

SERMON XIX.

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THE NATURE OF JUSTIFICATION OPENED.

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.—ROMANS v. 1.

THE words present us, for the argument of this Morning Exercise, with the great doctrine of justification, first to be opened, and then improved.

I. *To be opened.*—And that we may not, with Aquinas and the Papists, *in ipso limine impingere*, “stumble the very first step we take,” and so quite ever after lose our way, by confounding justification with sanctification; I shall only premise, that as in sanctification the change is absolute and inherent, so in justification the change is relative and juridical. The former is wrought in the sinner’s person; he becomes a new creature: but this latter is wrought in his state; he becomes absolved at the bar of Divine Justice. For justification is a law-state: * it abolisheth the convincing power of sin, or its guilt. Our business, therefore, is to discover the process at God’s bar in the justification of a sinner; which will be best done by comparing it with that at man’s, which we are familiarly acquainted with.

To be “justified,” therefore, implies in general three things: (I.) The person is *charged with guilt*; (II.) *Pleads to the charge*; (III.) *Upon that plea is discharged by the Judge.*

(I.) A justified person must be *charged with guilt.*—Now guilt is the relation which sin hath to punishment. For sin is the breach of the law, and punishment is the vengeance which the law threatens for that breach. And as the threatening itself is, in the nature of it, a guard to the law, to prevent the breach of it, bidding, as it were, the transgressor come at his peril, break the law if he dare, be wise beforehand, lest he rue it too late; so the punishment, in the very nature of it, is a vindication of the equity of the injured law, the reparation and amends [which] it makes itself for the wrong done it, by damnifying the person injuring her proportionally to the injury. Now, that a justified person must be charged with guilt,—that is, with the breach of law,—and, by consequence, with desert of punishment, appears, because otherwise, if a man be pronounced righteous whom nobody ever accused or questioned, he is only praised, not justified.

(II.) The person to be justified must *plead for himself.*—Either in person, or by his advocate who sustains his person. For, to refuse to plead, is to despair quite of being justified, and to abandon one’s self

* *Δικαιοσθαι* [“to be justified”] from *δικη* [“law, justice”].

over unto punishment: "silence gives consent;" it argues [that] the accused person hath nothing to say for himself, why he should not be condemned. Our law, you know, showeth no mercy to one that will not plead: he is to be pressed to death.

An indicted person must plead, therefore, something in his own behalf, why he should be justified, if he would be. Now, either the man is guilty of the charge, or not guilty. I must speak to both cases, and show what pleas are requisite in each, and which of them is the plea upon which a sinner is justified at the bar of God.

CASE I. If the indicted person be *not guilty* of the charge, justice itself must justify him upon that plea: *Si accusasse sufficiat, quis erit innocens?** An innocent person may be accused; he can never be convinced; for, that that is not, can never be demonstrated: the judge or jury were themselves guilty, if they found innocence guilty. Now, to be justified thus, is to be purely and merely justified, not at all to be pardoned; for, such an one stands upon his terms, bears himself upon his own righteousness, begs no mercy. It is no favour to justify him; it is his due: he is not beholden to the judge a jot; the exact rigour of the law acquits him.

To bring this to the present business: I shall demonstrate that *we can never be justified at the bar of God, by pleading Not Guilty.*—For,

1. *The plea is false.*—Although, in a very restrained sense, there is none so wicked but he may plead Not Guilty, and be justified, as to this or that particular fact charged upon him:—Nimrod was not guilty of Abel's murder; nay, a saint may be guilty of some sins which the devil may plead Not Guilty to; as grieving the comforting, the sealing Spirit, abusing the Redeemer's grace, &c.—yet nothing short of universal innocence, nothing but a perfect righteousness, a total exemption from all manner of guilt, will entitle us before God's tribunal to this plea: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." (James ii. 10.)

(1.) *Because the punishment due to the breach of the whole law, (namely, the curse of God,) is due to every breach of every part.*—"Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." (Gal. iii. 10; Deut. xxvii. 26.) "The wages of sin," τῆς ἀμαρτίας, "of every single sin," "is death." (Rom. vi. 23.)

(2.) *Because he that "offends in one point," affronteth the authority of all.*—As is excellently observed in the next verse: "For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill." (James ii. 11.) Every sin hath atheism in it; it denies the God that is above; to trample upon the majesty of God shining in one commandment, is at once to trample upon that majesty which enacted all.

(3.) *Because thereby he becomes infected with a contagious disposition to be guilty of all.*—The same principle which emboldened him now, will [embolden him] another time, if but excited with equal strengths of temptation, to commit any other sin, or to repeat the

* "If mere accusation be sufficient, who then will be innocent?"—EDIT.

same sins again and again, though excited with still weaker and weaker temptations; for as frequent acts strengthen the habit of sin, so the habit facilitates the acts.

From hence it appears, that the holy angels, that Adam in innocency, that the man Christ Jesus, might indeed plead Not Guilty before God, and be justified upon that plea; but [it is] now impossible for us. (Rom. iii. 20, 23; Psalm xiv. 1; 1 John i. 8.)

2. The plea being false, *there is no hope upon this issue to be justified, unless there were some defect in the judge, or in the evidence.*—*In the judge*, either of prudence, in not understanding,—or of integrity or power, in not executing,—the law aright. But in our case these are alike, that is, infinitely, impossible: for we have to do with the all-wise Legislator himself, who is also the “holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty;” and “shall not this Judge of all the earth do right?” (Gen. xviii. 25.) Nor can there be any defect *in the evidence*: for the books shall be opened at the last day; and the dead shall be “judged out of those things which are written in the books, according to their works.” (Rev. xx. 12.) Nay, even now there are two day-books a-filling: down goes (every hour, every moment) all we do and think and speak in *the book of God’s remembrance*, fairly written; not an iota, not a tittle, either missed or blurred. Of this God hath given us a counterpart, to keep in our own bosoms,—*the register of conscience*; though a very imperfect copy, full of blots, mistakes, omissions; yet enough alone to convince us instead of a thousand witnesses; for every sinner will be his own accuser and condemner, rising up as an advocate in the behalf of the great Judge, against himself at the day of judgment:—

— *Prima est hæc ultio, quòd, se
Judice, nemo nocens absolvitur.*—*JUVENALIS Sat. xiii. 2.**

CASE II. And this was the first plea, Not Guilty; but the case is not ours, and therefore this plea will never justify us. I come, therefore, to the other, which in our case is *Guilty*. And here are two ways of pleading:—

FIRST. *Mere mercy, for mercy’s sake.*—But, indeed, this is not to plead at all, but to beg. And as, in the last case, when an innocent person upon his pleading Not Guilty is discharged, that is pure justification, but no pardon; so here quite contrary,—when a guilty person is discharged out of mercy, this is pure pardon, but no justification: for there shines not one beam of justice in such a discharge; mere mercy is all in all. Whence it follows, that the Socinians, who, to avoid the necessity of acknowledging Christ’s satisfaction to Divine Justice, affirm that justification is nothing but mere remission of sins, do abuse the word, and contradict themselves. For who seeth not, that to be pardoned *gratis*, “out of pure mercy,” (without the least reparation made either for the injury and indignity done to the law, or satisfaction to the honour, justice, and authority of the lawgiver, by the sin, affronted,) is not “to be justified” at all, *δικαιοσθαι*, but

* “Tis the first vengeance: conscience tries the cause,
And vindicates the violated laws.”—GIFFORD’S Translation.

only "to be gratified," *ελεεισθαι*, that is, discharged upon the sole account of mercy, without any consideration had of justice? This is the first way of pleading, when guilty,—mere mercy, for mercy's sake; but to be justified upon this plea, is an evident contradiction. Therefore,

SECONDLY. The only plea for a guilty person to be justified upon is, to plead *mercy for the sake of some satisfaction made to the justice and honour of the law.*—And by how much the fuller this satisfaction is, by so much the fuller is the justification of such a person as is upon this plea discharged. Now a full satisfaction may be made two ways:—

1. By suffering the whole penalty due.
2. When a valuable consideration is accepted by the offended party or judge; wherein the honour of the law is as much saved, as if it had never been broken; or as if, being broken, the full penalty had been inflicted on the breaker.

