

SERMONS

ON VARIOUS

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS.

SERMON I.

Justification by Faith alone.

ROMANS IV. 5.

BUT TO HIM THAT WORKETH NOT, BUT BELIEVETH ON HIM THAT JUSTIFIETH THE UNGODLY, HIS FAITH IS COUNTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

THE following things may be noted in this verse :
1. That justification respects a man as ungodly : This is evident by those words.....*that justifieth the ungodly* : Which words cannot imply less, than that God, in the act of justification has no regard to any thing in the person justified, as godliness, or any goodness in him ; but that nextly or immediately before this act, God beholds him only as an ungodly or wicked creature ; so that godliness in the person to be justified is not so antecedent to his justification as to be the ground of it. When it is said that God justifies the ungodly, it is as absurd to suppose that our godliness, taken as some goodness in us, is the ground of our justification, as when it is said that Christ gave sight to the blind, to suppose that sight was prior

to, and the ground of that act of mercy in Christ ; or as, if it should be said, that such an one by his bounty has made a poor man rich, to suppose that it was the wealth of this poor man that was the ground of this bounty towards him, and was the price by which it was procured.

2. It appears that *by him that worketh not*, in this verse, is not meant only one that does not conform to the ceremonial law, because *he that worketh not*, and *the ungodly*, are evidently synonymous expressions, or what signify the same ; it appears by the manner of their connexion : If it be not so, to what purpose is the latter expression, *the ungodly*, brought in ? The context gives no other occasion for it, but only to show, that the grace of the gospel appears, in that God, in justification, has no regard to any godliness of ours. The foregoing verse is, “ Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.” In that verse it is evident that gospel grace, consists in the reward’s being given *without works* ; and in this verse which immediately follows it, and in sense is connected with it, it is evident that gospel grace consists in a man’s being justified that is *ungodly* ; by which it is most plain, that by *him that worketh not*, and him that is *ungodly*, are meant the same thing ; and that therefore not only works of the ceremonial law are excluded in this business of justification, but works of morality and godliness.

3. It is evident in the words, that by that faith, that is here spoken of, by which we are justified, is not meant the same thing as a course of obedience or righteousness, by the expression by which this faith is here denoted, *viz. believing on him that justifies the ungodly*. They that oppose the Solifidians, as they call them, do greatly insist on it, that we should take the words of scripture concerning this doctrine in their most natural and obvious meaning ; and how do they cry out, of our clouding this doctrine with obscure metaphors, and unintelligible figures of speech ? But is this to interpret scripture according to its most obvious meaning, when the scripture speaks of our *believing on him that justifies the ungodly*, or the *breakers of his law*, to say, that the meaning of it is performing a course of obedience to his law, and avoiding the breaches of

it? Believing on God as a *justifier*, certainly is a different thing from submitting to God as a *lawgiver*; especially a believing on him as a justifier of the ungodly or rebels *against the lawgiver*.

4. It is evident that the subject of justification is looked upon as destitute of any righteousness in himself, by that expression, *it is counted or imputed to him for righteousness*. The phrase, as the apostle uses it here, and in the context, manifestly imports, that God, of his sovereign grace, is pleased, in his dealings with the sinner, to take and regard that which indeed is not righteousness, and in one that has no righteousness, so, that the consequence shall be the same as if he had righteousness; (which may be from the respect that it bears to some thing that is indeed righteous.) It is plain that this is the force of the expression in the preceding verses. In the last verse but one, it is manifest that the apostle lays the stress of his argument for the free grace of God, from that text that he cites out of the Old Testament about Abraham, on that word *counted*, or *imputed*, and that this is the thing that he supposed God to shew his grace in, viz. in his *counting* something for righteousness, in his consequential dealings with Abraham, that was no righteousness in itself. And in the next verse which immediately precedes the text, "Now to him that worketh, is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt," the word there translated *reckoned*, is the same that in the other verses is rendered *imputed*, and *counted*; and it is as much as if the apostle had said, "As to *him that works* there is no need of any gracious *reckoning* or *counting* it for righteousness, and causing the reward to follow as if it were a righteousness; for if he has works, he has that which is a righteousness in itself, to which the reward properly belongs." This is further evident by the words that follow, verse 6. "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works." What can here be meant by imputing righteousness without works; but imputing righteousness to him that has none of his own? Verse 7, 8. "Saying, blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and

whose sins are covered : Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." How are these words of David to the apostle's purpose ? Or how do they prove any such thing, as that righteousness is imputed without works, unless it be because the word *imputed* is used, and the subject of the imputation is mentioned as a sinner, and consequently destitute of a moral righteousness ? For David says no such thing, as that he is forgiven without the works of the ceremonial law ; there is no hint of the ceremonial law, or reference to it, in the words. I will therefore venture to infer this *doctrine* from the words, for the subject of my present discourses, viz.

DOCTRINE.

WE ARE JUSTIFIED ONLY BY FAITH IN CHRIST, AND NOT BY ANY MANNER OF VIRTUE OR GOODNESS OF OUR OWN.

Such an assertion as this, I am sensible, many would be ready to cry out of as absurd, betraying a great deal of ignorance, and containing much inconsistence ; but I desire every one's patience till I have done.

In handling this doctrine, I would,

1. Explain the *meaning* of it, and shew how I would be understood by such an assertion.
2. Proceed to the consideration of the evidence of the *truth* of it.
3. Shew how evangelical obedience is concerned in this affair.
4. Answer objections.
5. Consider the importance of the doctrine.

I. I would explain the meaning of the doctrine, or shew in what sense I assert it, and would endeavor to evince the truth of it : Which may be done in answer to these two inquiries, viz. I. What is meant by being justified ? What is meant when it is said, that this is by faith alone, without any manner of virtue or goodness " of our own ?"

First, I would shew what justification is, or what I suppose is meant in scripture by being justified. And here I would not at all enlarge ; and therefore to answer in short :

A person is said to be justified, when he is approved of God as free from the guilt of sin and its deserved punishment ; and as having that righteousness belonging to him that entitles to the reward of life. That we should take the word in such a sense and understand it as the judge's accepting a person as having both a negative and positive righteousness belonging to him, and looking on him therefore as not only quit or free from any obligation to punishment, but also as just and righteous, and so entitled to a positive reward, is not only most agreeable to the etymology and natural import of the word, which signifies to make righteous, or to pass one for righteous in judgment, but also manifestly agreeable to the force of the word as used in scripture.

Some suppose that nothing more is intended in scripture by justification, than barely the remission of sins. If it be so it is very strange, if we consider the nature of the case ; for it is most evident and none will deny, that it is with respect to the rule or law of God that we are under, that we are said in scripture to be either justified or condemned. Now what is it to justify a person as the subject of a law or rule, but to judge him or look upon him, and approve him as standing right with respect to that rule ? To justify a person in a particular case, is to approve him as standing right, as subject to the law or rule in that case ; and to justify in general is to pass him in judgment, as standing right in a state correspondent to the law or rule in general : But certainly in order to a person's being looked on as standing right with respect to the rule in general, or in a state corresponding with the law of God more is needful than what is negative, or a not having the guilt of sin ; for whatever that law is, whether a new one or an old one, yet doubtless something positive is needed in order to its being answered. We are no more justified by the voice of the law, or of him that judges according to it, by a mere pardon of sin, than Adam, our first surety, was justified by the law, at the first point of his existence, before he had done the work,

or fulfilled the obedience of the law, or had so much as any trial whether he would fulfil it or no. If Adam had finished his course of perfect obedience, he would have been justified : and certainly his justification would have implied something more than what is merely negative ; he would have been approved as having fulfilled the righteousness of the law, and accordingly would have been adjudged to the reward of it. So Christ, our second surety (in whose justification all who believe in him, and whose surety he is, are virtually justified) was not justified till he had done the work the Father had appointed him, and kept the Father's commandments through all trials ; and then in his resurrection he was justified. When he that had been put to death in the flesh was quickened by the Spirit, 1 Pet. iii. 18, then he that was manifest in the flesh was justified in the Spirit, 1 Tim. iii. 16. But God, when he justified him in raising him from the dead, did not only release him from his humiliation for sin, and acquit him from any further suffering or abasement for it, but admitted him to that eternal and immortal life, and to the beginning of that exaltation that was the reward of what he had done. And indeed the justification of a believer is no other than his being admitted to communion in, or participation of the justification of this head and surety of all believers ; for as Christ suffered the punishment of sin, not as a private person, but as our surety ; so when after this suffering he was raised from the dead, he was therein justified, not as a private person, but as the surety and representative of all that should believe in him ; so that he was raised again, not only for his own, but also for our justification, according to the apostle, Rom. iv. 25. " Who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification." And therefore it is that the apostle says, as he does in Rom. viii. 34. " Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again."

But that a believer's justification implies, not only remission of sins, or acquittance from the wrath due to it, but also an admittance to a title to that glory that is the reward of righteousness, is more directly taught in the scripture, as particularly in Rom. v. 1, 2, where the apostle mentions both these as

joint benefits implied in justification : “ Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom also we have access into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” So remission of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified, are mentioned together as what are jointly obtained by faith in Christ, Acts xxvi. 18. “ That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them that are sanctified through faith that is in me.” Both these are without doubt implied in that passing from death to life, which Christ speaks of as the fruit of faith, and which he opposes to condemnation, John v. 24. “ Verily I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from death to life.”.....I proceed now,

Secondly. To shew what is meant when it is said, that this justification is by faith only, and not by any virtue or goodness of our own.

This inquiry may be subdivided into two, viz. 1. How it is by faith. 2. How it is by faith alone, without any manner of goodness of ours.

1. How justification is by faith.....Here the great difficulty has been about the import and force of the particle *by*, or what is that influence that faith has in the affair of justification that is expressed in scripture by being justified by faith.

Here, if I may humbly express what seems evident to me, though faith be indeed the condition of justification so as nothing else is, yet this matter is not clearly and sufficiently explained by saying that faith is the condition of justification ; and that because the word seems ambiguous, both in common use, and also as used in divinity : In one sense, Christ alone performs the condition of our justification and salvation ; in another sense, faith is the condition of justification ; in another sense other qualifications and acts are conditions of salvation and justification too. There seems to be a great deal of ambiguity in such expressions as are commonly used, (which yet we are forced to use) such as, condition of salvation, what is required in order to salvation or justification. the terms of

the covenant, and the like ; and I believe they are understood in very different senses by different persons. And besides, as the word condition is very often understood in the common use of language, faith is not the only thing in us that is the condition of justification ; for by the word condition as it is very often (and perhaps most commonly) used, we mean any thing that may have the place of a condition in a conditional proposition, and as such is truly connected with the consequent, especially if the proposition holds both in the affirmative and negative, as the condition is either affirmed or denied. If it be that with which, or which being supposed, a thing shall be, and without which, or it being denied, a thing shall not be, we in such a case call it a condition of that thing : But in this sense faith is not the only condition of salvation or justification ; for there are many things that accompany and flow from faith, that are things with which justification shall be, and without which, it will not be, and therefore are found to be put in scripture in conditional propositions with justification and salvation, in multitudes of places ; such are, love to God, and love to our brethren, forgiving men their trespasses, and many other good qualifications and acts. And there are many other things besides faith, which are directly proposed to us, to be pursued and performed by us, in order to eternal life, as those which if they are done, or obtained, we shall have eternal life, and if not done, or not obtained, we shall surely perish. And if it were so, that faith was the only condition of justification in this sense, yet I do not apprehend that to say, that faith was the condition of justification, would express the sense of that phrase of scripture, of being justified by faith. There is a difference between being justified by a thing, and that thing universally, and necessarily and inseparably attending or going with justification ; for so do a great many things that we are not said to be justified by. It is not the inseparable connexion with justification that the Holy Ghost would signify (or that is naturally signified) by such a phrase, but some particular influence that faith has in the affair, or some certain dependance that that effect has on its influence.

Some that have been aware of this have supposed that the influence or dependence might well be expressed by faith's being the instrument of our justification ; which has been misunderstood, and injuriously represented, and ridiculed by those that have denied the doctrine of justification by faith alone, as though they had supposed that faith was used as an instrument in the hand of God, whereby he performed and brought to pass that act of his, viz. approving and justifying the believer. Whereas it was not intended that faith was the instrument wherewith God justifies, but the instrument wherewith we receive justification ; not the instrument wherewith the justifier acts in justifying, but wherewith the receiver of justification acts in accepting justification. But yet it must be owned, that this is an obscure way of speaking, and there must certainly be some impropriety in calling it an instrument, wherewith we receive or accept justification ; for the very persons that thus explain the matter, speak of faith as being the reception or acceptance itself ; and if so, how can it be the instrument of reception or acceptance ? Certainly there is difference between the act and the instrument. And besides, by their own descriptions of faith, Christ the mediator by whom, and his righteousness by which we are justified, is more directly the object of this acceptance and justification, which is the benefit arising therefrom more indirectly ; and therefore, if faith be an instrument, it is more properly the instrument by which we receive Christ, than the instrument by which we receive justification.

But I humbly conceive we have been ready to look too far to find out what that influence of faith in our justification is, or what is that dependence of this effect on faith, signified by the expression of being justified by faith, overlooking that which is most obviously pointed forth in the expression, viz. that, the case being as it is, (there being a mediator that has purchased justification) faith in this mediator is that which renders it a meet and suitable thing, in the sight of God, that the believer, rather than others, should have this purchased benefit assigned to him. There is this benefit purchased, which God sees it to be a more meet and suitable thing that it should be assigned to

some than others, because he sees them differently qualified ; that qualification wherein the meetness to this benefit, as the case stands, consists, is that in us by which we are justified. If Christ had not come into the world and died, &c. to purchase justification, no qualification whatever in us could render it a meet or fit thing that we should be justified : But the case being as it now stands, viz. that Christ has actually purchased justification by his own blood for infinitely unworthy creatures, there may be some certain qualification found in some persons, that, either from the relation it bears to the mediator and his merits, or on some other account, is the thing that in the sight of God renders it a meet and condecant thing, that they should have an interest in this purchased benefit, and which if any are destitute of, it renders it an unfit and unsuitable thing that they should have it. The wisdom of God in his constitutions doubtless appears much in the fitness and beauty of them, so that those things are established to be done that are fit to be done, and that those things are connected in his constitution that are agreeable one to another : So God justifies a believer according to his revealed constitution, without doubt, because he sees something in this qualification that, as the case stands, renders it a fit thing that such should be justified ; whether it be because faith is the instrument, or as it were the hand, by which he that has purchased justification is apprehended and accepted, or because it is the acceptance itself, or whatever. To be justified, is to be approved of God as a proper subject of pardon, and a right to eternal life ; and therefore, when it is said that we are justified by faith, what else can be understood by it, than that faith is that by which we are rendered approvable, fitly so, and indeed, as the case stands, proper subjects of this benefit ?

This is something different from faith's being the condition of justification, only so as to be inseparably connected with justification : So are many other things besides faith ; and yet nothing in us but faith renders it meet that we should have justification assigned to us ; as I shall presently shew how, in answer to the next inquiry, viz.

2. How this is said to be by faith alone, without any manner of virtue or goodness of our own. This may seem to some to

be attended with two difficulties, viz. how this can be said to be by faith alone, without any virtue or goodness of ours, when faith itself is a virtue, and one part of our goodness, and is not only some manner of goodness of ours, but is a very excellent qualification, and one chief part of the inherent holiness of a Christian? And if it be a part of our inherent goodness or excellency (whether it be this part or any other) that renders it a condecant or congruous thing that we should have this benefit of Christ assigned to us, what less is this than what they mean that talk of a merit of congruity? And moreover, if this part of our Christian holiness qualifies us in the sight of God, for this benefit of Christ, and renders it a fit or meet thing, in his sight, that we should have it, why should not other parts of holiness, and conformity to God, which are also very excellent, and have as much the image of Christ in them, and are no less lovely in God's eyes, qualify us as much, and have as much influence to render us meet in God's sight, for such a benefit as this? Therefore I answer,

When it is said, that we are not justified by any righteousness or goodness of our own, what is meant is, that it is not out of respect to the excellency or goodness of any qualifications or acts in us whatsoever, that God judges it meet that this benefit of Christ should be ours; and it is not in any wise, on account of any excellency or value that there is in faith, that it appears in the sight of God a meet thing, that he that believes should have this benefit of Christ assigned to him, but purely from the relation faith has to the person in whom this benefit is to be had, or as it unites to that mediator, in and by whom we are justified. Here for the greater clearness, I would particularly explain myself under several propositions.

1. It is certain that there is some union or relation that the people of Christ stand in to him, that is expressed in scripture, from time to time, by being in Christ, and is represented frequently by those metaphors of being members of Christ, or being united to him as members to the head, and branches to the stock,* and is compared to a marriage union between

* “Our Saviour compares his mystical body, that is his church, to a vine, which his Father, whom he compares to a husbandman, hath planted; *I am*

husband and wife. I do not now pretend to determine of what sort this union is; nor is it necessary to my present purpose to enter into any manner of dispute about it. If any are disgusted at the word *union*, as obscure and unintelligible, the word *relation* equally serves my purpose; I do not now desire to determine any more about it, than all, of all sorts, will readily allow, viz. that there is a peculiar relation between true Christians and Christ, or a certain relation between him and them, that there is not between him and others; which is signified by those metaphorical expressions in scripture, of being in Christ, being members of Christ, &c.

2. This relation or union to Christ whereby Christians are said, to be in Christ, (whatever it be) is the ground of their right to his benefits. This needs no proof; the reason of the thing, at first blush, demonstrates it: But yet it is evident also by scripture, 1 John v. 12. "He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life." 1 Cor. i. 30. "Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto usrighteousness." First we must be in him, and then he will be made righteousness or justification to us. Eph. i. 6. "Who hath made us accepted in the beloved." Our being in him is the ground of our being accepted. So it is in those unions which the Holy Ghost has thought fit to compare this union to. The union of the members of the body with the head, is the

the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. To represent to us the union that is betwixt Christ and all true Christians, and the influence of grace and spiritual life, which all that are united to him do derive and receive from him, he sets it forth to us by the resemblance of a vine and branches. As there is a natural, vital union between the vine and the branches, so there is a spiritual union between Christ and true Christians; and this union is the cause of our fruitfulness in the works of obedience and a good life. There are some indeed that seem to be grafted into Christ by an outward profession of Christianity, who yet derive no influence from him, so as to bring forth fruit, because they are not vitally united to him." *Dr. Tillotson, 3d. vol. of Serms. p. 327.*

By this it appears that the vital union between Christ and true Christians, which is much more of a mystery than the relative union, and necessarily implies it, was not thought an unreasonable doctrine by one of the greatest divines on the other side of the question in hand.

ground of their partaking of the life of the head ; it is the union of the branches to the stock, which is the ground of their partaking of the sap and life of the stock ; it is the relation of the wife to the husband, that is the ground of her joint interest in his estate ; they are looked upon, in several respects, as one in law : So there is a legal union between Christ and true Christians ; so that (as all except Socinians allow) one, in some respects, is accepted for the other by the Supreme Judge.

3. And thus it is that faith is that qualification in any person that renders it meet in the sight of God that he should be looked upon as having Christ's satisfaction and righteousness belonging to him, viz. because it is that in him which, on his part, makes up this union between him and Christ. By what has been just now observed, it is a person's being, according to scripture phrase, in Christ, that is the ground of having his satisfaction and merits belonging to him, and a right to the benefits procured thereby : And the reason of it is plain ; it is easy to see how a having Christ's merits and benefits belonging to us, follows from our having (if I may so speak) Christ himself belonging to us, or a being united to him ; and if so, it must also be easy to see how, or in what manner, that, in a person, that on his part makes up the union between his soul and Christ, should be the thing on the account of which God looks on it meet that he should have Christ's merits and benefits, from regard to any qualification in him, in this respect, from his doing of it for him, out of respect to the value or loveliness of that qualification, or as a reward of the excellency of it.

As there is no body but what will allow that there is a peculiar relation between Christ and his true disciples, by which they are in some sense in scripture said to be one ; so I suppose there is no body but what will allow, that there may be something that the true Christian does on his part, whereby he is active in coming into his relation or union, some of the soul of the Christian, that is the Christian's uniting act, or that which is done towards this union or relation (or whatever

any please to call it) on the Christian's part : Now faith I suppose to be this act.

I do not now pretend to define justifying faith, or to determine precisely how much is contained in it, but only to determine thus much concerning it, viz. That it is that by which the soul that before was separate and alienated from Christ, unites itself to him, or ceases to be any longer in that state of alienation, and comes into that forementioned union or relation to him, or, to use the scripture phrase, that it is that by which the soul comes to Christ, and receives him : And this is evident by the scripture's using these very expressions to signify faith. John vi. 35, 36, 37, 38, 39. "He that *cometh* to me, shall never hunger ; and he that *believeth* on me, shall never thirst. But I said unto you, that ye also have seen me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth me, shall *come* to me ; and him that *cometh* to me, I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." Ver. 40. "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life ; and I will raise him up at the last day." Chap. v. 38, 39, 40. "Whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. Search the scriptures, for... they are they which testify of me. And ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life." Ver. 43, 44. "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not : If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. How can ye believe which receive honor one of another ?" Chap. i. 12. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name." If it be said that these are obscure figures of speech, that, however they might be well understood of old among those that then commonly used such metaphors, yet they are difficultly understood now ; I allow that the expressions, *receiving* Christ, and *coming* to Christ, are metaphorical expressions : And if I should allow them to be obscure metaphors ; yet so much at least is certainly plain in them, viz. that faith is that by which those that before were separated, and at a distance from Christ, (that is to say, were not so related and united to

him as his people are) do cease to be any longer at such a distance, and do come into that relation and nearness ; unless they are so unintelligible, that nothing at all can be understood by them.

God does not give those that believe an union with, or an interest in the Saviour, in reward for faith but only because faith is the soul's active uniting with Christ, or is itself the very act of union, on their part. God sees it fit, that in order to an union's being established between two intelligent, active beings or persons, so as that they should be looked upon as one, there should be the mutual act of both, that each should receive the other, as actively joining themselves one to another. God, in requiring this in order to an union with Christ as one of his people, treats men as reasonable creatures, capable of act and choice ; and hence sees it fit that they only that are one with Christ by their own act, should be looked upon as one in law. What is real in the union between Christ and his people, is the foundation of what is legal ; that is, it is something that is really in them, and between them, uniting them, that is the ground of the suitableness of their being accounted as one by the Judge : And if there be any act or qualification in believers that is of that uniting nature, that it is meet, on that account, that the Judge should look upon them and accept them as one, no wonder that upon the account of the same act or qualification, he should accept the satisfaction and merits of the one for the other, as if it were their satisfaction and merits : It necessarily follows, or rather is implied.

And thus it is that faith justifies, or gives an interest in Christ's satisfaction and merits, and a right to the benefits procured thereby, viz. as it thus makes Christ and the believer one, in the acceptance of the Supreme Judge. It is by faith that we have a title to eternal life, because it is by faith that we have the Son of God, by whom life is. The Apostle John in these words, 1 John v. 12. " He that hath the Son, hath life," seems evidently to have respect to those words of Christ that he gives an account of in his gospel, chap. iii. 36. " He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life ; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life." And in the same

places that the scripture speaks of faith as the soul's receiving or coming to Christ, it also speaks of this receiving, or coming to, or joining with Christ, as the ground of an interest in his benefits : To as many as received him, "to them gave he power" to become the sons of God. Ye will not come unto me "that ye might have life." And there is a wide difference between its being looked on suitable that Christ's satisfaction and merits should be theirs that believe, because an interest in that satisfaction and merit is but a fit reward of faith, or a suitable testimony of God's respect to the amiableness and excellency of that grace, and its only being looked on suitable that Christ's satisfaction and merits should be theirs, because Christ and they are so united, that in the eyes of the Judge they may suitably be looked upon and taken as one.

