If they say that both his obedience and sufferings procured our title to heaven, we may say so too, both are needful; and so the objection falls, and whatever account be made of it appears to be frivolous.

Indeed, we should not separate what the Lord hath not disjoined; the obedience and sufferings of Christ are not disjoined in themselves, in their virtue, or in their effects.

Not in *themselves*: he suffered in all his obedience, and obeyed in all his sufferings, Phil. ii. 8. There was obedience in all his sufferings, because he suffered in compliance with his Father's will, and there were sufferings in all his obedience, because his acts of obedience were acts of humiliation and abasement, all performed by the Son of God in the form of a servant.

Nor in their *virtue*: his obedience was both meritorious and satisfactory, and his sufferings were both satisfactory and meritorious. His obedience was not only meritorious, but also satisfactory; if not as obedience, yet as it was penal.

And his sufferings were not only satisfactory, but also meritorious; if not as they were great, yet as they were obediential.

Nor in their *effects*: his sufferings could not have satisfied justice without his perfect obedience.

Because sufferings simply considered without obedience find no acceptance with God, his perfect obedience could not have procured for us a title to life; for we have no title to life by obedience, unless freed from condemnation by his sufferings.

Obj. 8. If Christ fulfilled and obeyed the law in our stead, so that his obedience be imputed to us, then we are not ourselves to obey or keep the law; the necessity of personal holiness is hereby taken away; it will be no

more needful for us than it is to suffer personally what Christ suffered in our stead.

Ans. I said enough before to satisfy this ; we are neither bound to obey and fulfil the law on that account for which Christ fulfilled it in our stead, as we are not liable to suffer on that account for which Christ suffered in our stead, &c.

But because this consequence is importunately forced on us, however we disclaim it, I know not why, unless some be resolved to render this truth odious, right or wrong, let me add,

That we are for a necessity of obedience and personal holiness indispensably in the highest degree, and for all its acts of necessity which they pretend to, who charge us with making it unnecessary ; nor is there anything in this doctrine to hinder us from holding it to be so necessary as to our judgment, or from shewing it in our daily practice.

There are but two sorts of necessity which can be ascribed to things of this nature ; and we maintain both, and that in a full and fair consistence with this truth. There is a *necessitas precepti*, the necessity of it as a duty indispensably required ; and *necessitas medii*, the necessity of it as the means or way to salvation, without which it cannot be attained.

1. It is necessary as a duty ; obedience, holiness of heart and life, is required by the law of God ; the law of nature requires it of all, no less of those for whom Christ's obedience was performed, and is actually accepted, than of others.

It is enjoined by a law, whose obligation arises from our very nature and being, and is founded in the relation between God and man, as he is governor of intelligent creatures, and they subject to him, so long as they are such creatures, and he their ruler and superior ; that is, so long as they are men, and he is God, they cannot but owe him absolute obedience in all things. Nothing can free us from this obligation, unless God and man cease to be what they are in themselves, and what they are as thus related to one another. To deny perfect obedience to be due from man is to deny him to be man, and to deny it to be due to God is to deny him to be God.

As it is impossible that we should be freed from this obligation, so it cannot be imagined that Christ should either dissolve or weaken it.

He came not to dissolve the law, but to fulfil it ; his undertaking and performance was so far from taking off the obligation to obedience, that it strengthens, and adds more powerful enforcements to it, even all the constraints of his great love, that wonderful love which he expressed in dying and suffering so much for us. They are more justly charged with this who would charge it upon others ; those of them I mean who will have the law requiring perfect obedience to be abrogated, and the obligation of it dissolved.

2. It is necessary as a means : holiness of heart and life is necessary as the way that leads to life, as the way wherein we must walk if we would arrive at it, Eph. ii. 10. Acts of holiness are the end why we receive new life, and are made new creatures ; and this is the way wherein all must walk that will be saved by grace. There is no attaining of happiness, or arriving at the enjoyment or sight of God without holiness, Heb. xii. 14 ; no happiness without seeing the Lord ; no seeing the Lord without holiness, without following it. We make holiness with the Scripture necessary as the way to life ; ay, but you make it, they say, not necessary to procure a title to life ; that is true ; the Scripture doth it not, and we dare not do it. To

make it not needful for that end is only to make it not necessary to supplant Christ and invade his prerogative. It is he, and he alone, that procures for us a title to life; this is all the necessity we deny, viz., the necessity of it to dethrone Christ and pluck the crown from his head, to usurp his purchase, honour, and office.

We leave them to do this who will shew themselves traitors to Christ, pretending a necessity of obedience and subjection to him.

Eighthly, Others rely upon an actual righteousness, some acts of righteousness, some good works, some deeds of charity. This is the foundation upon which many build their hopes of pardon and salvation in the dark darkness of popery; and notwithstanding the light of the gospel, many yet discover not the sandiness of it; though the Lord in the gospel doth confound this Babel and the builders of it, yet how many think to secure themselves thereby in opposition to what the apostle professes, Titus iii. 4-6.

Ninthly, Others rely upon an internal righteousness, such as they fancy in their good meanings, intention, inclination; though their conscience tells them they do little or nothing for God, yet since they have the confidence to think they mean well, have a good mind to do something, are of a willing mind, though they want the deed, and when they sin, find some kind of remorse and inward sorrow for it, for this they conclude God will pardon and save them.

All these several rooms, and many more, hath Satan contrived in men's own righteousness, and persuades sinners that they may be secure therein, and rely safely thereon.

Whereas, indeed, whatever refuge men fancy in their own righteousness, it will prove a refuge of lies, it will deceive and betray those that fly thereto.

1. They are but imaginary sanctuaries, they are none of God's appointing; there is nothing in them to hinder revenging justice from proceeding against the sinner in a way of wrath and vengeance.

These are altars of your own erecting, though you fly to the horns thereof; nothing hinders, but the wrath of God may seize you there and proceed to execution, these can afford you no more security than the horns of that altar did to Joab, 1 Kings ii. 28. If you stay here, the Lord will say to justice, as Solomon did to Benaiah, 'Fall upon him, and slay him there.'

The apostle, though he had more reason to think himself safe in his own righteousness than others can have, yet he durst not be found there; the 'not having,' &c. He flies to another refuge, runs to Christ, desires to be found in him; ay, there is none but Christ, none but Christ, no other refuge, no other sanctuary, no other altar that can secure a sinner from the wrath and justice of God, but Christ and his righteousness; though the hills and mountains should fall upon you and cover you, yet could they not hide you from the wrath of him.

How high soever your righteousness be in your own opinion, the flood of God's indignation will overwhelm it, and your souls with it, if you get not into this ark.

To neglect Christ and his righteousness, and to rely upon your own, is to forsake the fountain of living waters, that fountain which is open for sin and uncleanness, that which can only cleanse you from the guilt and pollution of sin, and to dig broken cisterns, such is your own righteousness; take it in what notion you will, it will hold no water, there is no virtue

in it to cleanse you from the least evil ; your souls will perish if you stay here, rely on it.

If you will not trust in the righteousness of Christ only, and stay yourselves upon him, but rely on your own righteousness, as the prophet saith : Isa. l. 11, ' You kindle a fire, and compass yourselves about with sparks : you walk in the light of your own fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled.' But what will be the issue ? ' This shall,' &c. To lie down in darkness, for all your own sparks, in that darkness where there is eternal sorrow, where there is weeping, and, &c.

2. This is to oppose the glorious design of God in the gospel. His design there is to advance the riches of his grace and mercy ; and how doth he advance it, but by pardoning and saving those who find nothing in themselves why they should be pardoned and saved. If I should write all those places which declares this to be the Lord's intention, I should quote a great part of the New Testament ; let two places suffice, Titus iii. 5, Eph. ii. 8, 9.

Now this being God's design, and he thus promoting it, those that rely upon their own righteousness, upon anything in themselves, for pardon and salvation, they cross the design of God, the most glorious design that ever he promoted in the world, they are herein found fighters against God, and fighters against their own souls too ; for hereby you put yourselves out of that way wherein the Lord will only save and justify sinners.

3. This frustrates the death of Christ, it speaks the sufferings and bloodshed of Christ to be in vain. So the apostle, Gal. ii. 21. If a man by a personal observance of the law may have a righteousness, by which or for which he may be justified and saved, then Christ's death was to no purpose, he might have saved his pains and labour, the expense of his blood was needless. For why ? Christ lived and died, obeyed even unto the death, that guilty sinners might have a righteousness for which the Lord might pardon and save them.

But if sinners could attain such a righteousness by their personal obedience, as would entitle them to pardon and life, then Christ's undertaking is to no purpose. He obeyed and suffered to effect that which might as well have been effected without him. And therefore, in vain did he assume our nature, in vain took on him the form of a servant, in vain was he made under the law, in vain did he suffer the wrath of God, in vain did he shed his blood ; it was to as little purpose as water spilt upon the ground.

Why, man might by his personal obedience obtain that righteousness which was the end or issue of Christ's undertaking, and wherefore then was all this waste ?

This is the language of your self-confidence. Dependence on your own righteousness, it makes Christ's undertaking to be in vain, and to no purpose.

Thus you see how trusting to your own, &c., is highly dishonourable to God, exceeding injurious to Christ, and evidently destructive to your souls. And what more powerful motive to dissuade you from it ?

But because this is a secret evil, is not easily discerned, hath such sly streams, such retired conveyances, as those that are guilty of it do many times think themselves innocent, let us in some few particulars shew wherein by an observing eye it may be discovered ; and shew such streams of it as those may in part be guilty of, who for the main make Christ their chief confidence.

They bewray some confidence in their own righteousness.

(1.) Who look not up to Christ for strength to do the work of righteousness; who go about the duties they are called to, as though they were sufficient of themselves to do them, and think they can pray, hear, meditate, restrain sin, do acts of justice and charity, in a spiritual manner, without a special assistance from Christ to perform them, without hearty actual application of themselves to Christ for that assistance; whose hearts mutter some such things as those proud confidants speak out, of whom the Lord complains, Jer. ii. 81; who depend not on Christ as him who only works all their works, who only can enable them to work them; as on him without whom they can do nothing; who in the sense of their own weakness to that which is spiritual, cannot speak from their hearts what the apostle professes, 2 Cor. iii. 5. Where there is not this continual dependence on Christ, there is some self-dependence, some relying on righteousness, a sufficiency in yourselves.

(2.) Who are not sensible of the worthlessness of their own righteousness; who look not upon their best acts, inward or outward, as a menstruous cloth.

Who are apt to think there is something in their services, especially if plausibly and affectionately done, that may commend them to God, without any other mediator. If they pray with enlargement, or relieve those that are in need cheerfully, hear the word so as to be affected with it, &c., and think they shall be accepted for the work so done, which makes the work done, or the manner of doing it, the ground why they hope for acceptance, the heart least minds Christ in duties (as they think) well performed. Here is a visible appearance of confidence in your own righteousness.

When apt to think the spiritualness or affectionateness of any performance could make amends for the other defects of it, as though upon this account the Lord would not take notice of other sinful infirmities in them. Those that observe their hearts, &c.

The church was of another mind, Isa. lxiv. 6. And the apostle, 1 Cor. iv. 4, Ps. cxliii. 2.

(3.) Those that think they oblige God by an act or work of righteousness; imagine anything they do can make anything due to them from the hand of God; *ex. gr.*, think because they have prayed so fervently, so affectionately, therefore God is bound to hear them; because they have acted in this or that business so sincerely, so conscientiously, therefore God is bound to reward them. This argues too much presumption upon, too much confidence in, their own righteousness.

It is true, the Lord rewards the sincere obedience of his people, but his rewards are of grace, not of debt, freely bestowed, not due to them upon the account of what they do, Rom. iv. 4.

It is true also, he hath promised, but this makes him not a debtor to us, but to his own faithfulness. (Of this more in the next.) *Gratis promissit, gratis reddit.* Promissio divina in sacris Scripturis non sonat in aliquem obligationem, sed insinuat meram dispositionem liberalitatis divinæ.†* Luke xvii. 10, we have done no more than we owe, and what can be due to us for paying our debts? *Deus sine dubio præstabit quod promissit propter veritatem, non propter obligationem; quod si non præstet, mendax est, non injurius.*

(4.) Those that pacify their consciences with what they do in a way of righteousness, without looking for further ground of peace and pardon. To clear it by an instance, the man is afflicted in conscience for sin, he goes

* Ferus.

