

THE DOCTRINE
OF
J U S T I F I C A T I O N
OPENED AND APPLIED.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God. Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness in the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Rom. iii. 23—26.

THE apostle having confuted and overthrowed all justification, either of Jew or Gentile, by works, in the foregoing discourse, is now proving what he asserted, verses 21, 22, viz. “that the righteousness of God, without the law, is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference;” shewing that now in the gospel-times, there is no difference between Jew and Gentile; but that, in the justification of both, the righteousness of God, without the law is manifested. This he proveth, by shewing what the gospel teacheth concerning the way of justification; for the gospel only reveals the righteousness of God, Rom. i. 16, 17. “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith.”

So the words are a declaration of the gospel-way of justification by the righteousness of God; and that so clearly and fully, and the benefit spoken of so great and glorious, being the first benefit that we receive by union with Christ, and the foundation of all other benefits; that my text is accounted to be *evangelium*

evangelii, a principal part of the written gospel, as briefly, and yet fully expressing this excellent point, more than any other text.

Note, in the words particularly, the *subject* declared and explained, viz. justification of persons, or their being justified: and the meaning of it here, is, to be cleared and freed from all ambiguities and misunderstanding. Justification signifieth *making just*, as sanctification is *making holy*, glorification *making glorious*: but not making just by infusion of grace and holiness into a person, as the papists teach, confounding justification and sanctification together; but making just, in trial and judgment, by a judicial sentence discharging guilt, freeing from blame and accusation; approving, judging, owning, and pronouncing a person to be righteous. Use alters the signification. It is a juridical word, or law term, and hath reference to trial and judgment. 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4. "With me it is a very small thing, that I should be judged of you, or of any man's judgment; yea, I judge myself; for I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified; but he that judgeth me is the Lord." And it is so opposed to condemnation in judgment, Deut. xxv. 1. "If there be a controversy between men, and they come into judgment, that the judges may judge them, then they shall justify the righteous and condemn the wicked," And Mat. xii. 37. "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."—And it is opposed both to accusation and condemnation. Rom. viii. 33, 34. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Who is he that condemneth?" And so Job ix. 20. "If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me;" ch. xiii. 15. "I will maintain mine own ways before him;" ver. 18. "I have ordered my cause, I know that I shall be justified;" ver. 19. "Who is he that will plead with me?" Here justification is plainly opposed unto the accusation, or fault. And it is as plainly opposed to the passing sentence of condemnation; 1 Kings viii. 32. "Go and

judge thy servants, condemning the wicked to bring his way upon his head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness." In this sense it is a sin to justify the wicked, Isa. v. 23. Prov. xvii. 15. Job xxvii. 5. Actions must be existing already, and brought to trial, that they may be justified, Job xxxiii. 32. Isa. xliii. 9, 26.

Justice or righteousness consists not in the intrinsic nature of an action, but in its agreeableness to a rule of judgment; so that actions are called just and righteous, by an extrinsical denomination, with relation to God's rule of judging. And this righteousness appears by trying the action according to the rule, and by making an estimate of it; which estimate is either approving or disapproving, justifying or condemning, finding it to be a sin or no sin, or breach of the law. So we may say of the righteousness of persons, with reference to such habits or actings. And because the righteousness of righteous persons appears when they are brought to trial and judgment, therefore they are said then to be in a special manner justified, as if they were then made righteous, viz. when the righteousness is declared; as Christ was said to be begotten the Son of God at the resurrection, Acts xiii. 33; because he was then declared to be the Son of God, Rom. i. 4. And in the same sense, we that are adopted at present, are said to *wait for our adoption*, i. e. the manifestation of it, Rom. viii. 23. And thus even God is said to be justified, when we judge of his actings as we ought to do, and deem them to be righteous, Job xxxii. 2. Psa. li. 4. Luke vii. 29; though nothing can be added to the infinite righteousness of God. And *wisdom* is said to be *justified of her children*, Mat. xi. 19. So justification is not a *real* change of a sinner in himself (though a real change is annexed to it) but only a *relative* change with reference to God's judgment. And thus the word is used in the text; and so also in matters of judicature throughout the scripture; yea, some counted against the papists,

that it is no where in scripture used otherwise, except by a trope borrowed from this as the proper sense.— And in the text, it is beyond all doubt meant of being *deemed* and *accounted just in the sight of God*; for such a justification is here only treated of, as appears in the text, and before, ver. 19, 20. And I have been the longer explaining the sense of the word, because the mistaking it, by reason of its composition occasioned that popish error, whereby the benefit signified by it is obscured, yea, overthrown; so that we had need to contend for the sense of the word.

In the text we have the eight following things.

1. The *persons* justified; (1) *sinner*s. (2) Such sinners of all sorts that *shall believe*, whether Jews or Gentiles.
2. The *justifier*, or *efficient* cause, GOD.
3. The *impulsive* cause, *grace*.
4. The *means* effecting, or *material* cause, the *redemption* of CHRIST.
5. The *formal* cause, the *remission* of sins.
6. The *instrumental* cause, *faith*.
7. The *time of declaring*, the *present* time.
8. The *end*, that GOD may appear just.

From hence, therefore, will arise several useful observations, all tending to explain the nature of justification; which shall be laid down and cleared out of the text, and confirmed particularly; and then I shall make use of them altogether.