Although, on the account of faith in the believer, it is, in the sight of God, fit and congruous, both that he that believes should be looked upon as in Christ, and also as having an interest in his merits, in the way that has been now explained ; yet it appears that this is very wide from a merit of congruity, or indeed any moral congruity at all to either. There is a twofold fitness to a state ; I know not how to give them distinguishing names, or otherwise, than by calling the one a *moral* and the other a *natural* fitness. A person has a moral fitness for a state, when his moral excellency commends him to it, or when his being put into such a good state is but a fit or suitable testimony of regard or love to the moral excellency, or value, or amiableness of any of his qualifications or acts. A person has a natural fitness for a state, when it appears meet and decent that he should be in such a state or circumstances, only from the natural concord or agreeableness there is between such qualifications and such circumstances ; not because the qualifications are lovely or unlovely, but only because the qualifications and the circumstances are like one another, or do in their nature, suit and agree or unite one to another. And it is on this latter account only that God looks on it fit, by a natural fitness, that he whose heart sincerely unites itself to Christ as his Saviour, should be looked upon as united to that Saviour, and so having an interest in him ; and

not from any moral fitness there is between the excellency of such a qualification as faith, and such a glorious blessedness as the having an interest in Christ. God's bestowing Christ and his benefits on a soul in consequence of faith, out of regard only to the natural concord there is between such a qualification of a soul, and such an union with Christ, and interest in him, makes the case very widely different from what would be, if he bestowed this from regard to any moral suitableness : For, in the former case, it is only from God's love of order that he bestows these things on the account of faith : In the latter, God doth it out of love to the grace of faith itself. God will neither look on Christ's merits as ours, nor adjudge his benefits to us, till we be in Christ ; nor will he look upon us being in him, without an active union of our hearts and souls to him ; because he is a wise being, and delights in order and not in confusion, and that things should be together or asunder according to their nature ; and his making such a constitution is a testimony of his love of order : Whereas if it were out of regard to any moral fitness or suitableness between faith and such blessedness, it would be a testimony of his love to the act or qualification itself : The one supposes this divine constitution to be a manifestation of God's regard to the beauty of the act of faith ; the other only supposes it to be a manifestation of his regard to the beauty of that order that there is in uniting those things that have a natural agreement, and congruity, and union, the one with the other. Indeed a moral suitableness or fitness to a state includes a natural : For it is never so that if there be a moral suitableness that a person should be in such a state, there is not also a natural suitableness ; but such a natural suitableness as I have described, by no means necessarily includes a moral.

This is plainly what our divines intend when they say, that faith does not justify as a work, or a righteousness, viz. that it does not justify as a part of our moral goodness or excellency, or that it does not justify as a work in the sense, that man was to have been justified by his works by the covenant of works, which was to have a title to eternal life given him of God in testimony of his pleasedness with his works, or his re-

gard to the inherent excellency and beauty of his obedience. And this is certainly what the Apostle Paul means, when he so much insists upon it, that we are not justified by works, viz. that we are not justified by them as good works, or by any goodness, value, or excellency of our works. For the proof of this I shall at present mention but one thing, (being like to have occasion to say what shall make it more abundantly manifest afterwards) and that is, the apostles, from time to time, speaking of our not being justified by works, as the thing that excludes all boasting, Eph. ii. 9, Rom. iii. 27, and chap. iv. 2. Now which way do works give occasion for boasting, but as good? What do men use to boast of, but of something they suppose good or excellent? And on what account do they boast of any thing, but for the supposed excellency that is in it?

From these things we may learn in what manner faith is the only condition of justification, and salvation: For though it be not the only condition, so as alone truly to have the place of a condition in an hypothetical proposition, in which justification and salvation are the consequent, yet it is the condition of justification in a manner peculiar to it, and so that nothing else has a parallel influence with it; because faith includes the whole act of union to Christ as a Saviour. The entire, active uniting of the soul, or the whole of what is called coming to Christ, and receiving of him, is called faith in scripture; and however other things may be no less excellent than faith, yet it is not the nature of any other graces or virtues directly to close with Christ as a mediator, any further than they enter into the constitution of justifying faith, and do belong to its nature.

Thus I have explained my meaning in asserting it as a doctrine of the gospel, that we are justified by faith only, without any manner of goodness of our own. I now proceed in the

II. Place, to the proof of it; which I shall endeavor to produce in the following arguments.

First. Such is our case, and the state of things, that neither faith, nor any other qualification, or act or course of acts, does or can render it suitable or fit that a person should have an interest in the Saviour, and so a title to his benefits, on

account of any excellency therein, or any other way, than only as something in him may unite him to the Saviour. It is not suitable that God should give fallen man an interest in Christ and his merits, as a testimony of his respect to any thing whatsoever as a loveliness in him ; and that because it is not meet, till a sinner is actually justified, that any thing in him should be accepted of God, as an excellency or amiableness of his person ; or that God, by any act, should in any manner or degree testify any pleasedness with him, or favor towards him, on the account of any thing inherent in him : And that for two reasons, 1. Because the nature of things will not admit of it : 2. Because an antecedent, divine constitution stands in the way of it.

1. The nature of things will not admit of it. And this appears from the infinite guilt that the sinner, till justified, is under ; which arises from the infinite evil or heinousness of sin. But because this is what some deny, I would therefore first establish that point, and shew that sin is a thing that is indeed properly of infinite heinousness ; and then shew the consequence, and shew that, it being so, and so the sinner under infinite guilt in God's sight, it cannot be suitable, till the sinner is actually justified, that God should by any act testify any pleasedness with, or acceptance of any thing, as any excellency or amiableness of his person, or indeed have any acceptance of him, or pleasedness with him to testify.

That the evil and demerit of sin is infinitely great, is most demonstrably evident, because what the evil or iniquity of sin consists in, is the violating of an obligation, the doing contrary to what we are obliged to do, or doing what we should not do ; and therefore by how much the greater the obligation is that is violated, by so much the greater is the iniquity of the violation. But certainly our obligation to love or honor any being is great in proportion to the greatness or excellency of that being or his worthiness to be loved or honored : We are under greater obligations to love a more lovely being than a less lovely ; and if a being be infinitely excellent and lovely, our obligations to love him are therein infinitely great : The matter is so plain, it seems needless to say much about it.

Some have argued strangely against the infinite evil of sin, from its being committed against an infinite object, that if so, then it may as well be argued, that there is also an infinite value or worthiness in holiness and love to God, because that also has an infinite object ; whereas the argument, from parity of reason, will carry it in the reverse : The sin of the creature against God is ill deserving in proportion to the distance there is between God and the creature ; the greatness of the object, and the meanness of the subject aggravates it. But it is the reverse with regard to the worthiness of respect of the creature to God ; it is worthless, (and not worthy) in proportion to the meanness of the subject ; so much the greater the distance between God and the creature, so much the less is the creature's respect worthy of God's notice or regard. The unworthiness of sin or opposition to God rises and is great, in proportion to the dignity of the object and inferiority of the subject ; but on the contrary, the worth or value of respect rises in proportion to the value of the subject ; and that for this plain reason, *viz.* that the evil of disrespect is in proportion to the obligation that lies upon the subject to the object ; which obligation is most evidently increased by the excellency and superiority of the object ; but on the contrary, the worthiness of respect to a being is in proportion to the obligation that lies on him who is the object, (or rather the reason he has) to regard the subject, which certainly is in proportion to the subject's value or excellency. Sin or disrespect is evil or heinous in proportion to the degree of what it denies in the object, as it were takes from it, *viz.* its excellency and worthiness of respect ; on the contrary, respect is valuable in proportion to the value of what is given to the object in that respect, which undoubtedly (other things being equal) is great in proportion to the subject's value, or worthiness of regard ; because the subject in giving his respect, can give no more than himself to the object ; and therefore his gift is of greater or less value in proportion to the value of himself.

Hence, (by the way) the love, honor, and obedience of Christ towards God, has infinite value, from the excellency

and dignity of the person in whom these qualifications were inherent ; and the reason why we needed a person of infinite dignity to obey for us, was because of our infinite comparative meanness, who had disobeyed, whereby our disobedience was infinitely aggravated. We needed one, the worthiness of whose obedience might be answerable to the unworthiness of our disobedience ; and therefore needed one who was as great and worthy as we were unworthy.

Another objection (that perhaps may be thought hardly worth mentioning) is, that to suppose sin to be infinitely heinous, is to make all sins equally heinous ; for how can any sin be more than infinitely heinous ? But all that can be argued hence is, that no sin can be greater with respect to that aggravation, the worthiness of the object against whom it is committed. One sin cannot be more aggravated than another in that respect, because in this respect the aggravation of every sin is infinite ; but that does not hinder but that some sins may be more heinous than others in other respects : As if we should suppose a cylinder infinitely long, it cannot be greater in that respect, viz. with respect to the length of it ; but yet it may be doubled and trebled, and made a thousand fold more, by the increase of other dimensions. Of sins that are all infinitely heinous, some may be more heinous than others ; as well as of divers punishments that are all infinitely dreadful calamities, or all of them infinitely exceeding all finite calamities, so that there is no finite calamity, however great, but what is infinitely less dreadful, or more eligible than any of them, yet some of them may be a thousand times more dreadful than others. A punishment may be infinitely dreadful by reason of the long duration of it ; and therefore cannot be greater with respect to that aggravation of it, viz. its length of continuance, but yet may be vastly more terrible on other accounts.

Having thus, as I imagine, made it clear, that all sin is infinitely heinous, and consequently that the sinner, before he is justified, is under infinite guilt in God's sight ; it now remains that I shew the consequence, or how it follows from hence, that it is not suitable that God should give the sinner

an interest in Christ's merits, and so a title to his benefits, from regard to any qualification, or act, or course of acts in him, on the account of any excellency or goodness whatsoever therein, but only as uniting to Christ ; or (which fully implies it) that it is not suitable that God, by any act, should, in any manner or degree, testify any acceptance of, or pleasedness with any thing, as any virtue, or excellency, or any part of loveliness, or valuableness in his person until he is actually already interested in Christ's merits ; which appears by this, that from the premises it follows, that before the sinner is already interested in Christ, and justified, it is impossible God should have any acceptance of, or pleasedness with the person of the sinner, as in any degree lovely in his sight, or indeed less the object of his displeasure and wrath. For, by the supposition, the sinner still remains infinitely guilty in the sight of God ; for guilt is not removed but by pardon : But to suppose the sinner already pardoned, is to suppose him already justified ; which is contrary to the supposition. But if the sinner still remains infinitely guilty in God's sight, that is the same thing as still to be beheld of God as infinitely the object of his displeasure and wrath, or infinitely hateful in his eyes ; and if so, where is any room for any thing in him, to be accepted as some valuableness or acceptableness of him in God's sight, or for any act of favor of any kind towards him, or any gift whatsoever to him, in testimony of God's respect to and acceptance of something of him lovely and pleasing ? If we should suppose that it could be so, that a sinner could have faith or some other grace in his heart, and yet remain separate from Christ ; and it should continue still to be so, that he is not looked upon as being in Christ, or having any relation to him, it would not be meet that that true grace should be accepted of God as any loveliness of his person in the sight of God. If it should be accepted as the loveliness of the person, that would be to accept the person as in some degree lovely to God ; but this cannot be consistent with his still remaining under infinite guilt, or infinite unworthiness in God's sight, which that goodness has no worthiness to balance. While God beholds the man as separate from Christ,

he must behold him as he is in himself ; and so his goodness cannot be beheld by God, but as taken with his guilt and hatefulness ; and as put in the scales with it ; and being beheld so, his goodness is nothing ; because there is a finite on the balance against an infinite, whose proportion to it is nothing. In such a case, if the man be looked on as he is in himself, the excess of the weight in one scale above another, must be looked upon as the quality of the man. These contraries being beheld together, one takes from another, as one number is subtracted from another ; and the man must be looked upon in God's sight according to the remainder : For here, by the supposition, all acts of grace and favor, in not imputing the guilt as it is, are excluded, because that supposes a degree of pardon, and that supposes justification, which is contrary to what is supposed, viz. that the sinner is not already justified ; and therefore things must be taken strictly as they are : and so the man is still infinitely unworthy and hateful in God's sight, as he was before without diminution, because his goodness bears no proportion to his unworthiness, and therefore when taken together is nothing.

Hence may be more clearly seen the force of that expression in the text, of believing on him that *justifieth the ungodly* ; for though there is indeed something in man that is really and spiritually good, that is prior to justification, yet there is nothing that is accepted as any godliness or excellency of the person till after justification. Goodness or loveliness of the person in the acceptance of God, in any degree, is not to be considered prior but posterior in the order and method of God's proceeding in this affair. Though a respect to the natural suitableness between such a qualification, and such a state, does go before justification, yet the acceptance even of faith as any goodness or loveliness of the believer, follows justification : The goodness is on the forementioned account justly looked upon as nothing, until the man is justified : And therefore the man is respected in justification, as in himself altogether hateful. Thus the nature of things will not admit of a man's having an interest given him in the merits or benefits of a Saviour, on the account of any thing as a righteousness, or virtue, or excellency in him.

2. A divine constitution that is antecedent to that which establishes justification by a Saviour, (and indeed to any need of a Saviour) stands in the way of it, viz. that original constitution or law which man was put under ; by which constitution or law the sinner is condemned, because he is a violator of that law ; stands condemned, till he has actually an interest in the Saviour, through whom he is set at liberty from that condemnation. But to suppose that God gives a man an interest in Christ in reward for his righteousness or virtue, is inconsistent with his still remaining under condemnation till he has an interest in Christ ; because it supposes, that the sinner's virtue is accepted, and he accepted for it, before he has an interest in Christ ; inasmuch as an interest in Christ is given as a reward of his virtue : But the virtue must first be accepted, before it is rewarded, and the man must first be accepted for his virtue, before he is rewarded for it with so great and glorious a reward ; for the very notion of a reward, is some good bestowed in testimony of respect to, and acceptance of virtue in the person rewarded. It does not consist with the honor of the majesty of the king of heaven and earth, to accept of any thing from a condemned malefactor, condemned by the justice of his own holy law, till that condemnation be removed : And then such acceptance is inconsistent with, and contradictory to such remaining condemnation ; for the law condemns him that violates it to be totally rejected and cast off by God. But how can a man continue under this condemnation, i. e. continue utterly rejected and cast off by God, and yet his righteousness or virtue be accepted, and he himself accepted on the account of it, so as to have so glorious reward as an interest in Christ bestowed as a testimony of that acceptance ?

I know that the answer that will be ready for this, is, that we now are not subject to that constitution that mankind were at first put under ; but that God, in mercy to mankind, has abolished that rigorous constitution or law that they were under originally, and has put us under a new law, and introduced a more mild constitution ; and that the constitution or law itself not remaining, there is no need of supposing that the condemnation of it remains, to stand in the way of the accept-

ance of our virtue. And indeed there is no other way of avoiding this difficulty ; the condemnation of the law must stand in force against a man till he is actually interested in the Saviour, that has satisfied and answered the law, effectually to prevent any acceptance of his virtue, before, or in order to such an interest, unless the law or constitution itself be abolished. But the scheme of those modern divines by whom this is maintained, seems to contain a great deal of absurdity and selfcontradiction : They hold, that the old law given to Adam, which requires perfect obedience, is entirely repealed, and that instead of it we are put under a new law, which requires no more than imperfect, sincere obedience, in compliance with our poor, infirm, impotent circumstances since the fall, whereby we are unable to perform that perfect obedience that was required by the first law : For they strenuously maintain, that it would be unjust in God to require any thing of us that is beyond our present power and ability to perform ; and yet they hold, that Christ died to satisfy for the imperfections of our obedience, that so our imperfect obedience might be accepted instead of a perfect. Now, how can these things hang together ? I would ask, What law these imperfections of our obedience are a breach of ? If they are a breach of no law, then they be not sins, and if they be not sins, what need of Christ's dying to satisfy for them ? But if they are sins, and so the breach of some law, what law is it ? They cannot be a breach of their new law, for that requires no other than imperfect obedience, or obedience with imperfections ; and they cannot be a breach of the old law, for that they say is entirely abolished, and we never were under it ; and we cannot break a law that we never were under. They say it would not be just in God to exact of us perfect obedience, because it would not be just in God to require more of us than we can perform in our present state, and to punish us for failing of it ; and therefore, by their own scheme, the imperfections of our obedience do not deserve to be punished. What need therefore of Christ's dying to satisfy for them ? What need of Christ's suffering to satisfy for that which is no fault, and in its own nature deserves no suffering ? What need of Christ's dy-

ing to purchase that our imperfect obedience should be accepted, when, according to their scheme, it would be unjust in itself that any other obedience than imperfect should be required? What need of Christ's dying to make way for God's accepting such an obedience, as it would in itself be unjust in him not to accept? Is there any need of Christ's dying to persuade God not to do unjustly? If it be said, that Christ died to satisfy that law for us, that so we might not be under that law, but might be delivered from it, that so there might be room for us to be under a more mild law; still I would inquire, What need of Christ's dying that we might not be under a law that (according to their scheme) it would in itself be unjust that we should be under, because in our present state we are not able to keep it? What need of Christ's dying that we might not be under a law that it would be unjust that we should be under, whether Christ died or no?

Thus far I have argued principally from reason, and the nature of things :.....I proceed now to the

Second argument, which is, That this is a doctrine that the holy Scripture, the revelation that God has given us of his mind and will, by which alone we can ever come to know how those that have offended God can be accepted of him, and justified in his sight, is exceeding full in : Particularly the Apostle Paul is abundant in teaching, that "we are justified by faith alone, without the works of the law." There is no doctrine that he insists so much upon, and is so particular in, and that he handles with so much distinctness, explaining and giving reasons, and answering objections.

Here it is not denied by any, that the apostle does assert, that we are justified by faith, without the works of the law, because the words are express ; but only it is said, that we take his words wrong and understand that by them that never entered into his heart, in that when he excludes the works of the law, we understand him of the whole law of God, or the rule which he has given to mankind to walk by ; whereas all that he intends is the ceremonial law.

Some that oppose this doctrine indeed say, that the apostle sometimes means that it is by faith i. e. an hearty embracing the gospel, in its first act only, or without any preceding holy

life, that persons are admitted into a justified state; but, say they, it is by a persevering obedience that they are continued in a justified state; and it is by this that they are finally justified. But this is the same thing as to say, that a man, on his first embracing the gospel, is conditionally justified and pardoned: To pardon sin, is to free the sinner from the punishment of it, or from that eternal misery that is due to it; and therefore, if a person is pardoned or freed from this misery, on his first embracing the gospel, and yet not finally freed, but his actual freedom still depends on some condition yet to be performed, it is inconceivable how he can be pardoned otherwise than conditionally; that is, he is not actually pardoned, and freed from punishment, but only he has God's promise that he shall be pardoned on future conditions; God promises him, that now, if he perseveres in obedience, he shall be finally pardoned, or actually freed from hell; which is to make just nothing at all of the apostle's great doctrine of justification by faith alone: Such a conditional pardon is no pardon or justification at all, any more than all mankind have, whether they embrace the gospel or no; for they all have a promise of final justification on condition of future, sincere obedience, as much as he that embraces the gospel. But not to dispute about this, we will suppose that there may be something or other at the sinner's first embracing the gospel, that may properly be called justification or pardon, and yet that final justification, or real freedom from the punishment of sin, is still suspended on conditions hitherto unfulfilled; yet they that hold that sinners are thus justified on embracing the gospel, suppose that they are justified by this no otherwise than as this is a leading act of obedience, or at least as virtue and moral goodness in them, and therefore would be excluded by the apostle as much as any other virtue or obedience, if it be allowed that he means the moral law, when he excludes the works of the law. And therefore, if that point be yielded, that the apostle means the moral, and not the ceremonial law only, their whole scheme falls to the ground.

And because the issue of the whole argument from those texts in St. Paul's epistles depends on the determination of this point, I would be particular in the discussion of it.

Some of our opponents in this doctrine of justification, when they deny, that by the law the apostle means the moral law, or the whole rule of life which God has given to mankind, seem to choose to express themselves thus, that the apostle only intends the Mosaic dispensation. But this comes to just the same thing as if they said, that the apostle only means to exclude the works of the ceremonial law; for when they say, that it is intended only that we be not justified by the works of the Mosaic dispensation, if they mean any thing by it, it must be, that we be not justified by attending and observing what is Mosaic in that dispensation, or by what was peculiar to it, and wherein it differed from the Christian dispensation; which is the same as that which is ceremonial and positive, and not moral, in that administration. So that this is what I have to disprove, viz. that the apostle when he speaks of the works of the law in this affair, means only the works of the ceremonial law, or those observances that were peculiar to the Mosaic administration.

And here it must be noted, that nobody controverts it with them, whether the works of the ceremonial law be not included, or whether the apostle does not particularly argue against justification by circumcision, and other ceremonial observances; but all that is in question is, whether, when he denies justification by works of the law, he is to be understood of the ceremonial law only, or whether the moral law be not also implied and intended; and therefore those arguments that are brought to prove that the apostle meant the ceremonial law, are nothing to the purpose unless they prove more than that, viz. that the apostle meant those only.

What is much insisted on is, that it was the Judaising Christians' being so fond of circumcision, and other ceremonies of the law, and depending so much on them, which was the occasion of the apostle's writing as he does against justification by the works of the law. But supposing it were so, that their trusting in works of the ceremonial law were the sole occasion of the apostle's writing, (which yet there is no reason to allow, as may appear afterwards;) if their trusting in a particular work, as a work of righteousness, was all

that gave occasion to the apostle to write, how does it follow, that therefore the apostle did not upon that occasion write against trusting in all works of righteousness whatsoever? Where is the absurdity of supposing that the apostle might take occasion, from his observing some to trust in a certain work as a work of righteousness, to write to them against persons' trusting in any works of righteousness, and that it was a very proper occasion too? Yea, it would have been unavoidable for the apostle to have argued against trusting in a particular work in that quality of a work of righteousness, which quality was general, but he must therein argue against works of righteousness in general. Supposing it had been some other particular sort of works that was the occasion of the apostle's writing, as for instance, works of charity, and the apostle should hence take occasion to write to them not to trust in their works, could the apostle by that be understood of no other work besides works of charity? Would it have been absurd to understand him as writing against trusting in any work at all, because it was their trusting to a particular work that gave occasion to his writing?

Another thing that is alleged as an evidence that the apostle means the ceremonial law, when he says, we cannot be justified by the works of the law, is, that he uses that argument to prove it, viz. that this law that he speaks of was given so long after the covenant with Abraham, in Gal. iii. 17. "And this, I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul." But, say they, it was only the Mosaic administration, and not the covenant of works, that was given so long after. But the apostle's argument seems manifestly to be mistaken by them. The apostle does not speak of a law that began first to have being four hundred and thirty years after; if he did, there would be some force in their objection; but he has respect to a certain solemn transaction, well known among the Jews, by the phrase of the giving of the law, which was that great transaction at mount Sinai, that we have account of in the 19th and 20th chapters of Exodus, consisting especially in God's giving the ten commandments, which is the

moral law, with that terrible voice, which law he afterwards gave in tables of stone. This transaction, the Jews, in the apostles' time misinterpreted ; they looked upon it as God's establishing that law as a rule of justification. This conceit of their's the apostle brings this invincible argument against, viz. that God would never go about to disannul his covenant with Abraham, which was plainly a covenant of grace, by a transaction with his posterity, that was so long after it, and was plainly built upon it : He would not overthrow a covenant of grace that he had long before established with Abraham, for him, and his seed, (which is often mentioned on the ground of God's making them his people) by now establishing a covenant of works with them at Mount Sinai, as the Jews and judaising Christians supposed.

But that the apostle does not mean works of the ceremonial law only, when he excludes works of the law in justification, but also of the moral law, and all works of obedience, virtue and righteousness whatsoever, may appear by the following things.

1. The apostle does not only say, that we are not justified by the works of the law, but that we are not justified by works, using a general term ; as in our text, it is said, *to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth.* &c. ; and in the 6th verse, "God imputeth righteousness without works;" and chap. xi. 6, "And if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace : But if it be of works, then is it no more grace ; otherwise work is no more work." So Eph. ii. 8, 9, "For by grace are ye saved, through faith.....not of works;" by which there is no reason in the world to understand the apostle of any other than works in general, as correlates of a reward, or good works, or works of virtue and righteousness. When the apostle says, we are justified or saved not by works, without any such term annexed, as the law, or any other addition, to limit the expression, what warrant has any one to confine it to works of a particular law or institution, excluding others? Are not observances of other divine laws, works, as well as of that? It seems to be allowed by the divines in the Arminian scheme, in their interpretation of

several of those texts where the apostle mentions works only, without any additions, that he means our own good works in general; but then, they say, he only means to exclude any proper merit in those works. But to say the apostle means one thing when he says, we be not justified by works, another when he says, we be not justified by the works of the law, when we find the expressions mixed and used in the same discourse, and when the apostle is evidently on the same argument, is very unreasonable, it is to dodge, and fly from scripture, rather than to open and yield ourselves to its teachings.