† Durand.

and mourns for it, and prays for pardon ; if he hereupon speaks peace to himself, as though for thus doing he shall be pardoned, he relies on his own righteousness. It is not for anything we can do, but for what Christ hath done and suffered, that sin is forgiven.

It is true, the sincere acts of faith and repentance, they are signs of pardon, but they are not the ground or causes for which the Lord grants pardon ; even faith and repentance itself, in respect of their sinful imperfections, stand in need of pardoning mercy.

Thus you see the several appearances of self-confidence. Take notice of them, bewail them, get further out of yourselves, and your own righteousness, with the apostle, that you may be found in Christ, 'not having, &c.'

'But that which is through the faith,' &c. The way how the apostle desired to be found in Christ is expressed :

First, Negatively : 'Not having,' &c., of which formerly.

Secondly, Positively : 'That which is through the faith,' &c. Explained in the following words : 'The righteousness which is of God by faith ;' and this is it we shall now speak of. But before we proceed to fix upon the observation which these words afford, it will be necessary to inquire, what righteousness this is which the apostle desired to have ? Why it is set forth in such terms in this verse ?

For the first, Whose righteousness is it ?

He knew he must have some righteousness, else the Lord would never justify or save him, Exod. xxxiv. 7, Prov. xvii. 15.

¶ He had renounced his own righteousness as insufficient for this end ; he terms it 'flesh,' ver. 8, a word that ordinarily sounds ill in Scripture language ; at the best he could with no more security rely upon it for pardon and life, than the 'arm of flesh,' which the Scripture terms 'a broken reed,' rather pierces than supports, rather hurts than helps a guilty soul, if relied on for this end. He counts it 'loss,' ver. 7. He made account that confidence in this would be the loss of his soul, of his salvation ; he should come short of pardon and life if he trusted on his own righteousness ; for he counts it 'dung,' ver. 8, of no more value for procuring of pardon, acceptance, salvation, than dung is for procuring, purchasing of what we count most valuable. Thus, and in such significant, such vilifying expressions doth he renounce his own righteousness.

What righteousness then would the apostle have ?

Why, the righteousness of Christ ; there is no other imaginable ; so the words, 'That righteousness which is through the faith of Christ,' bear the same sense as if they ran thus : 'That righteousness of Christ which is through faith.' Many other scriptures confirm this : Jer. xxiii. 6, 'The Lord, whose righteousness is ours ;' 1 Cor. i. 30, how is he made unto us righteousness, but because his righteousness is made over to us, is made ours ? Rom. v. 18, 'the free gift of righteousness,' &c., ver. 19.

Now the righteousness of Christ is sometimes by the apostle called 'the righteousness of faith,' Rom. ix. 30, chap. x. 6, chap. iv. 18 ; and sometimes 'the righteousness of God,' Rom. x. 8, chap. i. 17, chap. iii. 21, 22. And because both these expressions are used in this verse, we must give some account of them, that they may be rightly understood before we go further.

The righteousness of Christ is called the righteousness of faith,

First, Not because faith is this righteousness, but because it is made ours by faith. The reason is not because faith is this righteousness, as some novelists fancy ; we need go no further than the words to prove this. It was

the righteousness of another, not his own, that the apostle desired to have, but his faith was his own, inherent in him, acted by him, Hab. ii.; *fide sua*.

Again, That righteousness which is through faith is not faith itself, but this righteousness is through faith.

Secondly, But because through faith applying, apprehending, receiving it, it is accepted for, imputed to believers, and so becomes theirs.

It is called the righteousness of God, not because it is that righteousness which is *in* God, but because it is the righteousness which is *from* God. When it is said God's righteousness, you must not understand by it that righteousness which is essentially in God, for that is not communicable, we cannot have it, it can no way be made ours: neither by inherence, for this being God's essence, hereby the creature would become God; nor by imputation, for this cannot be performed for us; and what is imputed must be performed.

But it is called the righteousness of God, because it is of his appointing and bestowing. It is his appointment, it is his gift, he appointed Christ to perform it for us, he accepts of his performance in our stead, and so imputes it to those that believe. Thus it is his gift of righteousness.

Luther, the great vindicator of Christ's righteousness, and free justification by it, from Romish corruptions, before his conversion did very much stumble at this expression, 'the righteousness of God.' The phrase which is the spring-head of all gospel comforts, when rightly understood, did terrify and affright the soul, while the scales of popish blindness were upon his eyes. Such mistakes may befall others, and that may be a sufficient apology for a larger exposition, but let this suffice.

This righteousness was appointed, is imputed, bestowed by God, and therefore called 'the righteousness of God.'

It is received, applied, made ours by faith, and therefore called 'the righteousness of faith.'

It is inherent in Christ, and was performed by him, and therefore called 'the righteousness of Christ.'

And now a clear way is made to the observation which I intend to insist on, which I shall deliver, and in it the mind of the apostle, and the sweetest mystery of the gospel, in these words:

Obs. Those that know Christ will desire above all things to have the righteousness of Christ; they will count all things loss that they may gain Christ's righteousness; those that will be found in Christ must have his righteousness.

Hence three points must be opened:

1. What is this righteousness of Christ?

2. How we may have it, how it becomes ours?

3. What is the use, what are the advantages of it, what makes it so desirable? and then come to the application.

This doctrine of Christ's righteousness made ours being the principal doctrine of the gospel, and that which Luther called *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiæ*, the article which being maintained, the church of Christ stands; being overthrown, the church falls, Satan, the great enemy of the church and gospel, hath set himself by all means to oppose it; he hath raised assaults against it on all sides, some denying it, some obscuring it, some perverting it, some through woeful ignorance and carelessness neglecting it. It is assaulted both on the right hand and on the left, both by seeming friends and open enemies of the gospel.

Therefore it highly concerns all that profess the gospel, all that will walk with a right foot in this principal and most comfortable part thereof, to be fully established in this present truth. And to this end I shall be longer in opening the particulars premised than usual, and yet shall endeavour to make the doctrinal part as practical and useful as may be.

1. First question, What is the righteousness of Christ which we must have?

Ans. 1. It is not his righteousness as God, not his essential righteousness; for that cannot be made man's, but man thereby will be made God.

Ans. 2. It is not his habitual righteousness; that is, those habits of holiness and righteousness wherewith the soul, the human nature of Christ, was endued by the Holy Ghost, by whose secret operation he was conceived.

The reason which sways me (though some be otherwise minded) is this, that righteousness of Christ which is made ours must be performed by Christ for us. But the habitual righteousness of Christ was not his performance for us, but the Holy Ghost's performance in him.

Ans. 3. But it is Christ's actual righteousness; that is, his actual fulfilling the law of God, his perfect obedience thereby.

For righteousness is a conformity to the rule prescribed; this rule is the law of God. This law hath two parts, the precept prescribing duty, the penalty or threatening in case of disobedience.

Now Christ was conformable to the law in both respects, both in doing what was commanded, which is called active righteousness, and his suffering what was threatened for our disobedience, which is called passive righteousness, though less properly.

Hence the effects of a perfect righteousness are sometimes ascribed to his active obedience, Rom. v. 19.

Sometimes to his blood and sufferings; 'By whom redemption,' &c., and Rom. iii. 25. Hence he is said to be 'the end of the law,' Rom. x. 8.

So, then, the righteousness of Christ is his fulfilling the law, by doing and suffering what it required for us. Thus the righteousness which we should have, &c.

2. Second question, How come we to have this righteousness? How can that which is Christ's become ours? In what respects may it be so said, &c.? It concerns believers to be inquisitive about this, because herein depends their title to the richest treasure that ever the Lord vouchsafed to the sons of men.

Ans. 1. In respect of substitution, Christ performed this righteousness in their stead; he performed for believers what they should have performed themselves, and this is properly to do a thing as a substitute, in the stead of another. Christ hath done and suffered for them what they themselves should have done and suffered. He did *succedere in eorum locum*,—he did it in their place.

When Christ is said to die for, to give himself for, &c., his people, the words *pro* and *propter* rendered *for them*, the other doth always denote such a substitution, or a doing in their place; *qui utriusque partis vicem apud alterum agit*. Hence those titles given to Christ in Scripture, which speak him a common person, a mediator, one who supplies the place of either part to other. Christ supplies the place of man to God, and the place of God to man, that he might reconcile one to the other.

Now what he doth in the place of sustaining the persons of believers,

that passes as though they had done it, as though it was their own performance.

Now when the surety pays a debt instead of the debtor, it stands in law as though it was the debtor's payment. So here, Christ fulfilling the law instead of believers, stands as though they had fulfilled, as though the performance was theirs. Hence that expression Rom. viii. 4 : that fulfilling it in our stead, the righteousness of the law is hereby fulfilled in them.

Ans. 2. In respect of acceptance, when what Christ performed for believers is accepted of God as performed for them. If it were not accepted for them, the performance of it in their stead would not be sufficient to make it effectually theirs, but God's acceptance concurring, the righteousness of Christ becomes as much a believer's as that which is done by another can be. Acceptation is that which the Scripture, and our divines, according to Scripture phrase, calls imputation.

There is indeed, through the heat of contention, a great dust raised about this word, so as an ordinary Christian can scarce clearly see what it is, though it be of great consequence to apprehend it clearly.

I shall give you an account of it in these few and plain words, obvious to the meanest capacity.

Then doth God impute the righteousness of Christ to a believer, when he accepts of what Christ performed for him, as though he had performed it (not as having performed, but as though he had), as we say ; then the creditor imputes the payment of a debt to the debtor, when he accepts of what the surety paid for him, as though the debtor himself paid it.

Answerably Christ is called the Surety, Heb. vii. 22. Our sins are called debts, sinners are the debtors, the law is the creditor : then doth the Lord impute the righteousness or satisfaction of Christ to a sinner, when he accepts of what Christ performed for the sinner in a way of satisfaction, as though the sinner himself had performed it.

And by the light of this familiar simile a mean capacity may see a clear answer to the greatest objections brought against Christ's righteousness imputed. To instance,

(1.) If Christ's righteousness be ours, imputed to us, then we are saviours, we are mediators, as having a Saviour's, a Mediator's righteousness ; and so Bellarmine.

But hence it appears he may as well argue the debtor is the surety, because his surety's payment is accepted for him.

(2.) If Christ's righteousness be ours, then we are as righteous as Christ ; so Bellarmine.

Ans. He might as well argue, the bankrupt is as rich as his surety, because his surety pays his debts.

(8.) If Christ's fulfilling of the law be ours, then we need not fulfil it ; no need of our repentance or obedience ; so some among us.

Ans. It is true, we need not fulfil it for those ends for which Christ fulfilled it, viz., to satisfy justice, to purchase heaven, &c.

But in other respects it doth no more follow that we should not endeavour after repentance and obedience, because of Christ's fulfilling the law for us, than it follows from the surety's paying, the debtor needs express no thankfulness to the surety, nor sorrow for unnecessary contracting that debt, or diligence in his calling for the future. You see here the unreasonableness of what can be objected against this doctrine. Indeed, taking imputation in the sense fore-expressed, and none that acknowledge Christ's

satisfaction, can with any colour of reason deny the imputation of his righteousness. * However, the Scripture is clear. Rom. iv. 6, This righteousness can be no other than the righteousness of Christ, as aforesaid. As Adam's first disobedience is ours, to make us sinners, so is Christ's obedience ours (if believers) to make us righteous; but his first disobedience was ours only by imputation, and no otherwise doth it make us sinners; so Christ's obedience is ours by imputation, 2 Cor. v. 21. Christ's righteousness is ours, as our sin was his; but our sin was his only by imputation, *ergo* his righteousness is ours by imputation, or that which is all one, by acceptance. That is the second way.

Ans. 3. In respect of participation. The benefits and blessed advantages of it, as if it were ours; so we have it equivalent, as much benefit by it as though it were ours never so much: That leads me to the

3. Third query, Of what use is the righteousness of Christ? What are the advantages of it, that it should be so desirable? What gain we by it, that we should lose all for it? Why come out of all, to be found in it?

Ans. I shall be the larger in shewing the usefulness, the blessed advantages of this righteousness, that Christ and his righteousness may not be so much neglected, as he is too much, not only by the men of the world, but even by such as have interest in him.

