

ANTINOMIANISM REFUTED



1. In the first place Antinomians connect the satisfaction of Christ with the doctrine of the imputation of His 'active righteousness' to faith. With them, therefore, the satisfaction of Christ means 'His performing for us that obedience which we were bound to perform.' They consider our Lord as a proxy [of obedience] for men; so that His perfect obedience to the Law should be esteemed by God, as done by them; as theirs in legal construction, & that His perfect righteousness being imputed to them, renders them legally righteous and sinless.

2. The plain answer to this is, a.) That we have no such office ascribed in Scripture to the 'active righteousness of Christ,' which is only spoken of there in connection with His atonement as rendering Him a fit victim or sacrifice for sin— 'He died, the just for the unjust.' b.) That this doctrine of 'the imputation of Christ's obedience' makes His sufferings superfluous. For if He has done all that the Law required of us, and if this is legally accounted our doing, then we are under no penalty of suffering, and His suffering in our stead was more than the Law and the case required. c.) That this involves a fiction opposed to the ends of moral government, and shuts out the obligation of personal obedience to the Law of God; so far, therefore, is it from being a demonstration of God's righteousness, His rectoral justice, that it transfers the obligation of obedience from the subjects of the Divine government to Christ, and leaves man without law, & God without dominion, which is obviously contrary to the Scriptures, and favourable to license of every kind.

3. This is not satisfaction in any good sense; it is merely the performance of all that the Law requires by one person substituted for another.

4. Another consequence to which the Antinomian view leads, is, that it makes justification of men a matter of right, not of grace.

5. But abundantly as the objection may thus be answered, it is not to be satisfactorily refuted, on the Antinomian principle, that Christ paid our debt, in the sense of yielding to the Law, in kind and in quantity, those acts of obedience, or that penalty of suffering, or both, which the Law required. The matter in that case, on the part of the Father, loses its character of grace, and is reduced to a strictly equitable proceeding; or at least the mercy is of no higher a kind than is the mercy of a creditor who accepts the full amount of his debt from the surety instead of the debtor, which is assuredly much below that love of the Father, to which allusions so admiring and so grateful are often made in the New Testament. The consequences, also, *become absurd and wholly at odds to the Scriptures*; and such a view of the satisfaction of Christ *is inconsistent* with Scriptural conditions of pardon and acceptance; for if the debt is in this sense actually tendered and accepted, on what ground can conditions of release stand? It is, therefore, consistent in the Antinomian scheme, to deny all conditions of pardon and acceptance, and to make repentance and faith merely insensible means through which men come to the knowledge of their previous and eternal election. By them, as fulfilled conditions, their relation to God is not changed, so that from guilty and condemned criminals they become sons of God. Such they were previous to faith, and previous even to birth, by all eternity, and thus Scripture is contradicted, which represents believers before repentance & faith, to be 'the children of wrath, even as others.' That passage also in Galatians loses its meaning, 'we have believed in Jesus Christ, THAT we might be justified by the faith of Christ.'

THE ANTINOMIAN CONCEPT OF 'IMPUTED ACTIVE OBEDIENCE'

6. Justification, being the pardon of sin by judicial sentence of the offended Majesty of heaven, under a gracious constitution, the term affords no ground for the notion that it imports the imputation or accounting to us the active and passive righteousness of Christ, so as to make us both relatively and positively righteous.

7. On this subject, one fruitful of controversy, our remarks must be somewhat more extended.

8. The notion that justification includes not only the pardon of sin, but the imputation to us of 'Christ's active personal righteousness,' usually held by hyper Calvinists and some among Lutherans and *Novadores* of different kind, has not been received by all divines of these classes; but, on the contrary, by some of them, both in ancient and modern times, it has been opposed, as well as by the advocates of that more moderate scheme of election defended by Gerhard and Baier in Germany, Cameron in France, and by Baxter in England. Even Calvin himself has said nothing on this subject.