OBSERV. I. "They who are justified, are *sinner*s, such who are come short of the glory of God," *i. e.* of God's approbation, John v. 44; of God's image of holiness, 2 Cor. iii. 18. Eph. iv. 24; of eternal happiness, 1 Thes. ii. 12. Rom. v. 2. 2 Cor. iv. 17.

1. The law condemns *all sinner*s, and strikes them as with a thunderbolt, Rom. iii. 20; and adjudgeth them to shame, confusion, and misery, instead of glory and happiness, by the strict terms of it, Rom. ii. 6—12; which none fulfils, neither can do, Rom. viii. 7. neither Jews nor Gentiles. There is no hope, if free grace restore them not.

2. Christ came only to save *sinner*s, and died for this end, Rom. v. 6. "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly."— And, 1 Tim. i. 15. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."— Mat. ix. 13. "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Mat. xviii. 11. "The Son of man is come to save that which was lost."— And God must be believed on to salvation, as a God that *justifieth the ungodly*; he must *believe*, as one that worketh not, *on him that justifieth the ungodly*, Rom. iv. 5.

OBSERV. II. "Sinners of all sorts, without difference, whether Jews or Gentiles, that believe, are the subjects of this justification." This is the scope of the apostle, to shew, that whereas Jews and Gentiles, were universally condemned by the light and law of nature, or the law written; so the "righteousness of God is upon all them that believe," ver. 21, 22, without difference. This was a great point to be defended against the Jews in the apostles' time, who appropriated justification to themselves, in a legal way, and to such as were proselytes to the law and circumcision; and therefore the apostle Paul vehemently urged it, Rom. x. 11, 12. And it was a point newly revealed to the apostles, that the Gentiles might be accepted without turning Jews, and much prized as a very glorious revelation, Acts x. 28, 45. Eph. iii. 4, 5, 8. Col. i. 25—27. And it is confirmed,

1. Because notwithstanding the *Jews'* privilege of the law, by reason of breaking the law, they had as much need of free justification as the Gentiles, and no worthiness above the Gentiles by their works, but were rather great sinners, Rom. ii. 23, 24. And when there is equal need and worth, God might righteously justify one as well as another, Rom. iii. 9.

2. God is the God of the *Gentiles* as well as of the *Jews*, Rom. iii. 29; as he promised, Rom. iv. 9, 12, 13. Gal. iii. 8. Isa. xix. 25. Zech. xiv. 9.

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3. Abraham was justified before he was circumcised, that he might be the father of those that believe, though uncircumcised, that they might inherit the same blessing, Rom. iv. 10—12.

4. This will appear further, by shewing that justification is only by *faith*, and without dependence upon the law, merely by the *righteousness of another*; and so Jews and Gentiles are alike capable of it.

OBSERV. III. "That the justifier, or efficient cause of justification, is God." It is an act of God, Rom. viii. 23. "*It is God that justifieth.*" He only can justify authoritatively and irreversibly.

1. Because he is the *law-giver*, and hath power to *save and destroy*, James iv. 12. This case concerns God's law, and can only be tried at his tribunal. He is the judge of the world, Gen. xviii. 25. It is a small worthless thing to be justified by man, or by ourselves merely, 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

2. To him the *debt* of suffering for sin, and acting righteousness, is owed: and therefore he only can give a discharge for payment, or a release of the debtor, Psa. li. 4. Mark ii. 7.

OBSERV. IV. "God justifieth souls freely by his grace, *δωρεαν εν αυτου χαριτι*, freely by his grace." One of these expressions had been enough; but this redoubling it, sheweth the importance of the truth, to quicken our attention the more. Here is the *impulsive* cause of justification, and his free manner of bestowing it accordingly. And this signifies God's free undeserved favour, in opposition to any works of our righteousness, whereby it might be challenged as a debt to us, Rom. iv. 3. "Now, to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt!" xi. 6. "If by grace, then is it 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." Eph. ii. 8, 9. "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." 2 Tim. i. 9. "Who hath saved us, and called us

with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began." Ver. 10. "But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour, Jesus Christ," &c. Grace is mercy and love shewed freely, out of God's proper motion; shewing mercy, because he will shew mercy; and loving us, because he will love us, Rom. ix. 15. And this is confirmed,

1. Because there *was* not, nor *is* any thing in us, but what might move God to condemn us; for *we have all sinned*, Eph. ii. 3. Ez. xvi. 6.

2. Because God would take away *boasting*, and have his grace glorified and exalted in our salvation. He will have all the praise and glory, though we have the blessedness; Eph. ii. 7, 9. "That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus." And so Rom. iii. 27.

OBSERV. V. "God justifieth sinners through the *redemption* that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood." This is the *effecting* means, or *material cause* of our justification, viz. redemption and propitiation through the blood of Christ; which is the righteousness of God treasured up in him.

By *redemption* is meant, properly such a deliverance as is by paying a price; and so the words *redeem* and *redemption*, are frequently used, Exo. xiii. 13. Num. iii. 48, 49, 51. Lev. xxv. 24, 51, 52. Jer. xxxii. 7, 8, Neh. v. 8. From this proper signification, it is borrowed to signify a deliverance without price, Luke xxi. 28. Eph. i. 14. iv. 30. or rather, by a metonymy of the cause, put for the highest effect, the state of glory; so that the state of glory is called *redemption*, as being the completing and crowning effect of Christ's redemption; therefore it is called *the purchased possession*, Eph. i. 14.

