

Eph. iv. 1. 'I beseech you, that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called ;' in two things.

1. Walk compassionately. Pity such as are yet uncalled : hast thou a child that God hath not yet called, a wife, a servant ? weep over their dying souls : they are in their blood, ' under the power of Satan : ' O pity them ! let their sins more trouble you than your own sufferings : if you pity an ox or ass going astray, will you not pity a soul going astray ? Shew your piety by your pity.

2. Walk holily. Your's is an holy calling, 2 Tim. i. 9. You are called to be saints, Rom. i. 7. Shew your vocation by a Bible conversation. Shall not flowers smell sweeter than weeds ? shall not they who are ennobled with grace, have more fragrancy in their lives than sinners ? 1 Pet. i. 15. ' As he who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation. O dishonour not your high calling by any fordid carriage : when Antigonus was going to defile himself with women, one told him, ' he was a king's son. ' O remember your dignity, ' called of God ! ' of the blood-royal of heaven : do nothing unworthy of your honourable calling. Scipio refused the embraces of an harlot, because he was general of an army. Abhor all motions to sin, because of your high calling. It is not fit for them who are the called of God, to do as others ; though others of the Jews did drink wine, it was not fit for the Nazarene, because he had a vow of sepeparation upon him, and had promised abstinence ; though Pagans and loose Christians take liberty to sin, yet it is not fit for them who are called out of the world, and have the mark of election upon them to do so : you are consecrated persons, your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, and your bodies must be a sacrary, or holy of holies.

OF JUSTIFICATION.

ROM. iii. 24. *Being justified freely by his grace.*

Q. XXXIII. *What is justification ?*

A. It is an act of God's free grace, whereby he pardoneth all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.

Justification is the very hinge and pillar of Christianity ; and an error about justification is dangerous, like a crack in the foundation, or an error in the first concoction. Justification by Christ, is a spring of the water of life ; and to have the poison

of corrupt doctrine cast into this spring, is damnable. It was a saying of Luther, "that after his death the doctrine of justification would be corrupted." As it hath been in these latter times, the Arminians and Socinians have cast a dead fly into this box of precious ointment.

I shall endeavour to follow the star of scripture to light me through this mysterious point.

Q. *What is meant by justification?*

Ans. It is *verbum forense*, a word borrowed from law-courts, wherein a person arraigned is pronounced righteous, and is openly absolved in the court. Thus God, in justifying a person, pronounceth him to be righteous, and looks upon him as if he had not sinned.

Q. *What is the ground of justification?*

Ans. The *causa*, the inward impellent motive or ground of justification, is the free grace of God; so in the text, 'justified freely by his grace.' Which Ambrose expounds, "not of the grace wrought within us, but the free grace of God." The first wheel that sets all the rest a-running, is the love and favour of God: 'being justified by his grace;' as a king freely pardons a delinquent. Justification is a mercy spun out of the bowels of free grace. God doth not justify us because we are worthy, but by justifying us makes us worthy.

Q. *What is the material cause, or that by which a sinner is justified?*

Ans. The matter of our justification, is Christ's satisfaction made to his Father. If it be asked, how can it stand with God's justice and holiness to pronounce us innocent when we are guilty? This answers it, Christ having made satisfaction for our fault, now God may, in equity and justice, pronounce us righteous. It is a just thing for a creditor to discharge a debtor of the debt, when a satisfaction is made by the surety.

Q. *But how was Christ's satisfaction meritorious, and so sufficient to justify?*

Ans. In respect of the divine nature: as he was man he suffered, as God he satisfied; by Christ's death and merits, God's justice is more abundantly satisfied, than if we had suffered the pains of hell for ever.

Q. *Wherein lies the formality or essence of our justification?*

Ans. In the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us, Jer. xxiii. 6. 'This is the name whereby he shall be called *Jehovah Tsidkennu*,' 'THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS,' 2 Cor. i. 40. 'He is made to us righteousness.' This righteousness of Christ, which doth justify us, is better righteousness than the angels; there's is the righteousness of creatures, this of God.

Q. *What is the means or instrument of our justification?*

Ans. Faith, Rom. v. 1, 'Being justified by faith.' The dig-

nity is not in faith as a grace, but relatively, as it lays hold on Christ's merits.