9. There are, in fact, three opinions on the topic, which it is necessary to distinguish in order to obtain clear views of the controversy.

10. The first, that we will ponder opening this study, is a part of the high Calvinistic & some American Lutherans scheme, and lays at the foundation of Antinomianism and is, in consequence, violently advocated by those who adopt that gross corruption of the Christian faith.

11. It is, that Christ so represented *the elect* [Calvinists] or *all men* [Synodical Conference et al Lutherans] that His righteousness is imputed to us as ours; as if we ourselves had been what He was, that is, perfectly obedient to the Law of God, and had done what He did as perfectly righteous.

OBJECTIONS ABOUT ACTIVE OBEDIENCE IMPUTED TO US:

12. The first objection to this opinion is, *that it is nowhere stated in Scripture that Christ's personal righteousness is imputed to us*. Not a text can be found which contains any enunciation of this doctrine; and those which are adduced, such as 'the Lord our righteousness,' and 'Christ, who is made unto us righteousness,' are obviously pressed into the service of this scheme by a paraphrastic interpretation, for which there is no authority in any other passages which speak of our redemption.

Explanation of Bible verses.

12. 1 - Jer. 23. 6, & 33. 16: '*And this is the name whereby He be called, The Lord our Righteousness.*' This passage also prove nothing to the point, for it is neither said that the righteousness of the Lord shall be our righteousness, nor that it shall be imputed to us for righteousness, but simply, *that the name by which he shall be called, or acknowledged, shall be the Lord our Righteousness*, that is, the Author and Procurer of our righteousness or justification before God. So He is said to be 'the Resurrection,' 'our Life,' 'our Peace,' &c, as the author of these blessings; for who ever dreamt that Christ is the life, the resurrection, the peace of His people *by imputation?* or that we live *by being accounted* to live in Him, or are raised from the dead *by being accounted* to have risen in Him?
12. 2 - 1 Cor. 1. 30, '*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption.*' Here, also, to say that Christ is 'made unto us righteousness,' by imputation, is to invent and not to interpret. This is clear, that He is made unto us righteousness only as He is made unto us 'redemption,' so that if we are not redeemed by imputation, we are not justified by imputation. The meaning of the Apostle is, that Christ is made to us, by the appointment of God, the sole means of instruction, justification, sanctification, and eternal life. 2 Cor. 5. 21, '*For he hath made him to be sin offering for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*' To be made sin, signifies to be made *an offering for sin*; consequently, as no imputation of our sins to Christ is here mentioned, there is no foundation for the notion, that there is a reciprocal imputation of Christ's righteousness to us. The text is wholly silent on this subject, for it is wholly gratuitous to say that we are made the righteousness of God in, or, through Christ, by imputation or reckoning to us what He did or suffered as our acts or sufferings. The passages we have already adduced will explain the phrase, 'the righteousness of God' in this place. This righteousness, with respect to our pardon, is God's righteous method of justifying, through the atonement of Christ, & our being made or becoming this righteousness of God in or by Christ, is our becoming righteous persons through the pardon of our sins in this peculiar method, by renouncing our own righteousness, and by 'submitting to this righteousness of God.'

13. The notion here attached to Christ's representing us is wholly gratuitous. In a limited sense it is true, that Christ represented us; that is, suffered in our stead, that we might not suffer; but not absolutely as our delegate; our persons did not, in a Law sense, do in and by Christ what He did, or possess the habits which He possessed,

or suffer what He suffered. The Scripture doctrine is, indeed, just the contrary. It is never said, that we suffered in Christ, *but that He suffered for us*; so also *it is never taught that we obeyed in Christ*, but that, through His entire obedience to a course of subjection & suffering, ending in His death, our disobedience is forgiven.