2. In the third chapter of Romans, our having been guilty of breaches of the moral law, is an argument that the apostle uses, why we cannot be justified by the works of the law; beginning with the 9th verse, there he proves, out of the Old Testament, that all are under sin: "There is none righteous, no not one: Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit: Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; and their feet swift to shed blood." And so he goes on, mentioning only those things that are breaches of the moral law; and then when he has done, his conclusion is, in the 19th and 20th verses, "Now, we know that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law, shall no flesh be justified in his sight." This is most evidently his argument, because all had sinned, (as it was said in the 9th verse) and been guilty of those breaches of the moral law that he had mentioned, (and it is repeated over again afterward, verse 23.) For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," therefore none at all can be justified by the law. Now if the apostle meant only, that we are not justified by the deeds of the ceremonial law, what kind of arguing would that be: Their mouth is full of cursing and bitterness, their feet are swift to shed blood;" therefore they cannot be justified by the deeds of the Mosaic administration: They are guilty of the breaches of the moral law; and therefore they cannot be justified by the deeds of the ceremonial law? Doubtless the apostle's argument is, that the very same law that they

have broken and sinned against, can never justify them as observers of it, because every law does not justify, but necessarily condemns its violators. And therefore our breaches of the moral law argue no more, than that we cannot be justified by that law that we have broken.

And it may be noted, that the apostle's argument here is the same that I have already used, viz. that as we are in ourselves and out of Christ, we are under the condemnation of that original law or constitution that God established with mankind; and therefore it is no way fit that any thing that we do, any virtue or obedience of ours should be accepted, or we accepted on the account of it.

3. The apostle, in the preceding part of this epistle, wherever he has the phrase, *the law*, evidently intends the moral law principally. As in the 12th verse of the foregoing chapter: "For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law." It is evidently the written, moral law the apostle means, by the next verse but one; "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law;" that is, the moral law that the Gentiles have by nature. And so the next verse, "Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts." It is the moral law, and not the ceremonial, that is written in the hearts of those that are destitute of divine revelation. And so in the 18th verse, "Thou approvest the things that are more excellent; being instructed out of the law." It is the moral law that shews us the nature of things, and teaches us what is excellent; 20th verse, "Thou hast a form of knowledge and truth in the law." It is the moral law, as is evident by what follows, ver. 22, 23. "Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law, dishonorest thou God? Adultery, idolatry, and sacrilege, surely are the breaking of the moral, and not the ceremonial law. So in the 27th verse, "And shall not uncircumcision which is by nature, if it fulfil the law, judge thee, who by the letter and circumcision dost transgress the law?" i. e. The Gentiles. that you despise

because uncircumcised, if they live moral and holy lives, in obedience to the moral law, shall condemn you though circumcised. And so there is not one place in all the preceding part of the epistle, where the apostle speaks of the law, but that he most apparently intends principally the moral law ; and yet when the apostle, in continuance of the same discourse, comes to tell us that we cannot be justified by the works of the law, then they will needs have it, that he means only the ceremonial law ; yea, though all this discourse about the moral law, shewing how the Jews, as well as Gentiles have violated it, is evidently preparatory and introductory to that doctrine, chap. iii. 20. " That no flesh," that is none of mankind, neither Jews nor Gentiles, " can be justified by the works of the law."

4. It is evident that when the apostle says, we cannot be justified by the works of the law, he means the moral as well as ceremonial law, by his giving this reason for it, that " by the law is the knowledge of sin," as Rom. iii. 20. " By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight ; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Now that law by which we come to the knowledge of sin, is the moral law chiefly and primarily. If this argument of the apostle be good, " that we cannot be justified by the deeds of the law, because it is by the law that we come to the knowledge of sin ; then it proves that we cannot be justified by the deeds of the moral law, nor by the precepts of Christianity ; for by them is the knowledge of sin. If the reason be good, then where the reason holds, the truth holds. It is a miserable shift, and a violent force put upon the words, to say that the meaning is, that by the law of circumcision is the knowledge of sin, because circumcision signifying the taking away of sin, puts men in mind of sin. The plain meaning of the apostle is, that as the law most strictly forbids sin, it tends to convince us of sin, and bring our own consciences to condemn us, instead of justifying us ; that the use of it is to declare to us our own guilt and unworthiness, which is the reverse of justifying and approving us as virtuous or worthy. This is the apostle's meaning, if we will allow him to be his own expositor ; for he himself, in this

very epistle, explains to us how it is that by the law we have the knowledge of sin, and that it is by the law's forbidding sin, chap. vii. 7. "I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet." There the apostle determines two things; first, That the way in which "by the law is the knowledge of sin," is by the law's forbidding sin: And secondly, which is more directly still to the purpose, he determines that it is the moral law by which we come to the knowledge of sin; "for," says he, "I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet." Now it is the moral, and not the ceremonial law, that says, thou shalt not covet: Therefore, when the apostle argues, that by the deeds of the law no flesh living shall be justified, because by the law is the knowledge of sin, his argument proves, (unless he was mistaken as to the force of his argument) that we cannot be justified by the deeds of the moral law.

5. It is evident that the apostle does not mean the ceremonial law only, because he gives this reason why we have righteousness, and a title to the privilege of God's children, not by the law, but by faith, "that the law worketh wrath." Rom. iv. 13.....16. "For the promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect. Because the law worketh wrath: For where no law is, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace." Now the way in which the law works wrath, by the apostle's own account, in the reason he himself annexes, is by forbidding sin, and aggravating the guilt of the transgression; "for," says he, "where no law is, there is no transgression:" And so, chap. vii. 13. "That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." If, therefore, this reason of the apostle be good, it is much stronger against justification by the moral law than the ceremonial law; for it is by transgressions of the moral law chiefly that there comes wrath; for they are most strictly forbidden, and most terribly threatened.

6. It is evident that when the apostle says, we be not justified by the works of the law, he excludes all our own virtue, goodness, or excellency, by that reason that he gives for it, viz. "That boasting might be excluded." Rom. iii. 26, 27, 28. "To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: That he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay; but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law." Eph. ii. 8, 9. "For by grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: It is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." Now what are men wont to boast of, but what they esteem their own goodness or excellency? If we are not justified by the works of the ceremonial law, yet how does that exclude boasting, as long as we are justified by our own excellency, or virtue and goodness of our own, or works of righteousness which we have done.

But it is said, that boasting is excluded, as circumcision was excluded, which was what the Jews especially used to glory in, and value themselves upon, above other nations.

To this I answer, that the Jews were not only used to boast of circumcision, but were notorious for boasting of their moral righteousness. The Jews of those days were generally admirers and followers of the Pharisees, who were full of their boasts of their moral righteousness; as we may see by the example of the Pharisee mentioned in the 18th of Luke, which Christ mentions as describing the general temper of that sect: "Lord," says he, "I thank thee, that I am not as other men, an extortioner, nor unjust, nor an adulterer." The works that he boasts of were chiefly moral works: He depended on the works of the law for justification; and therefore Christ tells us, that the publican, that renounced all his own righteousness, "went down to his house justified rather than he." And elsewhere we read of the Pharisees' praying in the corners of the streets, and sounding a trumpet before them when they did alms. But those works which they so vainly boasted of were moral works: And not only so, but what the apostle,

in this very epistle, is condemning the Jews for, is their boasting of the moral law. Chap. ii. 22, 23. "Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonorest thou God?" The law here mentioned that they made their boast of, was that of which adultery, idolatry and sacrilege, were the breaches, which is the moral law. So that this is the boasting which the apostle condemns them for, and therefore, if they were justified by the works of this law, then how comes he to say that their boasting is excluded? And besides, when they boasted of the rites of the ceremonial law, it was under a notion of its being a part of their own goodness or excellency, or what made them holier and more lovely in the sight of God than other people; and if they were not justified by this part of their own supposed goodness or holiness, yet if they were by another, how did that exclude boasting? How was their boasting excluded, unless all goodness or excellency of their own was excluded.

The reason given by the apostle why we can be justified by faith only, and not by the works of the law, in the 3d chapter of Gal. viz. "That they that are under the law, are under the curse," makes it evident that he does not mean the ceremonial law only. In that chapter the apostle had particularly insisted upon it, that Abraham was justified by faith, and that it is by faith only, and not by the works of the law, that we can be justified, and become the children of Abraham, and be made partakers of the blessing of Abraham: And he gives this reason for it, in the 10th verse: "For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." It is manifest that these words, cited from Deuteronomy, are spoken, not only with regard to the ceremonial law, but the whole law of God to mankind, and chiefly the moral law; and that all mankind are therefore, as they are in themselves, under that curse, not only while the ceremonial law lasted, but now since that has ceased: And therefore all that are justified, are redeemed from that curse,

by Christ's bearing it for them ; as there, in verse 13. " Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us : For it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Now therefore, either its being said so, that he is cursed that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them, is a good reason why we cannot be justified by the works of that law of which it is so said ; or it is not : If it be, then it is a good reason why we cannot be justified by the works of the moral law, and of the whole rule which God has given to mankind to walk by ; for the words are spoken of the moral as well as the ceremonial law, and reach every command or precept which God has given to mankind ; and chiefly the moral precepts, which are most strictly enjoined, and the violations of which in both New Testament and Old, and in the books of Moses themselves, are threatened with the most dreadful curse.

8. The apostle does in like manner argue against our being justified by our own righteousness, as he does against being justified by the works of the law ; and evidently uses the expressions, *our own righteousness*, and *works of the law*, promiscuously, and as signifying the same thing. It is particularly evident by Rom. x. 3. " For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." Here it is plain that the same thing is asserted as in the two last verses but one of the foregoing chapter. " But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore ? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law." And it is very unreasonable, upon several accounts, to suppose that the apostle, by their own righteousness, intends only their ceremonial righteousness. For when the apostle warns us against trusting in our own righteousness for justification, doubtless it is fair to interpret the expression in an agreement with the other scriptures, where we are warned, not to think that it is for the sake of our own righteousness that we obtain God's favor and blessing : As particularly that in Deut. ix. 4, 5, 6. " Speak not thou in thine

heart, after that the Lord thy God hath cast them out from before thee, saying, For my righteousness the Lord hath brought me in to possess this land : But for the wickedness of these nations the Lord doth drive them out from before thee. Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land : But for the wickedness of these nations, the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which he sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Understand therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it, for thy righteousness ; for thou art a stiffnecked people.” None will pretend that here the expression *thy righteousness*, signifies a ceremonial righteousness only, but all virtue or goodness of their own ; yea, and the inward goodness of the heart, as well as the outward goodness of life, which appears by the beginning of the 5th verse, “ Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thy heart ;” and also by the antithesis in the 6th verse, “ Not for thy righteousness, for thou art a stiffnecked people.” Their stiffneckedness was their moral wickedness, obstinacy, and perverseness of heart : By righteousness, therefore, on the contrary, is meant their moral virtue, and rectitude of heart and life. This is what I would argue from hence, That the expression of *our own righteousness*, when used in Scripture with relation to the favor of God, and when we are warned against looking upon it as that by which that favor or the fruits of it, are obtained, does not signify a ceremonial righteousness only, but all manner of goodness of our own.

The Jews also, in the New Testament, are condemned for trusting in their own righteousness in this sense ; Luke xviii. 9, &c. “ And he spake this parable unto certain that trusted in themselves that they were righteous.” This intends chiefly a moral righteousness ; as appears by the parable itself, in which we have an account of the prayer of the Pharisee, wherein the things that he mentions as what he trusts in, are chiefly moral qualifications and performances, viz. That he was not an extortioner, unjust, nor an adulterer, &c.

But we need not go to the writings of other penmen of the scripture. If we will allow the Apostle Paul to be his own interpreter, he, when he speaks of our own righteousness as that which we are not justified or saved by, does not mean a ceremonial righteousness only, nor does he only intend a way of religion, and serving God, of our own choosing and fixing on, without divine warrant or prescription; but by our own righteousness he means the same as a righteousness of our own doing, whether it be a service or righteousness of God's prescribing, or our own unwarranted performing: Let it be an obedience to the ceremonial law, or a gospel obedience, or what it will, if it be a righteousness of our own doing, it is excluded by the apostle in this affair, as is evident by Titus iii. 5. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done."

But I would more particularly insist on this text; and therefore this may be the 9th argument, That the apostle, when he denies justification by works, and by works of the law, and by our own righteousness, does not mean works of the ceremonial law only, viz. what is said by the Apostle in Tit. iii. 3.....7. "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour: That, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Works of righteousness that we have done are here excluded, as what we are neither saved nor justified by. The apostle expressly says, we are not saved by them; and it is evident that when he says this, he has respect to the affair of justification, and that he means, we are not saved by them in not being justified by them, by the next verse but one, which is part of the same sentence. "That, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

It is several ways manifest, that the apostle in this text, by "works of righteousness which we have done," does not mean works of the ceremonial law only. It appears by the third verse, "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another." These are breaches of the moral law, that the apostle observes they lived in before they were justified: And it is most plain that it is this that gives occasion to the apostle to observe, as he does in the 5th verse, that it was not by works of righteousness which they had done, that they were saved or justified.

But we need not go to the context, it is most apparent from the words themselves, that the apostle does not mean works of the ceremonial law only. If he had only said, it is not by our own works of righteousness, what could we understand by works of righteousness; but only righteous works, or, which is the same thing, good works? And to say, that it is by our own righteous works that we are justified, though not by one particular kind of righteous works, would certainly be a contradiction to such an assertion. But the words are rendered yet more strong, plain and determined in their sense, by those additional words, *which we have done*; which shews that the apostle intends to exclude all our own righteous or virtuous works universally. If it should be asserted concerning any commodity, treasure, or precious jewel, that it could not be procured by money, and not only so, but, to make the assertion the more strong, it should be asserted with additional words, that it could not be procured by money that men possess; how unreasonable would it be after all, to say, that all that was meant was, that it could not be procured with brass money?

And what renders the interpreting this text of works of the ceremonial law yet more unreasonable, is, that these works were indeed no works of righteousness but were only falsely supposed to be so by the Jews; and that our opponents in this doctrine suppose, is the very reason why we be not justified by them, because they are not works of righteousness, or because (the ceremonial law being now abrogated)

there is no obedience in them. But how absurd is it to say, that the apostle, when he says we are not justified by works of righteousness that we have done, meant only works of the ceremonial law, and that for that very reason, because they are not works of righteousness? To illustrate this by the forementioned comparison: If it should be asserted, that such a thing could not be procured by money that men possess, how ridiculous would it be to say, that the meaning only was, that it could not be procured by counterfeit money, and that for that reason because it was not money. What scripture will stand before men, if they will take liberty to manage it thus? Or what one text is there in the Bible that may not at this rate be explained away, and perverted to any sense men please?

But then further, if we should allow that the apostle intends only to oppose justification by works of the ceremonial law in his text, yet it is evident by the expression he uses, that he means to oppose it under that notion, or in that quality of their being works of righteousness of our own doing. But if the apostle argues against our being justified by works of the ceremonial law, under the notion of their being of that nature and kind, viz. works of our own doing; then it will follow that the apostle's argument is strong against, not only those, but all of that nature and kind, even all that are of our own doing.

If there were no other text in the Bible, about justification but this, this would clearly and invincibly prove that we are not justified by any of our own goodness, virtue, or righteousness, or for the excellency or righteousness of any thing that we have done in religion; because it is here so fully and strongly asserted: But this text does abundantly confirm other texts of the apostle where he denies justification by works of the law. There is no doubt can be rationally made, but that when the apostle here shews, that God "saves us according to his mercy," in that he doth not save us by "works of righteousness that we have done," verse 5, and that so we are "justified by grace," verse 7: Herein opposing salvation by works, and salvation by grace, he means the same works as he does in other places, where he in like man-

ner opposes works and grace : The same works as in Rom. xi. 6. “ And if by grace, then it is no more of works : Otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace : Otherwise work is no more work.” And the same works as in Rom. iv. 4. “ Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.” And the same works that are spoken of in the context of the 24th verse of the foregoing chapter, which the apostle there calls “ works of the law being justified freely by his grace.” And of the 4th chapter, 16th verse, Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace.” Where in the context, the righteousness of faith, is opposed to the righteousness of the law : For here God’s saving us according to his mercy, and justifying us by grace, is opposed to saving us by works of righteousness that we have done ; in the same manner as in those places, justifying us by his grace, is opposed to justifying us by works of the law.

10. The apostle could not mean works of the ceremonial law only, when he says, we are not justified by the works of the law, because it is asserted of the saints under the Old Testament as well as New. If men are justified by their sincere obedience, it will then follow that formerly, before the ceremonial law was abrogated, men were justified by the works of the ceremonial law as well as the moral. For if we are justified by our sincere obedience, then it alters not the case, whether the commands be moral or positive, provided they be God’s commands, and our obedience be obedience to God : And so the case must be just the same under the Old Testament, with the works of the moral law and ceremonial, according to the measure of the virtue of obedience there was in either. It is true, their obedience to the ceremonial law would have nothing to do in the affair of justification, unless it was sincere ; and so neither would the works of the moral law ; obedience to the moral law would have been concerned in the affair of justification, if sincere ; and so would obedience to the ceremonial. If obedience was the thing, then obedience to the ceremonial law, while that stood in force, and obedience to the moral law, had just the same sort of concern, accord-

ing to the proportion of obedience that consists in each ; as now under the New Testament, if obedience is what we are justified by, that obedience must doubtless comprehend obedience to all God's commands now in force, to the positive precepts of attendance on baptism and the Lord's supper, as well as moral precepts. If obedience be the thing, it is not because it is obedience to such a kind of commands, but because it is obedience. So that by this supposition the saints under the Old Testament were justified, at least in part, by their obedience to the ceremonial law.

But it is evident that the saints under the Old Testament were not justified in any measure by the works of the ceremonial law. This may be proved, proceeding on the foot of our adversary's own interpretation of the apostle's phrase, of the works of the law, and supposing him to mean by it only the works of the ceremonial law. To instance in David, it is evident that he was not justified in any wise by the works of the ceremonial law, by Rom. iv. 6, 7, 8. Even as David also describeth, "the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin." It is plain that the apostle is here speaking of justification, by the preceding verse and by all the context ; and the thing spoken of, viz. forgiving iniquities and covering sins, is what our adversaries themselves suppose to be justification, and even the whole of justification. This David, speaking of himself, says (by the apostle's interpretation) that he had without works. For it is manifest that David, in the words here cited, from the beginning of the 32d Psalm, has a special respect to himself : He speaks of his own sins being forgiven and not imputed to him ; as appears by the words that immediately follow. "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old ; through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me : My moisture is turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid : I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord ; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." Let us therefore under-

stand the apostle which way we will, by works, when he says, David “describes the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputes righteousness without works,” whether of all manner of works, or only works of the ceremonial law, yet it is evident at least, that David was not justified by works of the ceremonial law. Therefore here is the argument : If our own obedience be that by which men are justified, then under the Old Testament men were justified partly by obedience to the ceremonial law (as has been proved ;) but the saints under the Old Testament were not justified partly by the works of the ceremonial law ; therefore men’s own obedience, is not that by which they are justified.

11. Another argument that the apostle when he speaks of the two opposite ways of justification, one by the works of the law, and the other by faith, does not mean the works of the ceremonial law only, may be taken from that place, Romans x. 5, 6. “For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things, shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith, speaketh on this wise,” &c. Here two things are evident.

First, That the apostle here speaks of the same two opposite ways of justification, one by the righteousness which is the law, the other by faith that he had treated of in the former part of the epistle ; and therefore it must be the same law that is here spoken of. The same law is here meant as in the last verses of the foregoing chapter, where he says the Jews had “not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore ? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law ;” as is plain, because the apostle is still speaking of the same thing ; the words are a continuation of the same discourse, as may be seen at first glance, by any one that looks on the context.

Secondly, It is manifest that Moses, when he describes the righteousness which is of the law, or the way of justification by the law, in the words here cited, “He that doth these things shall live in them,” does not speak only, nor chiefly, of the works of the ceremonial law ; for none will pretend

that God ever made such a covenant with man, that he that kept the ceremonial law should live in it, or that there ever was a time, that it was chiefly by the works of the ceremonial law that men lived and were justified. Yea, it is manifest by the forementioned instance of David, mentioned in the 4th of Romans, that there never was a time wherein men were justified in any measure by the works of the ceremonial law as has been just now shewn. Moses therefore, in those words which, the apostle says, are a description of the righteousness which is of the law, cannot mean the ceremonial law only. And therefore it follows, that when the apostle speaks of justification by the works of the law, as opposite to justification by faith, he does not mean the ceremonial law only, but also the works of the moral law, which are the things spoken of by Moses, when he says, "he that doth these things, shall live in them;" and which are the things that the apostle in this very place is arguing that we cannot be justified by; as is evident by the context, the last verses of the preceeding chapter: "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law," &c. And in the 3d verse of this chapter, "For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."

And further, how can the apostle's description that he here gives from Moses of this exploded way of justification by the works of the law, consist with the Arminian scheme, of a way of justification by the virtue of a sincere obedience, that still remains as the true and only way of justification under the gospel. It is most apparent that it is the design of the apostle to give a description of both the legal rejected, and the evangelical valid ways of justification, in that wherein they differ, or are distinguished the one from the other: But how is that, "he that doth those things shall live in them;" that wherein the way of justification by the works of the law differs, or is distinguished from that in which Christians under the gospel

are justified, according to their scheme ; for still, according to them, it may be said, in the same manner, of the precepts of the gospel, he that doth these things, shall live in them : The difference lies only in the things to be done, but not at all in that, that the doing of them is not the condition of living in them, just in the one case, as in the other. The words “ He that doth them, shall live in them,” will serve just as well for a description of the latter as the former. By the apostle’s saying, the righteousness of the law is described thus, he that doth these things shall live in them ; but the righteousness of faith saith thus, plainly intimates that the righteousness of faith saith otherwise, and in an opposite manner. But besides, if these words cited from Moses, are actually said by him of the moral law as well as ceremonial, as it is most evident they are it renders it still more absurd to suppose them mentioned by the apostle, as the very note of distinction between justification by a ceremonial obedience, and a moral and sincere obedience, as the Arminians must suppose.

Thus I have spoken to a second argument, to prove that we are not justified by any manner of virtue or goodness of our own, viz. that to suppose otherwise, is contrary to the doctrine that is directly urged, and abundantly insisted on, by the Apostle Paul in his epistles.

I now proceed to a

Third Argument, viz. That to suppose that we are justified by our own sincere obedience, or any of our own virtue or goodness, derogates from gospel grace.

That scheme of justification that manifestly takes from, or diminishes the grace of God, is undoubtedly to be rejected ; for it is the declared design of God in the gospel, to exalt the freedom and riches of his grace, in that method of justification of sinners, and way of admitting them to his favor, and the blessed fruits of it, which it declares. The scripture teaches, that the way of justification that is appointed in the gospel covenant, is appointed as it is, for that end, that free grace might be expressed and glorified ? Rom. iv. 16..... “ Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace.” The exercising and magnifying the free grace of God in the gospel

contrivance for the justification and salvation of sinners, is evidently the chief design of it ; and this freedom and riches of the grace of the gospel is every where spoken of in Scripture as the chief glory of it. Therefore that doctrine that derogates from the free grace of God in justifying sinners, as it is most opposite to God's design, so it must be exceedingly offensive to him.

Those that maintain, that we are justified by our own sincere obedience, do pretend that their scheme does not diminish the grace of the gospel ; for they say, that the grace of God is wonderfully manifested in appointing such a way and method of salvation, by sincere obedience in assisting us to perform such an obedience, and in accepting our imperfect obedience instead of perfect.

Let us therefore examine that matter, whether their scheme, of a man's being justified by his own virtue and sincere obedience, does derogate from the grace of God or no ; or whether free grace is not more exalted, in supposing as we do, that we are justified without any manner of goodness of our own. In order to this, I will lay down this selfevident

Proposition, That "whatsoever that be by which the abundant benevolence of the giver is expressed, and gratitude in the receiver is obliged, that magnifies free grace." This I suppose none will ever controvert or dispute.