And here I have these two things to prove:—

1. *That man could never make such satisfaction to the justice of God, nor any creature for him.*
2. *That the Lord Christ hath made such full satisfaction, that it stands now with the honour of the holy God, to justify sinners upon the terms of the gospel.*

ASSERTION I. *That neither man nor any creature could satisfy offended justice.*

1. *Not by suffering the penalty.*—For, that, being infinite, requires an infinite continuance under it, there being no other way for a finite creature to suffer infinitely: and so the whole penalty will ever be suffering, but can never be suffered. For, in eternity, stop where you will, and there is yet as much to come as is already past; nay, infinitely more: for that which is past is but a finite time of suffering, though millions of ages are past; but an eternity of suffering is yet to come; and after as many more millions of ages, still, still an infinite eternity is future, that never can be so exhausted but an eternity will still be left.

2. *Not by any act of service, which amounts to a valuable consideration worthy to be accepted of the Judge as satisfactory to his affronted justice.*—For two reasons:—

(1.) *Because God is more dishonoured by one sin, than honoured by an eternity of obedience.*—For God is not at all obliged to cherubims and seraphims for obeying him: all the creation naturally oweth its utmost possibility of service, as an eternal debt, to its great Creator. Now, the least act of disobedience or sin being injury and treason, thereby a new obligation is contracted; namely, to suffer condign punishment; the former obligation unto duty remaining eternally in as full force as ever; which if we could discharge, yet were we but "unprofitable servants." (Luke xvii. 10.) "Can a man be profitable unto God?" (Job xxii. 2.) "If thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand?" (Chap. xxxv. 7.) An eternity of service in the highest perfection is every creature's debt, as

a creature; and, besides this, an eternity of suffering, too, is every delinquent creature's debt, as delinquent. But one debt cannot pay another. Since, therefore, all that the whole creation can do for ever, would but just satisfy the first natural obligation unto pure justice, namely, the debt of obedience; it is quite impossible that ever any creature should super-erogate, or spare any thing from hence, toward satisfying the secondary super-added obligation unto offended justice, namely, the debt of punishment, either in its own behalf or another's.

(2.) The other reason why neither man, nor any creature for him, can ever satisfy the offended Creator by the highest services, [is,] *because they all have it from him, when they do obey him.*—Of his own do they give him: (1 Chron. xxix. 14 :) for “in him we live, and move, and have our being.” (Acts xvii. 28.) “What hast thou,” O man, nay, O angel, O archangel, “that thou didst not receive?” (1 Cor. iv. 7.) “All” our, nay, all their, “springs are in him.” (Psalm lxxxvii. 7.) “Without him we can do nothing.” (John xv. 5.) The more we do for God, the more he doth for us; and, consequently, still the more we owe him. So that acts of obedience are so far from satisfying our obligations to God, as that they contract new ones; for even for them are we obliged.

ASSERTION II. Having cleared the first, we come to the second, point,—*that Christ hath so fully satisfied his Father's offended justice, as [that] it stands now with the honour of the holy God to justify every sinner that can, upon gospel-terms, plead his interest in this satisfaction.*—Here we must inquire into these three things:—

1. *The matter of this satisfaction.*

2. *The form, or that which makes it infinitely satisfactory and meritorious.*

3. *What are those gospel-terms?*

QUERY I. For *the matter of Christ's satisfaction*: I humbly conceive that the whole state of his humiliation, from his conception to his resurrection, (for at his resurrection began the second state of Christ as Mediator; namely, his exaltation; to be continued to the general resurrection; and then he shall resign up the kingdom to the Father, and God shall be thenceforward “all in all,” 1 Cor. xv. 24, 28,) that this state, I say, of our Redeemer's humiliation is entirely looked upon by God as the valuable consideration wherein his justice with honour acquiesceth and rests satisfied. It hath two parts: (1.) *His taking the form of a servant at his incarnation.* (2.) *His management of and deportment in that state.*

(1.) *His incarnation.*—And this presents God with a double satisfaction, whereby he may with honour entertain thoughts of love to mankind.

(i.) *In that human nature is in Christ unstained with either original or actual sin.*—For, by his divine conception by the Holy Ghost, he received of his virgin-mother a pure, undeflowered, virgin human nature. The Second Adam revives the innocency of the first. Those eyes could without disparagement behold his manhood, which are

“purer than to behold iniquity;” and even in their sight, though no other flesh living could, yet this flesh must, be justified.

(ii.) *In that human nature is in him dignified with union to the Divine, and is become the seat and mansion of the Godhead.*—So that, how loathsome soever sin hath rendered it in us, yet in him it is highly exalted, even as highly as the Divine Nature in him was abased: for the human nature ascends just in the same proportion as the Divine descended; that is, to the utmost possibility; for God could stoop no lower than to become a man, nor man rise higher than to be personally one with God.

Thus, you see, Christ’s entering into his state of humiliation hath rendered the nature of man very considerable again in the sight of God; so that He can now with honour exercise good-will toward it.

(2.) *His management of this state* consists in his active and passive righteousness.

By “his *active* righteousness,” I mean, his obedience to the whole law: to the *ceremonial*, in being circumcised, baptized, keeping the three yearly feasts, &c.; to the *moral*, in not committing one sin, or neglecting one commanded duty, even to subjection to his parents and paying tribute to Cæsar.

By “his *passive* righteousness,” I mean, all that he suffered *in his life-time*; as, the meanness of his birth and education; his persecution by Herod in his infancy, after by the scribes and Pharisees; his hunger and temptation in the wilderness; his poverty and straits,—he “had not where to lay his head;” (Matt. viii. 20;) in a word, he was all his life long in all things “tempted like as we are, yet without sin:” (Heb. iv. 15;) but especially what he suffered *at his death*,

First. *In his body.*—He was scourged, spit upon, crowned with thorns, and at length crucified; which was,

(i.) A *cruel* death: the Latin *cruciari*, “to be tormented,” is derived a *cruce*, “from being crucified.”

(ii.) A *reproachful* one: (Gal. iii. 13; Heb. xiii. 13;) it was the Roman death for slaves and malefactors.