That you may learn to esteem, highly prize and value this righteousness of Christ, see it desirable above all things, and apprehend the necessity of it, not only at first conversion, but every moment of our lives; not only in respect of these great concerns of soul, pardon, acceptance, and salvation, wherein the need of it is obvious, but also in every occurrence, every enjoyment, every undertaking.

Now this usefulness, necessity, advantageousness of Christ's righteousness, will be evident in many respects. We will reduce them to ten heads.

First. In respect of sin. By the righteousness of Christ, believers have the pardon of sin, and power against it: pardon of sin, continuance of pardon, sense of pardon; pardon by this righteousness performed, continuance of it by this righteousness presented, sense of it by this righteousness applied.

A sinner, whose conscience the Lord hath in mercy touched, awakened (as for secure sinners, they little regard Christ or his righteousness, or pardon by it), will be apt to say, Can, will the Lord pardon my sins,—mine, that are so many, so grievous, by which the Lord hath been so highly provoked, so exceedingly dishonoured? Against so much light, such means, such mercies, sins of such a deep die, so heavily aggravated, that cry so loud for vengeance? Can the Lord, or will he, pardon such sins, such a sinner?

Why, no; till he hath received a ransom, till his law and his justice be satisfied, the truth and justice of God will not permit him to pardon any sin; but when through the righteousness of Christ his law and justice is satisfied, then it is no more for the Lord to pardon them (though all the sins of all the elect from the beginning of the world were thine), than it is for a creditor to cease his suit against a debtor, when his surety hath fully discharged the debt. Christ's righteousness is the price of pardon, that which purchased it: Eph. i. 7, 'In whom we have redemption,' &c. Redemption is freedom procured by a price paid, remission of sins is freedom from guilt, and the price by which it was procured is the blood of Christ, his righteousness, his passive obedience; this is the fountain where alone guilty souls can be cleansed, though sins be red as scarlet,

Isa. i. 18; it is but 'wash and be clean,' ver. 16; 1 John i. 7, Rev. ii. 5. The righteousness of Christ is expressed by his blood, because that is the cost.

Oh, but though there be pardon through the righteousness of Christ, yet I have sinned since pardon, since conversion. All the love of the Father, of the Son, hath not restrained me from sinning against the sweet expressions of pardoning love, sometimes by apparent evils, dishonouring Christ and my profession itself, continually provoking him by sinful infirmities. The Lord may justly revoke his pardon, he may be weary of forgiving one who multiplies provocations; he may say, I will spare, I will forgive no more. Will the Lord continue to pardon one who doth little else every moment but offend him?

What can support a soul under such sad reasonings? Why, only the righteousness of Christ; this being continually presented by Christ, is the occasion of continued pardon: 1 John ii. 1, Heb. vii. 25, 'Always making intercession.' Now what is his intercession, but the presenting of his righteousness, his will and desire that all his people may be pardoned and saved by virtue of his righteousness? So Rom. viii. 33, 34. Pardon is everlasting, because the virtue of his righteousness is everlasting, Dan. ix. 24. Whenever sin appears, there appears to cover it Christ's righteousness.

Oh, but saith the awakened sinner, though the Lord be so gracious as to pardon, and Christ's righteousness effectual to procure it, yet I want the sense of it; my conscience is still wounding, accusing me, the sting of it continues with pain and anguish in my soul. It is this blood sprinkled, that is, applied to the conscience, that speaks better things, Heb. xii. 24, which speaks peace. By this the heart is sprinkled from an evil conscience, Heb. x. 22, that is, from a guilty, accusing, terrifying conscience.

Oh, but though the Lord hath pardoned me, and given my soul the comfortable sense thereof, yet what will this avail me if I should still continue to provoke and dishonour him, if my lusts still prevail against me? Though the guilt be removed, yet the power and dominion of sin still continues. And, 'O wretched man,' &c., Rom. vii. 24, 25.

Why, there is no deliverance but by virtue of this righteousness, Rom. vi. 14. Under the grace of the gospel, the foundation of which grace is Christ's righteousness.

God had never let out any gracious expressions to the sons of men after sin, had it not been through the interposal of Christ's righteousness: 'In all, we are more than conquerors;' but how? 'through him;' and what we are through him we are through his righteousness.

Secondly, In respect of your persons. Look upon any person as destitute of Christ's righteousness, and he is loathsome, accursed, abhorred, and woefully enslaved, and no redress for any of those miseries but by Christ's righteousness: no such loathsome deformity as sin. Hence in Scripture every soul, by reason of its natural sinfulness and corruption, is as loathsome in the eye of God as a toad or serpent is in our eyes; and how shall such loathsomeness become lovely? How shall such odious creatures be rendered acceptable? Only in Christ, that is, by virtue of his righteousness, Eph. i. 6, 7.

How shall such an unclean, polluted soul, become clean? Only by washing in the fountain of Christ's righteousness, Rev. vii. 14. Every person out of Christ is under the curse, all the curses written in the book of the law are bent against him, Gal. iii. Not only thy sin, but thy person is cursed: 'Cursed is every one.' Nothing in heaven or earth can

remove this curse, but only Christ's righteousness, Gal. iii. 18. How was he made a curse, but by being obedient, even to a cursed death.

God is an enemy to every person destitute of Christ's righteousness; he hates him, his wrath is kindled against him, his indignation burns like fire against such a sinner, and will seize on him, and consume him to eternity, if nothing interpose between this wrath and a guilty soul; and nothing can effectually interpose but the righteousness of Christ, nothing can quench this fire but his blood. This enmity between the Lord and a sinner is only abolished by Christ's righteousness, Eph. ii. 15, 16. The Lord would never be reconciled to a sinner but by the mediation of this righteousness; no peace for sinners but by virtue of Christ's undertaking, Col. i. 20-22.

Every person without this is a woeful slave to Satan, a slave to the vilest thing in the world, to his own lust; no redemption from this slavery but by a ransom; no ransom will be accepted but only Christ's righteousness, 1 Peter i. 18, 19.

No way to bring such vile persons into a capacity of being the sons of God, except the Son of God would become a servant, and be made under the law, to fulfil the righteousness of it; and so he did effect it, Gal. iv. 4, 5.

Thus you see the necessity and usefulness of Christ's righteousness as to our persons; without it no acceptance, no redemption, no reconciliation, no adoption.

Thirdly, In respect of graces and qualifications. The very being, the implanting of grace in the soul, is from the righteousness of Christ. No spark of holiness had ever been found, had ever been kindled in the heart of lost man, had it not been procured by this righteousness, Heb. x. 5. Other sacrifices God would not, therefore Christ took a body, that he might become a sacrifice; this was the will of God, ver. 9, and this was Christ's will too: 'By which will,' ver. 10. So Heb. xiii. 12, we owe the very being of sanctification to Christ's righteousness in his blood. We may conclude of the rest of what the apostle speaks of faith, 2 Peter. i. 1. Why so precious, but because the price of it was the invaluable righteousness of Christ; and 'like precious,' because the same price for all, Eph. i. 3. What we have in Christ we have by virtue of his righteousness.

Ay, but when the soul is sanctified, and the principle of spiritual life implanted in it, what need then of Christ's righteousness? Yes, even then in many respects. The gracious heart, sensible of its spiritual condition, apprehensive of the weakness and defects of grace received, will mourn under them, even as worldlings mourn under outward wants and afflictions. Now the spring-head of redress in this case is Christ's righteousness; we owe not only the being, but the means of grace to his righteousness, 2 Peter i. 1. Through God, by the mediation of Christ; as no otherwise doth God multiply any blessings on us.

But to what purpose is grace, or the means of it, if it be not exercised? And no acceptance of it, but by the virtue of this righteousness; for the actings of grace depend upon the influence and operation of Christ's Spirit; and the sending forth of the Spirit was the purchase of Christ's righteousness.

Nay, further, though grace, holiness, be the most excellent accomplishment, yet it is of itself a frail thing, and too weak for the opposition it meets with, if it were not supported with an almighty power; and how is this procured but by the righteousness of Christ? How is this continued,

but by his continual presenting of that righteousness in his intercession? This made the apostle confident of his perseverance, Rom. vi. 14, 15, 17.

Thus you see the usefulness of Christ's righteousness in respect of grace, for its being, increase, exercise, perseverance.

Fourthly, In respect of our obedience and services, and that many ways.

1. That we have any power or will to tender any service or obedience unto God, it is from Christ's righteousness; therefore you find obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus joined by the apostle, 1 Peter i. 2. What the apostle saith of prayer, Rom. viii. 26, is true of all other duties. We are so far from being able to perform any duty spiritually, that we do not so much as know how to do it; it is the Spirit that helps our infirmities, and the assistance of the Spirit is the effect of Christ's righteousness, Gal. iii. 14.

2. There are many failings and infirmities, such as are sinful, and cannot appear in the pure eye of God, in our best services. In every act of obedience we offend in many respects, in manner, measure, intention, and other circumstances: 'In many things we offend all.' Now what shall expiate these offences? Why, nothing is effectual but Christ's righteousness. This seems to be typified in the method of the legal service; the daily sacrifice, which was a sacrifice of expiation (to take away guilt), was offered before any of their other oblations. In vain had the rest been offered had not the Lord provided a propitiatory sacrifice, which by virtue of Christ, the Lamb without spot, thereby typified, did expiate the guilt of their other offerings. There is enough in our best sacrifices to condemn us, if the blood of Christ doth not cleanse, if his righteousness do not expiate them.

3. As they cannot be expiated, so they cannot be accepted but through the righteousness of Christ; if our services be not mixed with the incense, they will never ascend to God as the savour of a sweet smell.

Nothing can be well pleasing unto him but through the mediation of Christ, Heb. xiii. 20, 21. Though we do the will of God, and do it impartially in every good work, and do it sincerely, be perfect in doing it, yet will not this be well pleasing in his sight but through Christ, that is, by virtue of his mediation and righteousness.

4. Our services can have no success, no reward, but through and for the righteousness of Christ: 1 Cor. xv., 'End in the Lord;' that is, in respect of the Lord Christ; 'through whom,' he saith, ver. 57, 'we have the victory.' Were it not in respect of him and his righteousness, all our labour would be without success, without reward; though we abounded in the work of the Lord, yet would it be in vain, but that through Christ's righteousness he vouchsafes both blessed success and gracious reward.

Fifthly, In respect of the covenant of grace. The Lord hath not, will not shew himself merciful and gracious to the sons of men, but in a way of covenant.

All the favours and special blessings he vouchsafes to his people, are conveyed this way. That therefore to which the covenant owes its being, is that to which we owe all the blessings of this life, and that which is to come; and this is the righteousness of Christ, for the foundation of, admission into, the confirmation and perpetuity of this covenant is from Christ's righteousness.

1. It is the foundation of the covenant of grace. The Lord had never more made any covenant with fallen man, had it not been through the

mediation of Christ's righteousness. And here Christ is called 'the mediator of the covenant,' Heb. xii. 24. The Lord having in the first covenant promised life eternal to man and his posterity, upon condition of obedience, man breaking this covenant, and dealing unfaithfully with God, exposed himself and his to eternal death, which was the penalty thereof; and eternal death we all had suffered, nor could the Lord in justice admit of any new covenant, without satisfaction given for man's first treachery and disobedience; till then the truth and justice of God would not suffer him to have anything to do with man in a way of mercy, such as the covenant offers.

Man thus lying under the curse and sentence of eternal death, as utterly unable to make satisfaction for the dishonour he had done God, in breaking covenant made with him upon such advantageous terms, oh, Christ here interposes and offers, if lost man might be again received into favour, and have terms of mercy and reconciliation offered in another covenant, he would undertake and satisfy offended justice for man's disobedience and treachery, for the unfaithfulness of all that believe. That he may not die eternally (saith Christ), I am willing in him to die for him; and for his obedience, the condition of life eternal, since he can never perform it, I will perform it for him; let my life go for his, and my obedience satisfy for his disobedience, I engage myself to do and suffer what justice and the law requires of him, so that he may be admitted to mercy in a covenant of grace.

Hereupon the Lord, through the mediation of Christ and his righteousness, condescends to make a new covenant. The covenant of grace and salvation, it was made through this mediation of Christ. He is called often the Mediator of the covenant, Heb. viii. 6, and ix. 15.

So that of the apostle may be taken, Gal. iii. 20.