And it is not much less evident, that it doth both shew a more abundant benevolence in the giver when he shews kindness without goodness or excellency in the object, to move him to it ; and that it enhances the obligation to gratitude in the receiver.

1. It shews a more abundant goodness in the giver, when he shews kindness without any excellency in our persons or actions that would move the giver to love and beneficence. For it certainly shews the more abundant and overflowing goodness, or disposition to communicate good, by how much the less loveliness or excellency there is to entice beneficence : The less there is in the receiver to draw good will and kindness, it argues the more of the principle of good will and kindness in the giver ; for one that has but a little of a

principle of love and benevolence, may be drawn to do good and to shew kindness, when there is a great deal to draw him, or when there is much excellency and loveliness in the object to move good will; when he whose goodness and benevolence is more abundant, will shew kindness where there is less to draw it forth; for he does not so much need to have it drawn from without, he has enough of the principle, within, to move him of itself. Where there is most of the principle, there it is most sufficient for itself, and stands in least need of something without to excite it: For certainly a more abundant goodness more easily flows forth with less to impel or draw it than where there is less; or, which is the same thing, the more any one is disposed of himself, the less he needs from without himself, to put him upon it, or stir him up to it. And therefore his kindness appears the more exceeding great when it is bestowed without any excellency or loveliness in the receiver, or when the receiver is respected in the gift, as wholly without excellency: And much more still when the benevolence of the giver not only finds nothing in the receiver to draw it, but a great deal of hatefulness to repel it: The abundance of goodness is then manifested, not only in flowing forth without any thing extrinsic to put it forward, but in overcoming great repulsion in the object. And then does kindness and love appear most triumphant, and wonderfully great, when the receiver is respected in the gift, as not only wholly without all excellence or beauty to attract it, but altogether, yea, infinitely vile and hateful.

2. It is apparent also that it enhances the obligation to gratitude in the receiver. This is agreeable to the common sense of mankind, that the less worthy or excellent the object of benevolence, or the receiver of kindness, is, the more he is obliged, and the greater gratitude is due. He therefore is most of all obliged, that receives kindness without any goodness or excellency in himself, but with a total and universal hatefulness. And as it is agreeable to the common sense of mankind, so it is agreeable to the word of God. How often does God in the scripture insist on this argument with men, to move them to love him, and to acknowledge his kindness?

How much does he insist on this as an obligation to gratitude, that they are so sinful and undeserving, and ill deserving ?

Therefore it certainly follows, that that doctrine that teaches, that God, when he justifies a man, and shews him that great kindness, as to give him a right to eternal life, does not do it for any obedience, or any manner of goodness of his ; but that justification respects a man as ungodly, and wholly without any manner of virtue, beauty or excellency. I say, this doctrine does certainly more exalt the free grace of God in justification, and man's obligation to gratitude to him for such a favor, than the contrary doctrine, viz. That God, in shewing this kindness to man, respects him as sincerely obedient and virtuous, and as having something in him that is truly excellent, and lovely, and acceptable in his sight, and that this goodness or excellency of man is the very fundamental condition of the bestowment of that kindness on him, or of the distinguishing him from others by that benefit. But I hasten to a

Fourth argument for the truth of the doctrine, " That to suppose that a man is justified by his own virtue or obedience, derogates from the honor of the Mediator, and ascribes that to man's virtue that belongs only to the righteousness of Christ : "

It puts man in Christ's stead, and makes him his own Saviour, in a respect in which Christ only is the Saviour : And so it is a doctrine contrary to the nature and design of the gospel, which is to abase man, and to ascribe all the glory of our salvation to Christ the Redeemer. It is inconsistent with the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, which is a gospel doctrine. Here I would,

1. Explain what we mean by the imputation of Christ's righteousness.

2. Prove the thing intended by it to be true.

3. Shew that this doctrine is utterly inconsistent with the doctrine of our being justified by our own virtue or sincere obedience.

First, I would explain what we mean by the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Sometimes the expression is taken by our divines in a larger sense, for the imputation of all that

Christ did and suffered for our redemption, whereby we are free from guilt, and stand righteous in the sight of God ; and so implies the imputation both of Christ's satisfaction and obedience. But here I intend it in a stricter sense, for the imputation of that righteousness or moral goodness that consists in the obedience to Christ. And by that righteousness being imputed to us, is meant no other than this, that that righteousness of Christ is accepted for us, and admitted instead of that perfect inherent righteousness that ought to be in ourselves : Christ's perfect obedience shall be reckoned to our account, so that we shall have the benefit of it, as though we had performed it ourselves : And so we suppose that a title to eternal life is given us as the reward of this righteousness. The scripture uses the word *impute* in this sense, viz. for reckoning any thing belonging to any person, to another person's account : As Philemon 18. " If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account." In the original it is *τὸ τοῖς ἐλλογῆι impute that to me*. It is a word of the same root with that which is translated *impute*, Rom. iv. 6. " To whom God imputeth righteousness without works." And it is the very same word that is used in Rom. v. 13, that is translated *impute*; " sin is not imputed when there is no law."

The opposers of this doctrine suppose that there is an absurdity in it : They say that to suppose that God imputes Christ's obedience to us, is to suppose that God is mistaken, and thinks that we performed that obedience that Christ performed. But why cannot that righteousness be reckoned to our account, and be accepted for us, without any such absurdity ? Why is there any more absurdity in it, than in a merchant's transferring debt or credit from one man's account to another, when one man pays a price for another, so that it shall be accepted, as if that other had paid it ? Why is there any more absurdity in supposing that Christ's obedience is imputed to us, than that his satisfaction is imputed ? If Christ has suffered the penalty of the law for us, and in our stead, then it will follow, that his suffering that penalty is imputed to us, i. e. that it is accepted for us, and in our stead, and is reckoned to our account, as though we had suffered it. But

why may not his obeying the law of God be as rationally reckoned to our account, as his suffering the penalty of the law ? Why may not a price to bring into debt, be as rationally transferred from one person's account to another, as a price to pay a debt ? Having thus explained what we mean by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, I proceed,

Secondly, To prove that the righteousness of Christ is thus imputed.

1. There is the very same need of Christ's obeying the law in our stead, in order to the reward, as of his suffering the penalty of the law in our stead, in order to our escaping the penalty ; and the same reason why one should be accepted on our account, as the other. There is the same need of one as the other, that the law of God might be answered : One was as requisite to answer the law as the other. This is certain, that that was the reason why there was need that Christ should suffer the penalty for us, even that the law might be answered ; for this the scripture plainly teaches. This is given as the reason why Christ was made a curse for us, that the law threatened a curse to us, Gal. iii. 10, 13. But the same law that fixes the curse of God as the consequent of not continuing in all things written in the law to do them, verse 10, has as much fixed doing those things as an antecedent of living in them, (as verse 12, the next verse but one.) There is as much of a connexion established in one case as in the other. There is therefore exactly the same need, from the law, of perfect obedience being fulfilled in order to our obtaining the reward, as there is of death's being suffered in order to our escaping the punishment ; or the same necessity by the law, of perfect obedience preceding life, as there is of disobedience being succeeded by death. The law is, without doubt, as much of an established rule in one case as in the other.

Christ by suffering the penalty, and so making atonement for us, only removes the guilt of our sins, and so sets us in the same state that Adam was the first moment of his creation : And it is no more fit that we should obtain eternal life only on that account, than that Adam should have the reward of eter-

nal life, or of a confirmed and unalterable state of happiness, the first moment of his existence, without any obedience at all. Adam was not to have the reward merely on the account of his being innocent ; if so, he would have had it fixed upon him at once, as soon as ever he was created ; for he was as innocent then as he could be : But he was to have the reward on the account of his activeness in obedience ; not on the account merely of his not having done ill, but on the account of his doing well.

So on the same account we have not eternal life mere- on the account of being void of guilt, (as Adam was at first existence) which we have by the atonement of Christ ; but on the account of Christ's activeness in obedience and doing well. Christ is our second federal head, and is called the second Adam, 1 Cor. xv. 22, because he acted the part for us that the first Adam should have done. When he had undertaken for us to stand in our stead, he was looked upon and treated as though he were guilty with our guilt ; and by his satisfying or bearing the penalty, he did as it were free himself from this guilt. But by this the second Adam did only bring himself into the state that the first Adam was in on the first moment of his existence, viz. a state of mere freedom from guilt ; and hereby indeed was free from any obligation to suffer punishment : But this being supposed, there was no need of something further, even a positive obedience, in order to his obtaining, as our second Adam, the reward of eternal life.

God saw meet to place man first in a state of trial, and not to give him a title to eternal life as soon as he had made him ; because it was his will that he should first give honor to his authority, by fully submitting to it, in will and act, and perfectly obeying his law. God insisted upon it, that his holy majesty and law should have their due acknowledgment and honor from man, such as became the relation he stood in to that Being that created him, before he would bestow the reward of confirmed and everlasting happiness upon him ; and therefore God gave him a law when he created him, that he might have opportunity, by giving the due honor to his au-

thority in obeying it, to obtain this happiness. It therefore became Christ, seeing that in assuming man to himself, he sought a title to this eternal happiness for him after he had broken the law, that he himself should become subject to God's authority, and be in the form of a servant, that he might do that honor to God's authority for him, by his obedience, which God at first required of man as the condition of his having a title to that reward. Christ came into the world to that end, to render the honor of God's authority and law consistent with the salvation and eternal life of sinners ; he came to save them, and withal to assert and vindicate the honor of the lawgiver, and his holy law. Now if the sinner, after his sin was satisfied for, had eternal life bestowed upon him without active righteousness, the honor of his law would not be sufficiently vindicated. Supposing this were possible, that the sinner himself could, by suffering, pay the debt, and afterwards be in the same state that he was in before his probation, that is to say, negatively righteous, or merely without guilt ; if he now at last should have eternal life bestowed upon him, without performing that condition of obedience ; then God would recede from his law, and would give the promised reward, and his law never have respect and honor shewn to it, in that way of being obeyed. But now Christ, by subjecting himself to the law, and obeying of it, has done great honor to the law, and to the authority of God who gave it. That so glorious a person should become subject to the law, and fulfil it, has done much more honor to it, than if mere man had obeyed it. It was a thing infinitely honorable to God, that a person of infinite dignity was not ashamed to call him his God, and to adore and obey him as such : This was more to God's honor than if any mere creature, of any possible degree of excellency and dignity, had so done.

It is absolutely necessary, that in order to a sinner's being justified, the righteousness of some other should be reckoned to his account ; for it is declared, that the person justified is looked upon as (in himself) ungodly ; but God neither will nor can justify a person without a righteousness ; for justification is manifestly a *forensick* term, as the word is used in

scripture, and the thing a judicial-thing, or the act of a judge : So that if a person should be justified without a righteousness, the judgment would not be according to truth : The sentence of justification would be a false sentence, unless there be a righteousness performed that is by the judge properly looked upon as his. To say, that God does not justify the sinner without sincere, though an imperfect obedience, does not help the case ; for an imperfect righteousness before a judge is no righteousness. To accept of something that is short of the rule, instead of something else that answers the rule, is no judicial act, or act of a judge, but a pure act of sovereignty. An imperfect righteousness is no righteousness before a judge ; for " righteousness (as one observes) is a relative thing, and has always relation to a law. The formal nature of righteousness, properly understood, lies in a conformity of actions to that which is the rule and measure of them." Therefore that only is righteousness in the sight a judge that answers the law.* The law is the judge's rule : If he par-

* That it is perfect obedience, that is what is called righteousness in the New Testament, and that this righteousness, or perfect obedience, is by God's fixed unalterable rule, the condition of justification, is from the plain evidence of truth, confessed by a certain great man, that no body will think to be a likely person to be blinded by a prejudice in favor of the doctrine we are maintaining, and one who did not receive this doctrine, viz. Mr. Locke in his *Reasonableness of Christianity, as delivered in the Scriptures*, vol. 2 of his works, page 474 " To one that thus unbiassed reads the Scripture what Adam fell from is visible, was the state of perfect obedience, which is called *justice* in the New Testament, though the word, which in the original signifies justice, be translated *righteousness*." Ibid p. 476. 477 " For righteousness, or an exact obedience to the law seems by the Scripture to have a claim of right to eternal life ; Rom. iv. 4. *To him that worketh i. e. does the works of the law is the reward reckoned, not reckoned of grace, but of debt.* On the other side, it seems the unalterable purpose of the divine justice, that no unrighteous person, no one that is guilty of any breach of the law, should be in paradise ; but that the wages of sin should be to every man, as it was to Adam an exclusion of him out of that happy state of immortality, and bring death upon him. And this is so conformable to the eternal and established law of right and wrong, that it is spoke of too as it could not be otherwise. Here then we have the standing and fixed measures of life and death ; immortality and bliss belonging to the righteous. Those who have lived in an exact conformity to the law of God are out of the

does and hides what really is, and so does not pass sentence according to what things are in themselves, he either does not act the part of a judge, or else judges falsely. The very notion of judging is to determine what is, and what is not, in any one's case. The judge's work is twofold ; it is to determine first what is fact, and then whether what is in fact be according to rule, or according to the law. If a judge has no rule or law established beforehand, by which he should proceed in judging, he has no foundation to go upon in judging, he has no opportunity to be a judge ; nor is it possible that he should do the part of a judge. To judge without a law, or rule by which to judge, is impossible ; for the very notion of judging, is to determine whether the object of judgment be according to rule ; and therefore God has declared, that when he acts as a judge, he will not justify the wicked, and cannot clear the guilty ; and, by parity of reason, cannot justify without righteousness.

And the scheme of the old law's being abrogated and a new law introduced, will not help at all in this difficulty ; for

reach of death ; but an exclusion from paradise and loss of immortality, is the portion of sinners, of all those who have any way broke that law, and failed of a complete obedience to it, by the guilt of any one transgression. And thus mankind, by the law, are put upon the issues of life or death, as they are righteous or unrighteous, just or unjust, i. e. exact performers or transgressors of the law." Again, in p 477. " The law of works then in short is, that law which requires perfect obedience, without any remission or abatement ; so that by that law a man cannot be just, or justified, without an exact performance of every tittle. Such a perfect obedience in the New Testament, is termed *Δικαιοσύνη*, which we translate *righteousness*." In which last passage it is also to be noted, that Mr. Locke, by the law of works does not understand the ceremonial law, but the covenant of works : As he more fully expresses himself in the next paragraph but one." Where this law of works was to be found, the New Testament tells us, viz. in the law delivered by Moses ; John. 17. *The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.* Chap. vii. 19. *Did not Moses give you the law, says our Saviour, and yet none of you keep the law ?* And this is the law which he speaks of verse 28. *This do and thou shalt live.* This is that which St. Paul so often styles *the law*, without any other distinction ; Rom ii. 13. *Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law are justified.* It is needless to quote any more places, his epistles are all full of it, especially this to the Romans.

an imperfect righteousness cannot answer the law of God that we are under, whether that be an old one or a new one ; for every law requires perfect obedience to itself. Every rule whatsoever requires perfect conformity to itself ; it is a contradiction to suppose otherwise. For to say, that there is a law that does not require perfect obedience to itself, is to say that there is a law that does not require all that it requires. That law that now forbids sin, is certainly the law that we are now under, (let that be an old one or new one ;) or else it is not sin. That which is not forbidden, and is the breach of no law, is not sin. But if we are now forbidden to commit sin, then it is by a law that we are now under ; for surely we are neither under the forbiddings nor commanding of a law that we are not under. Therefore, if all sin is now forbidden, then we are now under a law that requires perfect obedience ; and therefore nothing can be accepted as a righteousness in the sight of our Judge, but perfect righteousness. So that our judge cannot justify us, unless he sees a perfect righteousness, some way belonging to us, either performed by ourselves, or by another, and justly and duly reckoned to our account.

God doth, in the sentence of justification pronounce a man perfectly righteous, or else he would need a further justification after he is justified. His sins being removed by Christ's atonement, is not sufficient for his justification ; for justifying a man, as has been already shewn, is not merely pronouncing him innocent, or without guilt, but standing right with regard to the rule that he is under, and righteous unto life : But this, according to the established rule of nature, reason, and divine appointment, is a positive, perfect righteousness.

As there is the same need that Christ's obedience should be reckoned to our account, as that his atonement should ; so there is the same reason why it should. As if Adam had persevered, and finished his course of obedience, we should have received the benefit of his obedience, as much as now we have the mischief of his disobedience ; so in like manner, there is reason that we should receive the benefit of the second Adam's obedience, as of his atonement of our disobedi-

ence. Believers are represented in scripture as being so in Christ, as that they are legally one, or accepted as one, by the Supreme Judge : Christ has assumed our nature, and has so assumed all, in that nature that belong to him, into such an union with himself, that he is become their Head, and has taken them to be his members. And therefore, what Christ has done in our nature, whereby he did honor to the law and authority of God by his acts, as well as the reparation to the honor of the law by his sufferings, is reckoned to the believer's account ; so as that the believer should be made happy, because it was so well and worthily done by his Head, as well as freed from being miserable, because he has suffered for our ill and unworthy doing.

When Christ had once undertaken with God to stand for us, and put himself under our law, by that law he was obliged to suffer, and by the same law he was obliged to obey : By the same law, after he had taken man's guilt upon him, he himself being our surety, could not be acquitted until he had suffered, nor rewarded until he had obeyed : But he was not acquitted as a private person, but as our head, and believers are acquitted in his acquittance ; nor was he accepted to a reward for his obedience, as a private person, but as our Head, and we are accepted to a reward in his acceptance. The scripture teaches us that when Christ was raised from the dead, he was justified ; which justification, as I have already shewn, implies, both his acquittance from our guilt, and his acceptance to the exaltation and glory that was the reward of his obedience : But believers, as soon as they believe, are admitted to partake with Christ in this his justification : Hence we are told, that he was " raised again for our justification," Rom. iv. 25, which is true, not only of that part of his justification that consists in his acquittance, but also his acceptance to his reward. The Scripture teaches us that he is exalted, and gone to heaven to take possession of glory in our name, as our forerunner, Heb. vi. 20. We are as it were, both raised up together with Christ, and also made to sit together with Christ, in heavenly places, and in him, Eph. ii. 6.

If it be objected here, that there is this reason, why what Christ suffered should be accepted on our account, rather than the obedience he performed, that he was obliged to obedience for himself, but was not obliged to suffer but only on our account ; to this I answer, that Christ was not obliged, on his own account, to undertake to obey. Christ, in his original circumstances, was in no subjection to the Father, being altogether equal with him : He was under no obligation to put himself in man's stead, and under man's law ; or to put himself into any state of subjection to God whatsoever. There was a transaction between the Father and the Son, that was antecedent to Christ's becoming man, and being made under the law, wherein he undertook to put himself under the law, and both to obey and to suffer ; in which transaction these things were already virtually done in the sight of God ; as is evident by this, that God acted on the ground of that transaction, justifying and saving sinners, as if the things undertaken had been actually performed long before they were performed indeed. And therefore, without doubt, in order to the estimating the value and validity of what Christ did and suffered, we must look back to that transaction, wherein these things were first undertaken, and virtually done in the sight of God, and see what capacity and circumstances Christ acted in then, and then we shall find that Christ was under no manner of obligation, either to obey the law, or suffer the penalty of it. After this he was equally under obligation to both ; for henceforward he stood as our surety or representative : And therefore this consequent obligation may be as much of an objection against the validity of his suffering the penalty, as against his obedience. But if we look to that original transaction between the Father and the Son, wherein both these were undertaken and accepted as virtually done in the sight of the Father, we shall find Christ acting with regard to both, as one perfectly in his own right, and under no manner of previous obligation to hinder the validity of either.

2. To suppose that all that Christ does is only to make atonement for us by suffering, is to make him our Saviour but in part. It is to rob him of half his glory as a Saviour

For if so, all that he does is to deliver us from hell ; he does not purchase heaven for us. The adverse scheme supposes that he purchases heaven for us, in the sense, that he satisfies for the imperfections of our obedience, and so purchase that our sincere imperfect obedience might be accepted as the condition of eternal life ; and so purchases an opportunity for us to obtain heaven by our own obedience. But to purchase heaven for us only in this sense, is to purchase it in no sense at all ; for all of it comes to no more than a satisfaction for our sins, or removing the penalty by suffering in our stead : For all the purchasing they speak of, that our imperfect obedience should be accepted, is only his satisfying for the sinful imperfections of our obedience ; or (which is the same thing) making atonement for the sin that our obedience is attended with. But that is not purchasing heaven, merely to set us at liberty again, that we may go and get heaven by what we do ourselves ; all that Christ does is only to pay a debt for us ; there is no positive purchase of any good. We are taught in scripture that heaven is purchased for us ; it is called the *purchased possession*, Eph. i. 14. The gospel proposes the eternal inheritance, not to be acquired, as the first covenant did, but as already acquired and purchased. But he that pays a man's debt for him, and so delivers him from slavery, cannot be said to purchase an estate for him, merely because he sets him at liberty, so that henceforward he has an opportunity to get an estate by his own hand labor. So that according to this scheme, the saints in heaven have no reason to thank Christ for purchasing heaven for them, or redeeming them to God, and making them kings and priests, as we have on that account that they do, in Rev. v. 9.

3. Justification by the righteousness and obedience of Christ, is a doctrine that the scripture teaches in very full terms ; Rom. v. 18, 19. " By the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners : So by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous." Here in one verse we are told, that we have justification by Christ's righteousness ; and, that there might be no room to

understand the righteousness spoken of, merely of Christ's atonement by his suffering the penalty, in the next verse it is put in other terms, and asserted, that it is by Christ's obedience that we are made righteous. It is scarce possible any thing should be more full and determined: The terms, taken singly, are such as do fix their own meaning, and taken together, they fix the meaning of each other: The words shew that we are justified by that righteousness of Christ that consists in his obedience, and that we are made righteous or justified by that obedience of his, that is, his righteousness, or moral goodness before God.

Here possibly it may be objected, that this text means only, that we are justified by Christ's passive obedience.

To this I answer, whether we call it active or passive, it alters not the case as to the present argument, as long as it is evident by the words, that it is not merely under the notion of an atonement for disobedience, or a satisfaction for unrighteousness, but under the notion of a positive obedience, and a righteousness or moral goodness, that it justifies us or makes us righteous; because both the words *righteousness* and *obedience* are used, and used too as the opposites of sin and disobedience, and an offence. "Therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation: Even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners: So by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous." Now, what can be meant by righteousness, when spoken of as the opposite to sin, or moral evil, but only moral goodness? What is the righteousness that is the opposite of an offence, but only the behavior that is well pleasing? And what can be meant by obedience, when spoken of as the opposite of disobedience, or going contrary to a command, but a positive obeying, and an actual complying with the command? So that there is no room for any invented distinction of active and passive, to hurt the argument from this scripture, as long as it is evident by it as any thing can be, that believers are justified by the righteousness and obedience of Christ, under the notion of his moral

goodness, and his positive obeying, and actual complying with the commands of God, and that behavior of his, that, because of its conformity to his commands, was well pleasing in his sight. This is all that ever any need to desire to have granted in this dispute.

By this it appears that if Christ's dying be here included in the words *righteousness* and *obedience*, it is not merely as a propitiation, or bearing a penalty of a broken law in our stead, but as his voluntary submitting and yielding himself to those sufferings, was an act of obedience to the Father's commands, and so was a part of his positive righteousness, or moral goodness.

Indeed all obedience, considered under the notion of obedience or righteousness, is something active, something that is done in active and voluntary compliance with a command; whether that which we do in obedience is something easy, and something that may be done without suffering, or whether it be something hard and difficult; yet as it is obedience, or righteousness, or moral goodness, it must be considered as something voluntary and active. If any one is commanded to go through difficulties and sufferings, and he, in compliance with this command, voluntarily does it, he properly obeys in so doing; and as he voluntarily does it in compliance with a command, his obedience is as active as any whatsoever. It is the same sort of obedience, a thing of the very same nature, as when a man, in compliance with a command, does a piece of hard service, or goes through hard labor; and there is no room to distinguish between such obedience and other that is more easy, to make a different sort of obedience of it, as if it were a thing of quite a different nature, by such opposite terms as active and passive: All the distinction that can be pretended, is that which is between obeying an easy command and a difficult one. But is not the obedience itself of the same nature, because the commands to be obeyed are some of them more difficult than others? Is there from hence any foundation to make two species of obedience, one active and the other passive? There is no appearance of any such distinction ever entering into the hearts of any of the penmen of scripture.