But, Secondly, most of all he suffered *in his soul.*—Witness those expressions, *λυπεισθαι, εκθαμβεισθαι, αδημονειν* [“He began to be sorrowful, to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy”]. (Matt. xxvi. 37; Mark xiv. 33.) Add his bemoaning himself to his disciples in the following words; and his passionate prayer, thrice repeated: “Abba, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” (Matt. xxvi. 39; Mark xiv. 36.) Add further yet his sweating drops of blood, in that bitter agony which so spent him in the garden, that an angel was sent to comfort him. (Luke xxii. 43, 44.) But, above all, his desertion upon the cross witnesseth that he suffered unutterably in his soul, when he cried, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Mark xv. 34.) The Socinians are here puzzled to give any tolerable account how the infinitely good God could find in his heart to exercise his only-begotten Son, that never sinned, with all these horrors in his soul. For, certainly, it stood not with his goodness, had not Christ, as the Second Adam, been a public person, a representative, on whom

“the Lord laid the iniquities of us all.” (Isai. liii. 6.) But if we consider (which they deny) that Christ was then satisfying his Father’s justice, we need not wonder at those horrors and consternations of the manhood : for he knew the vastness of his undertaking, the numberless numbers and aggravations of sins, the dreadful weight of his Father’s wrath, the sharpness of that sword which he was going now to feel. (Zech. xiii. 7.) (Not that God was angry with Christ upon the cross *quoad affectum* [“as to the affection”]; no, he never more dearly loved him : but *quoad effectum* [“with regard to the effect”].) Add Christ’s infinite abhorrence of the sins he bore, and that infinite zeal wherewith he was inflamed to vindicate the honour of divine justice. Now, his infinite love to his church, struggling with all these, produced those agonies ; and overcame them all, when he said, “It is finished.” (John xix. 30.) We meet him next triumphing in his resurrection.

But here to resolve that great question,—whether Christ’s passive righteousness alone, or active and passive jointly, are the matter of Christ’s satisfaction, which believers plead at God’s bar for their justification, and which, being accepted by God as a plea good in law, is said to be “imputed” (namely, in a law-sense) “for righteousness.” Let these reasons be weighed by such as do disjoin them :—

(i.) First. *Each of them hath its proper interest in, and its respective contribution toward, the satisfying [of] the injured honour of God’s law.*—For the honour of God’s law is the equity of both its parts,—its command, and its threatening. Christ’s active righteousness honours the equity of the first ; which man had dishonoured by his disobedience : but the great God-man hath repaired the honour of God’s commandments, by yielding a most perfect obedience to every one of them ; and therein proclaimed the law to be “holy, and just, and good.” (Rom. vii. 12.) Then Christ’s passive righteousness in like manner honours the equity of the threatening : for as, by obeying, he acknowledged God’s authority to make a law, and his unexceptionable righteousness in every single branch of the law made ; so, by suffering, he proclaimeth that man is bound to keep it, or, if he do not, to bear the penalty. He himself dies to justify that the sinner is worthy of death, and offers himself upon the cross as a sacrifice to the Divine Justice : and hereby he hath proclaimed sin to be “exceeding sinful,” and God to be so jealous a God as [that], rather than sin should go unpunished, and his justice want its glory, the righteous, eternal Son of God must be made an example [of] what guilty man had deserved. Thus God by two equal miracles (with everlasting astonishment to be adored) hath satisfied both his contending attributes, and rendered each of them triumphant ; in making his righteous Son an example of his sin-avenging *justice*, that guilty sinners, repenting and believing, might be made examples of his sin-pardoning *goodness*.

(ii.) In the second place : as each hath its respective interest in satisfying the injured law, so *neither of them can be any where severed from the other.*—And those which God hath so indissolubly joined,

let none part asunder. For Christ's active righteousness was every where passive, because all of it [was] done in the form of a servant; for in our nature he obeyed the law: but in his very incarnation he was passive; for therein he suffered an eclipse of the glory of his Godhead. And his passive righteousness was every where active; because what he suffered was not by constraint or against his will; no, it was his own voluntary act and deed all along. Let me instance in the greatest of his sufferings: his very dying was the product both of the freeness of his love and the majesty of his power. (John x. 17, 18; Rev. i. 5.)

(iii.) In the third place: *both Christ's active and passive righteousness, what he did and what he suffered, partake in common of the form of satisfaction.*—Therefore they are both integral parts or joint ingredients thereof; for *forma dat esse*.* But this brings me to the second inquiry:—

QUERY II. *What is the form of Christ's satisfaction, or that which renders it satisfactory?*

ANSWER. I answer, The infinite merit of what he did and suffered; which infinite merit stands,

(1.) *In the dignity of his person.*—"The fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily." (Col. ii. 9; John i. 14.) Now, for the work of a servant to be done by the Lord of all, renders his *active*—and for Him to suffer as a malefactor between malefactors who was "God blessed for evermore," renders also his *passive*—righteousness infinitely meritorious. No wonder "the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin;" (1 John i. 7;) for it is the blood of God. (Acts xx. 28.) And this is the reason why the righteousness of one redounds unto all for the "justification of life," (Rom. v. 18, 19,)—because his active and passive righteousness is infinitely of more value, than all that all the creatures in heaven and earth could have done or suffered to eternity. The very man Christ Jesus is above all the angels; (Heb. i. 6;) for he is "the man that is God's fellow." (Zech. xiii. 7.) And this infinite worthiness of the Redeemer's person you have excellently described, as irradiating and infinitely exalting all he did and suffered, in Phil. ii. 6—9; Heb. vii. 24—28.

(2.) The active and passive righteousness of Christ are of infinite merit, *because not at all due, but both mere super-erogations of an infinitely glorious person.*

And, First, for his *active* righteousness: it stood in his obedience to the ceremonial and moral laws.

(i.) His obedience to the *ceremonial* law was a mere super-erogation,—for the substance to comply with the shadows, the antitype to do homage to its own types. Besides, he submitted to those very ordinances whose end and institution supposeth guilt, and whose nature argues them designed only for the use of sinners. What foreskin of impurity had he to be cut off in circumcision? What filth, to be washed away in baptism? Did the "holy child Jesus" defile his mother's womb, as common mortals do, that are conceived in sin,

* "Form bestows existence."—EDIT.

and brought forth in iniquity? And yet he was circumcised and baptized, and his mother offered for her purification. (Luke ii. 21, 22; iii. 21.) No imaginable obligation lay on him to these submissions, being to him mere ciphers, wholly insignificant.

(ii.) His obedience to the *moral* law,—although it must be granted that as man it was his duty, (Gal. iv. 4,) yet was it not his duty to become man. True, a creature's homage was due from him, when a creature; a servant's work, when in the form of a servant: but the whole was free and arbitrary, because his entering into that state was so. For what but his own infinite love could ever move the eternal Word to pitch his tent in our nature? What obligation lay on the Heir of all things to take the form of a servant? Who bound the eternal Son of God to become, in the fulness of time, the Son of man?

And as his active righteousness, so, Secondly, his *passive*, too, was a mere super-erogation. For his Almighty Father's holy, all-seeing eye could never espy the least iniquity in him to punish. What had the Divine Justice to do with him? for he was a sinless person. He suffered "not for himself;" (Dan ix. 26;) no, "for us." (2 Cor. v. 21.) And therefore, since no obligation lay on him to do what he did, or to suffer what he suffered, he may impute the merit both of the one and the other to whomsoever, and upon what terms soever, he and his Father please.

But before I come to consider the terms upon which Christ's satisfaction is applied, I must answer some QUESTIONS, and clear the scruples in the way.

OBJECTION I.

"What is become of the law of that first covenant made with Adam in Paradise, (Gen. ii. 17,) repeated again to the Jews? (Deut. xxvii. 26;) the sum of which you have, fully expressed, in Ezek. xviii. 4: 'The soul that sinneth, it shall die.'"

ANSWER.

I answer, It is not executed nor abrogated, but released or dispensed with.

(1.) *It is not fully executed.*—"For there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. viii. 1.)