Man was before his sin as one with God, joined in league, in covenant with him, no need then of a mediator. But sin set them at variance, raised dissension between them, and they could never be reconciled but by the interposal of a mediator. Christ was this mediator, who by his righteousness satisfied the offended God, brought God and man again together, and joined them in a league and covenant. So that you see the righteousness of Christ is the foundation of the covenant of grace, Christ hereby is all in all in the new covenant. Hence he is called the covenant, Isa. xlii. 6, and xlix. 8.

2. Admission into covenant is by virtue of Christ's righteousness, Isa. liii. 10. Christ in performing this righteousness was 'a man of sorrows,' and his sorrows were *dolores parturientis*, the sorrows of one in travail, verse 11. The issue of his travail was the children of the covenant. We have the expression, Acts iii. 25, 'children of promise,' Rom. viii. 9, Gal. iv. 28.

Now, how comes it to pass that Christ had such a seed, such a numerous issue, that so many became children of the covenant? The prophet tells, 'When thou shalt make,' &c. If he had not made his soul an offering for sin, that is, performed this righteousness, he had never seen this seed, none of the sons of men had been admitted into covenant. If thou and I be in the covenant of grace, if we be impaled in the bonds of grace and saving mercy, and so separated from the lost world, who are 'strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God,' &c., Eph. ii. 12, it is for the righteousness of Christ, it is because he made his soul an offering for sin.

8. The confirmation of the covenant is from Christ's righteousness. By

this it is ratified, made sure, therefore Christ is called the surety, Heb. vii. 22. He made it sure on both hands.

On God's part, because by fulfilling righteousness he removes whatever might hinder the Lord from performing the gracious contents of the covenant to believers.

On man's part, hereby procuring whatever the Lord requires on their part in this covenant of grace.

And because it is confirmed by his righteousness, therefore it is called the covenant, the testament in his blood; for it was the custom to make, dedicate, confirm covenants by blood, the blood of sacrifices; see Gen. xv. Hereon, Heb. ix. 18, the covenant of grace under the first administration was dedicated with blood; the ceremony you may see in Exod. xxiv. 6, 8. Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basons, which was so reserved to be sprinkled upon the people. By this blood was signified the blood of Christ, by the virtue whereof the covenant of grace is established between God and his people; and the dividing of this blood (half being sprinkled upon the altar, which did represent God, and half upon the people), signified that the performance of the covenant by both parties, God's favour and grace to his people, and the people's faith and obedience to God, were to be ascribed to the blood, that is, to the righteousness of Christ.

Whence also it is called the testament, *Διαθήκη*, Heb. vii. 8, 9.

A will or testament is not in force till the death of the testator; it is that which makes it firm and inviolable. So the apostle, Heb. ix. 16, 17. It is the death of Christ (in which his righteousness was completed) which so confirms the covenant as no men nor devils can alter or disannul it, Gal. iii. 15. How was it confirmed? He tells us, verse 17, 'of God in Christ,' and how in Christ but as other testaments are, by his death. This it is which makes it firm and sure, the righteousness of Christ. If thou hast sure covenant, strong consolation in this covenant, it comes from Christ's righteousness, who makes it strong and sure.

4. The perpetuity of the covenant. It is not only made firm and sure for some time, but for ever, by Christ's righteousness. Hence it is called 'the covenant of salt,' 2 Chron. xiii. 5. The reason is this, there is a virtue in salt to preserve things from corruption; so that by a covenant of salt is meant a stable, firm, and incorruptible covenant, a covenant of an everlasting continuance. And why it is so, the apostle's expression shews, Heb. xiii. 20, 'an everlasting covenant;' because the blood of Christ, his righteousness, is of everlasting virtue.

Here is the greatest comfort, the strong consolation of God's covenanted people, the covenant between them and God (the great charter of all their peace, hopes, present enjoyments, and future happiness) can never be broken, never violated; all the blessings of it are to continue, not only like Joseph's blessing, 'to the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills,' Gen. xlix. 26, but while the Rock of ages, the Rock of eternity continues, Isa. liv. 10. And why? Verse 14, 'In righteousness shalt thou be established.' It is founded upon that righteousness which is far more durable than the mountains.

It is this that bears up the people of God in all fears and assaults from hell and the world; when they are afflicted and tossed with tempests, here is their anchor both firm and sure, when it enters within the veil, when it fastens on Christ and his righteousness: 'Though the earth be removed, and the mountains, &c., yet the covenant of peace shall not be removed.'

It is true, Satan is a mortal enemy to this union between God and man

in a way of covenant. It torments that envious, malicious spirit, to see man, made far lower than himself at first, now advanced to this glorious privilege of being in league, when himself is cast out. He set himself to break the first covenant, and then prevailed, as the lost sons of men found by woeful experience. That covenant had no such sure foundation, it was quickly broken. And now he employs all his craft, all his stratagems to disannul the covenant of grace. And why don't the gates of hell prevail against it? Why, it is founded upon a rock, upon Christ, upon his righteousness.

Besides, such is the weakness, the sinfulness, the unfaithfulness, the unsteadfastness of the best that are now in covenant with God, such are their provocations, as the Lord might justly break with them, even with them that are most observant of covenant terms.

Nay, if there were nothing to continue the best of us in covenant but the observance of what the Lord therein requires of us, there would certainly be a breach; the holy and wise God must needs cast us out. What is it then that keeps the Lord and his people together, notwithstanding his justice and holiness, notwithstanding their backsliding and unfaithfulness? Why, it is Christ's righteousness only, this is the foundation of it which can never be shaken; take away this, and the covenant of grace, with all the hopes and happiness of believers, fall to the ground. But this continuing, by virtue of it the Lord is satisfied, reconciled, when he is angry, and ready to break with us; by virtue of this our revolting hearts are again turned unto the Lord, and our treacherous declinings pardoned; otherwise there would be no peace, no league, no covenant between the Lord and such creatures, no, not the least moment.

Doth not this affect your hearts (ye that believe), that the Lord will be your God to everlasting? that those great blessings you have by virtue of the covenant, are everlasting blessings, everlasting forgiveness, Jer. xxxi. 33; and everlasting joy, Isa. xxxv. 10; everlasting salvation, Isa. xlv. 17; everlasting life, John iii. 16; everlasting love, Job xxxi. 3; and everlasting kindness, Isa. liv. 8.

Doth not your hearts leap within you, when the Lord helps you to think on this in secret? Why, then, look to the rock from whence these everlasting blessings are digged, whereon this everlasting covenant is founded: look to the righteousness of Christ. And if this everlasting happiness be dear to you, oh let this endear Christ and his righteousness to you! For therefore are the covenant and its blessings eternal and everlasting, because Christ's redemption is eternal, Heb. ix. 12; because his righteousness is everlasting, Dan. ix.

Sixthly, In respect of the promises: 1. Through Christ's righteousness they are made. 2. By it believers have interest in them. 3. For it they are performed to them.

1. Upon account of Christ's righteousness were all the promises made. The Lord, after the violation of the first covenant, had never made one promise to the sons of men, had it not been through the mediation of Christ's righteousness; all these 'exceeding great and precious promises' (the riches, the treasures of the saints on earth), they were made upon this account, given through Christ, 2 Pet. i. 2-4. To instance in two of the greatest promises, wherein the Scripture is express, the promise of spiritual life, the promise of the Spirit, and the promise of eternal life. For the first, Gal. iii. 13, 14, 'the promise of the Spirit'; that is, of all the graces and comforts, all the light, life, and strength, all the assistances and in-

fluences of the Spirit ; this promise, which is the all of the believer in this world, is given and received through Christ. And how through him ? The 18th verse shews, viz., by his being made a curse for us, his subjection to the law, and fulfilling the righteousness thereof.

Here is all that concerns spiritual life promised through Christ, and so it is all for eternal life, Heb. ix. 15. It is received by means of death, which being the consummation and completement of Christ's righteousness, is ordinarily put for the whole. Therefore if thou hast ever been refreshed with the sweetness of a gospel promise, as those that are in covenant have one time or other found sweeter refreshment in a promise than in any outward comforts, and while their souls are in good temper, do feed on them with great delight.

If thou hast ever tasted how gracious the Lord is in a gospel promise, then let Christ and his righteousness be dear unto thee ; for this is the spring, the fountain from whence all these streams of comfort flow, which are the great refreshment of believers on this side heaven.

2. By Christ's righteousness believers have interest in the promises, both those that are absolute and conditional. Nothing promised becomes due, nor is the Lord engaged to perform any promise, but by the mediation of Christ's righteousness.

This is evident in absolute promises, such as that of the first grace, Ezek. xi. 19, 20, chap. xxxvi. 25, 26. Now before this promise be performed, who can challenge interest in it ? There is no qualification expressed to a promise, to one more than another. To whom then is it due ? Why, only to those who are given to Christ, and for whom he hath given himself ; only to those for whom he hath satisfied the law and justice, by fulfilling the righteousness required of him. To such only are these promises due ; and hereby it is apparent it is Christ's righteousness which makes them due.

It is clear also in conditional promises ; and let it be the more carefully observed, because herein is an ordinary mistake, not only of vulgar Christians, but of those who have their senses exercised to discern between truth and error. It is taken for granted, that the mercy promised is due, and the Lord engaged to perform the promise, when the condition or qualification annexed to the promise is in sincerity performed. *Ex. gr.*, Since God hath promised to save those that believe, and pardon those that repent, it is concluded, when a man believes, salvation is due to him ; when he repents, the Lord is engaged to pardon him, without looking further than those conditions, to that without which no mercy promised can be due, nor any promise engaging. It is true, he that truly believes shall be saved, and he that truly repents shall be pardoned ; but these mercies are not due merely upon our believing and repenting, but upon another account.

I clear it thus : there are many sinful defects and imperfections in the faith and repentance of the best, and there is a curse due to every sin, even to every wilful imperfection, Gal. iii. The wilful defects of these qualifications are under a threatening. Now, both a blessing and a curse cannot be at once due to the same person, the Lord cannot be under two contrary engagements, both of a promise and a threatening, to the same person, at the same time. Therefore, though a man repent and believe, yet the mercies promised cannot be due to him, unless the curse due to the sinful imperfections of his faith and repentance be removed. Now it is Christ's righteousness alone that removes the curse, that takes off the threatening ; and therefore it is his righteousness (not our qualifications,

faith, repentance, holiness, obedience, considered in themselves merely), that gives us right to the mercies promised ; without this, even all those gracious qualifications would leave us under the curse ; so far are they from making the promise due, or engaging the Lord to bestow it.

This deserves further enlargement, but I leave it to your own thoughts ; the clear apprehension of it would clearly discover to you the freeness of grace in the promises, the worthlessness of man's best righteousness, and exceedingly endear the righteousness of Christ to us. There is no interest, no right to the promise, but through Christ's righteousness.

3. It is for Christ's righteousness that any promise is performed : 2 Cor. i. 20, ' In him,' in him as mediator, and so by virtue of his righteousness, ' are yea,' &c. *Yea* always ; not sometimes *yea* and sometimes *nay*, but always *yea* : there is constancy ; and *amen* : there is faithfulness. In him, through his mediation, the Lord will constantly and faithfully perform his promises to all believers.

Indeed, if a wicked man, a worldling, &c., comes and inquires at these oracles, if he ask, as she of Jehu, ' Is it peace ? ' shall I have peace with God ? will he pardon me ? will he save me ? the answer to him will be negative, not *yea* but *nay* ; no peace, no pardon, &c. And why so ? Because he that lives in sin is out of Christ, hath no interest in his righteousness ; ' but every one that nameth the name of Christ departs from iniquity,' 2 Tim. ii. 19.

But let a believer come, one who hath given up himself to Christ in a way of faith and gospel obedience ; let him inquire, Shall I have peace, grace, life, glory ? the answer will be then affirmative, the promise to him is *yea* ; and it is so constantly, ' it is yea and amen,' the Lord will be faithful in performing promise. The righteousness of Christ engages the truth and faithfulness of God to the performance of every tittle : ' Heaven and earth shall pass away, before,' &c.

If thou hast had experience of the accomplishment of promises, thou owest this to Christ's righteousness ; if thou expectest the performance of any promise, thou must depend upon Christ and his righteousness for it.

That the promises are given, that we have interest in them, that they are performed to us, all must be ascribed to Christ's righteousness.

Seventhly, In respect of the law ; and that in reference to all its parts, the precept, the threatening, the promise.