14. Nor is there any weight in the argument, that as our sins were accounted His, so His righteousness is accounted ours. Our sins were never so accounted Christ's *as that He did them, and so justly suffered for them*. THIS IS A MONSTROUS NOTION, which has been sometimes pushed to the edge of blasphemy. Our transgressions are never said to have been imputed to Him *in the fact*, but only that they were laid upon Him *in the penalty*. To be God's '*beloved Son in whom He was always well pleased,*' and to be reckoned, imputed, accounted a sinner, *de facto*, are manifest contradictions.

15. This whole doctrine of the 'imputation of Christ's personal moral obedience to believers,' as their own personal moral obedience, involves a fiction & impossibility inconsistent with the Divine attributes. If what our Lord was and did is to be accounted to us in the sense just given, then we must be accounted never to have sinned, because Christ never sinned, and yet we must ask for pardon, though we were accounted from birth to death, to have fulfilled God's Law in Christ; or if they should say, that when we ask for pardon we ask only for a revelation to us of our eternal justification or pardon, the matter is not altered, for what need is there of pardon, in time or eternity, if we are accounted to have perfectly obeyed God's holy Law; and why should we be accounted also to have suffered, in Christ, the penalty of sins which we are accounted never to have committed?

16. Another objection to the 'accounting of Christ's personal acts as done by us' is, that they were of a loftier character than can be supposed capable of being accounted the acts of mere creatures; that, in one eminent instance, neither the act could be required of us, nor the imputation of the act to us; and, in other respects, and as to particular duties, Christ's personal obedience is deficient, and cannot be therefore reckoned to our account. *For the first*, Christ was God and Man united in one person, a circumstance which gave a peculiar character of fullness and perfection to His obedience, which not even man, in his state of innocence, can be supposed capable of rendering. He, then, that assumes this righteousness to himself, and attires himself with it, represents himself before God, not in the habit of a just or righteous man, *but in the glorious attire of the great Mediator of the world*, whose righteousness has heights and depths in it, a length and breadth which infinitely exceed the proportions of all men whatever. Now, then, for a silly worm to take this robe of immeasurable majesty upon him, and to conceit himself as great in holiness and righteousness as Jesus Christ, (for that is the spirit that rules in this opinion, to teach men to assume all that Christ did unto themselves, and that in no other way, nor upon any lower terms, than as if themselves had personally done it,) whether this be right, I leave to sober men to consider. — *For the second*, I refer to our Lord's baptism by John. His submission to this sacrament was a part of His personal righteousness, (to be consecrated as Pontiff for His people,) and it is strongly marked as such in His own words addressed to John, '*Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.*' But no man now is bound to submit to the baptism of John, and the righteousness of doing so, whether personally or by imputation, is superfluous. This may also be applied to many others of the acts of Christ; they were never obligatory upon us, & their imputation to us is impossible or unnecessary. *For the third case*, the personal obedience of Christ is, as to particular acts, deficient, and our condition could not, therefore, be provided for by this imputation. Suppose us guilty of violating the paternal or the conjugal duties, the duties of servants, or of rulers, with many others, this theory is, that 'we are justified by the imputation of Christ's personal acts of righteousness to us, and that they are reckoned to us, as though we had ourselves performed them.' But our Lord, never having stood in any of these relations, never acquired a personal righteousness of this kind to be reckoned as done by us. That which never was done by Christ cannot be imputed, and so it would follow that we can never be forgiven such delinquencies. — If it be said, that the imputation of particular acts is not necessary, but that it is sufficient if men have a righteousness imputed to them, which is equivalent to them, it is answered, the strict and peremptory nature of Law knows nothing of this doctrine of the equivalency of one act to another. The suffering of an un-obliged substitute, where such a provision is admitted, may be an equivalent to the suffering of the offender; but one course of duties cannot be accepted in the place of another when justification is placed on the ground of the actual fulfilment of the Law by a representative in the place of the delinquent, such is the ground on which the doctrine of 'the imputation of Christ's Active Righteousness' for justification places it. The Law must exact conformity to all its precepts in their place and order, and he that 'offends in one is guilty of all.'