Q. What is the efficient cause of our justification?

Ans. The whole Trinity, all the persons in the blessed Trinity have an hand in the justification of a sinner: *opera Trinitatis ad extra junt indivisa*. God the Father is said to justify, Rom. viii. 33. 'It is God that justifieth.' God the Son is said to justify, Acts xiii. 39. 'By him all that believe are justified.' God the Holy Ghost is said to justify, 1 Cor. vi. 11. 'But ye are justified by the Spirit of our God.' God the Father justifies, as he pronounceth us righteous: God the Son justifies as he imputes his righteousness to us; and God the Holy Ghost justifies, as he clears up our justification, and seals us up to the day of redemption.

Q. What is the end of our justification?

Ans. The end is, 1. That God may inherit praise, Eph. i. 6. 'To the praise of the glory of his grace.' Hereby God raiseth the everlasting trophies of his own honour: how will the justified sinner proclaim the love of God, and make heaven ring of his praises?

2. That the justified person may inherit glory, Rom. viii. 30. 'Whom he justified, them he also glorified.' God, in justifying, doth not only absolve a soul from guilt, but advance him to dignity; as Joseph was not only loosed from prison, but made lord of the kingdom. Justification is crowned with glorification.

Q. Whether are we justified from eternity?

Ans. No: for 1. By nature we are under a sentence of condemnation, John iii. 18. But we could not be at all condemned, if we were justified from eternity.

2. The scripture confines justification to those who believe and repent, Acts iii. 19. 'Repent that your sins may be blotted out.' Therefore their sins were uncanceled, and their persons unjustified, till they did repent: Though God doth not justify us for our repentance, yet not without it. The Antinomians erroneously hold, that we are justified from eternity. This doctrine is a key which opens the door to all licentiousness; what sins do they care they commit, so long as they hold they are, *ab aeterno*, justified, whether they repent or not?

Before I come to the uses, I shall lay down four maxims or positions about justification.

Position 1. That justification confers a real benefit upon the person justified. The acquitting and discharging of the debtor, by virtue of the satisfaction made by the surety, is a real benefit to the debtor; a robe of righteousness, and a crown of righteousness, are real benefits.

Position 2. All believers are alike justified; *justificatio non recipit majis et minus*: though there are degrees in grace, yet

not in justification ; one is not justified more than another, the weakest believer is as perfectly justified as the strongest ; Mary Magdalene is as much justified as the Virgin-Mary. This may be cordial-water to a weak believer ; though thou hast but a drachm of faith, thou art as truly justified as he who is of the highest stature in Christ.

Position 3. Whosoever God justifies, he sanctifies, 1. Cor. vi. 11. ‘ But ye are sanctified, but ye are justified.’ The Papists calumniate the Protestants ; they report, we hold that men continuing in sin are justified ; whereas all our protestant writers affirm, that righteousness imputed, viz. Justification, and righteousness inherent, viz. Sanctification, must be inseparably united. Holiness indeed is not the cause of our justification, but it is the concomitant ; the heat in the sun is not the cause of its light, but it is the concomitant. It is absurd to imagine, that God should justify a people, and they go on in sin. If God should justify a people and not sanctify them, he should justify a people whom he could not glorify. God, as he is an holy God, cannot lay a sinner in his bosom. The metal is first refined, before the king’s stamp is put upon it : first, the soul is refined with holiness, before God puts the royal stamp of justification upon it.

Position 4. Justification is *inamissibilis* ; it is a fixed permanent thing, it can never be lost. The Arminians hold an apostacy from justification : to-day justified, to-morrow unjustified ; to-day a Peter, to-morrow a Judas ; to-day a member of Christ, to-morrow a limb of Satan : a most uncomfortable doctrine. Indeed justified persons may fall from degrees of grace, they may leave their first love, they may lose God’s favour for a time, but not lose their justification. If they are justified, then they are elected ; they can no more fall from their justification, than from their election. If they are justified, then they have union with Christ ; and, can a member of Christ be broken off ? If one justified person may fall away from Christ, then all may ; and so Christ should be an head without a body.