By a *propitiation*, is meant, that which appeaseth the wrath of God for sin, and wins his favour. And this propitiation of Christ is two ways typified; first in

propitiatory sacrifices, whose blood was shed. And, secondly, by the mercy seat; which was called the *propitiation*, because it covered the ark, wherein was the law; and the blood of the sacrifices for atonement was sprinkled by the High Priest before it. And this mercy-seat was a sign of God's favourableness to a sinful people, in residing among them, and was called *ἱλαστήριον* Heb. ix. 5.

Now this doctrine appears confirmed for these reasons.

1. Because Christ, by the will of God, gave himself a ransom for us, to redeem us from sin and punishment, wrath and curse, Tit. ii. 14. "He gave himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity!" He gave himself to death for us; was delivered for our offences: his death was the price of our redemption, that we might be justified in God's sight. God gave him up to death; he spared him not, that he might be made righteousness, 1 Cor. i. 30. Mat. xx. 28. "He gave his own life a ransom for many; and so, (1 Tim. ii. 6.) he bought us with this price," 1 Cor. vi. 20. "He redeemed us not with silver and gold, but with his precious blood, as of a lamb without spot," 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. 2 Pet. ii. 1. Rev. v. 9. He suffered the penalty due to us for sin, 1 Pet. ii. 14. "He bare our sins in his own body on the tree!" Gal. iii. 13. "He was made a curse for us," and thereby redeemed us from the curse of the law; and that he might be made a curse, he was made *sin for us*, 2 Cor. v. 21. Isa. iii. 5, 6. He subjected himself to the law, in active as well as passive obedience, Gal. iv. 4. and obeyed his Father even to death, doing and suffering at his commandment, John xiv. 31. Heb. x. 7. and his obedience was for our justification. Compare Rom. v. 19. with Phil. iii. 8, 9. So Christ satisfied both our debt of righteousness, and debt of punishment; for our faultiness, taint of sin, and want of righteousness as well as for our guilt, and obnoxiousness to punishment; that we might be free from wrath, and deemed righteous in God's sight. His suffering in our room was the consummating act of redemption; and so all is attributed to

it, Heb. ii. 9, 10. even to his blood, though other doings and sufferings concur, 2 Cor. viii. 9. We are righteous by him as we are guilty by Adam, Rom. v. 12.

2. God accepted this *price* as a satisfaction, to his justice, which he shewed in raising Christ from the dead, and so acquitting him for all our sins: *he was justified in the Spirit*, 1 Tim. iii. 16; *for us*, Rom. iv. 25; *raised for our justification*, see Rom. viii. 33, 34. "It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen from the dead." And, Heb. x. 14, "by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Eph. v. 2. "This sacrifice was a sweet smelling savour unto God." If Christ had sunk under the weight of our sins, and had not been raised, the payment had not been finished, and so the debt not discharged, John xvi. 10. "Of righteousness, because I go to my father."

3. This redemption is in Christ, as to the benefit of it; so that it cannot be had, except we be in Christ, and have Christ: so the text expresseth and sheweth that he is the *propitiation*; and, as such, he is *our righteousness*, 1 Cor. i. 30. We have redemption and righteousness in him, Eph. ii. 7. 2 Cor. v. 21; and therein our freedom from condemnation, Rom. viii. 1. Christ died, that his *seed* might be *justified*, Isa. liii. 10, 11; those that are in him by spiritual regeneration, 1 Cor. iv. 15.

OBSERV. VI. "The *formal* cause of justification, or that wherein it consists, is, the *remission of sins*; i. e. not only the guilt and punishment is removed, but the fault; because it is a pardon grounded on justice, which clear-eth the fault also. By him we are justified from all things that the law chargeth us with," Acts xiii. 39.

In men, subject to a law, there is no middle condition between not imputing sin, and imputing righteousness: and so these terms are used as equivalent, Acts xiii. 38, 39. "Through this man is preached the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified," &c. Rom. iv. 6—8. 2 Cor. v. 19, 21. Rom. v. 17. This is through the bloodshed of Christ, Eph. i. 7. Mat. xxvi. 28.

OBSERV. VII. "God justifieth a sinner through *faith* in Christ's blood." Faith is the *instrumental* cause of receiving this benefit, faith in the blood of Christ.

1. This faith is believing on Christ, that we may be justified by him; Gal. ii. 16. "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law." We believe in Christ for justification, out of a sense of our inability to obtain justification by works.

2. This faith doth not justify us, as an act of *righteousness*, earning and procuring our justification by the *work of it*, as under the law; diametrically opposite to grace and free gift, which excludes *all* consideration of any works of ours, to be our righteousness, under any diminutive terms whatever, whether you call it *legal* or *evangelical*, though you reckon it to be no more than the payment of a pepper-corn, Rom. xi. 6. Faith in this case is accounted a *not-working*, Rom. iv. 5. And it is not *faith* that stands instead of the righteousness of the law, but the *righteousness of Christ*, which satisfieth for what we ought to have done or suffered, as hath been shewed.