1. In regard of the *precept*. This requires perfect obedience, and that universally, in all things, of all persons, at all times.

It requires perfection both inward and outward, both perfect holiness of heart and perfect acts of lives, and that both for parts and degrees ; a perfect observance of every precept, and that in the highest degree. It is not a good intention or meaning, or a sincere resolution, nor a conscionable endeavour, nor a bewailing of imperfections and failings, that will satisfy the demands of God's righteous law. That calls for absolute perfection, and that from all persons, both regenerate and unregenerate, both of those that are in the covenant of grace, and those that are under the covenant of works, and this always, from the moment of man's creation to eternity. This is essential to him while he is a reasonable creature, to be perfectly subject to God as creator ; and being essential to him while he is a reasonable creature, he cannot be freed by any dispensation from his obligation to perfect obedience.

Well then, when the Lord comes to demand what is due to him, when he calls for such obedience as we owe him, alas ! what can we answer him ?

He requires that every act of our hearts and lives should be perfectly holy; and there is not one act since we had a being that comes near what he requires, though at first we had power to do it. We owe him an hundred thousand talents, and we cannot bring him the value of one farthing upon the account of perfection. Where then shall the best of us appear? what shall we plead? or how shall we satisfy his righteous demands? Why, if Christ's perfect obedience be not accepted, if his righteousness doth not here satisfy for us, we are utterly cast, we are eternally lost, as will appear further in the second.

2. In regard of the *threatening*: 'In the day thou sinnest, thou shalt die.' Death is the wages of every sin, death temporal and eternal. The law entails the curse of God upon every sinner, and exposes him to the everlasting wrath of the almighty and eternal God, Gal. iii. 10. Secure sinners, though under the heaviest part of this curse, weigh it no more than the wind.

But one who is under the spirit of bondage, as all must be more or less before they receive the spirit of adoption, will hear those words as thunder and lightning from the presence of an incensed God; they will smite his soul with trembling and affrightment. Alas! is the curse and his eternal wrath due to every sin? Oh then, how woeful is my condition! What wrath is due to me, who am guilty of more sins than I have lived hours, moments in the world! Oh how shall my soul bear the burthen of that wrath that is heavier than the hills and mountains, and will sink me into the lower hell! Oh how shall I abide with devouring fire! how shall I dwell with everlasting burnings!

Why, there is no remedy, saith the word, nothing but curse, and wrath, and hell for thee, for any sinner, except the Lord's justice be satisfied; and there is nothing will satisfy him but a righteousness of infinite value, nothing but the righteousness of Christ. Get interest in this. Christ's righteousness must be fully imputed to thee, or else wrath and hell must be thy portion for ever. This method the Lord ordinarily uses to awaken secure sinners, to bring them unto Christ; therefore the law is called the school-master, Gal. iii. 24; and happy that apprehension of wrath that is thus effectual.

Here is the usefulness of Christ's righteousness. No sinner in the world ever was, or ever shall be, freed from the wrath of God and curse of the law, but by the virtue of this righteousness.

8. In regard of the *promise* of the law, 'Do this and live,' that is, perform perfect obedience, and thou shalt have eternal life. This perfect obedience was the way to life under the law, and if the gospel shew not another righteousness, it is the way still.

Now Christ, when he was interpreting the law, tells us, 'One jot or tittle shall in nowise pass from the law till all be fulfilled.' So that unless perfect obedience be fulfilled, it seems there is no life to be had under the gospel, Mat. v. 17. Nay, the apostle, when he is proving justification by faith only, which seems quite to repeal the law in this point, Rom. iii. 28, answers this very objection: ver. 31, 'Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid,' saith he; 'yea, we establish the law.' So that it seems the way to heaven by perfect obedience, which the law prescribed, is not contradicted by the gospel, but established. No eternal life now without perfect obedience. But you will say, Alas! if it be so, then no flesh shall be saved, for perfect obedience in man's fallen estate is impossible. See here then the necessity of Christ's righteousness. It is indeed impos-

sible for man, though a believer, but not impossible for his surety, Christ; so the apostle tells us, Rom. viii. 8, 4, 'What the law could not do,' &c. The law could not bring any to life, because of man's inability to satisfy its demands. Christ was able to do it, and he did it, performed all that the law requires, 'in the likeness of sinful flesh, that the righteousness of the law,' ver. 4, that we, being unable to fulfil it ourselves, might have it fulfilled in us. So that the gospel doth not contradict the law, but favourably expounds it. Whereas it might be taken thus, Do this in person, and live, the gospel expounds it thus favourably, Do this (if not by thyself, yet) by thy Surety, and thou shalt live. So that the doctrine of the gospel is not contrary, but subservient to the law.

The righteousness of Christ turns the law into gospel to a believer, and of a doctrine full of dread and terror, renders it the most acceptable message that ever was brought to the world. The law, which stands as the angel with a flaming sword, to bar all flesh out of paradise, when the righteousness of Christ is applied, it becomes an angel to carry every believer into Abraham's bosom; Christ's righteousness added, it loses its name, and we call it gospel. The way in both seems to be the same for substance; perfect obedience is requisite in both. They differ in the circumstances of the person performing this obedience. In the law it was to be personal, in the gospel his surety's performance is sufficient.

However, if there be any terror, dread in the law, Christ's righteousness removes it; if any grace, comfort in the gospel, Christ's righteousness is the rise of it. Take away Christ's righteousness, and the gospel can give no life; take it away, and the law speaks nothing but death; no life, no hope of life without it, either in law or gospel.

Eighthly, In respect of the ordinances. The enjoyment of them, the sanctifying of them, the presence of God in them, and the efficacy of them, are for and from the righteousness of Christ.

1. The *enjoyment* of ordinances: they are the gift of Christ, the purchase of his righteousness, 2 Pet. i. 8. All things that pertain to godliness are given through the knowledge of Christ; that is, through faith in him, faith that lays hold on his righteousness, particularly the seals of the covenant; they are the signs of the New Testament in his blood; the ministry of the word, the great ordinance for the begetting and increasing of godliness. This is the purchase, the gift of Christ, Eph. iv. 8, 11. These are the gifts of his triumph, and what he gave in his exaltation he purchased by his humiliation. The apostle ascribes both his office and ability to execute it unto Christ, Rom. i. 5.

2. The *sanctifying* of the ordinances is from Christ's righteousness, by virtue of his blood. So polluted are we by sin, and such is the defilement of sin within us, that everything we touch, or meddle with, or make use of (even the holy institutions of God not excepted) are unclean unto us, except the blood of Jesus makes them clean to us, and makes us clean in the use of them. To signify this, the Lord prescribed in the law that 'almost all things should be purged by blood,' Heb. ix. 22. 'Both the book and the people, both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry, were sprinkled with blood,' ver. 19, 21; sprinkled with blood, that they might be purged, whereby was typified the virtue of Christ's blood to sanctify not only our persons, but also the ordinances we make use of.

And therefore, when we go to the ordinances, we should be apprehensive of a necessity of Christ's righteousness in the use of them; look up to the blood of sprinkling for its sanctifying virtue to remove that defilement,

whereby we pollute the ordinances, whereby they become unholy, unhal-
lowed, unclean to us; else nothing is pure, nothing sanctified to our
use.

3. The *presence* of God in the ordinances is only vouchsafed through
his righteousness. The presence of God, which is the life and comfort of
them, cannot be enjoyed but in and through Christ, the mediation of his
righteousness. A sinner cannot draw near to God, nor will the Lord
draw near to him, till he be found in Christ's righteousness. He is a
consuming fire to a sinner out of Christ, he beholds him afar off, he cannot
endure to come near him, not in the use of his own ordinances, where he
draws nearest to his people, nor can a sinner draw near to God. Those
that are out of Christ have no interest in his righteousness; they are far
off when they seem to draw near unto God; there is no access to him but
in the blood of Jesus, Eph. ii. 13. While without Christ, they were not
only without God in the world, but without God in his ordinances; they
were always strangers, God took no notice of them, but now in Christ
Jesus, &c., through him only they have access, Eph. ii. 18, 19. The Lord
will converse with them as a man with his friend, his familiar, he will use
them as children, as friends, they are then the household of God. But it
is in Christ's mediation, of his righteousness; he saith to us, as Joseph to
his brethren, Gen. xliii. 5, 'Ye shall not see my face, except your brother
be with you;' no seeing God's face, except Benjamin, except Christ, the
Son of his right hand, the Son of his love, be with us, and we in him.
If ever thou hast seen the face of God in his ordinances, if he ever have
vouchsafed himself, if ever he hath unveiled himself and caused his glory
to pass before thee, if ever thou hast seen light in his countenance, that
light which is better, sweeter than life, it must be ascribed to his righteous-
ness; if ever thou expectest the comfortable, enhappying manifestations of
God to thy soul, thou must depend on Christ and his righteousness for it.

4. The *efficacy* of the ordinances is from Christ's righteousness; all the
spiritual use and strength, all the peace and comfort, all the growth and
fruitfulness, all the light and heavenly refreshments, all the blessings and
blessed advantages found in any or all the ordinances, flow from this foun-
tain, that are effectual for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of
the body of Christ, &c. It is the gift of Christ, Eph. iv. 12, 13.

No blessing can be expected from God, except we come as Jacob, in the
garment of our Elder Brother, except we be found in Christ's righteousness;
if the Lord hath made the word effectual to turn thee from darkness to
light, to convince, enlighten, comfort, quicken, strengthen, encourage thee,
&c.; if he hath made thee joyful in the house of prayer, satisfied thy soul
with marrow and fatness, made the Sabbath thy delight, a day of refresh-
ment from his presence; if in the use of ordinances thy secure conscience
hath been awakened, blind eyes opened, hard heart melted, cold affections
inflamed, thy soul raised to a spiritual and heavenly temper.

Ninthly, In respect of outward enjoyments. By Christ's righteousness
believers have a spiritual right to a comfortable use of spiritual advantages
by, and sincere improvement of, these temporal enjoyments.

1. A spiritual right to them. Another kind of right than unbelievers
have; those that are strangers to Christ may have a civil right to what
they lawfully obtain and enjoy, and such a right as is grounded on the laws
of men; and so far as the Lord approves of these laws, so far they have
them by divine approbation, and he approves of laws tending to the good
of mankind. A civil right they have; but no spiritual, evangelical right,

for that is grounded upon the covenant of grace, which hath its being from Christ's righteousness.

Now believers, who have interest in the righteousness of Christ, have hereby a spiritual right to temporal blessings; they have them *jure promissionis*: 'Godliness hath the promise,' 1 Tim. i. 8; it hath the promise, and all the promises are in Christ *yea*. *Jure donationis*: 2 Pet. i. 8; 1 Tim. vi. 17; 'Through the knowledge of Christ,' ver. 2. *Jure emptionis*: Christ hath purchased these for them, his righteousness was the price, 2 Cor. viii. 9; though it be true of spiritual riches, yet the context leads us here to include outward enjoyments; and the same warrant we have to understand Philip. iv. 19.

Christ is the heir of all things, and none can come to this spiritual right but by being found in him; and those who are found in him hold their enjoyments *in capite*, their right is derived from their head, Christ. Hence, 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23, 'If you be in Christ,' he yours (for the interest is mutual), then 'all is yours,' by the best, the noblest, the surest title under heaven.

Besides, wicked men, by their treason and rebellion against the Lord and his Christ, have forfeited all they enjoy, and deserve to be deprived of all temporal enjoyments; the Lord may most justly (though men cannot) take his forfeiture.

You will say, the best have forfeited all and deserve to enjoy nothing. It is true, but observe a vast difference herein, even believers have forfeited, but the ground of the forfeiture is removed; their sin is pardoned, and satisfaction made by the righteousness of Christ, which is a just stop to the seizure; so that it is a righteous thing with the Lord to continue them in the enjoyment of all things good for them. Why? They have forfeited, but Christ hath satisfied; they have lost all, but Christ's righteousness hath purchased all good things for them, Rom. viii. 32. How shall he not for him give us all things, who gave himself for us, that all things might be freely given us.

2. Comfortable enjoyment. Strangers to Christ have the use of these things, but cannot be properly said to have the enjoyment; they seem to be masters of them, but indeed they are servants to them; possessors as to outward use, but slaves as to their inward affections; they serve them while they seem to dispose of them; they do not *dominari*, but *servire*; have not the command of, but are enslaved.