It is true, that of late, when a man refuses to obey the precept of an human law, but patiently yields himself up to suffer the penalty of the law, it is called passive obedience : But this I suppose is only a modern use of the word obedience ; surely it is a sense of the word that the scripture is a perfect stranger to ; and it is improperly called obedience, unless there be such a precept in the law, that he shall yield himself patiently to suffer, to which his so doing shall be an active, voluntary conformity. There may in some sense be said to be a conformity to the law in a person's suffering the penalty of the law ; but no other conformity to the law is properly called obedience to it but an active, voluntary conformity to the precepts of it : The word *obey* is often found in scripture with respect to the law of God to man, but never in any other sense.

It is true that Christ's willingly undergoing those sufferings which he endured, is a great part of that obedience or righteousness by which we are justified. The sufferings of Christ are respected in scripture under a twofold consideration, either merely as his being substituted for us, or put into our stead in suffering the penalty of the law ; and so his sufferings are considered as a satisfaction and propitiation for sin : Or as he, in obedience to a law or command of the Father, voluntarily submitted himself to those sufferings, and actively yielded himself up to bear them ; and so they are considered as his righteousness, and a part of his active obedience. Christ underwent death in obedience to the command of the Father, Psalm xl. 6, 7, 8. "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened : Burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come : In the volume of the book is written of me : I delight to do thy will ; O my God ; yea, thy law is within my heart." John. x. 17, 18. "I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself : I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." John xviii. 11. "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it ?" And this is part, and

Indeed the principal part of that active obedience that we are justified by.

It can be no just objection against this, that that command of the Father to Christ, that he should lay down his life, was no part of the law that we had broken ; and therefore, that his obeying this command could be no part of that obedience that he performed for us, because we needed that he should obey no other law for us, but only that which we had broken or failed of obeying. For although it must be the same legislative authority, whose honor is repaired by Christ's obedience, that we have injured by our disobedience ; yet there is no need that the law that Christ obeys should be precisely the same that Adam was to have obeyed, in that sense, that there should be no positive precepts wanting, nor any added : There was wanting the precept about the forbidden fruit, and there was added the ceremonial law. The thing required was perfect obedience : It is no matter whether the positive precepts were the same, if they were equivalent. The positive precepts that Christ was to obey, were much more than equivalent to what was wanting, because infinitely more difficult, particularly the command that he had received to lay down his life, which was his principal act of obedience, and which above all others is concerned in our justification. As that act of disobedience by which we fell, was disobedience to a positive precept that Christ never was under, viz. that of abstaining from the tree of knowledge of good and evil ; so that act of obedience by which principally we are redeemed, is obedience to a positive precept that Adam never was under, viz. the precept of laying down his life. It was suitable that it should be a positive precept, that should try both Adam's and Christ's obedience : Such precepts are the greatest and most proper trial of obedience ; because in them, the mere authority and will of the legislator is the sole ground of the obligation, (and nothing in the nature of the things themselves ;) and therefore they are the greatest trial of any person's respect to that authority and will.

The law that Christ was subject to, and obeyed, was in some sense the same that was given to Adam. There are

innumerable particular duties that are required by the law only conditionally ; and in such circumstances, are comprehended in some great and general rule of that law. Thus, for instance, there are innumerable acts of respect and obedience to men, which are required by the law of nature, (which was a law given to Adam) which yet be not required absolutely, but upon many prerequisite conditions ; as, that there be men standing in such relations to us, and that they gave forth such commands, and the like. So many acts of respect and obedience to God are included, in like manner, in the moral law conditionally, or such and such things being supposed ; as Abraham's going about to sacrifice his son, the Jews, circumcising their children when eight days old, and Adam's not eating the forbidden fruit ; they are virtually comprehended in that great general rule of the moral law, that we should obey God, and be subject to him in whatsoever he pleases to command us. Certainly the moral law does as much require us to obey God's positive commands, as it requires us to obey the positive commands of our parents. And thus all that Adam, and all that Christ was commanded, even his observing the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish worship, and his laying down his life, was virtually included in the same great law*.

It is no objection against the last mentioned thing, even Christ's laying down his life, its being included in the moral

* Thus Mr. Locke in his *Reasonableness of Christianity as delivered in the Scriptures*, vol. 2d. of his work, p. 478. " Nay, whatever God requires any where to be done, without making any allowance for faith, that is a part of the law of works. So that forbidding Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge, was part of the law of works. Only we must take notice here, that some of God's positive commands being for peculiar ends, and suited to particular circumstances of times, places and persons, have a limited, and only temporary obligation, by virtue of God's positive injunction. Such as was that part of Moses' law which concerned the outward worship or political constitution of the Jews, and is called the ceremonial and judaical law." Again, p. 479. " Thus then as to the law in short, the civil and ritual part of the law delivered by Moses obliges not Christians, though to the Jews it were a part of the law of works ; it being a part of the law of nature, that men ought to obey every positive law of God, whenever he shall please to make any such addition to the law of his nature."

law given to Adam ; because that law itself allowed of no occasion for any such thing ; for the moral law virtually includes all right acts, on all possible occasions, even occasions that the law itself allows not : Thus we are obliged by the moral law to mortify our lusts; and repent of our sins, though that law allows of no lust to mortify, or sin to repent of.

There is indeed but one great law of God, and that is the same law that says, “ if thou sinnest, thou shalt die ;” and “ cursed is everyone that continues not in all things contained in this law to do them.” All duties of positive institution are virtually comprehended in this law : And therefore, if the Jews broke the ceremonial law, it exposed them to the penalty of the law, or covenant of works, which threatened, “ thou shalt surely die.” The law is the eternal and unalterable rule of righteousness between God and man, and therefore is the rule of judgment, by which all that a man does shall be either justified or condemned ; and no sin exposes to damnation, but by the law : So now he that refuses to obey the precepts that require an attendance on the sacraments of the New Testament, is exposed to damnation, by virtue of the law or covenant of works. It may moreover be argued, that all sins whatsoever are breaches of the law or covenant of works, because all sins, even breaches of the positive precepts, as well as others, have atonement by the death of Christ : But what Christ died for, was to satisfy the law, or to bear the curse of the law ; as appears by Gal. iii. 10.....13, and Rom. viii. 3, 4.

So that Christ's laying down his life might be part of that obedience by which we are justified, though it was a positive precept not given to Adam. It was doubtless Christ's main act of obedience, because it was obedience to a command that was attended with immensely the greatest difficulty, and so to a command that was the greatest trial of his obedience. His respect shown to God in it, and his honor to God's authority was proportionably great : It is spoken of in scripture as Christ's principal act of obedience. Philip. ii. 7, 8. “ But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the like-

ness of men : And, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Heb. v. 8. "Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things that he suffered." It was mainly by this act of obedience that Christ purchased so glorious a reward for himself: As in that place in Philippians, ii. 8, 9. "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. And it therefore follows from what has been already said, that it is mainly by this act of obedience that believers in Christ also have the reward of glory, or come to partake with Christ in his glory. We are as much saved by the death of Christ, as his yielding himself to die was an act of obedience, as we are, as it was a propitiation for our sins : For as it was not the only act of obedience that merited, he having performed meritorious acts of obedience through the whole course of his life ; so neither was it the only suffering that was propitiatory ; all his sufferings through the whole course of his life being propitiatory, as well as every act of obedience meritorious : Indeed this was his principal suffering ; and it was as much his principal act of obedience.

Hence we may see how that the death of Christ did not only make atonement, but also merited eternal life ; and hence we may see how by the blood of Christ we are not only redeemed from sin, but redeemed unto God ; and therefore the scripture seems every where to attribute the whole of salvation to the blood of Christ : This precious blood is as much the main price by which heaven is purchased, as it is the main price by which we are redeemed from hell. The positive righteousness of Christ, or that price by which he merited, was of equal value with that by which he satisfied ; for indeed it was the same price. He spilled his blood to satisfy, and by reason of the infinite dignity of his person, his sufferings were looked upon as of infinite value, and equivalent to the eternal sufferings of a finite creature : And he spilled his blood out of respect to the honor of God's majesty and in submission to his authority, who had commanded him so to do :

And his obedience therein was of infinite value ; both because of the dignity of the person that performed it, and because he put himself to infinite expense to perform it, whereby the infinite degree of his regard to God's authority appeared.

One would wonder what the Arminians mean by Christ's merits. They talk of Christ's merits as much as any body, and yet deny the imputation of Christ's positive righteousness. What should there be that any one should merit or deserve any thing by, besides righteousness or goodness ? If any thing that Christ did or suffered, merited or deserved any thing, it was by virtue of the goodness, or righteousness, or holiness of it : If Christ's sufferings and death merited heaven it must be because there was an excellent righteousness and transcendent moral goodness in that act of laying down his life : And if by that excellent righteousness he merited heaven for us ; then surely that righteousness is reckoned to our account, that we have the benefit of it, or which is the same thing, it is imputed to us.

Thus, I hope I have made it evident, that the righteousness of Christ is indeed imputed to us. I proceed now to the

Third and last thing under this argument, that this doctrine, of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, is utterly inconsistent with the doctrine of our being justified by our own virtue or sincere obedience. If acceptance to God's favor, and a title to life, be given to believers as the reward of Christ's obedience, then it is not given as the reward of our own obedience. In what respect soever Christ is our Saviour, that doubtless excludes our being our own saviours in the same respect that Christ is, it will thence follow, that the salvation of Christ is needless in that respect ; according to the apostle's reasoning, Gal. v. 4. " Christ is rendered of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law." Doubtless, it is Christ's prerogative to be our Saviour in that sense wherein he is our Saviour : And therefore if it be by his obedience that we are justified, then it is not by our own obedience.

Here perhaps it may be said, that a title to salvation is not directly given as the reward of our obedience ; for that is not by any thing of ours, but only by Christ's satisfaction and righteousness ; but yet an interest in that satisfaction and righteousness is given as a reward of our obedience.

But this does not at all help the case ; for this is to ascribe as much to our obedience as if we ascribed salvation to it directly, without the intervention of Christ's righteousness : For it would be as great a thing for God to give us Christ, and his satisfaction and righteousness, in reward for our obedience, as to give us heaven immediately ; it would be as great a reward, and as great a testimony of respect to our obedience : And if God gives as great a thing as salvation for our obedience, why could he not as well give salvation itself directly ? And then there would have been no need of Christ's righteousness. And indeed if God gives us Christ, or an interest in him, properly in reward of our obedience, he does really give us salvation in reward for our obedience : For the former implies the latter ; yea it implies it, as the greater implies the less. So that indeed it exalts our virtue and obedience more, to suppose that God gives us Christ in reward of that virtue and obedience, than if he should give salvation without Christ.

The thing that the scripture guards and militates against, is our imagining that it is our own goodness, virtue, or excellency, that instates us in God's acceptance and favor. But to suppose that God gives us an interest in Christ in reward for our virtue, is as great an argument that it instates us in God's favor, as if he bestowed a title to eternal life as its direct reward. If God gives us an interest in Christ as a reward of our obedience, it will then follow, that we are instated in God's acceptance and favor by our own obedience, antecedent to our having an interest in Christ. For a rewarding any one's excellency, evermore supposes favor and acceptance on the account of that excellency : It is the very notion of a reward, that it is a good thing, bestowed in testimony of respect and favor for the virtue or excellency rewarded. So that it is not by virtue of our interest in Christ and his mer-

its, that we first come into favor with God, according to this scheme ; for we are in God's favor before we have any interest in those merits ; in that we have an interest in those merits given as a fruit of God's favor for our own virtue. If our interest in Christ be the fruit of God's favor, then it cannot be the ground of it. If God did not accept us, and had no favor for us for our own excellency, he never would bestow so great a reward upon us, as a right in Christ's satisfaction and righteousness. So that such a scheme destroys itself ; for it supposes that Christ's satisfaction and righteousness are necessary for us to recommend us to the favor of God ; and yet supposes that we have God's favor and acceptance before we have Christ's satisfaction and righteousness, and have these given as a fruit of God's favor.

Indeed, neither salvation itself, nor Christ the Saviour, are given as a reward of any thing in man : They are not given as a reward of faith, nor any thing else of ours : We are not united to Christ as a reward of our faith, but have union with him by faith, only as faith is the very act of uniting or closing on our part. As when a man offers himself to a woman in marriage, he does not give himself to her as a reward of her receiving him in marriage : Her receiving him is not considered as a worthy deed in her, for which he rewards her by giving himself to her ; but it is by her receiving him that the union is made, by which she hath him for her husband : It is on her part the union itself. By these things it appears, how contrary to the scheme of the gospel of Christ their scheme is, who say that faith justifies as a principle of obedience, or as a leading act of obedience ; or (as others) the sum and comprehension of all evangelical obedience or virtue that is in faith, that is the thing that gives it its justifying influence ; and that is the same thing as to say, that we are justified by our own obedience, virtue, or goodness.

Having thus considered the evidence of the truth of the doctrine, I proceed now to the

III. Thing proposed, viz. " To shew in what sense the acts of a Christian life, or of evangelical obedience may be looked upon to be concerned in this affair.

From what has been said already, it is manifest that they cannot have any concern in this affair as good works, or by virtue of any moral goodness in them ; not as works of the law, or as that moral excellency, or any part of it, that is the answering or fulfilment of that great and universal, and everlasting law or covenant of works that the great Lawgiver has established, as the highest and unalterable rule of judgment, which Christ alone answers, or does any thing towards it.

And it having been shewn, out of the scripture that it is only by faith, or the soul's receiving and uniting to the Saviour that has wrought our righteousness, that we are justified ; it therefore remains, that the acts of a Christian life cannot be concerned in this affair any otherwise than as they imply, and are the expressions of faith, and may be looked upon as so many acts of reception of Christ the Saviour.

But the determining what concern acts of Christian obedience can have in justification in this respect, will depend on the resolving of another point, viz. Whether any other act of faith besides the first act, has any concern in our justification, or how far perseverance in faith, or the continued and renewed acts of faith, have influence in this affair.

And it seems manifest that justification is by the first act of faith, in some respects, in a peculiar manner, because a sinner is actually and finally justified as soon as he has performed one act of faith ; and faith in its first act does, virtually at least, depend on God for perseverance, and entitles to this among other benefits. But yet the perseverance of faith is not excluded in this affair ; it is not only certainly connected with justification, but it is not to be excluded from that on which the justification of a sinner has a dependence, or that by which he is justified.

I have shewn that the way in which justification has a dependence on faith, is that it is the qualification on which the congruity of an interest in the righteousness of Christ depends, or wherein such a fitness consists. But the consideration of the perseverance of faith cannot be excluded out of this congruity of an interest in Christ's righteousness, and so in the eternal benefits purchased by it, because faith is that by

which the soul hath union or oneness with Christ ; and there is a natural congruity in it, that they that are one with Christ should have a joint interest with him in his eternal benefits ; but yet this congruity depends on its being an abiding union. As it is needful that the branch should abide in the vine, in order to its receiving the lasting benefits of the root ; so it is necessary that the soul should abide in Christ, in order to its receiving those lasting benefits of God's final acceptance and favor. " John xv. 6, 7. " If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." Verse 9, 10. " Continue ye in my love. If ye keep (or abide) my commandments, ye shall abide in my love : Even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love." There is the same reason why it is necessary that the union with Christ should remain, as why it should be begun ; why it should continue to be, as why it should once be : If it should be begun without remaining, the beginning would be in vain. In order to the soul's being now in a justified state, and now free from condemnation, it is necessary that it should now be in Christ, and not only that it should once have been in him. Rom. viii. 1. " There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." The soul is saved in Christ, as being now in him, when the salvation is bestowed, and not merely as remembering that it once was in him. Phil. iii. 9. " That I may 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." 1 John ii. 28. " And now, little children, abide in him ; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming." In order to person's being blessed after death, it is necessary not only that they should once be in him, but that they should die in him. Rev. xiv. 13. " Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord."

And there is the same reason why faith, the uniting qualification, should remain, in order to the union's remaining ; as why it should once be, in order to the union's once being. •

So that although the sinner is actually and finally justified on the first act of faith, yet the perseverance of faith, even then, comes into consideration, as one thing on which the fitness of acceptance to life depends. God, in the act of justification, which is passed on a sinner's first believing, has respect to perseverance, as being virtually contained in that first act of faith ; and it is looked upon, and taken by him that justifies, as being as it were a property in that faith that then is : God has respect to the believer's continuance in faith, and he is justified by that, as though it already were, because by divine establishment it shall follow ; and it being by divine constitution connected with that first faith, as much, as if it were a property in it, it is then considered as such, and so justification is not suspended ; but were it not for this, it would be needful that it should be suspended, till the sinner had actually persevered in faith.

And that it is so, that God in that act of final justification that he passes at the sinner's conversion, has respect to perseverance in faith, and future acts of faith, as being virtually implied in that first act, is further manifest by this, viz. That in a sinner's justification, at his conversion there is virtually contained a forgiveness as to eternal and deserved punishment, not only of all past sins, but also of all future infirmities and acts of sin that they shall be guilty of ; because that first justification is decisive and final. And yet pardon, in the order of nature, properly follows the crime, and also follows those acts of repentance and faith that respect the crime pardoned, as is manifest both from reason and scripture. David, in the beginning of Psal. xxxii. speaks of the forgiveness of sins of his, that were doubtless committed long after he was first godly, as being consequent on those sins, and on his repentance and faith with respect to them ; and yet this forgiveness is spoken of by the apostle in the 4th of Romans, as an instance of justification by faith. Probably the sin David there speaks of is the same that he committed in the matter of Uriah, and so the pardon the same with that release from death or eternal punishment, that the prophet Nathan speaks of. 2 Sam. xii. 13. "The Lord also hath put away

thy sin ; thou shalt not die." Not only does the manifestation of this pardon follow the sin in the order of time, but the pardon itself, in the order of nature, follows David's repentance and faith with respect to this sin ; for it is spoken of in the 32d Psalm, as depending on it.

But inasmuch as a sinner, in his first justification, is forever justified and freed from all obligation to eternal punishment ; it hence of necessity follows, that future faith and repentance are beheld, in that justification, as virtually contained in that first faith and repentance ; because repentance of those future sins, and faith in a Redeemer, with respect to them, or, at least, the continuance of that habit and principle in the heart that has such an actual repentance and faith in its nature and tendency, is now made sure by God's promise.

If remission of sins, committed after conversion, in the order of nature, follows that faith and repentance that is after them, then it follows that future sins are respected in the first justification, no otherwise than as future faith and repentance are respected in it. And future faith and repentance are looked upon by him that justifies, as virtually implied in the first repentance and faith, in the same manner as justification from future sins is virtually implied in the first justification ; which is the thing that was to be proved.

And besides, if no other act of faith could be concerned in justification but the first act, it will then follow, that Christians ought never to seek justification by any other act of faith. For if justification is not to be obtained by after acts of faith, then surely it is not a duty to seek it by such acts : And so it can never be a duty for persons after they are once converted, by faith to seek to God, or believingly to look to him for the remission of sin, or deliverance from the guilt of it, because deliverance from the guilt of sin is part of what belongs to justification. And if it be not proper for converts by faith to look to God through Christ for it, then it will follow, that it is not proper for them to pray for it ; Christian prayer to God for a blessing, is but an expression of faith in God for that blessing ; prayer is only the voice of faith. But if these

things are so, it will follow that that petition of the Lord's prayer, *forgive us our debts*, is not proper to be put up by disciples of Christ, or to be used in Christian assemblies ; and that Christ improperly directed his disciples to use that petition, when they were all of them except Judas, converted before. The debt that Christ directs his disciples to pray for the forgiveness of, can mean nothing else but the punishment that sin deserves, or the debt that we owe to divine justice, the ten thousand talents we owe our Lord. To pray that God would forgive our debts, is undoubtedly the same thing as to pray that God would release us from obligation to due punishment ; but releasing from obligation to the punishment due to sin, and forgiving the debt that we owe to divine justice, is what appertains to justification.

And then to suppose that no after acts of faith are concerned in the business of justification, and so that it is not proper for any ever to seek justification by such acts, would be forever to cut off those Christians that are doubtful concerning their first act of faith, from the joy and peace of believing. As the business of a justifying faith is to obtain pardon and peace with God, by looking to God and trusting in him for these blessings ; so the joy and peace of that faith are in the apprehension of pardon and peace obtained by such a trust. This a Christian that is doubtful of his first act of faith cannot have from that act, because by the supposition, he is doubtful whether it be an act of faith, and so whether he did obtain pardon and peace by that act. The proper remedy, in such a case, is now by faith to look to God in Christ for these blessings : But he is cut off from this remedy, because he is uncertain whether he has warrant so to do ; for he does not know but that he has believed already ; and if so, then he has no warrant to look to God by faith for these blessings now, because, by the supposition, no new act of faith is a proper means of obtaining these blessings. And so he can never properly obtain the joy of faith ; for there are acts of true faith that are very weak acts, and the first act may be so as well as others ; It may be like the first motion of the infant in the womb ; it may be so weak an act, that the Christian, by examining it,

may never be able to determine whether it was a true act of faith or no ; and it is evident from fact, and abundant experience, that many Christians are forever at a loss to determine which was their first act of faith. And those saints that have a good degree of satisfaction concerning their faith, may be subject to great declensions and falls, in which case they are liable to great fears of eternal punishment ; and the proper way of deliverance, is to forsake their sin by repentance, and by faith now to come to Christ for deliverance from the deserved eternal punishment ; but this it would not be, if deliverance from that punishment was not this way to be obtained.

But what is a still more plain and direct evidence of what I am now arguing for, is that that act of faith that Abraham exercised in the great promise of the covenant of grace that God made to him, of which it is expressly said, Gal. iii. 6. "It was accounted to him for righteousness," which is the grand instance and proof that the apostle so much insists upon, throughout the 4th chapter of Romans, and 3d of Galatians, to confirm his doctrine of justification by faith alone, was not Abraham's first act of faith, but was exerted long after he had by faith forsaken his own country, Heb. xi. 8, and had been treated as an eminent friend of God.

Moreover, the Apostle Paul, in the 3d chapter of Philippians, tells us how earnestly he sought justification by faith, or to win Christ and to obtain that righteousness which was by the faith of him, in what he did after his conversion. Ver. 3, 9. "For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." And in the two next verses he expresses the same thing in other words, and tells us how he went through sufferings, and became conformable to Christ's death, that he might be a partaker with Christ in the benefit of his resurrection ; which the same apostle elsewhere teaches us, is especially justification. Christ's resurrection was his justification ; in this, he that was put to death

in the flesh, was justified by the spirit ; and he that was delivered for our offences, rose again for our justification. And the apostle tells us in the verses that follow in that 3d chapter of Philippians, that he thus sought to attain the righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, and so to partake of the benefit of his resurrection, still as though he had not already attained, but that he continued to follow after it.

On the whole it appears, that the perseverance of faith is necessary, even to the congruity of justification ; and that not the less, because a sinner is justified, and perseverance promised, on the first act of faith, but God, in that justification, has respect, not only to the past act of faith, but to his own promise of future acts, and to the fitness of a qualification beheld as yet only in his own promise.

And that perseverance in faith is thus necessary to salvation, not merely as a *sine qua non*, or as an universal concomitant of it, but by reason of such an influence and dependence, seems manifest by many scriptures ; I would mention two or three : Heb. iii. 6. “ Whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” Verse 14 : “ For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.” Chap. vi. 12. “ Be ye followers of them, who through “ faith and patience inherit the promises.” Rom. xi. 20. “ Well, because of unbelief they were broken off ; but thou standest by faith. Be not high minded, but fear.”

And as the congruity to a final justification depends on perseverance in faith, as well as the first act, so oftentimes the manifestation of justification in the conscience, arises a great deal more from after acts, than the first act. And all the difference whereby the first act of faith has a concern in this affair that is peculiar, seems to be, as it were, only an accidental difference, arising from the circumstance of time or it being first in order of time, and not from any peculiar respect that God has to it, or any influence it has of a peculiar nature, in the affair of our salvation.