(2.) *It is not abrogated.*—For it is in part executed upon believers. They are liable to the first, or natural, death, which is "the wages of sin," (Rom. vi. 23,) although "the second death hath no power" over them; (Rev. xx. 6;) beside all manner of chastisements and afflictions. (Psalm lxxxix. 30—32.) And also that law is totally executed upon finally-impenitent unbelievers; over whom, not the first only, but the second death also hath power. (2 Thess. i. 8.) For "he that believeth not is condemned already:" (John iii. 18;) that is, the gospel finds him, and every one, in a state of condemnation; but those who believe, it proclaims deliverance to; those who through unbelief reject it, "judging themselves unworthy of everlasting life,"

(see Acts xiii. 46,) it leaves such as it found them; namely, under the condemnation of the old covenant, since they refuse the pardoning mercy of the new.

(3.) I answer, therefore, positively, that *the first covenant is released and dispensed with.*—By super-inducing a new covenant of grace over it; that whosoever closeth with and comes into the terms of the new, should be exempted from the rigour and extremity, that is, from the eternal condemnation, of the old. In John iii. 16, it is not said, “He that believeth shall not be sick, shall not be afflicted, shall not die:” no; but, He “shall not perish.” Thus you see, the covenant of works, as to its execution upon such as are in the covenant of grace, is in the chief part restrained, but yet in some part inflicted. They never shall complain under the eternal and destructive, yet they do complain under the temporal and corrective, punishment of their sins. (Lam. iii. 39.)

Yet more particularly, for the clearer understanding of this, we must consider, that *the first covenant* lays a double obligation on sinful man:—

(i.) *In reference to what is past.*—And here it requires satisfaction and reparation from us for our sin in breaking it.

(ii.) *In reference to the future.*—After such satisfaction and amends made, it requires perfect conformity still as at first, absolute obedience to all God’s commands being the eternal debt of the reasonable creature to that God that made it in his own image. If, therefore, we could (which hath already been proved to be impossible) ever have satisfied God’s injured law for our past breach, the law would still have come upon us for future exact conformity, to pay the residue of that eternal debt; and its language would be, “Sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee;” (John v. 14;) as a felon, though burnt in the hand, is yet bound to live honestly for the future at his peril.

Now *the new covenant of grace* relieves us as to both these cases, and dispenses with the rigour of the law.

(i.) As to the first: it comforts us with the good news, that the Son of God hath satisfied his Father’s justice; and if we believe but in him, God will accept of us, as if we had satisfied in our own persons. The case [which] the law leaves us in, is well expressed in Isai. xxxiii. 14; Heb. x. 31; but the relief [that] the gospel brings us, in St. Paul’s language, Rom viii. 33, 34. You have both together excellently in Ezek. xxxiii. 10, 11.

(ii.) As to the second obligation: the new covenant dispenseth with the rigour of that too. For, woe to a justified and pardoned person, if he must lose all again upon the least defailance! Therefore the gospel proclaims pardon of sin upon repentance, and acceptance of sincere endeavours to obey him. God’s language now is, “Sinners, be but in good earnest; do but love me heartily and my ways; let me but see a child-like ingenuity [ingenuousness] in you; and I will put down your upright, though imperfect, performances in the ‘book of my remembrance;’” (Mal. iii. 16;) and blot out your transgressions, when repented of, out of the book of my remembrance.” *Mandata Dei*

*tanquam facta reputantur, quando quicquid non fit ignoscitur.** Thus doth the candour of the gospel dispense with the rigour of the law. God deals not with us as an Egyptian task-master, but as a father with his children whom he loves. Christ's "yoke is easy, his burden light." (Matt. xi. 30.)

OBJECTION II.

If any doubt how it stands with God's veracity and immutability, having once declared that "the soul that sinneth shall die," to contradict it, by declaring that "he that believeth shall never die," (John xi. 26,) but have eternal life :

ANSWER.

I answer, We must look upon threatenings as a part of the law, declaring the dueness of the punishment, what the offender hath deserved to suffer ; not as predictions of the event ; any more than "thou shalt," and "thou shalt not," in the command, are predictions, but only are expressive of the dueness of obedience. Nor will it hence follow, that we have the least cause once to suspect that God may, if he please, revoke his promises, as well as his threatenings ; and then what would become of us ? For there is a wide difference in their essential natures and properties. In a *promise*, the obligation lies upon the party promising : he hath passed away his own liberty ; and the thing is now no longer his, but the other's ; who may, if he please, release and quit claim to his pretensions ; he may dispense with and surrender his own right ; but if he claim his right to and interest in the benefit by virtue of the promise, it cannot be detained without notorious wrong and injury, which "God forbid" we should charge him with. For he were not God, if he were not infinitely true and faithful : how should he else "judge the world ?" (Rom: iii. 6.) But now the obligation unto *punishment* lies contrarily upon the sinner threatened : he hath passed away his own indemnity, and given God the right of punishing him. I say, the right, not the necessity : if God will claim this right, he may ; but if he please, he may dispense with it. It is no injury, if he punisheth ; yet no obligation lies upon him, but his own honour. And that, indeed, obligeth him not never to dispense with his law ; but never to dispense with it upon a light cause, or upon terms misbecoming his glorious attributes. And the dispensation we now speak of is an honourable one : for,

(1.) *There are weighty inducements moving God hereunto.*—If he had not dispensed with the rigour of it,

(i.) He had lost the opportunity of the highest possible way of glorifying his own goodness, which now so infinitely endears him to the world, and lays such obligations on us to admire and adore him.

(ii.) As all Israel lamented over Benjamin, that a tribe was lost ; (Judges xxi. 6 ;) so the creation would have missed a tribe. Which is the reason [that] some divines have given why Christ "took not

* AUGUSTINI *Retractationes*, lib. I. "The commands of God are considered as fulfilled, when whatsoever is not performed is forgiven."—EDIT.

on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham :” because only *some* of the angelical tribe lost their birthright, only *some* kept not their first estate ; but “ man, being in honour, continued not ” but became “ like the beast that perisheth.” (Psalm xlix. 12.)

(iii.) All religion had been extinguished and frozen by despair unavoidably. If there had been no hope, the fear of God, his worship and service, had for ever utterly perished from off the earth. But now his “ name is excellent in all the earth ; ” (Psalm viii. 1 ;) even that name proclaimed to Moses : “ The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.” (Exod. xxxiv. 6.) “ In Judah is God known : his name is great in Israel.” (Psalm lxxvi. 1.)

(2.) As the causes inducing are weighty, so *the terms on which he dispenseth with his law are as honourable.*—Which was our third query propounded in the opening [of] the point. For since Christ redeemed us, not by way of solution, (strictly,) as a surety, paying the debtor’s proper debt to the Creditor ; but by way of satisfaction, as a Mediator and Intercessor, offering a valuable consideration to the offended Judge of the world, in lieu of the law’s executing the penalty threatened upon the sinner ; it necessarily follows that no right at all in the benefits of this satisfaction can accrue to the delinquent, but upon such terms precisely as the offended party, and the Mediator that satisfieth him, shall agree unto, and, upon mutual treaty and compromise, jointly ratify. So that justification by way of satisfaction provides not only for the sinner’s indemnity, but in such a manner as also to consult the interests and honour both of the party satisfying and satisfied : and this latter is the rule and measure of exhibiting the former, and of making over the satisfaction for discharge of the offender.