Nor is their use truly comfortable; they may fancy comfort, but their comfort is but a fancy; it flows from another fountain than can be digged in earth; true, solid comfort is the portion of those only who have the righteousness of Christ for their portion.

These may look upon every temporal enjoyment as a token of everlasting love, as a pledge and earnest of eternal glory; and both these, because they may receive them as the purchase of the blood (of the righteousness) of Christ; ay, here is the well-spring of comfort, the fountain of that comfort which is better than life. Oh what comfort is it to taste the sweetness of Christ's love in every enjoyment! when we can say, 'Christ loved me, and gave himself for me,' that I might enjoy these blessings! Oh how will this raise the value of every common mercy! Christ's righteousness which was performed, the highest expression of his love, purchased this for me!

Upon this account is that of the psalmist true, Ps. xxxvii. 15; he that hath but food and raiment, hath in this respect more than he that hath the Turkish empire, or the gold of the Indies; he hath more ground of comfort in his little than they in all.

Alas, what comfort can they take in any enjoyment if they are but apprehensive of their condition ; the fatter their pastures are, the fatter will they be fed for slaughter.

What pleasure will a malefactor take in the things that continue his life till the day of execution ?

He that is not in Christ is condemned already ; for anything thou knowest, this day shall thy soul, thy life, be taken from thee ; and then whose shall these things be ? what comfort in them ?

No comfortable enjoyment of the chiefest outward comforts, without interest in Christ's righteousness.

8. Spiritual advantage. Strangers to Christ seldom use these things lawfully, much less spiritually ; and where there is no spiritual use of them, there can be no spiritual advantage by them ; if the Lord hath made a distinction between thee and others in the use and improving of these things that are common, so that thou canst reap spiritual advantage from temporal enjoyments, even this must be ascribed to Christ's righteousness.

If they are as cords to draw thy heart up to God and tie thee to him ; if they endear Christ to thy soul, and engage thee more to love him ; if these drops make thee thirst after the fountain, where there is more sweetness, in much more abundance ; if they raise thy esteem of heavenly enjoyments as more valuable ; if they provoke thy zeal for his honour, who gives thee experience of the riches of his bounty ; if they strengthen thy faith to expect greater things from him, who will not let thee want the less ; if they engage thee to lay them out, to improve them as a good steward, for the honour, for the service of him who entrusts thee with them ; if they encourage thee to serve him with cheerfulness and gladness of heart in abundance of all good things ; if the Lord bless them to thee so as thy soul prospers the more for this outward prosperity ;—if thou gettest these or other spiritual advantages by them, without which they are not blessings, even this thou owest to Christ's righteousness ; for when temporal enjoyments are thus spiritually improved, their property is altered ; they are in effect spiritual blessings, and such wherewith we are only blessed in Christ, Eph. i.

4. Secure improvement. If you improve them so as to avoid the snares which Satan conveys into every outward comfort. Since sin entered into the world, all the things of the world are full of snares ; whatever we use, whatever we see, nay, what we do but imagine, though we neither see nor enjoy it, is apt to ensnare us.

There are snares in our beds, snares on our tables, snares in company, snares in solitariness, snares in riches, credit, pleasures ; everything apt to entangle us in sin, pride, security, licentiousness, neglect of God, our souls, eternity, &c.

Those that are strangers to Christ lie miserably entangled in these snares ; so they live, die, perish. Hence these outward things prove not blessings but curses to them, as the Lord threatens, Mal. ii. 2.

Now if any of you escape these snares, if you have been delivered out of them, if you do not perish in them, this must be ascribed to Christ's righteousness, Gal. i. 4. Why is it evil ? because it is so full of sin, so full of snares. How are we delivered from it ? by Christ's giving himself for our sins ; that is, by Christ's performing this righteousness for us. The Lamb's company, Rev. xiv., are said to be redeemed from the earth, ver. 8, that is, the defilements of the earth, ver. 4 ; to redeem is to deliver by pay-

ment of a ransom ; so are we delivered, and the ransom is the blood of the Lamb, the righteousness of Christ.

Tenthly, In respect of afflictions and death, upon divers accounts :

1. Those afflictions which befall believers are not punishments, it is to be ascribed to the righteousness of Christ. A sweet privilege, &c. That is a punishment which is inflicted for the satisfaction of justice. A father corrects his child, not to satisfy the law, which is the intent of a judge. Under this dreadful notion must those that are excluded from Christ's righteousness receive their sufferings, they are inflicted by a Judge for satisfaction of offended justice ; and because they can never fully satisfy, they must ever suffer, sometimes here, always hereafter ; but he that is found in Christ's righteousness, shall never be found under the stroke of punishment. Whatever he suffers there is no revenge in it, no intention thereby to seek satisfaction ; the sting of affliction is gone, the bitterness of death is past, Christ's righteousness hath disarmed, hath sweetened, the sharpest sufferings ; the Lord requires no satisfaction of them, and therefore he inflicts no punishment on them. And why ? Because the righteousness of Christ hath fully satisfied offended justice on their behalf, and it is not agreeable to justice to demand satisfaction twice ; and when the Surety hath fully satisfied for the offence, he will not require satisfaction also of the offender, Isa. liii. 5.

The sufferings of believers are not to wound, but to heal them ; when this Head hath been wounded even to satisfaction, he will not wound the members also. On that account their afflictions are the chastisements of a father, not the revenges of a judge ; to reclaim the offender, not to satisfy for the offence. Christ's righteousness hath done that in abundance, nothing now can be laid to their charge ; no ground of punishment, since all their sins have been punished in Christ, ver. 6.

A believer may say upon another account as Christ did, John xviii. 11, It is but a cup, and it is a Father's cup ; how bitter soever it seems, it was love that mingled it ; and it is given me, it is a gift, a pledge of love, the gift of a friend, of a father ; not the wounds of a judge, of an enemy. It is not a deadly potion, as given to a malefactor who is sentenced to death, and must die to satisfy law and justice. Christ took this cup out of my hand, and drank it up all in my stead, even the dregs of it ; though the bitterness of punishment, of penal, cursed death, was in it, he left not a drop of this nature for me to drink.

That which is reserved for me is a draught of physic, a medicinal potion ; how bitter, how distasteful soever it seems, the design of it is health and life. From Christ's righteousness it is that the most afflicted condition of a believer is more happy, more desirable than the most prosperous estate of the ungodly ; affliction is with the people of God to be chosen rather than the pleasures of sin. The bitterest things that befall Christ's people are more desirous* than the sweetest enjoyments of sinners, the very pleasures of sin. Oh the wonderful virtue of Christ's righteousness ! were it not for this, every suffering would be a foretaste of hell, and the first-fruits of eternal sufferings, a spark of those everlasting burnings. The sufferings of finite unbelievers on earth, and the sufferings of the damned in hell, differ but in degrees ; they agree in common nature of punishments, both for satisfaction of revenging justice. If thou beest not in the same condition, if thy sufferings are not the beginnings of hell on earth, it is because of Christ's righteousness.

* Qn. 'desirable' ?—Ed.

2. Hence it is also that the sufferings of believers are mitigated; the Lord inflicts nothing but in that proportion which he knows is best for them, Isa. xxvii. 7, 8.

If Christ's righteousness be thine, no reason to fear the bitterness of sufferings, he will not put one drop into thy cup, but what is necessary for thy soul's health; no other end but this, or what may be assigned to this.

No reason to fear his hand will lie too heavy on thee; thou shalt not feel one stroke, one scourge more than what will tend to cure thee.

No reason to fear the king of terrors, the dreadfulfulness of the last enemy; thou shalt not endure one pang more in thy last agony but what will tend to thy good. Why so?

It is hard to believe this, faith hath need of some ground to support it. Why, here is the reason: if the Lord should inflict more than what is good for thee, it would savour of revenge; but Christ's righteousness hath left no place for revenge, revenging justice did satisfy itself fully upon Christ, while he performed this righteousness; if this be thine, it hath left nothing for thee but mercy and love; this shall be the portion of thy cup, even when it seems most bitter; that deadly mixture and wrath he drank himself.

8. The blessed fruits of afflictions are from Christ's righteousness. If this be thine, thou shalt want nothing but what thy soul would be a loser if it did not want it, thou shalt suffer nothing but it would be far worse for thee if thou didst not suffer it.

Wonderful things are spoken in Scripture of the happy issue of sanctified afflictions. It is a riddle indeed to flesh and blood, such as Samson's to the Philistines: 'Out of the strong comes forth sweetness;' and honey is found in the carcass of devouring afflictions. You will never expound this but by consideration of the righteousness of Christ, of whom Samson was a type. It is this that sweetens the water of Marah; like Elisha's salt, so heals them as there remains no more death nor barrenness in them, 2 Kings ii. 21. If thou hast had David's experience, and canst say —. And if by this thy iniquity hath been purged, thy heart estranged from the world, learned to love the appearance of Christ, if hereby thou art made partaker of his holiness, if they have brought forth in thee the peaceable fruits of righteousness, even these are the fruits of Christ's righteousness, who having answered all other ends of such sad dispensations by his own sufferings, hath left no other end why his people should suffer, but that their souls might thereby prosper; no other end but this, or what may be reduced to this. You may see other effects of suffering in others: Rev. xvi. 9, 11, 'Men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God: and they repented not to give him glory.' Who were these? They were the enemies of Christ; though they seemed to profess him, had no share in his righteousness, and so had no better issue of their sufferings.

4. Strength to bear afflictions. Support under sufferings is from Christ's righteousness: Philip. iv. 13, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me;' this doing includes both acting and suffering, as appears, ver. 12. Strength to bear up in every condition is through Christ, and we have nothing through Christ but by virtue of his righteousness. That believers can suffer with patient submission, with contentedness, comfort, and courage, as becomes the dependents of Christ, it is from his righteousness.

Not only strength to suffer, but to conquer in suffering, is from Christ,

as Rom. viii. 37. 'In all these things,' see what they are, ver. 35. When they seemed to be killed, they conquered, and triumph when they are led as sheep to the slaughter, ver. 36. Hell, and death, the king of terrors, and the thrones of darkness, the devouring lion Satan, and the raging world of persecutors, are under the feet of believers, while they seem to be oppressed by them; they do more than conquer when they seem to be captives. And how comes this to pass? He tells us: 'Through him,' &c.; and therefore through that which was the highest expression of his love, the fulfilling this righteousness for us, this is it which raises a believer even in his lowest condition above the height of a triumph, makes him more than conqueror.

Thus I have at large shewed you the usefulness of Christ's righteousness upon a manifold account, so that you can scarce meet with or think of anything in this world or the other but may endear the righteousness of Christ to you, provoke you highly to esteem and demonstrate the necessity of it.

The *uses* are,

First, Of confutation and reproof. If it be so, as hath been declared, here is a just reproof of those who profess they know Christ, yet neglect, oppose, deny his righteousness. It is strange that any who enjoy the gospel should be herein guilty, but this shews the woeful deprivation of man's mind since the fall. Such is the corruption of it, as rather than it will yield to the revealed truths (when they cross the interests of men, and their pre-engaged apprehensions), men will deprive themselves of the richest treasure which ever the Lord discovered to the world.

We have too many instances in this case:

1. Those who deny the end of this righteousness, deny the satisfaction of Christ, as doth Socinus and his wretched followers; hereby in effect denying the righteousness itself, and rendering it of no value; for if it be not satisfactory, it is not meritorious. Sure nothing can be procured of mercy until satisfaction be tendered to offended justice; and if neither merit nor satisfy for us, of what use is it? of what value? why should the apostle so highly esteem it as to suffer the loss? &c. Surely these men are not led by the same Spirit which guided the apostle, who so much disparage that which he so highly prized.

2. Who deny the sufficiency of it. So the papists, who, as though Christ was not sufficient to satisfy justice and procure eternal life, join their own fond merits and satisfaction with that of Christ's righteousness; as though man's own righteousness could be either satisfactory or meritorious, which are the prerogatives and sovereign virtues of Christ's righteousness alone.

Far was the apostle from apprehending any such worth in his own righteousness (and sure he was not behind any of the papists), when he styles it flesh, and loss, and dung; when he disclaims it expressly, is afraid to be found in it, in any, save the righteousness of Christ.