3. God justifieth by faith, as the *instrument* whereby we receive Christ and his righteousness, by which we are justified properly; and we are *justified by faith* only *metonymically*, by reason of the righteousness received by it: and to be *justified by faith* and *by Christ*, is all one, Gal. iii. 8. Rom. v. 19. By faith we receive *remission of sins*, Acts xxvi. 18. x. 43. Its effect is, the reception of justification, not the working it, as a man may be said to be maintained by his hands, or nourished by his mouth, when those do but receive that which nourisheth, his food and drink. The cup is put from the *liquor* in the cup, 1 Cor. xi. 26, 27. See Rom. i. 17. iii. 22. *Christ is in us by faith*, Eph. iii. 17; received, ate, drunk, John i. 12. vi. 51—54.

4. This faith is to be understood *exclusively*, to all our works for justification. We defend, against the pa-

pists, *justification by faith only*; and there is nothing more fully expressed in scripture-phrase, Rom. iii. 28. Gal. ii. 16. Phil. iii. 8, 9. Rom. iv. 16.

5. We must understand faith in a *full* sense of receiving *remission of the fault*, as well as of the *punishment*. We believe God accounts not the fault to us of the least sin. And where faith is said to be *accounted for righteousness*, it is because of the *object* it receives, Rom. iv. 5—8. 2 Cor. v. 19, 21. We believe Christ's righteousness is imputed to us as our sins are to him; or else we receive not remission of sins by believing, which is contrary to charging us with sin and condemnation; which *charging* signifies *imputing sin*, Rom. viii. 33, 34. Together with the removal of the charge of sin, we receive the *gift of righteousness*, Rom. v. 17. And this we have in the reception of Christ's redemption and bloodshed, Eph. i. 7. Mat. xxvi. 28.

OBSERV. VIII. "That God, in setting forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, aimed to declare his righteousness, now under the gospel, for the remission of sins that are *past* as well as *present*;" of those sins that were *past*, and committed under the Old Testament, which was God's time of *forbearing in pardoning*, long before his justice was actually satisfied by Christ's atonement, Heb. xiii. 8. Rev. xiii. 8. Mat. xviii. 26. The *ground* of these pardons is now revealed by Christ's coming, Isa. li. 5, 9. lvi. 1. Dan. ix. 24. 2 Tim. i. 9, 10; that those pardons may be no blemish to the justice of God now satisfied, Ex. xxxiv. 7. Psal. lxxxii. 10.

1. By this *righteousness* is meant that *righteousness of God* mentioned in the proposition, Rom. iii. 21, 22. of which the text is but a confirmation, viz. the righteousness of God; not his essential righteousness, that which is an essential property of God, but even that righteousness, which is upon *all them that do believe*; Christ's righteousness, which is the *end of the law*, Rom. x. 3, 4; and therefore called *God's righteousness*, that which Christ wrought for us, which is given to us, and

we receive by faith; that whereby Christ answered the law for us; by which, as the price, he redeemed us; which is called *God's righteousness*, because it is of *God's working*, and it only hath *God's acceptance and approbation*; as Christ is called the *Lamb of God*, because God provided him and accepts him as an offering, John i. 29. Upon the like account, *Christ's kingdom* is called the *kingdom of God*, because *God's own hand* set it up and maintained it, and rules it, Eph. v. 5. Christ who became obedient to death, to work this righteousness, was God as well as man, Phil. ii. 6, 8. And this is that righteousness which the apostle opposeth to his own, that which is in Christ; which he had through faith. And this is the *righteousness of God here*, and in other places; "the righteousness which is of God by faith," Phil. iii. 9.

2. God aimed at *declaring*, in the gospel times, his *righteousness in forgiving sins past*, in the time of *God's forbearance* under the Old Testament, Rom. iii. 25; and also in justifying those that believe in Christ at present; for it was by the righteousness of the same Christ, that sins were pardoned under the Old Testament, as well as now, Heb. xiii. 8. Christ was the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," Rev. xiii. 8; only the righteousness was not actually fulfilled and revealed then, but it was shadowed out then, by the sacrifices, ransoms, redemptions, &c. Heb. x. 1, 2, 9, 10. So this was a time of *God's forbearance*: because he pardoned sins, as if it were, without present payment and satisfaction. He had patience, and did not exact the debt, until Christ paid all, Mat. xviii. 26. But then God promised, that he would reveal his righteousness in due time, Isa. lvi. 1. and i. 5, 6. Psal. xcvi. 2. Dan. ix. 24. And this he hath done by the appearance of Christ, 2 Tim. i. 10.

OBSERV. IX. "The end of this manifestation is, that God may appear *just*, in forgiving sins past as well as present, and the *justifier* of him that believeth in Jesus." Here the essential property of God is exalted, and ap-

pears glorious in justifying by the forementioned righteousness of God.

1. As God justifieth *freely* by grace, he would appear hereby just in justifying sinners; for, it would be a blemish to God's justice, to forgive without a satisfaction, and righteousness performed; and therefore, though he be gracious and merciful, yet he will not *clear the guilty*, Ex. xxxiv. 7. Gen. xviii. 25. Ex. xxiii. 7. And so the saints of God concluded, that God had a righteousness and redemption, whereby he forgave sin, though it was not then revealed, Psa. li. 14. cxxx. 7, 8. and cxliii. 1, 2. God would have *justice and mercy* to meet in our salvation, Psa. lxxxv. 10.