QUERY III. *What are the terms, therefore, upon which both God and Christ have agreed to justify sinners ?*

ANSWER. I answer, First, *faith* ; which is a hearty receiving Christ as he is tendered by the gospel. And here the soul quits all pretensions of being justified by any righteousness of its own, and rolls itself upon “ the Lord its righteousness.” And therefore hath faith the honour to be the justifying grace, because it so highly honoureth Christ. It is the nuptial knot whereby the soul joins itself to its Lord-Redeemer in an everlasting marriage-covenant : it denies itself, and forsakes all its other lovers, and clasps about its Lord and Husband, as its all in all. Look : what a wife doth in a marriage-covenant to her husband, that doth a soul in believing unto Christ : it saith unto him, *אִשִּׁי Ishi*, “ Thou art my Husband ; ” (Hosea ii. 16 ;) and he saith unto his spouse, *אֲמִי Ammi*, “ You are my people.” (Verse 1.)

But then this justifying faith hath two daughters that inseparably attend her :—

(1.) *Repentance.*—Here sinful man retracts and undoes his faults, cries *Peccavi*, [“ I have sinned,”] weeps, wrings his hands, smites upon his breast, and cries, “ What have I done ? ” laments after the Lord, and abhors himself in dust and ashes. He calls himself fool, mad-

man, beast, traitor to his God and to his soul; in a word, executes the law upon himself: and since God excuseth him from the punishment, he accuseth himself of the guilt, and condemns himself to the shame, of his sin. And hereby the sinner honours the equity of the threatening, by his tears acknowledging that his blood was due.

(2.) *Newness of life.*—Here the sinner acknowledgeth perfect obedience to be still his duty. This honours the equity of God's commandments: and the Redeemer, by making this one of the conditions of the gospel-covenant, hath given his Father his law back again. He doth not repeal it: no; it is still the rule of life, and every commandment still obligeth a believer. Christ hath only released us from the condemning power of it, not the commanding power of it. We must still press after perfection; but though we fall short of it, we shall not die for it. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us;" (Gal. iii. 13;) but hath left us under the government and command of the law. The whole matter is excellently expressed in 1 John ii. 1: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

(III.) Having thus discoursed to the three [two] general points first propounded; and showed [first] that the person justified is charged with guilt: and, secondly, that he pleads to the charge; (where I have largely opened the nature of that plea;) I come now to the third general point,—to show how *upon his plea he is discharged, or justified.*

A sinner is then actually justified, when he is constituted or made righteous in law. Righteousness is a conformity to the law: he that fulfils the law is righteous in the eye of that law; he is *ενομος*, "within the protection of it;" as he that transgresseth the law is *ανομος*, "guilty in the eye of the law, and without the protection of it." Now the law of the new covenant runs thus: "He that believeth shall not perish:" (John iii. 15:) so that a believer keeps and fulfils this law; and therefore "faith is imputed to him for righteousness," (Rom. iv. 22—24,) because faith is the keeping of the new covenant; which therefore is called "the law of faith," (chap. iii. 27,) in opposition to the old covenant, called there by the apostle, "the law of works." As, therefore, innocency, or perfect obedience, would have justified Adam, had he stood, by virtue of the law of works, or old covenant, whose tenor is, "Obey, and live;" for then he had fulfilled that law: and as his disobedience actually condemned him by virtue of the same law: "Disobey, and die for it:" (Gen. ii. 17:) so now believing in Christ justifieth by virtue of the law of faith; for it is the keeping and fulfilling of the gospel-covenant, whose tenor is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved:" (Acts xvi. 31:) and, again, unbelief actually condemneth by virtue of the same law: "He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." (John iii. 18.) That is, Because the unbeliever is *ανομος*, "without

the protection of the "gospel, or "law" of faith,—he cometh not up to its righteousness,—he "is condemned already" as a sinner by the law of works; and yet once more, with a witness, condemned as an unbeliever, as a monster that hath twice been accessory to his own murder: first, in wounding himself; and, secondly, in refusing to be healed.

The law of works includes us all under sin, we are all "dead," our case was desperate; "but God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he hath loved us," (his immense *φιλανθρωπια*), "even when we were dead in trespasses and sins," hath sent "his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (Eph. ii. 4, 5; John iii. 16.) And this is that according to which he will judge the world: "According to my gospel," saith Paul. (Rom. ii. 16.) Every believer, therefore,—though he wants the righteousness of the law of works, (namely, innocency,) yet he shall not be condemned, because he hath the righteousness of the gospel, (namely, faith,) which is the new law in force, according to which God now dealeth with us, and shall judge the world at the last day.

And here it will be richly worth our very heedful observation, that although a believer hath not the righteousness of the law of works inherent in himself, (for, if he had, he were not a sinner, but should be justified by that law,) yet by faith he lays hold upon Christ's satisfaction, which in the very eye of the law of works is an unexceptionably perfect, an infinitely glorious, righteousness. So that faith justifieth us even at the bar of the law of works, *ratione objecti*, ["in respect of the object,"] as it lays hold on Christ's satisfaction, which is our legal righteousness; it justifieth us at the bar of the gospel, or law of faith, *formaliter et ratione sui*, ["formally and with regard to itself,"] as it is covenant-keeping, or a fulfilling of the gospel-law. For he that keeps a law is righteous, where that law is judge; the law-maker, by his very making of the law, makes him righteous; and the judge, that pronounceth according to the law, (for a judge is *νομος επιθυχος*;) will infallibly pronounce him so.

But that with all requisite distinctness we may apprehend this great affair, let us take a view of some of the most considerable and important causes which concur to the producing [of] this excellent effect,—the discharge and justification of a sinner; and state their several interests and concernments in their respective influences upon and contribution toward it.

HOW FREE GRACE JUSTIFIETH.

1. *The free grace of God* is the first wheel, that sets all the rest in motion. Its contribution is that of a proegumenal cause, or internal motive, disposing God to send his Son, (John iii. 16,) that sinners, believing, might be "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Rom. iii. 24.) For Christ died not to render God good; (he was so eternally;) but that, with the honour

* "The law endued with vitality," or, "the law personified."—EDIT.

of his justice, he might exert and display his goodness, which contrived and made itself this way to break forth into the world.

HOW CHRIST'S SATISFACTION.

2. *Christ's satisfaction* is doubly concerned in our justification:—

(1.) *In respect of God*, as a procatartec cause, of infinite merit and impetrative power; for the sake of which "God is reconciling himself unto the world in Christ, not imputing their trespasses unto them." (2 Cor. v. 19.)

(2.) *In respect of the law of works*, Christ's satisfaction justifieth us formally, as our proper legal righteousness. I call it "*our righteousness*," because it becomes imputed to us upon our believing; faith being our gospel-title, by pleading which we lay claim to all the benefits accruing from the merit of Christ's performance, to all effects, uses, and purposes, as if it had been personally our own. I call it "*our legal righteousness*," because thereby the law of God owns itself fully a-paid, and acquiesceth in it, as in full reparations and amends made unto it for the injury and dishonour received by the sin of man. We must plead this against all the challenges and accusations of the law: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died," &c. (Rom. viii. 33, 34.) And thus our legal righteousness required in the first covenant,—that of works,—is wholly without us in our Redeemer, yet imputed upon our account.

HOW THE GOSPEL.

3. *The gospel* justifieth *quâ lex lata*, "as it is the law" of faith; for the very tenor of the gospel-covenant is, "Believe, and thou shalt be saved."

HOW FAITH.