3. To deny the participation of it, deny that it is imputed to us; as do the Arminians, with both the former. What this imputation is, I have shewed before; and thence it may appear how unreasonably they deny it to be imputed to believers, who grant it is accepted for them; since imputation is nothing but the acceptation of it declared and pronounced in the gospel.

I would fain know how that which is neither in us nor performed by us can be ours otherwise than by imputation. Either they must grant it is

imputed, or deny that we can have it. If so, what made the apostle disclaim all, suffer the loss of all, that he might have that which is impossible he should have?

4. Those who deny the righteousness of Christ in effect, though they confess it in words, live so unacquainted with it as though they did not acknowledge it; are such strangers to the use and improvement of this righteousness, as if there were no such things.

Many there are who disclaim popery in words, and yet are too like papists in undervaluing the righteousness of Christ; many who rely not on it alone for pardon, acceptance, and life, who set up their posts by God's post, and join their own righteousness with the righteousness of Christ, if they leave any place at all for this. Their good meaning, honest dealing, religious duties, or works of charity, must share with Christ in the honour of procuring for them pardon and life. Here they rest.

And this is too common, and the grounds of it seem to be pride and ignorance; the motive, corruptions* of our minds and hearts. Such pride there is in every man by nature, as he will have something of his own to commend him to God; he will not be beholden to another for his salvation. He is loath to think himself so vile as that he hath nothing, or can do nothing, that may help him to pardon and life.

That self-denial, self-abhorrence which the gospel requires, is quite contrary to nature; and if there be nothing but nature in thee, thou wilt never attain them.

This pride is it which keeps multitudes (who yet think themselves humble enough) out of that way of life which is revealed in Christ. This is it which is the great enemy of the honour of Christ in his righteousness, and so deeply is it rooted in man's nature, as nothing but an almighty power can pluck it up. Those weapons must be mighty through God that cast down these high imaginations.

Another ground is ignorance. Men are not well acquainted either with Christ or themselves, for if they know, yet do not effectually lay it to heart; they consider not what perfection and exactness the law of God doth indispensably require of them; they consider not into what misery every act of disobedience sinks their souls; they consider not how impossible it is, by anything they have or can do, to free themselves from this misery; they consider not that Christ's righteousness is only sufficient to do it. And thus they go on in the dark, neglecting Christ and their souls, till he sends his Spirit with power and evidence, to convince them of sin, of wrath due to sin, of misery by reason of wrath, of their absolute necessity of Christ to free them from this wrath. Till you have lively apprehensions of these things, Christ's righteousness will be of little value; and so it is with a great part of those who daily profess the gospel, which is a lamentation, and will be for a lamentation.

Secondly, The second direction is, Be apprehensive of its necessity. In other cases, we need no other motive to raise our desires of a thing, than the apprehension that it is absolutely necessary for us. The righteousness of Christ is of absolute necessity, and that in the weightiest concerns; it is absolutely necessary for thy life, for thy soul, for thy salvation. And that appears briefly in three particulars.

1. Nothing but this can answer the law of God. This requires perfect obedience of all that will have life, perfect righteousness under pain of death. Now no man in the world can perform such obedience, can produce such a

* Qu. 'native corruptions'?—Ed.

† Qu. 'or'?—Ed.

righteousness. It is only to be found in the man Christ Jesus. Either thou must be found having this righteousness of Christ, or else there is no life for thee ; else there is nothing but death for thee, and that as sure as God is true and unchangeable.

2. Nothing but this can satisfy the justice of God. It must be a righteousness of infinite value that satisfies justice, for sin is against an infinite majesty, and therefore the injury is infinite ; the satisfaction must be answerable to the injury, and therefore it must be infinite. But no righteousness, no satisfaction is of infinite value, but only that of Christ. Therefore thou must be found having Christ's righteousness, or else justice will press thee to death, justice will cast thee into hell, justice will there exact the utmost farthing, justice will have satisfaction on either, from the offender or his Surety. If thou hast not interest in Christ's satisfaction, to tender it unto justice, justice will require of thee in person ; and because thou canst never fully satisfy, thou must ever suffer.

3. Nothing but this can justify a sinner. There can be no justification without a perfect righteousness, for where there is imperfection there is some guilt, and the righteousness of God will never justify a guilty person, Exod. xxiii. 7, Prov. xvii. 15.

Now where must this perfect justifying righteousness be had ? Thou hast no such of thine own, Isa. lxiv., nor can any men or angels afford it thee. The angels have no more than will justify themselves, and fallen man hath not so much, Job xv. 14.

Either thou must have this righteousness of Christ, or else thou canst never be justified, and without justification no salvation : Rom. viii. 30, ' Whom he justifies, them also,' and them only, ' he glorifies.'

If, then, salvation be necessary for thee, then thou must count the righteousness of Christ necessary ; and if that be to be desired above all things, which is absolutely necessary to salvation, then is Christ's righteousness to be desired above all things.

Thirdly, The third direction is, Labour to get an interest in it. We are apt to esteem those things which are our own, and this esteem will make us desirous to continue in possession of them. So that the way to raise our esteem and quicken our desire after this righteousness of Christ, is to get interest in it. Make this your business and your great design, to get an interest in it ; and mind this as the one thing necessary, ' Seek first the kingdom of God, and this righteousness of him,' Mat. vi. ' Seek it first,' that is, primarily, before all, and principally, above all. It is a preposterous course to seek the things of the world first and most, and this after, with less care, less affections. This is the way to lose both, both heaven and earth, both the glorious things above, and the comforts of all enjoyments below. Make sure of this, and all is sure : ' All these shall be added.'

Now the way to obtain this righteousness we may find out in this phrase by which it is here expressed, ' The righteousness of God through faith.'

First, It is the righteousness of Christ ; and therefore, if we would obtain it, we must renounce our own righteousness, for these two are opposed by the apostle in point of confidence. If we rely upon our own righteousness, we disclaim the righteousness of Christ ; and if we rely on Christ's righteousness, we must disclaim our own. If these two could be joined, the apostle would not divide them ; but he professes, ' he would be found in Christ, not having,' &c., ' that he might have that which is,' &c.

Be convinced, then, of the insufficiency of your own righteousness. It cannot satisfy justice, it comes far short of what is required, it cannot make amends for the least sin, it cannot entitle you to heaven, it cannot justify you in the sight of God : 'By the deeds of the law,' &c., Gal. ii. 16. Since it is thus insufficient, rely not on it for what it cannot perform, depend not on it for pardon, acceptance, or life ; think not your praying and being sorry for sin, or works of charity, is that for which the Lord will pardon or save you, Tit. iii. 5. The like of justification, adoption, acceptance.

Be convinced no righteousness that you have, no works of righteousness that you do, will make any satisfaction for sin, or procure you any title to glory.

If you place your confidence herein, you cut yourself off from Christ and his righteousness, Gal. v. 4. Your own must be renounced, or else there is no hope of the righteousness by faith ; renounced, I say, not in respect of performance, but in respect of confidence. The works of righteousness must not be omitted, neglected ; this was not the apostle's practice nor intention ; he saw the necessity of these in himself, he urged them upon others ; they are commendable, yea, necessary in their own place, for those ends, and in that way which the Lord requires ; to testify your submission to God, to express your thankfulness for gospel mercies, to honour him, adorn your profession, evidence your sincerity ; for this and such like ends there is an excellency in them, a necessity of them.

But in respect of confidence you must renounce them ; perform them you must, but when you have performed them, you must repose no more confidence in them than if you had performed nothing at all. 'When we have done all, say,' &c., Mat. xvii. 10. Your own righteousness is good in its own place, but when you rely on it you misplace it ; and a good thing out of its own place may prove a dangerous evil. What more necessary and useful than fire when it is confined to the chimney ? Put it in the thatch, you know it will prove a dangerous, destructive evil. So here, righteousness confided in is a good thing out of its place, and so it may prove pernicious ; it will exclude you an interest in, and benefit by Christ's righteousness ; and therefore, in point of confidence, you must renounce it, if ever you would partake of Christ's righteousness.

The ground hereof is signally expressed by the church, Isa. lxiv. 6. Not righteousness, this or that act, but righteousnesses ; not some, but all put together ; let no rags, a rag will not cover you, it is not a garment ; stretch it as you will it cannot so hide your nakedness but some of it will appear ; your own righteousness cannot cover your guilt or pollution from the eye of God, it is a rag, there are many rents and holes in it, many defects and sinful imperfections in all, even the best. It is a rag, that which you have cause rather to be ashamed of than glory in, that which can neither secure you from extremity of heat or cold. It cannot secure you from the wrath and justice of God, it leaves you exposed thereto, it is not therefore to be trusted to.

Nay, filthy rags, not only defective, but polluted, and filthily polluted ; if the Lord observe it there is no standing in his sight ; it needs another covering to hide its filthiness from the pure eye of God, and nothing can so cover it but Christ's righteousness ; it must be cast off in point of confidence before we can put on Christ. Those that will be found in it cannot be found in Christ : it is the Lord's method to strip a sinner of his own rags before he put on him the best robe, Zech. iii. 3-5. The apostle observed this method : 'Not having,' &c. The way to Christ's righteous-

ness is renouncing your own. If you would rejoice in Christ Jesus, in the participation of his righteousness, you must have no confidence in the flesh.

Secondly, It is this righteousness which is of God. He ordained it, he appointed Christ to perform it; he accepted it performed, and imputes it, gives it believers; it is his gift, Rom. v. 15-19; and therefore if you would have it, you must ask it of God. Go, then, take to you words, desire it of him in all humble importunity. To beg for this as for life, pray as Rachel for children, Gen. xxx. 1. Give me Christ, give me his righteousness, or else I die: I die spiritually, I die eternally; nothing less can satisfy revenging justice, every hour ready to destroy; can appease that curse that burns like fire against me; can deliver me from wrath to come; can preserve me from going down into the pit. Oh give me this, or else I die, I perish eternally! Heaven and earth cannot save me without it; my soul is lost, my condition is desperate; I am undone for ever, if the Lord deny me this. Oh, this calls for your strongest cries! Life or death, and that of soul and body, and that to eternity, depends on it. Beg for it, as you would beg for life; say, nothing but this can procure me pardon of sin, can render myself or my services acceptable in his sight, can give me the least grounded hopes of heaven. If my hopes were only in this life, I am of all men most miserable. Why? Without Christ's righteousness I am without hope; this life cannot be comfortable, and there is no hopes at all of eternal life. If thou deniest this, I am of all men most miserable; I may be happy without worldly enjoyments, but all things in the world cannot make me happy without this. And therefore, however thou disposest of me in the world, whatsoever thou deniest me, Lord, deny me not this. I can be happy without riches and abundance, as was Job and Lazarus; happy though reviled and reproached, so was Christ, so was his disciples; happy and comfortable in prison, so was Paul and Silas. Oh, but I cannot be happy without this; all the riches, places, honours on earth, will leave me miserable, if I be left without this; so I should be rich and increased so with goods as to stand in need of nothing, yet if I want this, I shall be wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. If I had all things else that heart can desire on earth, yet what would all this avail me without Christ's righteousness! What profit in riches, while I have them with the wrath of God! What comforts in honour, while I am a son of perdition, a child of wrath! What sweetness in pleasure, while I am hastening to everlasting torments! Oh, miserable comforts, miserable enjoyments are these, whilst Christ's righteousness is not my portion!

Lord, however thou dealest with me in outward things, whatsoever thou takest from me, whatsoever thou deniest me, oh, deny me not Christ, deny me not interest in his righteousness! Thus follow the Lord with strong cries, lie at the Lord's feet, cast thyself at this throne of grace, resolve to give the Lord no rest till he gives thee Christ and his righteousness.

Thirdly, It is a righteousness through faith. The righteousness *by* faith here, and elsewhere a righteousness *of* faith, and that because it is made ours by faith. It is the righteousness of God, because his gift; the righteousness of faith, because faith is, as it were, the hand by which we receive this gift. Hence believing and receiving are all one in Scripture, John i. 12. If you would have Christ's righteousness, you must have faith. But here mistake not that for faith which is not faith, an ordinary but dangerous mistake, when Satan persuades men they have Christ's

righteousness, though they have it not, by persuading them they have justifying faith, when they have no such thing.