And thus it is that a truly Christian walk, and the acts of an evangelical, childlike, believing obedience, are concerned in the affair of our justification, and seem to be sometimes

so **spoken of in scripture**, viz. as an expression of a persevering faith in the Son of God, the only Saviour. Faith unites to Christ, and so gives a congruity to justification, not merely as remaining a dormant principle in the heart, but as being and appearing in its active expressions.

The obedience of a Christian, so far as it is truly evangelical, and performed with the Spirit of the Son sent forth into the heart, has all relation to Christ, the Mediator, and is but an expression of the soul's believing union to Christ. All evangelical works, are works of that faith that worketh by love ; and every such act of obedience, wherein it is inward, and the act of the soul is only a new, effective act of reception of Christ, an adherence to the glorious Saviour. Hence that of the apostle, Gal. ii. 20. " I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me ; and the life that I now live in the flesh, is by the faith of the Son of God." And hence we are directed, in whatever we do, whether in word or deed, to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Col. iii. 17.

And that God in justification has respect not only to the first act of faith, but also to future, persevering acts, in this sense, viz. as expressed in life, seems manifest, by Rom. ii. 17. " For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith : As it is written, The just shall live by faith." And Heb. x. 38, 39 ; " Now the just shall live by faith ; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition ; but of them that believe, to the saving of the soul."

So that as was before said of faith, so may it be said of a childlike, believing obedience, it has no concern in justification by any virtue or excellency in it ; but only as there is a reception of Christ in it. And this is no more contrary to the apostle's frequent assertion of our being justified without the works of the law, than to say, that we are justified by faith ; for faith is as much a work, or act of Christian obedience, as the expressions of faith, in spiritual life and walk. And therefore, as we say that faith does not justify as a work, so we say of all these effective expressions of faith.

This is the reverse of the scheme of our modern divines, who hold, that faith justifies only as an act or expression of obedience ; whereas, in truth obedience has no concern in justification, any otherwise than as an expression of faith.

I now proceed to the

IV. Thing proposed viz. “ To answer objections.”

Object. 1. We frequently find promises of eternal life and salvation, and sometimes of justification itself, made to our own virtue and obedience. Eternal life is promised to obedience, in Rom. ii. 7. “ To them, who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, honor, and immortality ; eternal life ?” And the like in innumerable other places. And justification itself is promised to that virtue of a forgiving spirit and temper in us, Matth. vi. 14. “ For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you : But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” All allow that justification in great part consists in the forgiveness of sins.

To this I answer,

1. These things being promised to our virtue and obedience, argues no more, than that there is a connexion between them and evangelical obedience ; which, I have already observed, is not the thing in dispute. All that can be proved by obedience and salvation being connected in the promise, is, that obedience and salvation are connected in fact ; which nobody denies ; and whether it be owned or denied, is, as has been shewn, nothing to the purpose. There is no need that an admission to a title to salvation, should be given on the account of our obedience, in order to the promises being true. If we find such a promise, that he that obeys shall be saved, or he that is holy shall be justified ; all that is needful in order to such promises being true, is, that it be really so, that he that obeys shall be saved, and that holiness and justification shall indeed go together. That proposition may be a truth, that he that obeys shall be saved ; because obedience and salvation are connected together in fact ; and yet an acceptance to a title to salvation not be granted upon the account of any of our own virtue or obedience. What is a prom-

ise, but only a declaration of future truth, for the comfort and encouragement of the person to whom it is declared? Promises are conditional propositions; and, as has been already observed, it is not the thing in dispute, whether other things besides faith may not have the place of the condition in such propositions wherein pardon and salvation are the consequent.

2. Promises may rationally be made to signs and evidences of faith, and yet the thing promised not be upon the account of the sign, but the thing signified. Thus, for instance, human government may rationally make promises of such and such privileges to those that can shew such evidences of their being free of such a city, or members of such a corporation, or descended of such a family; when it is not at all for the sake of that which is the evidence or sign, in itself considered, that they are admitted to such a privilege, but only and purely for the sake of that which it is an evidence of.

And though God does not stand in need of signs to know whether we have true faith or not, yet our own consciences do; so that it is much for our comfort that promises are made to signs of faith. A finding in ourselves a forgiving temper and disposition, may be a most proper and natural evidence to our consciences, that our hearts have, in a sense of our own utter unworthiness, truly closed and fallen in with the way of free and infinitely gracious forgiveness of our sins by Jesus Christ; whence we may be enabled, with the greater comfort, to apply to ourselves the promises of forgiveness by Christ.

3. It has been just now shown, how that acts of evangelical obedience are indeed concerned in our justification itself, and are not excluded from that condition that justification depends upon, without the least prejudice to that doctrine of justification by faith, without any goodness of our own, that has been maintained; and therefore it can be no objection against this doctrine, that we have sometimes in scripture promises of pardon and acceptance made to such acts of obedience.

4. Promises of particular benefits implied in justification and salvation, may especially be fitly made to such expressions

and evidences of faith as they have a peculiar natural likeness and suitableness to. As forgiveness is promised to a forgiving spirit in us ; obtaining mercy is fitly promised to mercifulness in us, and the like : And that upon several accounts ; they are the most natural evidences of our heart's closing with those benefits by faith ; for they do especially shew the sweet accord and consent that there is between the heart and these benefits ; and by reason of the natural likeness that there is between the virtue and the benefit, the one has the greater tendency to bring the other to mind ; the practice of the virtue tends the more to renew the sense, and refresh the hope of the blessing promised : And also to convince the conscience of the justice of being denied the benefit, if the duty be neglected.

And besides the sense and manifestation of divine forgiveness in our own consciences ; yea, and many exercises of God's forgiving mercy, as it respects God's fatherly displeasure, that are granted after justification, through the course of a Christian's life, may be given as the proper rewards of the virtue of a forgiving spirit, and yet this not be at all to the prejudice of the doctrine we have maintained ; as will more fully appear, when we come to answer another objection hereafter to be mentioned.

Obje^ct. 2. Our own obedience and inherent holiness, is necessary to prepare men for heaven ; and therefore is doubtless what recommends persons to God's acceptance, as the heirs of heaven.

To this I answer,

1. Our own obedience being necessary in order to a preparation for an actual bestowment of glory, is no argument that it is the thing upon the account of which we are accepted to a right to it. God may, and does do many things to prepare the saints for glory, after he has accepted them as the heirs of glory. A parent may do much in its education, to prepare a child for an inheritance after the child is an heir ; yea, there are many things necessary to fit a child for the actual possession of the inheritance, that be not necessary in order to its having a right to the inheritance.

2. If every thing that is necessary to prepare men for glory must be the proper condition of justification, then perfect holiness is the condition of justification. Men must be made perfectly holy, before they are admitted to the enjoyment of the blessedness of heaven ; for there must in no wise enter in there any spiritual defilement. And therefore, when a saint dies he leaves all his sin and corruption when he leaves the body.

Object. 3. Our obedience is not only indissolubly connected with salvation, and preparatory to it, but the Scripture expressly speaks of bestowing eternal blessings as rewards for the good deeds of the saints. Matth. x, 42. " Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, he shall in no wise lose his reward." 1 Cor. iii. 8. " Every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labor." And in many other places. This seems to militate against the doctrine that has been maintained, two ways : 1. The bestowing a reward, carries in it a respect to a moral fitness, in the thing rewarded, to the reward ; the very notion of a reward being a benefit bestowed in testimony of acceptance of, and respect to, the goodness or amiableness of some qualification or work in the person rewarded. And besides, the scripture seems to explain itself in this matter, in Rev. iii. 4. Thou hast a few names, even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments : And they shall walk with me in white ; for they are worthy." This is here given as the reason why they should have such a reward, " because they were worthy ; " which, though we suppose it to imply no proper merit, yet it at least implies a moral fitness, or that the excellency of their virtue in God's sight recommends them to such a reward ; which seems directly repugnant to what has been supposed, viz. That we are accepted, and approved of God, as the heirs of salvation, not out of regard to the excellency of our own virtue or goodness, or any moral fitness therein to such a reward, but on the account of the dignity and moral fitness of Christ's righteousness. 2. Our being eternally rewarded for our own holiness and good works, necessarily supposes that our future happiness will be greater or smaller, in some proper-

tion as our own holiness and obedience are more or less ; and that there are different degrees of glory, according to different degrees of virtue and good works, is a doctrine very expressly and frequently taught us in scripture. But this seems quite inconsistent with the saints' all having their future blessedness as a reward of Christ's righteousness : For if Christ's righteousness be imputed to all, and this be what entitles each one to glory, then it is the same righteousness that entitles one to glory which entitles another. But if all have glory as the reward of the same righteousness why have not all the same glory ? Does not the same righteousness merit as much glory when imputed to one as when imputed to another ?

In answer to the *first* part of this objection, I would observe, that it does not argue that we are justified by our good deeds, that we shall have eternal blessings in reward for them, for it is in consequence of our justification, that our good deeds become rewardable with spiritual and eternal rewards. The acceptableness, and so the rewardableness of our virtue, is not antecedent to justification, but follows it, and is built entirely upon it ; which is the reverse of what those in the adverse scheme of justification suppose, viz. that justification is built on the acceptableness and rewardableness of our virtue. They suppose that a saving interest in Christ is given as a reward of our virtue, or, (which is the same thing) as a testimony of God's acceptance of our excellency in our virtue. But the contrary is true, that God's respect to our virtue as our amiableness in his sight, and his acceptance of it as rewardable, are entirely built on our interest in Christ already established. So that that relation to Christ, whereby believers, in scripture language, are said to be in Christ, is the very foundation of our virtues and good deeds being accepted of God, and so of their being rewarded ; for a reward is a testimony of acceptance. For we, and all that we do, are accepted only in the beloved, Eph. i. 6. Our sacrifices are acceptable, only through our interest in him, and through his worthiness and preciousness being as it were, made ours. 1 Pet. ii. 4, 5 " To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. Ye also as lively

stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Here a being actually built on this stone, precious to God, is mentioned as all the ground of the acceptableness of our good works to God, and their becoming also precious in his eyes. So, Heb. xiii. 21. "Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ." And hence we are directed, whatever we offer to God, to offer it in Christ's name, as expecting to have it accepted no other way, than from the value that God has to that name. Col. iii. 17. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." To act in Christ's name, is to act under him, as our head, and as having him to stand for us, and represent us God ward.

The reason of this may be seen, from what has been already said, to shew that it is not meet that any thing in us should be accepted of God as any excellency of our persons, until we are actually in Christ, and justified through him. The loveliness of the virtue of the fallen creatures is nothing in the sight of God, till he beholds them in Christ, and clothed with his righteousness. 1. Because till then we stand condemned before God, by his own holy law, to his utter rejection and abhorrence. And, 2. Because we are infinitely guilty before him ; and the loveliness of our virtue bears no proportion to our guilt, and must therefore pass for nothing before a strict judge. And 3. Because our good deeds and virtuous acts themselves are in a sense corrupt ; and the hatefulness of the corruption of them, if we are beheld as we are in ourselves, or separate from Christ, infinitely outweighs the loveliness of that which attends the act of virtue itself, the loveliness vanishes into nothing in comparison of it : And therefore the virtue must pass for nothing, out of Christ. Not only are our best duties defiled, in being attended with the exercises of sin and corruption, that precede them, and follow them, and are intermingled with holy acts ; but even the holy acts themselves, and the gracious exercises of the godly, though the act most

simply considered is good, yet take the acts in their measure and dimensions, and the manner in which they are exerted, and they are corrupt acts ; that is, they are defectively corrupt, or sinfully defective ; there is that defect in them that may well be called the corruption of them. That defect is properly sin, an expression of a vile sinfulness of heart, and what tends to provoke the just anger of God ; not because the exercise of love and other grace is not equal to God's loveliness ; for it is impossible the love of creatures (men or angels) should be so ; but because the act is so very disproportionate to the occasion given for love or other grace, considering God's loveliness, and the manifestation that is made of it, and the exercises of kindness, and the capacity of human nature, and our advantages (and the like) together. A negative expression of corruption may be as truly sin, and as just cause of provocation, as a positive. Thus if a man, a worthy and excellent person, should, from mere generosity and goodness, exceedingly lay out himself, and should, with great expense and suffering, save another's life or redeem him from some extreme calamity ; and when he had done all, that other person should never thank him for it, or express the least gratitude any way ; this would be a negative expression of his ingratitude, and baseness ; but is equivalent to an act of ingratitude or positive exercise of a base, unworthy spirit ; and is truly an expression of it, and brings as much blame, as if he, by some positive act, had much injured another person. And so it would be, (only in a less degree) if the gratitude was but very small, bearing no proportion to the benefit and obligation ; as if, for so great and extraordinary a kindness, he should express no more gratitude than would have been becoming towards a person that had only given him a cup of water when thirsty, or shewn him the way in a journey when at a loss, or had done him some such small kindness : If he should come to his benefactor to express his gratitude, and should do after this manner, he might truly be said to act unworthily and odiously ; he would show a most ungrateful spirit : And his doing after such a manner might justly be abhorred by all : And yet the gratitude, that little there is of it, most simply consid-

ered, and so far as it goes is good. And so it is with respect to our exercise of love, and gratitude, and other graces, towards God : They are defectively corrupt and sinful, and take them as they are, in their manner and measure, might justly be odious and provoking to God, and would necessarily be so, were we beheld out of Christ : For in that this defect is sin, it is infinitely hateful ; and so the hatefulness of the very act infinitely outweighs the loveliness of it ; because all sin has infinite hatefulness and heinousness ; but our holiness has but little value and loveliness, as has been elsewhere demonstrated.

Hence, though it be true that the saints are rewarded for their good works yet it is for Christ's sake only, and not for the excellency of their works in themselves considered, or beheld separately from Christ ; for so they have no excellency in God's sight, or acceptableness to him, as has now been shewn. It is acknowledged that God, in rewarding the holiness and good works of believers, does in some respect, give them happiness as a testimony of his respect to the loveliness of their holiness and good works in his sight ; for that is the very notion of a reward : But in a very different sense from what would have been, if man had not fallen ; which would have been to bestow eternal life on man, as a testimony of God's respect to the loveliness of what man did, considered as in itself, and as in man, separately by himself, and not beheld as a member of Christ : In which sense also, the scheme of justification we are opposing necessarily supposes the excellency of our virtue to be respected and rewarded ; for it supposes a saving interest in Christ itself to be given as a reward of it.

Two things come to pass, relating to the saints' reward of their inherent righteousness, by virtue of their relation to Christ. 1. The guilt of their persons is all done away, and the pollution and hatefulness that attend their good works are hid. 2. Their relation to Christ adds a positive value and dignity to their good works in God's sight. That little holiness, and those faint and feeble acts of love, and other grace, receive an exceeding value in the sight of God, by virtue

of God's beholding them as in Christ, and as it were members of one so infinitely worthy in his eyes ; and that because God looks upon their persons as persons of greater dignity on this account. Isa. xliii. 4. " Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable." God for Christ's sake, and because they are members of his own righteous and dear Son, sets an exceeding value upon their persons ; and hence it follows, that he also sets a great value upon their good acts and offerings. The same love and obedience in a person of greater dignity and value in God's sight is more valuable in his eyes than in one of less dignity. Love and respect (as has been before observed) are valuable in proportion to the dignity of the person whose love it is ; because, so far as any one gives his love to another, he gives himself, in that he gives his heart : But this is a more excellent offering, in proportion as the person whose self is offered is more worthy. Believers are become immensely more honorable in God's esteem by virtue of their relation to Christ, than man would have been, considered as by himself, though he had been free from sin ; as a mean person becomes more honorable when married to a king. Hence God will probably reward the little weak, love, and poor and exceedingly imperfect obedience of believers in Christ, with a more glorious reward than he would have done Adam's perfect obedience. According to the tenor of the first covenant, the person was to be accepted and rewarded, only for the work's sake ; but by the covenant of grace, the work is accepted and rewarded, only for the person's sake ; the person being beheld antecedently as a member of Christ, and clothed with his righteousness. So that though the saints' inherent holiness is rewarded, yet this very reward is indeed not the less founded on the worthiness and righteousness of Christ ; None of the value that their works have in his sight, nor any of the acceptance they have with him, is out of Christ, and out of his righteousness ; but his worthiness as Mediator is the prime and only foundation on which all is built, and the universal source whence all arises. God indeed doth great things out of regard to the saints' loveliness, but it is only as a secondary and derivative loveliness, as it were. When I

speaking of a derivative loveliness, I do not mean only, that the qualifications themselves that are accepted as lovely, are derived from Christ, and are from his power and purchase ; but that the acceptance of them as a loveliness, and all the value that is set upon them, and all their connexion with the reward, is founded in, and derived from Christ's righteousness and worthiness.

If we suppose that not only higher degrees of glory in heaven, but heaven itself, is in some respect given in reward for the holiness and good works of the saints, in this secondary and derivative sense, it will not prejudice the doctrine we have maintained. It is no way impossible that God may bestow heaven's glory wholly out of respect to Christ's righteousness, and yet in reward for man's inherent holiness, in different respects, and different ways. It may be only Christ's righteousness that God has respect to, for his own sake, the independent acceptableness and dignity of it, being sufficient of itself to recommend all that believe in Christ to a title to this glory ; and so it may be only by this, that persons enter into a title to heaven, or have their prime right to it : And yet God may also have respect to the saints' own holiness, for Christ's sake, and as deriving a value from Christ's merit, which he may testify in bestowing heaven upon them. The saints being beheld as members of Christ, their obedience is looked upon by God as something of Christ's, it being the obedience of the members of Christ, and their sufferings are looked upon, in some respect, as the sufferings of Christ. Hence the apostle, speaking of his sufferings, says, Col. i. 24. "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh." To the same purpose is Matth. xxv. 35. &c. I was an hungred, naked, sick, and in prison, &c. And so that in Rev. xi. 8. "And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified."

By the merit and righteousness of Christ, such favor of God towards believers, may be obtained as that God, may hereby be already, as it were, disposed to make them

perfectly and eternally happy. But yet this does not hinder, but that God in his wisdom may choose to bestow this perfect and eternal happiness in this way, viz. in some respect as a reward of their holiness and obedience: It is not impossible but that the blessedness may be bestowed as a reward for that which is done, after that an interest is already obtained in that favor which (to speak of God after the manner of men) disposes God to bestow the blessedness. Our heavenly Father may already have that favor for a child, whereby he may be thoroughly ready to give the child an inheritance, because he is his child; which he is by the purchase of Christ's righteousness: And yet that does not hinder but that it should be possible, that the Father may choose to bestow the inheritance on the child, in a way of reward for his dutifulness, and behaving as becoming a child. And so great and exceeding a reward may not be judged more than a meet reward for his dutifulness; but that so great a reward is judged meet, does not arise from the excellency of the obedience absolutely considered, but from his standing in so near and honorable a relation to God, as that of a child, which is obtained only by the righteousness of Christ. And thus the reward, arises properly from the righteousness of Christ; though it be indeed in some sort the reward of their obedience. As a father might justly esteem the inheritance no more than a meet reward for the obedience of his child, and yet esteem it more than a meet reward for the obedience of a servant. The favor whence a believer's heavenly Father bestows the eternal inheritance, and his title as an heir, are founded in that relation he stands in to him as a child, purchased by Christ's righteousness; though he in wisdom chooses to bestow it in such a way, as therein to testify his acceptance of the amiableness of his own obedience in Christ.

Believers having a title to heaven by faith, antecedent to their obedience, or its being absolutely promised to them before, does not hinder but that the actual bestowment of heaven may also be a testimony of God's regard to their obedience, though performed afterwards. Thus it was with Abraham, the father and pattern of all believers: God bestowed upon

him that blessing of multiplying his seed as the stars of heaven, and causing that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed, in reward for his obedience in offering up his son Isaac, Gen. xxii. 16....18. "And said, by myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." And yet the very same blessings had been from time to time promised to Abraham, in the most positive terms, and the promise, with great solemnity, confirmed and sealed to him; as chap. xii. 2, 3. chap. xiii. 16. chap. xv. 1.....7. &c. chap. xvii. throughout; chap. xviii. 10. 18.

From what has been said we may easily solve the difficulty arising from that text in Rev. iii. 4. "They shall walk with me in white for they are worthy;" which is parallel with that text in Luke xx. 35. "But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead." I allow (as in the objection) that this worthiness does doubtless denote a moral fitness to the reward, or that God looks on these glorious benefits as a meet testimony of his regard to the value which their persons and performances have in his sight.

1. God looks on these glorious benefits as a meet testimony of his regard to the value which their persons have in his sight. But he sets this value upon their persons purely for Christ's sake: They are such jewels, and have such preciousness in his eyes, only because they are beheld in Christ, and by reason of the worthiness of the head they are the members of, and the stock they are grafted into. And this value that God sets upon them on this account is so great, that God thinks meet, from regard to it, to admit them to such exceeding glory. The saints, on the account of their relation to Christ, are such precious jewels in God's sight, that they are thought worthy of a place in his own crown. Mal. iii. 17.

Zech. iv. 16. So far as the saints are said to be valuable in God's sight, upon whatever account they are so, so far may they properly be said to be worthy, or meet for that honor that is answerable to that value or price which God sets upon them. A child or wife of a prince is worthy to be treated with great honor ; and therefore if a mean person should be adopted to be a child of a prince, or should be espoused to a prince, it would be proper to say, that she was worthy of such an honor and respect, and there would be no force upon the words in saying, that she ought to have such respect paid her for she is worthy, though it be only on the account of her relation to the prince that she is so.

2. From the value God sets upon their persons, for the sake of Christ's worthiness, he also sets a high value on their virtue and performances. Their meek and quiet spirit is of great price in his sight. Their fruits are pleasant fruits, their offerings are an odour of sweet smell to him ; and that because of the value he sets on their persons, as has been already observed and explained. This preciousness or high valuableness of believers is a moral fitness to a reward ; and yet this valuableness is all in the righteousness of Christ, that is the foundation of it. The thing that respect is had to, is not the excellency that is in them separately by themselves, or in their virtue by itself, but to the value that in God's account arises thereto on other considerations ; which is the natural import of the manner of expression in Luke xx. 35. "They which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world," &c. and Luke xxi. 36. "That ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man". 2 Thess. i. 5. "That ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer."

There is a vast difference between this scheme, and what is supposed in the scheme of those that oppose the doctrine of justification by faith alone. This lays the foundation of first acceptance with God, and all actual salvation consequent upon it, wholly in Christ and his righteousness. On the contrary, in their scheme a regard to man's own excellency or

virtue is supposed to be first, and to have the place of the first foundation in actual salvation, though not in that ineffectual redemption, which they suppose common to all: They lay the foundation of all discriminating salvation in man's own virtue and moral excellency: This is the very bottom stone in this affair; for they suppose that it is from regard to our virtue, that even a special interest in Christ itself is given. The foundation being thus contrary, the whole scheme becomes exceeding diverse and contrary; the one scheme is an evangelical one, the other a legal one; the one is utterly inconsistent with our being justified by Christ's righteousness, the other not at all.

From what has been said, we may understand what has been before mentioned, viz. How that not only is that forgiveness of sin that is granted in justification indissolubly connected with a forgiving spirit in us, but there may be many exercises of forgiving mercy that may properly be granted in reward for our forgiving those that trespass against us: For none will deny but that there are many acts of divine forgiveness towards the saints, that do not presuppose an unjustified state immediately preceding that forgiveness. None will deny, that saints that never fell from grace or a justified state, do yet commit many sins which God forgives afterwards, by laying aside his fatherly displeasure. This forgiveness may be in reward for our forgiveness, without any prejudice to the doctrine that has been maintained, as well as other mercies and blessings consequent on justification.

With respect to the *second* part of the objection, that relates to the different degrees of glory, and the seeming inconsistency there is in it, that the degrees of glory in different saints should be greater or less according to their inherent holiness and good works, and yet, that every one's glory should be purchased with the price of the very same imputed righteousness.