4. *Faith* justifieth *vi legis latae*, as it is our evangelical righteousness, or our keeping the gospel-law; for that law suspends justification upon believing. Faith pretends to no merit or virtue of its own; but professedly avows its dependence upon the merit of Christ's satisfaction, as our legal righteousness, on which it layeth hold; nor can it show any other title to be itself our evangelical righteousness, but only God's sanction, who chose this act of believing to the honour of being the justifying act, because it so highly honoureth Christ. So that, as a most judicious pen expresseth it, the act of believing is as the silver; but God's authority, in the gospel-sanction, is the king's coin, or image stamped upon it, which gives it all its value as to justification. Without this stamp it could never have been current; and if God had set this stamp on any other grace, as love, that then would have been current, and have justified us, as faith doth now.

HOW GOD.

5. *God* justifieth in a proper sense two ways: (1.) *As a Legislator*; (2.) *As a Judge*.

(1.) *As a Legislator*, enacting by his sovereign authority that sweet and gracious law of the new covenant, by virtue of whose tenor every sinner that believes is justified from the guilt of sin, "from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses." (Act^s xiii. 38, 39.) This law of justification by faith is God's own act and deed, the great *instrumentum pacis* ["instrument of peace"] between God and man. He hath proclaimed his letters-patent: the King of heaven and earth hath in the gospel (our Magna Charta) given his warrant under his own Broad Seal, that "he that believeth shall not be condemned."

(2.) *As a Judge*, the God of heaven may in three respects be said to justify a believer:—

(i.) Forthwith upon his believing, God owneth him secretly within himself, as a person justified. God esteems and approves of him, as in that state unto which he hath by believing a title good in law, an indefeisible right. A justified estate emergeth actually, as soon as faith: the law-title thereunto emergeth as a necessary resultance, by virtue of the tenor of the gospel-law; which only justified virtually, potentially, and conditionally, before, every believer in general; but now, actually, absolutely, and in particular, it justifieth him as a believer, when he is so.

(ii.) At the moment of dissolution God justifieth as the Judge of all the earth, passing a private sentence and award unto everlasting life upon every believing soul.

(iii.) But eminently at the last day, when the Ancient of Days shall take the throne, and in open court, before the whole creation, by public sentence, for ever acquit and discharge believers at that great and last assizes.

HOW WORKS.

6. Shall I need to add, that *works* are said to justify us? (James ii. 2, 4;) because they justify our faith, or demonstrate before God and man, and to our own consciences, that our faith is not a dead and barren, but a true and living, one, by its fruitfulness in well-doing.

HOW THE SPIRIT.

7. But I must not forget, lastly, that *the Spirit of God* is said to justify us: (1 Cor. vi. 11 :) and that two ways:—

(1.) *Directly*: by working faith in the heart, which is one of the fruits of the Spirit. (Gal. v. 22.) Now *causa causæ est etiam causa causati*: * the Spirit justifieth, as it is the Author of the justifying grace.

(2.) *Reflexively*: the Divine Spirit clears up justification to a believer's conscience, by discovering the truth of faith, by working assurance, and by sealing a believer to the day of redemption: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." (Rom. viii. 16, 17.)

* "That which produces the cause is also the author of that which is produced by the cause."—EDIT.

Thus I have at length done with my first task,—the opening of the point ; which finds itself summed up in this DEFINITION :—

DEFINITION.

Justification is a judicial act of God, as Lawgiver and Judge of the world, graciously discharging a believer, for the sake of Christ's satisfaction, from the condemnation of the law of works, by the tenor of the gospel-law, or new covenant ; which requireth of, accepteth from, imputeth unto, sinners faith in Christ Jesus, as their righteousness. See Rom. iii. 25—28 ; iv. 5 ; Phil. iii. 9.

USE I. REFUTATION.

II. *To improve it, now, (which was my other task,) by way of refutation : I infer against the antinomians,*

1. *That justification is not from eternity.*

(1.) Because a person must be charged with guilt, before he is justified or discharged : but nothing can be before eternity. If discharged from eternity, when was he charged ? What ! from eternity, too ? Then he will be at once eternally charged with, and discharged from, guilt ; which if any excuse from a contradiction, they are much wiser than I am.

(2.) My text convinceth them [that] actual faith is not from eternity ; therefore, not justification before God. For if faith justify us not before God, but only at the bar of conscience, then there will be no justification at God's bar at all once mentioned in scripture ; for works do it at man's bar. What is it, I wonder, that justifieth from eternity ? Not God's decree to justify ; for then his decree to glorify would make glorification from eternity too. But *decreta Dei nihil ponunt actu in subjecto* : "God's decrees are immanent acts, and pass nothing actually upon the creature."

(3.) A justified person was actually under condemnation whilst he was an unbeliever : "He that believeth not is condemned already : " (John iii. 18 :) but he could not be at all condemned, if justified from eternity.

(4.) St. Paul expressly affirms that the believing Corinthians were not once, but now were, justified : "Such were some of you : but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. vi. 11.)

2. I infer against them, *that they are dangerously mistaken in thinking that a believer is righteous in the sight of God with the self-same active and passive righteousness wherewith Christ was righteous.*—As though believers suffered in Christ, and obeyed in Christ, and were as righteous in God's esteem as Christ himself, having his personal righteousness made personally theirs by imputation. This is their fundamental mistake, and from hence, *tanquam ex equo Trojano*, ["as from the Trojan horse,"] issue out a throng of such false and corrupt deductions and consequences as these :—

That God sees no sin in his children : That affliction and death are not proper punishments of sin to believers : That all future sins are

already actually forgiven, as well as past and present : That a believer must not pray for the pardon of sin, but only for the manifestation of it : That God loved Noah, when drunk ; Lot, when so, and besides incestuous ; David, when acting adultery and murder ; Peter, when he was cursing and swearing and denying Christ ; with as high a love of complacency and delight, as when conversant in the most spiritual exercises of grace : That all which God requires as a sinner's duty in the gospel is, to believe that Christ died absolutely for him in particular : That this is alone* true gospel-faith ; and the doubting or questioning this, the unbelief which the gospel so much condemneth : That, to argue our justification from our sanctification, and gather assurance of God's love from our love and fear of him, is a legal principle : That obedience to God's commandments is not properly a believer's debt ; but that all the obligation which lies upon him to holiness is only the voluntary expression of his love and gratitude to God, not as what is due, but what is comely : and, lastly, (for I should be tired to name all,) That Christ hath kept the gospel-covenant for us, as well as satisfied the law ; so that not only our legal righteousness is without us in Christ our Surety, but our evangelical righteousness itself also.

Now, to pluck up all these desperate consequences by the root, there needs no more than a right understanding of the true and proper notion and manner of Christ's redeeming us. It is not by way of solution, but of satisfaction. Clearly thus :—our case to God is not properly that of debtors, but that of criminal subjects. God's aspect to us-ward [is] not properly that of a creditor, but that of a Rector and Judge. The person [which] Christ sustained, and the part [that] he acted, [was] not, in a strict sense, that of a Surety, paying the very debt in kind, and so discharging a bond ; but that of a Mediator, expiating our guilt and making reparations to Divine Justice [in] another way than by the execution of the law. And, indeed, the very nature of a law is such, as [that] it is quite impossible that the obligation either of its threatening or command should in a proper sense be fulfilled by any other than the very person threatened and commanded : *alius* here makes *aliud*. If another suffer the penalty, the threatening is not fulfilled ; nor, if another performs the duty, [is] the command [fulfilled] : for, “the obligation as to punishment lies on the person threatened ;” (*noxa caput sequitur* ;) and that to duty, on the person commanded. It cannot be fulfilled in kind by “another,” but it ceases to be the same thing, and becomes “another thing” from that in the obligation : yet it may be such another thing (and Christ's righteousness, both active and passive, really is such) as the rector or judge may accept of with honour and be satisfied with, as if the very same thing had been suffered and done just in the same manner as the law threatened and commanded it.