2. God would have it appear, that he only is just, and therefore saveth us, not by our own righteousness, but by his: which is indeed the more exalted by our unrighteousness occasionally, though God is not therefore *unrighteous in taking vengeance*, Rom. iii. 4, 5. Dan. ix. 7.

3. God would appear to be the only *procurer* and *worker* of our righteousness, and so our justifier by way of procurement, as well as by way of judgment; and so he will justify us by a righteousness of *his own*, and not by *our own*, Isa. liv. 17. xlv. 22, 24, 25. that we may *glory in the Lord only*, 1 Cor. i. 30, 31.

USE I. It serves for *instruction*, by way of *encouragement* and *consolation*; that the great happiness of those that are in Christ, is that their sins are forgiven, and they accounted just in the sight of the judge of the world, through the redemption that is by the blood of Christ; and this benefit contains all blessedness of life, and the consequences thereof, Rom. iv. 6. That "man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works," hath a blessedness therein, and such an extensive blessedness, in regard to the spiritual part, as Abraham had; comprehending all spiritual blessings in Christ: for "they which be of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham," Gal. iii. 9. For this righteousness, being the fundamental blessing, is *revealed from faith to faith*;

and they that are by faith just, and justified through that righteousness, do live by faith, always receiving it, and receiving nourishment and comfort by it, Rom. i. 15.

1. They are delivered from the charge of *sin* and *fault* before God; Rom. viii. 33, 34. *Τις συκαλισει*: "Who shall lay any thing to their charge, or suffered to bring in, at God's tribunal, any indictment, charge, or accusation against them? It is God that justifieth them: and Christ hath died and rose again. They are redeemed from among men, being the first fruits to God and the Lamb. In their mouth there is no guile; and they are without fault [*αμωμοι*] before the throne," Rev. xiv. 4, 5. See also Col. i. 22.

2. They are delivered from all *condemnation* in sentence and execution; the curse and wrath of God, Gal. iii. 13. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." 1 Thes. i. 10. "Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come." Psal. lxxxv.

3. "Thou hast taken away all thy wrath: thou hast turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger." See ver. 5, 6. The wrath of God is an insupportable burden, and the foundation of all miseries; which foundation is razed, and a foundation of all blessedness laid, whereby we have peace with God, and are fully reconciled of God, Rom. v. 1, 2. 2 Cor. v. 18, 19. Col. i. 21, 22. "You that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his flesh, through death, to present you holy and unblamable, and unprovable in his sight." Now, where there is no blame before God; there can be no wrath from God.

3. They have no need to seek salvation by the *works of the law*; and so are delivered from a yoke that cannot be borne; from endless observances that pharisees and papist's have heaped up; from continual frights, doubts, fears and terrors by the law, Acts xv. 10. Rom. viii. 15; from a wrath-working law, Rom. iv. 15; from a sin-irritating law, Rom. vi. 5; from a killing law, a "ministration of death and condemnation," 2 Cor. iii. 6, 7, 9; "Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage," Gal. iv. 24.

4. Hence they are delivered from a *condemning conscience*, which otherwise would still gnaw them as a worm: Heb. ix. 14. "If the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" A guilty conscience is a foul conscience; and it will make all services and duties dead works, unfit for the service of the living God: it is the blood of Christ applied by faith, that takes off the foulness of guilt from the conscience; therefore the blood of Christ hath the only efficacy this way to take off the conscience of sin, Heb. x. 1, &c.) Hence they come to have a *good conscience*, 1 Pet. iii. 2; *void of offence towards God*, Acts xxiv. 16.

5. It is an *everlasting righteousness*; by which their standing in Christ is secured, Dan. ix. 24. It is an *eternal redemption* that is obtained; Heb. ix. 12. Whereas, by the law, those that were justified to-day typically might fall under condemnation; so far as to need another sacrifice for sin to-morrow: they had no real purgation of conscience from sin by these sacrifices; and therefore could not have a lasting delivery of their consciences of their guilt by them. Here it is far otherwise; here is an effectual, complete and perpetual redemption, reaching the conscience of the sinner, and for the purging away of all sins, *past, present* and *to come*, 1 John i. 7.

6. It is a righteousness of *infinite value*; because it is the righteousness of one that is *God*; and his name is **JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**, Jer. xxiii. 6. Heb. ix. 14. It is therefore more powerful to save than Adam's sin was to destroy or condemn, Rom. v. Christ is here *the power of God*, 1 Cor. i. 24. Hence we are powerful, and conquer by faith. Likewise, there is a marvellous plenty of mercy and grace, that is brought to us by *Jehovah our righteousness*; and plenteous redemption, Psa. cxxx. 7. It must be most plentiful, because infinite. Though no creature could satisfy for sin, yet Jehovah

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could do it abundantly : and therefore in Christ, God's mercy prevails high above our sins, Psa. ciii. 11, 12.