I answer, that Christ, by his righteousness, purchased for every one complete and perfect happiness, according to his capacity. But this does not hinder but that the saints, being of various capacities, may have various degrees of happiness.

and yet all their happiness be the fruit of Christ's purchase. Indeed it cannot be properly said that Christ purchased any particular degree of happiness, so that the value of Christ's righteousness in the sight of God, is sufficient to raise a believer so high in happiness, and no higher, and so that if the believer were made happier, it would exceed the value of Christ's righteousness; but in general, Christ purchased eternal life or perfect happiness for all, according to their several capacities. The saints are as so many vessels of different sizes, cast into a sea of happiness, where every vessel is full; this Christ purchased for all: Yet it is left to God's sovereign pleasure to determine the largeness of the vessel; Christ's righteousness meddles not with this matter. Eph. iv. 4....7. "There is one body, and one spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism," &c. "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." God may dispense in this matter according to what rule he pleases, not the less for what Christ has done: He may dispense either without condition, or upon what condition he pleases to fix. It is evident that Christ's righteousness meddles not with this matter; for what Christ did was to fulfil the covenant of works; but the covenant of works did not meddle at all with this: If Adam had persevered in perfect obedience, he and his posterity would have had perfect and full happiness; every one's happiness would have so answered his capacity, that he would have been completely blessed; but God would have been at liberty to have made some of one capacity, and others of another, as he pleased. The angels have obtained eternal life, or a state of confirmed glory, by a covenant of works, whose condition was perfect obedience; but yet some are higher in glory than others, according to the several capacities that God, according to his sovereign pleasure, hath given them. So that it being still left with God notwithstanding the perfect obedience of the second Adam, to fix the degree of each one's capacity by what rule he pleases, he hath been pleased to fix the degree of capacity, and so of glory, by the proportion of the saints' grace and fruitfulness here: He gives higher degrees of glory, in reward

for higher degrees of holiness and good works, because it pleases him ; and yet all the happiness of each saint is indeed the fruit of the purchase of Christ's obedience. If it had been but one man that Christ had obeyed and died for, and it had pleased God to make him of a very large capacity, Christ's perfect obedience would have purchased that his capacity should be filled and then all his happiness might properly be said to be the fruit of Christ's perfect obedience ; though if he had been of a less capacity, he would not have had so much happiness by the same obedience ; and yet would have had as much as Christ merited for him. Christ's righteousness meddles not with the degree of happiness, any otherwise than as he merits that it should be full and perfect, according to the capacity ; And so it may be said to be concerned in the degree of happiness, as perfect is a degree with respect to imperfect ; but it meddles not with degrees of perfect happiness.

This matter may be yet better understood, if we consider that Christ and the whole church of saints are, as it were, one body, of which he is the Head, and they members, of different place and capacity : Now the whole body, head, and members, have communion in Christ's righteousness ; they are all partakers of the benefit of it ; Christ himself the head is rewarded for it, and every member is partaker of the benefit and reward : But it does by no means follow, that every part should equally partake of the benefit, but every part in proportion to its place and capacity ; the head partakes of far more than other parts, because it is of a far greater capacity ; and the more noble members partake of more than the inferior. As it is in a natural body that enjoys perfect health, the head, and the heart, and lungs, have a greater share of this health, they have it more seated in them, than the hands and feet, because they are parts of greater capacity ; though the hands and feet are as much in perfect health as those nobler parts of the body : So it is in the mystical body of Christ, all the members are partakers of the benefit of the righteousness of the head ; but it is according to the different capacity and place they have in the body ; and God determines that place

and capacity as he pleases ; he makes whom he pleases the foot, and whom he pleases the hand, and whom he pleases the lungs, &c. 1 Cor. xii. 18. "God hath set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." And God efficaciously determines the place and capacity of every member, by the different degrees of grace and assistance in the improvement of it here in this world : Those that he intends for the highest place in the body, he gives them most of his Spirit, the greatest share of the divine nature, the Spirit and nature of Christ Jesus the head, and that assistance whereby they perform the most excellent works, and do most abound in them.

Object. 4. It may be objected against what has been supposed, viz. That rewards are given to our good works, only in consequence of an interest in Christ, or in testimony of God's respect to the excellency or value of them in his sight, as built on an interest in Christ's righteousness already obtained : That the Scripture speaks of an interest in Christ itself, as being given out of respect to our moral fitness. Matth. x. 37.....39. "He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me : He that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me : He that taketh not up his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life, shall lose it," &c. Worthiness here, at least signifies a moral fitness, or an excellency or virtue that recommends : And this place seems to intimate as though it were from respect to a moral fitness that men are admitted even to an union with Christ, and interest in him ; and therefore this worthiness cannot be consequent on being in Christ, and by the imputation of his worthiness, or from any value that is in us, or in our actions in God's sight, as beheld in Christ.

To this I answer, That though persons when they are accepted, are not accepted as worthy, yet when they are rejected they are rejected as unworthy. He that does not love Christ above other things, that treats him with such indignity, as to set him below earthly things, shall be treated as unworthy of Christ ; his unworthiness of Christ, especially in that particular, shall be marked against him, and

Imputed to him : And though he be a professing Christian, and live in the enjoyment of the gospel, and has been visibly ingrafted into Christ, and admitted as one of his disciples, as Judas was ; yet he shall be thrust out in wrath, as a punishment of his vile treatment of Christ. The forementioned words do not imply, that if a man does love Christ above father and mother, &c. That he should be worthy ; the most they imply is, that such a visible Christian shall be treated and thrust out as unworthy. He that believes is not received for the worthiness or moral fitness of faith ; but yet the visible Christian is cast out by God, for the unworthiness and moral unfitness of unbelief. A being accepted as one of Christ's, is not the reward of believing ; but being thrust out from being one of Christ's disciples, after a visible admission as such, is properly a punishment of unbelief. John iii. 18, 19. He that believeth on him, is not condemned ; but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." Salvation is promised to faith as a free gift, but damnation is threatened to unbelief as a debt, or punishment due to unbelief. They that believed in the wilderness did not enter into Canaan, because of the worthiness of their faith ; but God swore in his wrath, that they that believed not should not enter in, because of the unworthiness of their unbelief. The admitting a soul to an union with Christ is an act of free and sovereign grace ; but an excluding at death, and at the day of judgment, those professors of Christianity that have had the offers of a Saviour and enjoyed great privileges as God's people, is a judicial proceeding, and a just punishment of their unworthy treatment of Christ. The design of this saying of Christ is to make men sensible of the unworthiness of their treatment of Christ, that professed him to be their Lord and Saviour, and set him below father and mother, &c. and not to persuade of the worthiness of loving him above father and mother. If a beggar should be offered any great and precious gift, but as soon as offered, should trample it under his feet, it might be

taken from him, as unworthy to have it : Or if a malefactor should have his pardon offered him, that he might be freed from execution, and should only scoff at it, his pardon might be refused him, as unworthy of it ; though if he had received it, he would not have had it for his worthiness, or as being recommended to it by his virtue ; for his being a malefactor supposes him unworthy, and its being offered him to have it only on accepting, supposes that the king looks for no worthiness, nothing in him for which he should bestow pardon as a reward. This may teach us how to understand Acts xiii. 46. " It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken unto you ; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo we turn to the Gentiles. "

Object. 5. It is objected against the doctrine of justification by faith alone, That repentance is evidently spoken of in Scripture as that which is in a special manner the condition of remission of sins : But remission of sins is by all allowed to be that wherein justification does (at least) in great part consist.

But it must certainly arise from a misunderstanding of what the Scripture says about repentance, to suppose that faith and repentance are two distinct things, that in like manner are the conditions of justification. For it is most plain from the Scripture, that the condition of justification, or that in us by which we are justified, is but one, and that is faith. Faith and repentance are not two distinct conditions of justification, nor are they two distinct things that together make one condition of justification ; but faith comprehends the whole of that by which we are justified, or by which we come to have an interest in Christ, and nothing else has a parallel concern with it in the affair of our salvation. And this the divines on the other side themselves are sensible of, and therefore they suppose that that faith that the Apostle Paul speaks of, which he says we are justified by alone, comprehends in it repentance.

And therefore, in answer to the objection, I would say, That when repentance is spoken of in scripture as the condition of pardon, thereby is not intended any particular grace, or

act properly distinct from faith, that has a parallel influence with it in the affair of our pardon or justification ; but by repentance is intended nothing distinct from active conversion, (or conversion actively considered) as it respects the term from which. Active conversion is a motion or exercise of that mind that respects two terms, viz. sin and God : And by repentance is meant this conversion, or active change of the mind, so far as it is conversant about the term from which, or about sin. This is what the word *repentance* properly signifies ; which, in the original of the New Testament, is *μετανοια* which signifies *a change of the mind*, or which is the same thing, the turning or the conversion of the mind. Repentance is this turning, as it respects what is turned from. Acts xxvi. 20. “ Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I shewed unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, and turn to God.” Both these are the same turning, but only with respect to opposite terms : In the former, is expressed the exercise of mind that there is about sin in this turning ; in the other, the exercise of mind towards God.

If we look over the scriptures that speak of evangelical repentance, we shall presently see that repentance is to be understood in this sense ; as Matth. ix. 13. “ I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Luke xiii. 3. “ Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” And chap. xv. 7, 10. “ There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth,” i. e. over one sinner that is converted. Acts xi. 18. “ Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.” This is said by the Christians of the circumcision at Jerusalem, upon Peter’s giving an account of the conversion of Cornelius and his family, and their embracing the gospel, though Peter had said nothing expressly about their sorrow for sin. And again, Acts xvii. 30. “ But now commandeth all men every where to repent.” And Luke xvi. 30. “ Nay, father Abraham, but if one went to them from the dead they would repent.” 2 Pet. iii. 9. “ The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long suffering to usward, not willing that any

should perish, but that all should come to repentance." It is plain that in these and other places, by repentance is meant conversion.

Now, it is true, that conversion is the condition of pardon and justification : But if it be so, how absurd is it to say, that conversion is one condition of justification, and faith another, as though they were distributively distinct and parallel conditions ! Conversion is the condition of justification, because it is that great change by which we are brought from sin to Christ, and by which we become believers in him : Agreeable to Matth. xxi. 32. " And ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him." When we are directed to repent, that our sins may be blotted out, it is as much as to say, let your minds and hearts be changed, that your sins may be blotted out. But if it be said, let your hearts be changed, that you may be justified ; and also said, believe that you may be justified ; does it therefore follow, that the heart's being changed is one condition of justification, and believing another ? But our minds must be changed, that we may believe, and so may be justified.

And besides, evangelical repentance, being active conversion, is not to be treated of as a particular grace, properly and entirely distinct from faith, as by some it seems to have been. What is conversion, but the sinful, alienated soul's closing with Christ, or the sinner's being brought to believe in Christ ? That exercise of soul that there is in conversion, that respects sin, cannot be excluded out of the nature of faith in Christ : There is something in faith, or closing with Christ that respects sin, and that is evangelical repentance. That repentance which in scripture is called repentance for the remission of sins, is that very principle or operation of the mind itself that is called faith, so far as it is conversant about sin. Justifying faith in a Mediator is conversant about two things : It is conversant about sin or evil to be rejected and to be delivered from by the Mediator, and about positive good to be accepted and obtained by the Mediator ; as conversant about the former of these it is evangelical repentance, or repentance for remission of sins. Surely they must be very igno-

want, or at least very inconsiderate of the whole tenor of the gospel, that think that that repentance by which remission of sins is obtained, can be completed, as to all that is essential to it, without any respect to Christ, or application of the mind to the Mediator, who alone has made atonement for sin. Surely so great a part of salvation as remission of sins, is not to be obtained without looking or coming to the great and only Saviour. It is true, repentance, in its more general, abstracted nature, is only a sorrow for sin and forsaking of it, which is a duty of natural religion; but evangelical repentance, or repentance for remission of sins, hath more than this essential to it; a dependance of soul on the Mediator for deliverance from sin, is of the essence of it.

That justifying repentance has the nature of faith, seems evident by Acts xix. 4. "Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus." The latter words, "saying unto the people, that they should believe on him &c. are evidently exgetical of the former, and explain how he preached repentance for the remission of sin. When it is said, that he preached repentance for the remission of sin, saying, that they should believe on Christ, cannot be supposed but that it is intended this saying, that they should believe in Christ, was as directing them what to do that they might obtain the remission of sins. So, 2 Tim. ii. 25. "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth." That acknowledging of the truth which there is in believing, is here spoken of as what is attained in repentance. And on the other hand, that faith includes repentance in its nature, is evident by the apostle's speaking of sin as destroyed in faith, Gal. ii. 18. In the preceding verses the apostle mentions an objection against the doctrine of justification by faith alone, viz. that it tends to encourage men in sin, and so to make Christ the minister of sin. This objection he rejects and refutes with this, "If I build again the things that

I had destroyed, I make myself a transgressor." If sin be destroyed by faith, it must be by repentance of sin included in it ; for we know that it is our repentance of sin, or the *μετανοια* or turning of the mind from sin, that is our destroying our sin.

That in justifying faith that directly respects sin, or the evil to be delivered from by the Mediator, is as follows : A sense of our own sinfulness, and the hatefulness of it and an hearty acknowledgment of its desert of the threatened punishment, looking to the free mercy of God in a Redeemer, for deliverance from it and its punishment.

Concerning this here described, three things may be noted, 1. That it is the very same with that evangelical repentance to which remission of sins is promised in scripture. 2. That it is all of it of the essence of justifying faith, and is the same with that faith, so far as it is conversant about the evil to be delivered from by the Mediator. 3. That this is indeed the proper and peculiar condition of remission of sins.

1. All of it is essential to evangelical repentance, and is indeed the very thing meant by that repentance, to which remission of sins is promised in the gospel. As to the former part of the description, viz. a sense of our own sinfulness, and the hatefulness of it, and an hearty acknowledgment of its desert of wrath, none will deny it to be included in repentance : But this does not comprehend the whole essence of evangelical repentance ; but what follows does also properly and essentially belong to its nature, looking to the free mercy of God in a Redeemer, for deliverance from it, and from the punishment of it. That repentance to which remission is promised, not only always has this with it, but it is contained in it, as what is of the proper nature and essence of it : And respect is ever had to this in the nature of repentance, whenever remission is promised to it ; and it is especially from respect to this in the nature of repentance, that it has that promise made to it. If this latter part be missing, it fails of the nature of that evangelical repentance to which remission of sins is promised. If repentance remains in sorrow for sin, and does not reach to a looking to the free mercy of God in Christ for pardon, it is not that which is the condition of par-

don, neither shall pardon be obtained by it. Evangelical repentance is an humiliation for sin before God ; but the sinner never comes and humbles himself before God in any other repentance, but that which includes an hoping in his mercy for remission : If his sorrow be not accompanied with that, there will be no coming to God in it, but a flying further from him. There is some worship of God in justifying repentance ; but that there is not in any other repentance, but that which has a sense of, and faith in the divine mercy to forgive sin ; Psalm cxxx. 4. “ There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.” The promise of mercy to a true penitent, in Prov. xxviii. 13, is expressed in these terms. “ Whoso confesseth and forsaketh his sins, shall have mercy.” But there is faith in God’s mercy in that confessing. The Psalmist, in Psalm xxxii. speaking of the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered, to whom the Lord imputes not sin, says, that he acknowledged his sin unto God, his iniquity he did not hide ; he said he would confess his transgression to the Lord, and then God forgave the iniquity of his sin. The manner of expression plainly holds forth, that then while he kept silence his bones waxed old, but then he began to encourage himself in the mercy of God, when before his bones waxed old, while he kept silence ; and therefore the Apostle Paul, in the 4th of Romans, brings this instance to confirm the doctrine of justification by faith alone that he had been insisting on. When sin is aright confessed to God, there is always faith in that act : That confessing of sin that is joined with despair such as was in Judas, is not the confession to which the promise is made. In Acts ii. 38, the direction that was given to those that were pricked in their heart with a sense of the guilt of sin, was to repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins. A being baptized in the name of Christ for the remission of sins, implied faith in Christ for the remission of sins. Repentance for the remission of sins was typified of old by the priest’s confessing the sins of the people over the scape goat, laying his hands on him, Lev. xvi. 21, denoting that it is that repent-

ance and confession of sin only that obtains remission, that is made over the scape goat, over Christ, the great sacrifice, and with dependance on him. Many other things might be produced from the scripture, that do in like manner confirm this point; but these may be sufficient.

2. All the forementioned description is of the essence of justifying faith, and not different from it, so far as it is conversant about sin, or the evil to be delivered from by the Mediator. For it is doubtless of the essence of justifying faith, to embrace Christ as a Saviour from sin and its punishment; and all that is contained in that act is contained in the nature of faith itself: But in the act of embracing Christ as a Saviour from our sin and its punishment, is implied a sense of our sinfulness, and a hatred of our sins, or a rejecting them with abhorrence, and a sense of our desert of their punishment. An embracing Christ as a Saviour from sin, implies the contrary act towards sin, viz. rejecting of sin. If we fly to the light to be delivered from darkness, the same is contrary towards darkness, viz. a rejecting of it. In proportion to the earnestness or appetite with which we embrace Christ as a Saviour from sin, in the same proportion is the abhorrence with which we reject sin, in the same act. Yea, if we suppose there to be in the nature of faith as conversant about sin, no more than the hearty embracing Christ as a Saviour from the punishment of sin, this act will imply in it the whole of the abovementioned description. It implies a sense of our own sinfulness. Certainly in the hearty embracing a Saviour from the punishment of our sinfulness, there is the exercise of a sense of our sinfulness, or that we be sinful: We cannot heartily embrace Christ as a Saviour from the punishment of that which we are not sensible we are guilty of. There is also in the same act, a sense of our desert of the threatened punishment: We cannot heartily embrace Christ as a Saviour from that which we be not sensible that we have deserved: For if we are not sensible that we have deserved the punishment, we shall not be sensible that we have any need of a Saviour from it, or, at least shall not be convinced but that the God that offers the Saviour, unjustly

makes him needful ; and we cannot heartily embrace such an offer. And further, there is implied in a hearty embracing Christ as a Saviour from punishment, not only a conviction of conscience that we have deserved the punishment, such as the devils and damned have ; but there is a hearty acknowledgment of it, with the submission of the soul, so as with the accord of the heart, to own that God might be just and worthy in the punishment. If the heart rises against the act or judgment of God, in holding us obliged to the punishment, when he offers us his Son as a Saviour from the punishment, we cannot with the consent of the heart receive him in that character : But if persons thus submit to the righteousness of so dreadful a punishment of sin, this carries in it an hatred of sin.

That such a sense of our sinfulness, and utter unworthiness, and desert of punishment, belongs to the nature of saving faith, is what the scripture from time to time seems to hold forth ; as particularly in Matth. xv. 26....28. “ But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children’s bread and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth Lord : Yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master’s table. Then Jesus answered, and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith.” And Luke vii. 6....9. “ The centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself, for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof. Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee ; but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed : For I also am a man set under authority,” &c.....When Jesus heard these things, he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” And also ver. 37, 38. “ And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet, with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.” Together with

verse 50. "He said unto the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peace."

These things do not necessarily suppose that repentance and faith are words of just the same signification ; for it is only so much in justifying faith as respects the evil to be delivered from by the Saviour, that is called repentance : And besides, both repentance and faith, take them only in their general nature, and they are entirely distinct : Repentance is a sorrow for sin, and forsaking of it ; and faith is a trusting in God's sufficiency and truth : But faith and repentance, as evangelical duties, or justifying faith, and repentance for remission of sins, contain more in them, and imply a respect to a Mediator, and involve each other's nature ;* though it be true, that they still bear the name of faith and repentance, from those general moral virtues, that repentance which is a duty of natural religion, and that faith, that was a duty required under the first covenant, that are contained in the evangelical act ; which severally appear when this act is considered with respect to its different terms and objects, that it is conversant about.

It may be objected here, that the scripture sometimes mentions faith and repentance together, as if they were entirely distinct things ; as in Mark i. 15. "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." But there is no need of understanding these as two distinct conditions of salvation, but the words are exegetical one of another : It is to teach us after what manner we must repent, viz. as believing the gospel, and after what manner we must believe the gospel, viz. as repenting : These words no more prove faith and repentance to be entirely distinct, than those forementioned. Matth. xxi. 32. "And ye when ye had seen it, repented not afterwards, that ye might believe him." Or those, 2 Tim. ii. 25. "If peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowl-

* Agreeable to this, is what Mr. Locke says in his second Vindication of the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. Vol. II, of his works, p. 630, 631, "The believing him, therefore, to be the Messiah, is very often, with great reason, put both for faith and repentance too, which are sometimes set down singly. where one is put for both, as implying the other."

edging of the truth." The apostle, in Acts xix. 4, seems to have reference to these words of John the Baptist, "John baptised with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe," &c. where the latter words, as we have already observed, are to explain how he preached repentance.

Another scripture where faith and repentance are mentioned together, is Acts xx. 21. "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards the Lord Jesus Christ." It may be objected that in this place, faith and repentance are not only spoken of as distinct things, but having distinct objects.

To this I answer, that it is true that faith and repentance, in their general nature, are distinct things; and repentance, for the remission of sins, or that in justifying faith that respects the evil to be delivered from, so far as it regards that term, which is what especially denominates it repentance, has respect to God as the object, because he is the being offended by sin, and to be reconciled, but that in this justifying act, whence it is denominated faith, does more especially respect Christ. But let us interpret it how we will, the objection of faith being here so distinguished from repentance, is as much for an objection against the scheme of those that oppose justification by faith alone, as against this scheme; for they hold that the justifying faith that the Apostle Paul speaks of, includes repentance, as has been already observed.

3. This repentance that has been described, is indeed the special condition of remission of sin. This seems very evident by the Scripture, as particularly, Mark i. 4. "John did baptise in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins." So, Luke iii. 3. "And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance, for the remission of sins." Luke xxiv. 47. "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." Acts v. 31. "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and Saviour, for to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Chap.

ii. 38. "Repent, and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." And chap.

iii. 19. "Repent ye therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." The like is evident by Lev. xxvi. 40.....42. Job xxxiii. 27, 28. Psalm xxxii. 5. Prov. xxviii.

13. Jer. iii 13, and 1 John i. 9, and other places.

And the reason may be plain from what has been said. We need not wonder that in faith which especially respects sin, should be especially the condition of remission of sins ; or that this motion or exercise of the soul, as it rejects and flies from evil, and embraces Christ as a Saviour from it, should especially be the condition of being free from that evil ; in like manner, as the same principle or motion, as it seeks good, and cleaves to Christ as the procurer of that good, should be the condition of obtaining that good. Faith with respect to good is accepting, and with respect to evil it is rejecting. Yea this rejecting evil is itself an act of acceptance ; it is accepting freedom or separation from that evil ; and this freedom or separation is the benefit bestowed in remission. No wonder that that in faith which immediately respects this benefit, and is our acceptance of this benefit, should be the special condition of our having it : It is so with respect to all the benefits that Christ has purchased. Trusting in God through Christ for such a particular benefit that we need, is the special condition of our having it : It is so with respect to all the benefits that Christ has purchased. Trusting in God through Christ for such a particular benefit that we need is the special condition of obtaining that benefit. When we need protection from enemies, the exercise of faith with respect to such a benefit, or trusting in Christ for protection from enemies, is especially the way to obtain that particular benefit, rather than trusting in Christ for something else ; and so of any other benefit that might be mentioned. So prayer (which is the expression of faith) for a particular mercy needed, is especially the way to obtain that mercy.*

* If repentance justifies, or be that by which we obtain pardon of sin any other way than this, it must be either as a virtue or righteousness, or something amiable in us ; or else it must be, that our sorrow and con-

So that we see that no argument can be drawn from hence against the doctrine of justification by faith alone. And there is that in the nature of repentance, which peculiarly tends to establish the contrary of justification by works : For nothing so much renounces our own unworthiness and excellency, as repentance ; the very nature of it is to acknowledge our own utter sinfulness and unworthiness, and to renounce our own goodness, and all confidence in self ; and so to trust in the propitiation of the Mediator, and ascribe all the glory of forgiveness to him.