That Christ hath paid, not the *idem*, but *tantundem*,—that is, not fulfilled the law (as for us) in kind, but satisfied it for us,—is most evident. For,

(1.) The law obliged the sinner's person to suffer: Christ was no sinner.

* In the edition of 1676 the word *all* is substituted for “alone.”—EDIT.

(2.) All men to suffer; forasmuch as "all had sinned:" Christ was but one man.

(3.) The punishment due by law was eternal: Christ suffered but for a season, and is "entered into his glory." (Luke xxiv. 26.) Thus Christ paid not the same thing that was in the obligation, but something equivalent thereunto.

This being obtained,—that the Lord Christ hath redeemed us, not by way of solution, or discharging a bond by payment in kind; but by way of satisfaction, or making amends to the injured justice of the law,—it follows, from the reason and nature of the thing,

(1.) *That God pardons freely.*—We are not only beholden to Christ for satisfying, but to God, too, infinitely for accepting of any satisfaction at all. He might have refused it: he had done sinners no wrong, if he had executed the rigour of the law, without hearkening to terms of reconciliation. Quite contrary: a creditor doth not pardon the debtor, when the surety hath discharged the bond by full payment in kind: the debtor is beholden, indeed, to his friend the surety, but not at all to the creditor, who cannot refuse to cancel the bond; nay, it were wrong and injustice in him if he did.

(2.) *That none hath or can have actual interest in, or benefit by, this redemption, but upon such terms as God and Christ have mutually compromised in and agreed to; namely, the conditions of the gospel-covenant above-mentioned.*—See the answer to the third query.

(i.) The reason hereof is partly *from God*, the injured Lawgiver of the world; who, seeing it was at his liberty to accept of satisfaction or no, hath of necessity the right to make his own terms,—when, and how far forth, and in what manner and method, he will condescend to admit the sinner to the actual benefit of Christ's satisfaction.

(ii.) And partly, too, *from Christ.*—For, as he is the *Μεσιτης*, or "Mediator," between God and man, a friend to both parties, nay, a person consisting of both natures,—the offended and offending; he is engaged necessarily, by virtue both of office and person, to espouse with equal tenderness of regard the interests of both parties: for he is really concerned in them both; they are his concernments, as well as theirs. True, indeed, a surety that dischargeth a bond by full payment in kind,—he sustains and bears only the person of the debtor, minds only his indemnity, doeth what he doeth upon his account and for his sake. But our great Mediator must consult, not only our impunity, but his Father's, yea, and his own honour. And therefore, *έκας, ω έκας, εστε βεβηλοι*. * "get you hence," all you that either yet never did, or that do not now, repent, believe, and conscientiously endeavour to obey. Here is not the least jot of benefit for you, in the case you are in, from this redemption; for, how infinite soever the merit of Christ's satisfaction is, it conferreth nothing actually upon any person that hath not actually a gospel-claim and title to plead it before God.

The immediate effect actually resulting from Christ's performance is, the procuring the gospel-covenant to be ratified by his Father, as a

* "Hence, O far hence, flee, ye profane!"—EDIT.

law, whereby sinners, upon the terms propounded, become reconcilable unto God. Actually it is of force to all that have, but to none that want, the conditions of it. Now the keeping this gospel-covenant God expects from us in person; though by the assistance of his Spirit, whom he hath promised to give to them that humbly and earnestly ask it of him. (Luke xi. 13.) To affirm that Christ hath kept the gospel for us too, is to utter the most self-contradicting blasphemy and absurdity imaginable: as if he could repent, or believe in himself; free, except, or cancel our obligation to obey the moral law, by his own obeying it: as if Christ had so done all, that nothing remains to be done on our part. Such strange extremes do some men run into, that, to avoid justification by works, by an *αμετρία της ανθολκης*, ["excessive counterbalancing,"] are as extravagant on the other hand; thinking the grace of God cannot be free, except the sinner become either a senseless statue, merely passive; or (which is yet worse) have a writ of ease to be quite idle, or (which is worst of all) a licence to sin by prerogative.

Let the apostle's *Μη γενοιτο* chastise this insolence: "Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? *God forbid.*" (Rom. vi. 15.) If Christ had obeyed the law for us in the sense of paying a debt, or discharging a bond, the apostle's answer could not stand: "Do we then make void the law through faith? *God forbid: yea, we establish the law.*" (Rom. iii. 31.) When a believer breaks the law, he sins: "For sin is the transgression of the law." (1 John iii. 4.) Nay, he cannot break it willfully, but he breaks the very gospel-covenant; (one condition whereof is sincere obedience;) and the guilt of that sin lieth upon him unpardoned, until, by hearty repentance and fresh applications by faith to the blood of sprinkling, (which are the only titles good in law, the only gospel-claims to pardon,) he hath sued out a new pardon, (for actual remission is only of past sins, Rom. iii. 25,) according to the tenor of the new covenant, which is a perpetual law of pardoning repenting and believing sinners, whomsoever, whensoever, but as such.

Neither was Christ's suffering like the cancelling of a bond, a total discharge of us from suffering the penalty threatened in the law. We die still, and afflictions are punishments still. True, indeed, upon Christ's satisfaction made, God and he are agreed that a believing sinner should not be punished with the everlasting destructive penalty threatened; for "whosoever believeth shall not perish:" (John iii. 16:) but they are not [agreed] that he shall not be—for he is—punished with the temporal corrective punishments of the threatening, as sickness and natural death; yet even these, through infinite goodness so ordering and disposing it, prove much more a benefit than a penalty to a believer.

USE II. ADORATION.

What cause have we then, with the lowest and profoundest humility, to adore the majesty of the living God!

1. To adore his holiness.—Reverence those eyes of his, that are

purer than that they can endure to behold iniquity. (Hab. i. 13.) Let this God be thy dread and awe. Dare not to make a mock of sin : tremble at the horrid guilt and sinfulness of the least sin ; look upon it as an affront and treason against an Eternal Majesty, as worthy the curse of the law and the wrath of an Almighty God, as that which could not be expiated at a lesser rate than the blood of God. (Acts xx. 28.)

2. To adore *his wisdom, in finding out such a person to satisfy his justice as our Redeemer.*—Consider here, that God could not suffer, could not die ; nay, could not (properly) satisfy himself ; for it had not been a satisfaction to his justice at all, but mere mercy,—and so, no justification of a sinner, but mere pardon,—if the person satisfying had been only God. Again : consider, that a mere creature could never satisfy, as I before demonstrated ; a mere creature had perished in the attempt ; would have been overwhelmed, and crushed to pieces with that insupportable load,—the guilt of sin, and the wrath of God. The person, therefore, that must satisfy, must neither be finite nor infinite, neither the creature nor the Creator, neither God nor man, yet must be both. Here, now, the understandings of men and angels must have been tired* to all eternity, and lost for ever in a bottomless gulf of horror and amazement, to find out such a person. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!” (Rom. xi. 33. See also Eph. i. 7, 8, fully hereunto.)

3. To adore *the infinite riches of his grace in justification.* (Rom. iii. 24.)—And here consider,

(1.) God might have let man alone, seized the forfeiture : as the tree fell, it might have lain for ever. What obliged God to accept of satisfaction ?

(2.) The Redeemer hath “trodden the wine-press alone :” whatever was done in this satisfaction, he did it. “Of the people there was none with him :” (Isai. lxiii. 3 :) the sinner hath not the least hand in it ; could not pay one—Christ paid every, to the utmost—farthing.