7. God's *grace* and *justice* are both engaged on our behalf in this righteousness. Justice is terrible, and seems to be against mercy, and dreadful to natural people : but it is otherwise to believers ; it is pacified and appeased through this righteousness ; it is satisfied by Christ for our sins. Justice becomes our friend, joins in with grace : and instead of pleading against us, it is altogether for us ; and it speaks contrary to what it speaks to sinners out of Christ, Josh. xxiv. 19, 20. We may also plead justice for forgiveness, through mercy in Christ, Rom. iii. 29.

8. We may be sure of *holiness* and *glory* ; delivery from the power and dominion of sin, as well as the charge of it before God, and guilt in our consciences : for this was the end of Christ's death, Tit. ii. 4. Rom. vi. 6, 14. viii. 3, 4, 30. "Whom he justified, them he also glorified." The law was the strength of sin ; for sin had its title to rule in us by reason of the curse : and thence Satan also rules ; but here is our deliverance from sin and Satan ; yea, from death too, Heb. ii. 14, 15. Hos. xiii. 14. And, by the same reason we are raised by the excellent righteousness to a better state than we had in Adam at first ; for Christ died, that we might receive the *adoption of sons*, and the *Spirit* ; that we might be brought under a new covenant, and be set in the right way of holiness, serving out of love, Gal. iii. 14. 1 John iv. 19. Gal. iv. 5. Heb. ix. 15. Rom. v. 11. Luke i. 74. Col. ii. 13.

9. We may be sure, hence, of a concurrence of *all* things for our good. All things shall work for good, through grace, to bring us to glory ; because God is for us, who is the creator and governor of all things, Rom. viii. 28, 31, 33. God "will never be wroth with us, nor rebuke us in anger any more," Isa. liv. 9. Rom. v. 2, 5.

10. Hence we may come before God without *confusion of face*, yea, with *boldness* to the throne of grace

in Christ's name, John xiv. 13, 24; and expect all good things from him; Eph. iii. 12. "In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him." Heb. x. 22, 23. "Let us draw near with the full assurance of faith." Christ's blood pleads for us in heaven; Heb. xii. 24; and we may and are to plead boldly a satisfaction on his account.

11. We live in those times when this righteousness is *fully revealed*, and *sin made an end of*, Rom. iii. 21, 22. This is our happiness above all those that lived before Christ's coming, who were under types and shadows of this righteousness: when as we have the substance in its own light: and so we are not under the law, which they were under as a school-master. We are not servants, but sons, called to liberty, Gal. iii. 23, 26. iv. 7. v. 13. The preaching the old covenant, as a church ordinance to be urged, is now ceased; the law is not to be preached now in the same terms as Moses preached it for justification, Rom. x. 5—8. 2 Cor. iii. 6, 7. Gal. iii. 13, 24; it is contrary in terms of faith, though it were subservient.

USE II. For *examination*, whether we be in Christ, and have received this justification by faith with all our hearts.

1. Consider, whether you be made really *sensible* of sin, and your condemnation by the law. This is necessary to make us fly to Christ; and for this as one great end, was the law given, Gal. iii. 22—24. Mat. ix. 13. Acts ii. 37. Without sense of sin, there will be no prizing of Christ, or desire of holiness; but rather abuse of grace to carnal security and licentiousness. Those that were stung with the fiery serpents, looked up to the brazen serpent.

2. Dost thou trust only upon *free mercy* for justification in God's sight, renouncing all thy works whatever in this point, as not able to stand in them before God's exact justice, crying mercy with the poor publican? Perfectionists, and self-righteous persons, have no share in this matter, Luke xviii. 13, 14. Paul.

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notwithstanding all that the world might think he had to plead for himself, "counted all things but dung, that he might win Christ, and be found in him, not having his own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith," i. e. the redeeming and propitiation-righteousness of Christ; whereby he desired only to be justified, and which he believed in for that end, opposing it to any thing inherent in himself; which therefore he calls his *own righteousness*, Phil. lii. 6, 8, 9. Rom. iv. 5.

3. Dost thou trust with any *confidence* in Christ, not continuing in a mere suspense? In a way of mere doubting, we can receive no good thing from God, James i. 6, 7. Mere doubting will not loose the conscience from the guilt of sin, Heb. x. 22; but leaveth the soul under terrors. Abraham's confidence is the example and pattern of our justifying faith, that we would endeavour to come up unto, believing with a fulness of persuasion, in *hope against hope*, Rom. iv. 20, 24. Though a believing soul may be assaulted with many doubtings; yet it fights against them, and doth not give up itself to the dominion of them, Psa. xlii. 11. Mark ix. 24. It hath always something contrary to them, and striving with them.

4. Dost thou come to Christ for *remission of sins*, for the right end, namely, that thou mayest be *freed from the dominion of sin* before the living God, Heb. ix. 14. Psa. cxxx. Tit. ii. 14. 1 Pet. ii. 44. If otherwise, thou dost not receive it for the right end: and desirest not really the favour and enjoyment of God, and to be in friendship with him.