Use 1. See from hence, that there is nothing within us could justify us, but something without us ; not any righteousness inherent, but imputed : we may as well look for a star in the earth, as for justification in our own righteousness. The papists say we are justified by works. But the apostle confutes it, ‘ not of works, lest any man should boast,’ Eph. ii. 9. But the papists say “ the works done by an unregenerate man indeed cannot justify him, but works done by a regenerate man may justify.” This is most false, as may be proved both by example and reason.

1. By example. Abraham was a regenerate man ; but Abraham was not justified by works, but by faith, Rom. iv. 3.

Abraham 'believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness.'

2. By reason. How can those works justify us, which defile us? Isa. lxiv. 6. 'Our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.' *Bona opera non præcedunt justificationem, sed sequuntur justificatum*: good works are not an usher to go before justification, but an hand-maid to follow it.

Obj. *But doth not the apostle James say, Abraham was justified by works?*

A. The answer is easy: works declare us to be righteous before men, but they do not make us righteous before God. Works are evidences of our justification, not causes. This name only must be graven upon the golden plate of our High Priest Christ, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

2d Use, of Exhortation. Branch 1. Adore the infinite wisdom and goodness of God, to find out such a way to justify us by 'rich grace and precious blood.' We were all involved in guilt; none of us could plead *not guilty*; and being guilty, we lay under a sentence of death: now that the judge himself should find out a way to justify us, and the creditor himself contrive a way to have the debt paid, and not distress the debtor; this may fill us with wonder and love. The angels admire the mystery of free grace in this new way of justifying and saving lost man, 1 Pet. i. 12. and should not we, who are nearly concerned in it, and on whom the benefit is devolved, cry out with the apostle, 'O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!' &c.

Branch. 2. Labour for this high privilege of justification: there is balm in Gilead; Christ hath laid down the price of our justification, viz. his blood; and he offers himself and all his merits to us, to justify; he invites us to come to him; he hath promised to give his Spirit, to enable us to do what is required. Why then, sinners, will ye not look after this great privilege of justification? Do not starve in the midst of plenty; do not perish when there is a remedy to save you. Would not he be thought to be distracted, if having a pardon offered him, only upon the acknowledgment of his fault, and promising amendment, he should bid the prince keep his pardon to himself; for his part, he was in love with his chains and fetters, and would die? Thou who neglectest justification offered thee freely by Christ in the gospel, art this distracted person. Is the love of Christ to be slighted? Is thy soul and heaven worth nothing? O then look after justification through Christ's blood!

Consider, 1. The necessity of being justified: if we are not justified, we cannot be glorified, Rom. viii. 30. 'Whom he justified, them he also glorified.' He who is outlawed, and all his goods confiscated, must be brought into favour with his

prince, before he can be restored to his former rights and liberties: so we must first have our sins forgiven, and be brought into God's favour by justification, before we can be restored to the liberty of the sons of God, and have right to that happiness we have forfeited in Adam.

2. The utility and benefit: by justification we enjoy peace in our conscience; a richer jewel than any prince wears in his crown, Rom. v. 1. 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God.' Peace can sweeten all our afflictions, it turns our water into wine. How happy is a justified person who hath the power of God to guard him, and the peace of God to comfort him? Peace flowing from justification, is an antidote against the fear of death and hell, Rom. viii. 34. 'It is God that justifies, who is he that condemneth?' Therefore labour for this justification by Christ; this privilege is obtained by believing in Christ, Acts xiii. 39. 'By him all that believe are justified.' And Rom. iii. 25. 'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.' Faith unites us to Christ; and having union with his person, we partake of his merits and the glorious salvation which comes by him.

Use 3. Comfort to the justified, (1.) It is comfort in case of failings: alas! how defective are the godly! they come short in every duty: but though believers should be humbled under their defects, yet not desponded; they are not to be justified by their duties or graces, but the righteousness of Christ. Their duties are mixed with sin, but that righteousness which justifies them is a perfect righteousness.

(2.) Comfort in case of hard censures: the world censures the people of God for proud and hypocritical, and the troublers of Israel; but though men censure and condemn the godly; yet God hath justified them, and as he hath now justified them, so at the day of judgment he will openly justify them, and pronounce them righteous before men and angels. And God is so just and holy a judge, that having once justified his people, he will never condemn them. Pilate justified Christ, 'I find no fault in him;' yet after this he condemned him: but God having publicly justified his saints, he will never condemn them; 'whom he justified, them he also glorified.'