Object. 6 The last objection I shall mention, is that paragraph in the 2d chapter of James, where persons are said expressly to be justified by works ; verse 21 “ Was not Abraham our Father justified by works ? ” verse 24. “ Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only ; ” verse 25. “ Was not Rahab the harlot justified by works ? ”

In answer to this objection I would,

1. Take notice of the great unfairness of the divines that oppose us, in the improvement they make of this passage against us. All will allow, that in that proposition of St. James, “ By works a man is justified, and not by faith only,” one of the terms, either the word *faith*, or else the word *justify*, is not to be understood precisely in the same sense as the same terms when used by St. Paul ; because they suppose, as well as we, that it was not the intent of the Apostle James to contradict St. Paul in that doctrine of justification by faith alone, that he had instructed the churches in : But if we understand both the terms, as used by each apostle, in precisely the same sense, then what one asserts is a precise, direct, and full contradiction of the other, the one affirming and the other denying the very same thing. So that all the controversy from this text comes to this, viz. which of these two terms shall be understood in a diversity from St. Paul. They say that it is the word *faith* ; for they suppose, that when the Apostle Paul uses the word, and makes faith that by which alone we are justified, that then by

denying what is past, is accepted as some atonement for it ; both which are equally contrary to the gospel doctrine of justification by Christ.

it is understood a compliance with, and practice of Christianity in general ; so as to include all saving Christian virtue and obedience. But as the Apostle James uses the word faith in this place, they suppose thereby is to be understood only an assent of the understanding to the truth of gospel doctrines, as distinguished from good works, and that may exist separate from them, and from all saving grace. We, on the other hand, suppose that the word *justify* is to be understood in a different sense from the Apostle Paul. So that they are forced to go as far in their scheme, in altering the sense of terms from Paul's use of them, as we. But yet at the same time that they freely vary the sense of the former of them, viz. faith, yet when we understand the latter, viz. justify, in a different sense from St. Paul, they cry out of us, what necessity of framing this distinction, but only to serve an opinion ? At this rate a man may maintain any thing, though never so contrary to scripture, and elude the clearest text in the Bible ! Though they do not shew us why we have not as good warrant to understand the word *justify* in a diversity from St. Paul, as they the word *faith*. If the sense of one of the words must be varied on either scheme, to make the Apostle James's doctrine consistent with the Apostle Paul's, and the varying the sense of one term or the other, be all that stands in the way of their agreeing with either scheme, and the varying the sense of the latter, be in itself as fair as of the former, then the text lies as fair for one scheme as the other, and can no more fairly be an objection against our scheme than theirs. And if so, what becomes of all this great objection from this passage in James ?

2. If there be no more difficulty in varying the sense of one of these terms than another, from any thing in the text itself, so as to make the words suit with either scheme, then certainly that is to be chosen that is most agreeable to the current of scripture, and other places where the same matter is more particularly and fully treated of ; and therefore that we should understand the word *justify* in this passage of James, in a sense in some respect diverse from that in which St. Paul uses it. For by what has been already said, it may ap-

pear, that there is no one doctrine in the whole Bible more fully asserted, explained and urged, than the doctrine of justification by faith alone, without any of our own righteousness.

3. There is a very fair interpretation of this passage of St. James, that is no way inconsistent with this doctrine of justification, which I have shown that other scriptures do so abundantly teach, which interpretation the words themselves will as well allow of, as that which the objectors put upon them, and much better agrees "with the context ; and that is, that works are here spoken of as justifying as evidences. A man may be said to be justified by that which clears him, or vindicates him, or makes the goodness of his cause manifest. When a person has a cause tried in a civil court, and is justified or cleared, he may be said in different senses to be cleared, by the goodness of his cause, and by the goodness of the evidences of it. He may be said to be cleared by what evidences his cause to be good. That which renders his cause good, is the proper ground of his justification ; it is by that that he is himself a proper subject of it ; but evidences justify, only as they manifest that his cause is good in fact, whether they are of such a nature as to have any influence to render it so or no. It is by works that our cause appears to be good ; but by faith our cause not only appears to be good, but becomes good ; because thereby we are united to Christ. That the word *justify* should be sometimes understood to signify the former of these, as well as the latter, is agreeable to the use of the word in common speech ; as we say such an one stood up to justify another, i. e. he endeavored to shew or manifest his cause to be good. And it is certain that the word is sometimes used in this sense in scripture when speaking of our being justified before God ; as where it is said, we shall be justified by our words, Matth. xii. 39. "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." It cannot be meant that men are accepted before God on the account of their words ; for God has told us nothing more plainly, than that it is the heart that he looks at ; and that when he acts as judge towards men, in order to justifying or condemning, he tries the

heart, Jer. xi. 20. "But O Lord of hosts, that judgest righteously, that triest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them; for unto thee have I revealed my cause." Psalm vii. 8, 9. "The Lord shall judge the people: Judge me O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me. O let the wickedness of the wicked come to an end; but establish the just; for the righteous God trieth the hearts and reins." Verse 11. "God judgeth the righteous." And many other places to the like purpose. And therefore men can be justified by their words, no otherwise than as evidences or manifestations of what is in the heart. And it is thus that Christ speaks of the words in this very place, as is evident by the context, verse 34. 35. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart," &c. The words, or sounds themselves, are neither parts of godliness, nor evidences of godliness, but as signs of what is inward.

God himself, when he acts towards men as judge, in order to a declarative judgment, makes use of evidences, and so judges men by their works. And therefore, at the day of judgment, God will judge men according to their works: For though God will stand in no need of evidence to inform him what is right, yet it is to be considered, that he will then sit in judgment, not as earthly judges do, to find out what is right in a cause, but to declare and manifest what is right; and therefore that day is called by the apostle, "the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God," Rom. ii. 5.

To be justified, is to be approved and accepted: But a man may be said to be approved and accepted in two respects; the one is to be approved really and the other to be approved and accepted declaratively. Justification is twofold; it is either the acceptance and approbation of the judge itself, or the manifestation of that approbation, by a sentence or judgment declared by the judge, either to our own consciences, or to the world. If justification be understood in the former sense, for the approbation itself, that is only that by which we become fit to be approved: But if it be understood

in the latter sense, for the manifestation of this approbation, it is by whatever is a proper evidence of that fitness. In the former, faith only is concerned ; because it is by that only in us that we become fit to be accepted and approved : In the latter, whatever is an evidence of our fitness, is alike concerned. And therefore, take justification in this sense, and then faith, and all other graces and good works have a common and equal concern in it : For any other grace, or holy act, is equally an evidence of a qualification for acceptance or approbation, as faith. To justify has always, in common speech, signified indifferently, either simply approbation, or testifying that approbation ; sometimes one, and sometimes the other : And that because they are both the same, only as one is outwardly what the other is inwardly. So we, and it may be all nations, are wont to give the same names to two things, when one is only declarative of the other. Thus sometimes judging intends only judging in our thoughts ; at other times, testifying and declaring judgment. So such words as justify, condemn, accept, reject, prize, slight, approve, renounce, are sometimes put for mental acts, at other times, for an outward treatment. So in the sense in which the Apostle James seems to use the word *justify*, for *manifestative justification*, a man is justified not only by faith but also by works ; as a tree is manifested to be good, not only by immediately examining the tree, but also by the fruit. Prov. xx. 11. "Even a child is known by his doings, whether his work be pure, and whether it be right."

The drift of the apostle does not require that he should be understood in any other sense : For all that he aims at, as appears by a view of the context, is to prove that good works are necessary. The error of those that he opposed was this, That good works were not necessary to salvation ; that if they did but believe that there was but one God, and that Christ was the Son of God, and the like, and were baptised, they were safe, let them live how they would ; which doctrine greatly tended to licentiousness. The evincing of the contrary of this is evidently the apostle's scope.

And that we should understand the apostle, of works justifying as an evidence, and in a declarative judgment, is what a due consideration of the context will naturally lead us to. For it is plain, that the apostle is here insisting on works, in the quality of a necessary manifestation and evidence of faith, or as what the truth of faith is shewed or made to appear by : As verse 18. "Shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." And when he says, verse 26. "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." It is much more rational and natural to understand him as speaking of works done as proper signs and evidences of the reality, life, and goodness of faith. Not that the very works or actions are properly the life of faith, as the spirit in the body ; but it is the active, working nature of faith, of which the actions or works done are the signs, that is itself the life and spirit of faith. The sign of a thing is often in scripture language said to be that thing ; as it is in that comparison by which the apostle illustrates it. It is not the actions themselves of a body, that are properly the life or spirit of the body ; but it is the active nature, of which those actions or motions are the signs, that is the life of the body. That which makes men call any thing alive, is, that they observe that it has an active, operative nature in it ; which they observe no otherwise than by the actions or motions that are the signs of it. It is plainly the apostle's aim to prove that works are necessary from that, that if faith hath not works, it is a sign that it is not a good sort of faith ; which would not have been to his purpose, if it was his design to shew that it is not by faith alone though of a right sort, that we have acceptance with God, but that we are accepted on the account of obedience as well as faith. It is evident by the apostle's reasoning, that the necessity of works that he speaks of, is not as having a parallel concern in our salvation with faith ; but he speaks of works only as related to faith, and expressive of it ; which, after all, leaves faith the alone fundamental condition, without any thing else having a parallel concern with it in this affair ; and other things conditions, only as several expressions and evidences of it.

'That the apostle speaks of works justifying only as a sign or evidence, and in God's declarative judgment, is further confirmed by verse 21. "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered up Isaac his son upon the altar?" Here the apostle seems plainly to refer to that declarative judgment of God, concerning Abraham's sincerity, manifested to him, for the peace and assurance of his own conscience after his offering up Isaac his son on the altar, that we have account of, Gen. xxii. 12. "Now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me." But here it is plain, and expressed in the very words of justification or approbation, that this work of Abraham's, his offering up his son on the altar, justified him as an evidence. When the Apostle James says, we are justified by works, he may, and ought to be understood in a sense agreeable to the instance he brings for the proof of it: But justification in that instance appears by the works of justification themselves referred to, to be by works as an evidence. And where this instance of Abraham's obedience is elsewhere mentioned in the New Testament, it is mentioned as a fruit and evidence of his faith. Heb. xi. 17. "By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises, offered up his only begotten son."

And in the other instance which the apostle mentions, verse 25. "Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?" The apostle refers to a declarative judgment, in that particular testimony which was given of God's approbation of her as a believer, in directing Joshua to save her when the rest of Jericho was destroyed, Josh. vi. 25. "And Joshua saved Rahab the harlot alive, and her father's household, and all that she had; and she dwelleth in Israel even unto this day; because she hid the messengers which Joshua sent to spy out Jericho." This was accepted as an evidence and expression of her faith. Heb. xi. 32. "By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace." The apostle in saying, "Was not Rahab the harlot justified by

works?" By the manner of his speaking has reference to something in her history ; but we have no account in her history of any other justification of her but this.

4. If, notwithstanding, any choose to take justification in St. James's precisely as we do in Paul's epistles, for God's acceptance or approbation itself, and not any expression of that approbation ; what has been already said concerning the manner in which acts of evangelical obedience are concerned in the affair of our justification, affords a very easy, clear and full answer : For if we take works as acts or expressions of faith, they are not excluded ; so a man is not justified by faith only, but also by works ; i. e. he is not justified only by faith as a principle in the heart, or in its first and more immanent acts, but also by the effective acts of it in life, which are the expressions of the life of faith, as the operations and actions of the body are of the life of that ; agreeable to verse 26.

What has been said in answer to these objections, may also, I hope, abundantly serve for an answer to that objection, that is often made against this doctrine, viz. that it encourages licentiousness in life. For, from what has been said, we may see that the scripture doctrine of justification by faith alone, without any manner of goodness or excellency of ours, does in no wise diminish either the necessity or benefit of a sincere, evangelical, universal obedience : In that, man's salvation is not only indissolubly connected with it, and damnation with the want of it, in those that have opportunity for it, but that it depends upon it in many respects ; as it is the way to it, and the necessary preparation for it, and also as eternal blessings are bestowed in reward for it, and as our justification in our own consciences, and at the day of judgment, depends on it, as the proper evidence of our acceptable state ; and that, even in accepting us as entitled to life in our justification, God has respect to this, as that on which the fitness of such an act of justification depends : So that our salvation does as truly depend upon it, as if we were justified for the moral excellency of it. And besides all this, the degree of our happiness to all eternity is suspended on, and determined by the degree of this. So that this gospel scheme of justifi-

ation is as far from encouraging licentiousness, and contains as much to encourage and excite to strict and universal obedience, and the utmost possible eminency of holiness, as any scheme that can be devised, and indeed unspeakably more.

I come now to the

V. And last thing proposed, which is, to consider the "importance of this doctrine."

I know there are many that make as though this controversy was of no great importance; that it is chiefly a matter of nice speculation, depending on certain subtle distinctions, which many that make use of them do not understand themselves; and that the difference is not of such consequence as to be worth the being zealous about; and that more hurt is done by raising disputes about it than good.

Indeed I am far from thinking that it is of absolute necessity that persons should understand, and be agreed upon, all the distinctions needful particularly to explain and defend this doctrine against all cavils and objections; (though all Christians should strive after an increase of knowledge, and none should content themselves without some clear and distinct understanding in this point:) But that we should believe in the general, according to the clear and abundant revelations of God's word, that it is none of our own excellency, virtue, or righteousness, that is the ground of our being received from a state of condemnation into a state of acceptance in God's sight, but only Jesus Christ, and his righteousness, and worthiness, received by faith. This I think to be of great importance, at least in application to ourselves; and that for the following reasons.

1. The Scripture treats of this doctrine, as a doctrine of very great importance. That there is a certain doctrine of justification by faith, in opposition to justification by the works of the law, that the Apostle Paul insists upon as of the greatest importance, none will deny; because there is nothing in the Bible more apparent. The apostle, under the infallible conduct of the Spirit of God, thought it worth his most strenuous and zealous disputing about and defending. He speaks of the contrary doctrine as fatal and ruinous to the souls of

men, in the latter end of the ninth chapter of Romans, and beginning of the tenth. He speaks of it as subversive of the gospel of Christ, and calls it another gospel, and says concerning it, if any one, "though an angel, from heaven, preach it, let him be accursed;" Gal. i. 6....9 compared with the following part of the epistle. Certainly we must allow the apostles to be good judges of the importance and tendency of doctrines; at least the Holy Ghost in them. And doubtless we are safe, and in no danger of harshness and censoriousness, if we only follow him, and keep close to his express teachings, in what we believe and say of the hurtful and pernicious tendency of any error. Why are we to blame, or to be cried out of, for saying what the Bible has taught us to say, or for believing what the Holy Ghost has taught us to that end that we might believe it?

2. The adverse scheme lays another foundation of man's salvation than God hath laid. I do not now speak of that ineffectual redemption that they suppose to be universal, and what all mankind are equally the subjects of; but I say, it lays entirely another foundation of man's actual, discriminating salvation, or that salvation, wherein true Christians differ from wicked men. We suppose the foundation of this to be Christ's worthiness and righteousness: On the contrary, that scheme supposes it to be men's own virtue; even so, that this is the ground of a saving interest in Christ itself. It takes away Christ out of the place of the bottom stone, and puts in men's own virtue in the room of him: So that Christ himself in the affair of distinguishing, actual salvation, is laid upon this foundation. And the foundation being so different, I leave it to every one to judge whether the difference between the two schemes consists only in punctilios of small consequence. The foundations being contrary, makes the whole scheme exceeding diverse and opposite; the one is a gospel scheme, the other a legal one.

3. It is in this doctrine that the most essential difference lies between the covenant of grace and the first covenant. The adverse scheme of justification supposes that we are justified by our works, in the very same sense wherein man was to

have been justified by his works under the first covenant. By that covenant our first parents were not to have had eternal life given them for any proper merit in their obedience ; because their perfect obedience was a debt that they owed God : Nor was it to be bestowed for any proportion between the dignity of their obedience, and the value of the reward ; but only it was to be bestowed from a regard to a moral fitness in the virtue of their obedience, to the reward of God's favor ; and a title to eternal life was to be given them, as a testimony of God's pleasedness with their works, or his regard to the inherent beauty of their virtue. And so it is the very same way that those in the adverse scheme suppose that we are received into God's special favor now, and to those saving benefits that are the testimonies of it. I am sensible the divines of that side entirely disclaim the Popish doctrine of merit ; and are free to speak of our utter unworthiness, and the great imperfection of all our services : But after all, it is our virtue, imperfect as it is, that recommends men to God, by which good men come to have a saving interest in Christ, and God's favor, rather than others ; and these things are bestowed in testimony of God's respect to their goodness. So that whether they will allow the term *merit* or no, yet they hold, that we are accepted by our own merit, in the same sense though not in the same degree as under the first covenant.

But the great and most distinguishing difference between that covenant and the covenant of grace is, that by the covenant of grace we are not thus justified by our own works, but only by faith in Jesus Christ. It is on this account chiefly that the new covenant deserves the name of a covenant of grace, as is evident by Rom. iv. 16. "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace." And chap. iii. 20, 24. "Therefore by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight—Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ." And chap. xi. 6. "And if by grace, then it is no more of works ; otherwise grace is no more grace : But if it be of works ; then it is no more grace ; otherwise work is no more work." Gal. v. 4. "Whosoever of you are justified by the law, ye are fallen

from grace." And therefore the apostle when in the same epistle to the Galatians, he speaks of the doctrine of justification by works as another gospel, he adds, "which is not another," chap i. verse 6, 7. It is no gospel at all; it is law: It is no covenant of grace, but of works: It is not an evangelical, but a legal doctrine. Certainly that doctrine wherein consists the greatest and most essential difference between the covenant of grace and the first covenant, must be a doctrine of great importance. That doctrine of the gospel by which above all others it is worthy of the name gospel, is doubtless a very important doctrine of the gospel.

4 This is the main thing that fallen men stood in need of divine revelation for, to teach us how we that have sinned may come to be again accepted of God; or, which is the same thing, how the sinner may be justified. Something beyond the light of nature is necessary to salvation chiefly on this account. Mere natural reason afforded no means by which we could come to the knowledge of this, it depending on the sovereign pleasure of the Being that we had offended by sin. This seems to be the great drift of that revelation that God has given, and of all those mysteries it reveals, all those great doctrines that are peculiarly doctrines of revelation, and above the light of nature. It seems to have been very much on this account, that it was requisite that the doctrine of the Trinity itself should be revealed to us; that by a discovery of the concern of the several divine persons in the great affair of our salvation, we might the better understand and see how all our dependence in this affair is on God, and our sufficiency all in him, and not in ourselves; that he is all in all in this business, agreeable to that in 1 Cor. i. 29....31: "That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." What is the gospel, but only the glad tidings of a new way of acceptance with God unto life, a way wherein sinners may come to be free from the guilt of sin, and obtain a title to eternal life? And if, when this way is revealed,

it is rejected, and another of man's devising be put in the room of it, without doubt it must be an error of great importance, and the apostle might well say it was another gospel.

5. The contrary scheme of justification derogates much from the honor of God and the Mediator. I have already shewn how it diminishes the glory of the Mediator, in ascribing that to man's virtue and goodness, which belongs alone to his worthiness and righteousness.

By the apostle's sense of the matter it renders Christ needless, Gal. v. 4. "Christ is become of no effect to you, whosoever of you are justified by the law." If that scheme of justification be followed in its consequences, it utterly overthrows the glory of all the great things that have been contrived, and done, and suffered in the work of redemption. Gal. ii. 21. "If righteousness come by the law, Christ is dead in vain." It has also been already shewn how it diminishes the glory of divine grace, (which is the attribute God hath especially set himself to glorify in the work of redemption ;) and so that it greatly diminishes the obligation to gratitude in the sinner that is saved : Yea, that in the sense of the apostle, it makes void the distinguishing grace of the gospel. Gal. v. 4. Whosoever of you are justified "by the law, are fallen from grace." It diminishes the glory of the grace of God and the Redeemer, and proportionably magnifies man : It makes him something before God, when indeed he is nothing : It makes the goodness and excellency of fallen man to be something, which I have shewn are nothing. I have also already shewn, that it is contrary to the truth of God in the threatening of his holy law, to justify the sinner for his virtue. And whether it were contrary to God's truth or no, it is a scheme of things very unworthy of God, that supposes that God, when about to lift up a poor, forlorn malefactor, condemned to eternal misery for sinning against his Majesty, out of his misery, and to make him unspeakably and eternally happy, by bestowing his Son and himself, upon him, as it were, sets all this to sale, for the price of his virtue and excellency. I know that those we oppose do acknowledge,

that the price is very disproportionate to the benefit bestowed ; and say, that God's grace is wonderfully manifested in accepting so little virtue, and bestowing so glorious a reward for such imperfect righteousness. But seeing we are such infinitely sinful and abominable creatures in God's sight, and by our infinite guilt have brought ourselves into such wretched and deplorable circumstances, and all our righteousnesses are nothing, and ten thousand times worse than nothing, (if God looks upon them as they be in themselves) is it not immensely more worthy of the infinite majesty and glory of God, to deliver and make happy such poor, filthy worms, such wretched vagabonds and captives, without any money or price of theirs, or any manner of expectation of any excellency or virtue in them, in any wise to recommend them ? Will it not betray a foolish, exalting opinion of ourselves, and a mean one of God, to have a thought of offering any thing of ours, to recommend us to the favor of being brought from wallowing, like filthy swine, in the mire of our sins, and from the enmity and misery of devils in the lowest hell, to the state of God's dear children, in the everlasting arms of his love, in heavenly glory ; or to imagine that that is the constitution of God, that we should bring our filthy rags, and offer them to him as the price of this ?

6. The opposite scheme does most directly tend to lead men to trust in their own righteousness for justification, which is a thing fatal to the soul. This is what men are of themselves exceedingly prone to do, (and that though they are never so much taught the contrary) through the exceeding partial and high thoughts they have of themselves, and their exceeding dulness of apprehending any such mystery as our being accepted for the righteousness of another. But this scheme does directly teach men to trust in their own righteousness for justification ; in that it teaches them that this is indeed what they must be justified by, being the way of justification that God himself has appointed. So that if a man had naturally no disposition to trust in his own righteousness, yet if he embraced this scheme, and acted consistent with it, it would lead him to it. But that trusting in our own right-

eousness, is a thing fatal to the soul, is what the scripture plainly teaches us : It tells us, that it will cause that Christ profit us nothing, and be of no effect to us, Gal. v. 2....4. For though the apostle speaks there particularly of circumcision, yet (I have shewn already, that) it is not merely being circumcised, but trusting in circumcision as a righteousness, that the apostle has respect to. He could not mean, that merely being circumcised would render Christ of no profit or effect to a person ; for we read that he himself, for certain reasons, took Timothy and circumcised him, Acts xvi. 3. And the same is evident by the context, and by the rest of the epistle. And the apostle speaks of trusting in their own righteousness as fatal to the Jews, Rom. ix. 31, 32. "But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore ? Because they sought it, not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law ; for they stumbled at that stumbling stone." Together with chap. x. verse 3. "For they, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." And this is spoken of as fatal to the Pharisees, in the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, that Christ spake to them to reprove them for trusting in themselves that they were righteous. The design of the parable is to shew them, that the very Publicans shall be justified, rather than they ; as appears by the reflection Christ makes upon it Luke xviii. 14. "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other ;" that is, this and not the other. The fatal tendency of it might also be proved from its inconsistency with the nature of justifying faith, and also its inconsistency with the nature of that humiliation that the Scripture often speaks of as absolutely necessary to salvation ; but these scriptures are so express, that it is needless to bring any further arguments.

How far a wonderful and mysterious agency of God's Spirit may so influence some men's hearts, that their practice in this regard may be contrary to their own principles, so that they shall not trust in their own righteousness, though they profess that men are justified by their own righteousness :

or how far they believe the doctrine of justification by men's own righteousness in general, and yet not believe it in a particular application of it to themselves ; or how far that error which they may have been led into by education, or cunning sophistry of others, may yet be indeed contrary to the prevailing disposition of their hearts, and contrary to their practice : Or how far some may seem to maintain a doctrine contrary to this gospel doctrine of justification, that really do not, but only express themselves differently from others ; or seem to oppose it through their misunderstanding of our expressions, or we of theirs, when indeed our real sentiments are the same in the main ; or may seem to differ more than they do, by using terms that are without a precisely fixed and determinate meaning ; or to be wide in their sentiments from this doctrine, for want of a distinct understanding of it, whose hearts, at the same time, entirely agree with it, and if once it was clearly explained to their understandings, would immediately close with it, and embrace it : How far these things may be, I will not determine ; but am fully persuaded that great allowances are to be made on these and such like accounts, in innumerable instances ; though it is manifest, from what has been said, that the teaching and propagating contrary doctrines and schemes are of a pernicious and fatal tendency.