5. Dost thou *walk in holiness*, and strive to evidence this justification by the fruits of faith, in good works? If otherwise, thy faith is but a *dead faith*; for a true faith purifieth the heart, Acts xv. 9. If Christ be thine, he will be *sanctification* as well as *righteousness*, 1 Cor. i. 30. Rom. viii. 1, 9. John xiii. 8. If God take thee into his favour, he will doubtless cleanse

thee. Though faith alone justifies, without the concurrence of works to the act of justification; yet that faith is not so alone, as not to be accompanied with good works: as the eye alone seeth, yet it is not alone, without other members. So the apostle James declar-eth, faith that is alone, to be dead, and biddeth us shew our faith by our works; which is to be understood, not as if works were the *conditions* of attaining justification, but sure *evidences* of justification attained by faith; and very necessary, Jam. ii. 14, 15.—The gospel is no covenant of works, requiring another righteousness for justification by doing for life. Works justify us from such accusations of men as will deny us to have justification by faith, or that we have a true and lively faith, or are good trees, Mat. xii. 33, 37; not as being our righteousness themselves, or conditions of our having Christ's righteousness, or qualify-
ing us for it.

USE III. It serveth for *exhortation to several duties.*

1. To the *wicked*. It is dehortation unto them from *continuance* in sin, under God's wrath, running headlong to damnation; for here is a door of mercy opened to them; a righteousness prepared that they may be freely accepted of God. Some men are desperadoes: "They have loved strangers, and after them they will go," Jer. ii. 25. They are resolved to run the risk of it; and please themselves that they shall speed as well as others. And some men would be justified, but seek for it in a wrong way. Some will go to the Pope, to quiet their consciences by his deceits: some to their own works and performances, but you are exhorted to look out for the true righteousness. Christ saith in the gospel, Behold me, Behold me; the kingdom of heaven is open; mercy and righteousness are freely offered, Isa. lv. 6, 7. Jer. iii. 12. Repentance is preached with the remission of sins, Luke xxiv. 47. Acts ii. 38. Beware you do not neglect "this acceptable time, this day of salvation," Heb. ii. 1, 3. For, (1) if you do you remain under the *wrath* of God, John iii. 36. under the *curse* of the law

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which, like a flood, sweeps away all that are found out of this ark, the Lord Jesus Christ, Psa. xi. 5, 6. (2) Your condemnation will be *aggravated by refusing so great salvation*, Heb. ii. 3. You will have *no cloak for your sins*, when you refuse mercy, John xv. 22. You cannot say, you are undone, by your past sins, beyond recovery, and therefore it is in vain to strive; for behold, *remission of sins* is proclaimed unto you, Ezek. xxxiii. 10, 11. And what a horrid sin is it to despise the blood of the Son of God? John iii. 18, 36.

OBJECT. I. "If God justifieth the ungodly," Rom. iv. 5. "what need I forsake ungodliness at all?" Rom. vi. 1.

ANS. Thou canst not seek justification *truly*, except thou hast a mind to live to God in friendship with him; for justification is God's way of taking us into friendship with him, Rom. v. 1, 2; and of reconciling us, 2 Cor. v. 19. The use thou art to make of it is to seek God's friendship by it and the enjoyment of him. Why doth a man seek a pardon, if he intend to go on in rebellion and stand out in defiance to his prince? 1 Pet. ii. 24. They seek pardon in a mocking way, that intend not to return to obedience, Gal. vi. 7, 8.

OBJECT. II. *My sins are so great, that I have no encouragement to hope.*

ANS. Christ's righteousness is for all *sorts of sinners* that believe, whether Jews or Gentiles; and how great sinners were of both sorts? Rom. i. ii. iii; and even for those that killed and murdered the *Lord of glory*, Acts ii. 23, 36. 1 Cor. ii. 8: for the chief of sinners, 1 Tim. i. 15. Acts xvi. "Where sin abounds, grace super-abounds," Rom. v. 20. Your sins are but the sins of a *creature*, but his righteousness is the *righteousness of God*, John vi. 37. Rom. x. 3, 11, 13.

EXHORT. II. It exhorts those that have a mind to turn to God, to turn the right way, by faith in Christ for justification. Let them not seek by works, as most in the world do, Rom. ix. 31, 32. But this doctrine seems very foolish, yea, pernicious to a natural man.

“Become a fool, that thou mayest be wise,” 1 Cor. iii. 18; otherwise you will labour in the fire, and weary yourselves for very vanity, and be under continual discomforts and discouragements; for, you can do no good work while you are in the flesh, under the law, and its curse, before God receive you into favour; for justification is, in order of nature, before true holiness of heart and life, 1 Tim. i. 5. Heb. ix. 14. Faith is the great work, and mother duty, John vi. 29. Gal. v. 6. Isa. lv. 2, &c. and therefore while you believe not, you dishonor Christ and his death, Gal. ii. 21. v. 2—4. Therefore come boldly, though you have been a great sinner; Acts x. 43; and seek righteousness in Christ Jesus with holiness, Rom. viii. 1.

Quest. But how shall I get faith?

A. Faith is the gift of God, Eph. ii. 8; and by the gospel, Rom. ii. 15—17. *Faith cometh by hearing* the gospel preached, Rom. x. 17; and that comes in working faith, not in word only, but in power, 1 Thes. i. 5. beyond what can be done by natural and human attainment, John vi. 63. Therefore, if thou hast no beginning of it in thee, thy only way is to attend to the gospel, and to meditate on thy sin and misery, and Christ's excellency, that so thou mayest be inclined in thy heart to believe, Song i. 3. Gal. ii. 16. Psa. ix. 10; for this is the way God useth to beget faith, Isa. lv. 3. But, if thou hast a desire and inclination to fly from thyself to Christ, in the bent of thy heart, so that thou preferrest Christ above all, then the Spirit hath begun and will carry on the work: so that now thou mayst pray confidently for faith, Song. i. 4. Luke xi. 13. Mark ix. 24.