Think not you have faith because you believe the word of God, and what he there reveals is true. This is not justifying faith; this is no more than devils may have. Think not it is an easy thing to believe; those that think so know not what faith is. A man, whilst in the state of nature, can no more believe of himself, and receive Christ's righteousness, than a dead man can stretch out his hand to receive meat, for natural men are dead in trespasses and sins.

Those that say they have faith ever since they can remember, know not how they came by it, may suspect they never had it at all. It is an almighty power that works faith in a sinner, and there is a wonderful change wrought in the heart when faith is there planted, a change answerable to the greatness of that power that works, answerable [to] such a power as raised Christ from the dead, for such a power is requisite to work faith, Eph. i. 19, 20.

Observe the way, the method, which the Lord ordinarily uses in working that faith which receives this righteousness.

He convinces the soul of sin, sets his sins in order before him in its sinfulness, heinousness, aggravations, and desert; of the wrath of God due to him for sin, and his misery by reason hereof, so as his conscience is affected, his soul burthened therewith; he discovers Christ, his excellency, all-sufficiency, and the absolute necessity of him. He had heard of this before, but now sees them; his present apprehensions of these things differ as much from his former, as those of a quick-sighted man differs from his who is blind.

He hereupon quickens his desires after Christ, begets in him hungering and thirsting after his righteousness, such as a famished man after meat.

He persuades the heart to accept of Christ upon his own terms, makes it willing, resolute to abandon every known sin, how dear soever, and to walk in every way of holiness, how strict and precise soever he hath judged it formerly, how much soever it be hated or derided by the world.

And in the deep sense of his misery and lost condition, by reason of sin and wrath, and the insufficiency of all things to deliver him, but Christ only, he inclines the soul to cast itself upon Christ for pardon and life, and to rest upon him as the only refuge from wrath and misery; the soul lays hold, rests upon Christ, even as a drowning man lays hold on a plank and stays himself thereupon from sinking; this is that faith which receives Christ's righteousness, and this you must believe if you would partake of it.

Fourthly, Be diligent to improve this righteousness of Christ. We little value or desire those things whose use and virtue we know not, and the virtue of a thing is not fully known till it be improved and made use of. Labour to improve the righteousness of Christ, and then the sweet and blessed advantages of it will be known effectually; for hereby you will know them experimentally, and an experimental knowledge hereof is the most effectual means to raise your apprehensions of it, and draw out your desires after it.

For further directions I intended to shew how Christ's righteousness may be improved for the encouragement, increase, and exercise of every grace, of love and zeal, of humility and self-denial, of hatred of sin and contempt of the world, with many more. I intended also to shew how you may improve it in every duty, enjoyment, occurrence, and undertaking;

but if you forget not what I have formerly delivered in many particulars concerning the usefulness and advantage of Christ's righteousness; if you conscientiously make use thereof accordingly, there will be no need of further directions herein; and lest I should seem to stay too long upon this subject, thither I must refer you.

I shall now only insist upon one particular, or rather two in one, but that which will be instead of many; and this is to shew you how we may improve it in praying and believing, for the strengthening of faith and your encouragement to pray in faith.

These two are as it were the life, breath, of a quickened soul; that which it lives upon is Christ and his righteousness, Gal. ii. 20; he that can pray and believe needs want nothing, this will fetch him rich supplies in abundance; the treasury is Christ's righteousness.

He needs fear nothing, this will scatter all occasions of fear, Christ's righteousness will be his security.

He is a Christian indeed that is much in prayer and strong in faith; these two must be joined, for faith is best experienced in prayer, and prayer is most effectual when in faith, James i. 5, 6.

These are the two great attractive faculties of the new creature, they draw into the soul all that virtue of Christ's righteousness which is communicable; these are the ways, the means to make the utmost improvement of the righteousness of Jesus.

And which is here most considerable, nothing affords more encouragement to improve this righteousness by faith and prayer than this righteousness itself.

As the best way to improve this righteousness is by praying and believing, so the greatest encouragement to faith, to prayer, is from this righteousness; this strengthens the hands of faith, this suggests arguments to make the soul earnest, affected, importunate in prayer; this answers all objections, removes all discouragements that might dishearten the soul from praying, or hinder the acting of faith in prayer.

Let me shew this more particularly, that you may see the way herein to improve Christ's righteousness.

(1.) A humble soul, sensible of his spiritual condition, and the weakness of his best services, will be apt to discourage himself with such thoughts as these. Alas! my prayers are weak, if I could pray with such fervency, such enlargements, such affections, such importunity as other servants of God have done formerly, and some I see are wont to do now, then I might be encouraged to pray, and to expect an answer of my prayers; but my prayers are so weak, faint, imperfect, as there is little hope they should be regarded, little hope they should prevail.

Ay, but consider, though thy prayers be weak, yet the plea of Christ's righteousness is strong, this hath a voice which the Lord hears, though we take no notice of it; *nunquam tacet*, &c.

It speaks better things than the blood of Abel, Heb. xii. 24. The weakest prayer, enforced with the righteousness of Christ, is more effectual, more prevailing than that which seems strongest, if Christ's righteousness be neglected; if Christ should now, as in the days of his flesh, send up for thee strong cries, with tears and sighs, thou wouldst not doubt, whatever thy weakness be, but he would prevail for thee; why, the righteousness of Christ presented to the Lord now in heaven, doth as effectually speak for thee (if a believer), as if he did now pray for thee with sighs and tears. There is a more powerful plea in the blood of Christ than there could be in

his tears : and that is as fresh in the Lord's remembrance, as if it were now, as if it were every hour shed for thee ; it ever pleads, and therefore he is said for ever to make intercession ; and canst thou doubt that this plea ever joined with, always enforcing thy prayers, will not prevail ? Oh what encouragement is here to faith in prayer from Christ's righteousness !

(2.) Secondly, Oh but my former sins are great, my provocations many, and when I come to pray, nay, would believe the Lord will hearken, then I fear my sins may come into remembrance, may meet my prayers at the throne of grace, and this dashes my hopes, sinks me into distrust and doubtings. My sins cry louder than my prayers, and what hope then my prayers should prevail ? The Lord's ear is not straitened. Methinks I see my sins spreading themselves as a thick cloud about the throne of grace, so as my prayers cannot come near.

Ay, but to remove this, consider there is a virtue in the righteousness of Christ to scatter thy sins as a thick cloud. Let faith carry with it the righteousness of Christ to the throne of grace, and thou wilt see thy sins vanish as a mist before the sun, and this is applied by and to a believer, and presented by Christ in his behalf, his sins shall never more be had in remembrance ; nay, he will cast them into the bottom of the sea. So that thou mayest say of them as it is said of Pharaoh and the Egyptians, ' Those that ye now see, ye shall see them no more.' Christ's righteousness will be continually presented on purpose to nonsuit sin and Satan. When this is applied, though sin appear in judgment and plead against the believer, yet it will certainly be cast, Rom. viii. 8. Christ, by virtue of his righteousness, is the most powerful advocate, he always hath the judge's ears and heart, and that cause will always be found righteous that Christ's righteousness is engaged in ; it is impossible it should miscarry.

To bring this with faith to the throne of grace, and then whatever sins yours have been, you may plead there with confidence to prevail ; hence triumphant challenge of the apostle, who otherwise was as sensible of his sins as any, Rom. viii. 33 ; your sins may outcry your prayers, but they cannot outcry the blood, the righteousness of Christ.

(3.) Thirdly, Oh but I am unworthy, how can I expect the Lord should take notice of such a worm ? there seems no more reason the great God should regard my prayers than that he should regard the crawling of a worm, or take notice of the regardless motion of dust or ashes ; I am less, I am worse than these, sin hath made me more unworthy.

Ay, but though thou beest unworthy, yet Christ is worthy ; though there be no worth in thee, yet there is worth enough in Christ's righteousness ; though thou and thy services be found too light, lighter than vanity, yet put Christ's righteousness in the balance, together with thee and thy prayers, and then they will be current, acceptable, without question.

If thou be found in Christ, then look not on what thou art simply in thyself, but what thou art in him ; now he hath made thy lust his, and his righteousness thine, no matter then for thy unworthiness since he is worthy ; say, Most unworthy am I, O Lord, but worthy is Christ ; and so the angels and saints cry with a loud voice, Rev. v. 12.

Now, as he is worthy to receive all this for himself, so he is worthy to obtain, to receive all good things for his people ; if thou beest found in him, having his righteousness, his merits, his worthiness will be as available for thee though thou beest most unworthy ; thou shalt as easily obtain what thou prayest for as though thou wast worthy to receive it ; though thou

art the vilest of slaves by reason of sin, yet believing this, by this righteousness art made a king and a priest to offer up spiritual sacrifices, &c.

(4.) Fourthly, But I fear the Lord is not willing to grant what I pray for. Ordinarily there seems to be no doubt of the Lord's power, but that which most weakens faith and discourages the heart in praying is fear, or doubting that the Lord is not willing. Here is the greatest discouragement a believer meets with, Gal. iv. 5.

But the righteousness of Christ removes this, hence thou mayest persuade thyself the Lord is most willing, most ready to grant what thou desirest; for if thou be found in Christ, and if thou ask what is good, what is necessary for thee, the righteousness of Christ hath purchased this for thee; now, will the Lord be unwilling to put thee in possession of what Christ hath purchased for thee? You cannot imagine him unwilling here, except you will think him unjust, unrighteous.

Besides, the relation wherein Christ's righteousness instates thee may persuade this; hereby thou standest in that relation to God as a child to his father, Gal. iii. 26. Now, will a father so gracious, so indulgent, be unwilling to afford his child what is good, what is necessary for him, when he asks it affectionately, begs it with all importunity? It is Christ's own argument, Mat. vii. 9-11.

(5.) Fifthly, Oh, but it is a great request I put up; if it were a small matter, I should with more confidence look to have it granted, but in this case, here is more ground for doubting.

For answer, no more ground at all; the righteousness of Christ satisfies this on a double account.

[1.] If the Lord hath given thee Christ and his righteousness, he hath given thee the greatest mercy that can be given or received; if he hath given thee the greater, mayest thou not with confidence ask the less? He that thought not Christ himself too much for thee, will he stand with thee for a small matter? The greatest is small compared with Christ, Rom. viii.

[2.] Is this great thing of more value than Christ's righteousness? No such instance can be given. Why, then, it was bought for thee by Christ's righteousness, this was the price of it; and if it be purchased for thee, can the greatness of it hinder the Lord from giving it to thee?

(6.) Sixthly, Oh, but there are many provocations even in my prayers, much deadness of heart, much unaffectedness, much indifferency and lukewarmness, much self-seeking, and many distractions, much backwardness to it, dulness in it, weariness of it, &c., and many other provoking evils. Those that observe the temper of their hearts in spiritual duties, and take an account of their ways and walking with God, will find cause to bewail the sinfulness of their best prayers; and Satan, he takes an occasion hereby to assault their faith, and discourage from expecting any gracious returns to such offensive petitions. How can this offering (will he suggest) ascend up as a savour of a sweet smell unto heaven, when there is so much corruption in them?

But for answer: If these sinful imperfections be bewailed, and the blood of Christ applied by faith for pardon, then they are pardoned; and what sins are pardoned can no more hinder the answer of prayer (if good) than if they were not committed.

The prayers of believers appear not in the sight of God simply as they come from them, they are presented by Christ; their petitions are, as it were, offered by his hand, and his righteousness presented with them; if the sin appears, the satisfaction is at hand too, and how then can the

appearance of sin be prejudicial? See this comfortably set forth in Rom. viii. 8, 4.

It was the priest's office to offer incense, and this angel that here offers is the High Priest of heaven, the Lord Jesus; he offers the prayers of the saints, they ascend before God out of the angel's hand, and needs must they be accepted from his hand, whatever they be in themselves.

Nay, further, he offers them with much incense, or, as it is in the Greek, he adds much incense to them; that is, he adds his meritorious and satisfactory righteousness, for incense was a type of his mediation. The prayers that ascend up with this incense must needs be the savour of a sweet smell, must needs find gracious acceptance and sweet returns.

Thus you see how this righteousness may be improved to strengthen faith, and remove all discouragements in praying, to answer all objections that may occasion any doubt of gracious returns. And by this one instance you may judge how advantageous it would be to the rest. Oh that the comfort and precious advantages which arise from the improvement of this righteousness might be effectual to raise your thoughts of it, and quicken your desires after it, so as ye might be willing to suffer the loss of all things, &c.