(3.) It was the Judge himself who contrived this way to justify us ; and it was at his cost,—he gave his Son. Herein “God commended his love to us,” (as Abraham once did his faith to God,) in that he spared not his Son, his only-begotten Son, whom he loved. (Rom. v. 8.) So that, if we rightly weigh it, it will appear that, by how much the satisfaction is the fuller, by so much the pardon is the freer ; by how much his justice is the more, by so much too is his mercy the more, glorified, and still, still infinitely the more are we obliged.

USE III. CONSOLATION.

Here is unspeakable comfort for every humble, though doubting, soul ; every contrite spirit, that hungers and thirsts after righteousness.

1. Consider, *how full satisfaction Christ hath made.*—“He is able

* The edition of 1676 has the word *tried*, apparently an appropriate change.—EDIT.

to save them to the uttermost that come unto God through him." (Heb. vii. 25.) He is the "beloved Son, in whom the Father is well pleased." (Mark i. 11.) All power is committed into his hands. (Matt. xxviii. 18.) "God hath exalted him to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance, and remission of sins." (Acts v. 31.)

2. *Consider, he inviteth thee as a sinner to come in unto this gospel-righteousness.*—In the general tenor of his proclamation, "Whoever believeth shall not perish, but have eternal life." (John iii. 15.) "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (1 John ii. 1, 2.) A "whoever" excludes none that excludes not himself.

3. *Consider, Christ assures thee,* (that art the person [whom] I now speak to,) he who is the Truth assures thee, *thou shalt be welcome.*—"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. xi. 28.) This is your very case. Hark! the Master calleth you; will you not be of good courage, and go, when he saith, "Come?" he that never yet cast out any that came unto him, that never will,—he saith so himself. (John vi. 37.) Thou mayest believe him: he never broke his word yet; he will not begin with thee: he cannot deny himself.

4. *Consider those standing monuments of God's free justifying grace that are on record in the scripture.*—What hath been done, may be done again; nay, will be done again, in the case we speak of, by the God that changeth not. God hath pardoned as great sinners: see Ephraim's case; (Jer. xxxi. 18—20;) see the Corinthians' example; (1 Cor. vi. 10, 11;) see Paul's. (1 Tim. i. 13.) Whoever goes and doeth likewise, shall receive likewise: for Christ is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." (Heb. xiii. 8.)

5. *Consider, it is the very design of God in giving his Son, and of Christ in giving himself, to die for us, to justify such as thou art.* (Isai. lxi. 1; Luke iv. 18—21; Jer. iii. 12; 1 John iv. 9.)

USE IV. EXHORTATION.

1. *To the unconverted.*—Let me, then, beseech sinners not to love death. Why should iniquity be your ruin? There is "balm in Gilead;" there is a "Physician there:" why are ye unwilling to be healed? "Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die?" (Ezek. xviii. 31, 32.) Would it be a hard matter to persuade a condemned person to be willing not to be executed? Were he not distracted if, having a pardon offered upon the easy terms of confessing his fault and seriously promising amendment, he should bid the prince keep his pardon to himself; [telling him that] for his part he was in love with his chains, he would not be released, he would die? Thou art the man, whoever thou art that neglectest gospel-grace: what fury and raging madness is it that thou art guilty of! Thy soul, with all its eternal interests, lies at stake; and as if it were neither here nor there—what became of thee for ever, thou "despisest the riches of God's forbearance; after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasuring

up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath." (Rom. ii. 4, 5.) Is it well done of thee, sinner? Is this thy kindness to thy own soul? Is this thy thanks to thy Redeemer? How inexcusable art thou, thyself being judge! Thou canst not answer it to thy conscience, to thy God, with the least colour or shadow of a reason.

God sends his gospel, proclaiming, "Repent ye, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out;" (Acts iii. 19;) his ministers, proclaiming, "We then are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." (2 Cor. v. 20.) Why dost thou hate thy soul, and say, "I will not?" Why wilt thou not? Is it because it doth not concern thee? or because eternal life and death are trifles, small, little things, not worth thy considering? Or doth any body hinder thee? No, no; our Saviour gives the true account: "Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." (John v. 40.)

Let me entreat this small request of thee, for God's sake, for thine own:—take the next opportunity, and spend half an hour alone. Let thy spirit accomplish a diligent search; pursue this inquiry to some issue: "Am I justified, or no? If not, what will become of me, if it should happen (sometimes such things fall out) that I should die now presently? I cannot promise myself that I shall see to-morrow morning." Thus go on; and bring it to something, before thou leavest: give not over, till thou art not only clearly convinced of, but heartily affected with, thy guilt; [art brought] not only to see, but feel, thyself to be the man who art undone, without an interest in this justification. Be in good earnest: thou canst not mock thy God; and is there any wisdom in mocking and cheating thy own soul? What thou doest, "do it heartily, as to the Lord," (Col. iii. 23,) as for thy life, as one that would not rue thy self-deceiving folly when it cannot be recalled. And if thou art hearty and serious in these reflections,

(1.) Thou wilt deeply humble thyself before the majesty of the Judge of all the earth, with that self-abhorrence and confusion that becomes one who feels himself (even himself being judge) most righteously condemned.

(2.) Thou wilt solicit and assail the throne of grace with all redoubled fervours and holy passionate importunities of prayer and supplication; giving God no rest till he hath given thee his Spirit, according to his own promise, (Luke xi. 13; Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27,) to help thee to perform the conditions of the gospel-covenant. Plead his own promise with him. Wrestle with him for a broken and clean heart, for faith, for repentance unto life: for these are not of thyself; they are the gift of God. Let him not go till he hath blessed thee with these blessings in Christ Jesus. This will confound every sinner at the day of judgment,—that, when he might have had grace,—yea, the Spirit of grace,—for asking, he either asked not, or, if he did, it was so coldly as if he were contented enough to go without. Now, if thou art in good earnest, God is, I assure thee, in full as good earnest as thou: he is ready to meet thee. Try but once, whether it be in vain

to seek him: all that ever tried found it good to draw near to God, and found him easy to be entreated; he useth not to send the hungry empty away. He that commands us to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling," he it is that "worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure." (Phil. ii. 12, 13.)

2. *To them that are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.*—Let me beseech them,

(1.) *To walk worthy of God, who hath called them to his kingdom and glory; to adorn their holy profession.*—Take the exhortation in Paul's words: "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." (Col. ii. 6.) "Receive not" this "grace of God in vain." (2 Cor. vi. 1.) The interest of your comfort obligeth you hereunto. Hereby you will know that you know him; that you "are in Christ Jesus;" that "there is no condemnation to" you, if you "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit:" (Rom. viii. 1:) and herein will your Father be "glorified, if ye bring forth much fruit." (John xv. 8.)

(2.) *To live up to the comfort of their state.*—Ye are already "the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what ye shall be." (1 John iii. 2.) "Who shall lay any thing to" your "charge? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (Rom. viii. 33, 34.) "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and put on thy white raiment; for God now hath accepted thy works." (Eccles. ix. 7, 8.)

I conclude this particular, and the whole discourse, with the happy effects and fruits of justification,—which every believer hath as good a right and title to, as the gospel itself, the word of the God of truth, can give him,—as I find those sweet effects and consequences set down in my text, and the words next following it: "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." (Rom. v. 1—5.)

Wherefore "the righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory." (Psalm lxiv. 10.)