OBJECT. III. “But without holiness no man shall see the Lord,” Heb. xii. 14. *And, how shall I get holiness? I cannot sanctify myself; and this confidence you speak of may slacken my diligence.*

ANSW. If thou hast righteousness in Christ, God will make thee holy: and this confidence is the only

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way to get holiness, because of that righteousness, Rom. v. 21. The new covenant is confirmed in him, which promiseth a new heart. If sin be forgiven, thou shalt be delivered from its power and quickened by the same death and resurrection of Christ, whereby thou art justified, Col. ii. 12, 13.

EXHORT. III. It exhorteth them that are *justified by faith*. 1st, To *walk humbly*, as being nothing of themselves; to acknowledge themselves enemies to God by nature, and acknowledge their sins in the greatness and heinousness of them; that they are saved freely by the righteousness of another, not by their own; yea, that they are so far fallen, that the justice of God would have been against them, if it had not been satisfied, Psa. lxxi. 16. Rom. iii. 37; but now they see that Christ hath satisfied, and his righteousness is above their sins, Ezek. xxxvi. 31.

2. To *praise and glorify* God, through Christ, for his grace. Oh! what abundant grace and love appears in God's washing and cleansing us by his Son's blood! Rev. i. 5. Gal. ii. 20; and in making his Son sin and a curse for us! Rom. v. 5, 8. 1 John iv. 9, 10. iii. 16. 2 Cor. viii. 9; and what a glorious and excellent righteousness hath God given us in Christ! Isa. lxi. 10.

3. To *walk comfortably*, upon the account of this righteousness, Isa. xl. 1, 2. Triumph over sin and affliction, Rom. viii. 33, 39. Be confident in expecting great things from God, Heb. x. 22; for, though you may be unworthy, and grace will shew you your own unworthiness, yet you stand upon the righteousness of Christ. Glory in the hope of God's glory; for, if Christ died to reconcile you, when you were enemies, much more will he save you by his life, now you are reconciled, Rom. v. 3, 10. Ask boldly for what you want; for God is in Christ's manhood as the mercy-seat. Whenever sin stings, and objections trouble you, look to the brazen serpent; confess sin, and trust for pardon; meditate on Christ's righteous-

ness, and abundance of grace in him, Rom. viii. 32.— If you find never so much ungodliness, no good qualifications; yet Christ is at hand for your comfort, Isa. l. 10. 2 Thes. ii. 16, 17. In all your sins apply yourselves to this fountain, Zech. xiii. 1. 1 John i. 7. If sin lie on the conscience, it weakens peace and spiritual strength. Lie not under guilt with a slavish fear; you have a righteousness to deliver you from it; apply it by faith, that you may have no more conscience of sin as condemning, Heb. x. 2. Psal. xxxii. You have a better righteousness than any perfectionists can have.

4. To hold fast this way of justification, notwithstanding all the noise that is made in the world against it; for the devil will strive to scare you out of it, or steal it from you; as he did from the Jews, from the Galatians, the Papists, and many Protestants, Gal. i. 6. And the apostles reckon it is by a spiritual bewitchery. He will strive to get you to trust upon works, and tell you, it is for the promoting of holiness; and to trust on works to get Christ; and to lay works lowest in the foundation. If you lose this righteousness of Christ, under any colour or pretence whatever, you lose all, Gal. v. 2, 3. Do not so dishonor Christ, as to think of procuring that by works which you have so fully in Christ. Think not that the gospel requires another justification to gain this; for, the gospel is no legal covenant, but a declaration of the righteousness of faith; and we being justified, are heirs by adoption and promise, Gal. iii. 24—26. iv. 7. This is the doctrine which glorifieth God, and abaseth the creature; which is a great mark of truth. Beware therefore, of carnal reason; which will go quite contrary, and make Christ's righteousness a stumbling-stone to thee, 2 Pet. ii. 8. Rom. ix. 32, 34.

5. To walk as one that enjoys the favor of God in Christ. Let him have the honor of it. Walk therefore in holiness, knowing by what price you are redeemed, 1 Pet. i. 17, 18. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. 2 Pet. i. 5;

11. 1 Cor. vi. 20. Love God that hath loved you first, 1 Job. iv. 19. Psa. cxxvi. 16. Believe that God will enable you, for the practice of holiness, Rom. vi. 14. Particularly, walk in love to the saints; exercise forgiveness to your enemies. Sense of your own sins, and God's forgiving you, will cause you to pity and forgive others; else you cannot pray or trust for forgiveness of your own sins upon reasonable grounds, Eph. iv. 31, 32. Mat. vi. 14, 15. xviii. 21. Desire grace may be exacted upon others; and wait patiently for the full declaration of justification at the great day, Gal. v. 5. Acts iii. 19; for here, your justification is known only by faith; but in outward things you are dealt with as a sinner; then your righteousness shall appear openly, and you shall be dealt with according to it.

THE END.