17. A crowning & most fatal objection is, that this doctrine shifts the meritorious cause of man's justification from Christ's obedience unto death, *where the Scriptures place it*, to Christ's 'active obedience' to the precepts of the Law: & leaves no rational account of the reason of Christ's vicarious sufferings. To His blood the New Testament writers ascribe our redemption, *and faith in His blood* is clearly held out as the instrumental cause of our

justification; but by this doctrine the attention and hope of men are perversely turned away from His sacrificial death to His holy life, which, though necessary, both as an example to us, and also so to qualify His sacrifice, that His blood should be that of 'a Lamb without spot,' is nowhere represented as that on account of which men are pardoned.

18. Johan Piscator, formerly Lutheran at Reformation times, thus treats the subject in scholastic form. 'If our sins have been expiated by the obedience of the life of Christ, either a perfect expiation has been thus made for all of them, or an imperfect one for some of them. The first cannot be asserted, for then it would follow that Christ had died in vain; for as He died to expiate our sins, He would not have accounted it necessary to offer such an expiation for them, if they had been already expiated by the obedience of His life. And the latter cannot be maintained, because Christ has yielded perfect obedience to the Law of God, wherefore, if He have performed that for the expiation of our sins, He must necessarily, through that obedience, have expiated all of them perfectly.' Again, 'if Christ, by the obedience of His life, had rendered satisfaction to God for our sins, it would follow, as a consequence, that God is unjust, who has made an additional demand to receive satisfaction through the obedience of death, and thus required to have the same debt paid twice.'

19. Again, 'if Christ, by His obedience to the Law, has merited for us the forgiveness of sins, the consequence will be that the remission of sins was effected without the shedding of blood; but *without shedding of blood no remission is effected* as appears from Hebr. 9. 22; therefore Christ has not merited for us the remission of sins by the obedience which He performed to the Law.' (*Theses Theolog.*, vol. iii.)

20. To the same effect, also, is a passage in an old *Treatise on Justification*. 'If men be as righteous as Christ was in His life, there was no more necessity of His death for them, than there was either of His own death, or the death of any other, for himself. If we were perfectly just or righteous in Him, or with Him, in His life, then He just would not have died for the unjust, but He would have died for the just, for whom there was no necessity He should die.' This reason the Apostle expressly delivers, Gal. 2. 21, '*If righteousness be by the law, then Christ died in vain.*' I desire the impartial reader to observe narrowly the force of this inference made by the Holy Ghost. If righteousness, or justification, were by the Law, then Christ died in vain. Men cannot here betake themselves to their wonted refuge, to say, that by *the Law*, is to be understood the works of the Law as performed by a man's self in person. For if by the word *Law* in this place, we understand the works of the Law as performed by Christ, the consequence will rise up with the greater strength against them. If righteousness were by the works of the law, as performed by Christ, that is, if the imputation of them were our complete righteousness, the death of Christ for us had been in vain, since the righteousness of His life imputed had been a sufficient and complete righteousness for us.

21. The doctrine of such 'imputation of the active obedience of Christ' also confounds the two covenants of Works and Grace. In fact, those that hold the way of imputation should conceive that God never made more covenants than *one* with man; and that the Gospel is nothing else but a gracious aid from God to help man to perform the covenant of works: so that the life and salvation which are said to come by Christ, in no other sense come by Him, but as He fulfilled that Law of works for man which men themselves were not able to fulfil: and by imputation, as by a deed of gift, He makes over His perfect obedience & fulfilling of the Law to those that believe; so that they, in right of this perfect obedience, made theirs by imputation, come to inherit life and salvation, according to the strict tenor of the covenant of works— 'Do this and live.'

22. But then we may as well say, there was no second Adam, really differing from the first; or that the spirit of bondage is the same with the Spirit of adoption. If the second covenant of grace were implicitly contained in the first, then the meaning of the first covenant, conceived in those words, 'Do this and live,' must be, 'do this, either by thyself, or by another, and live.' There is no other way to reduce them to the same covenant.

23. Again, if the first and second covenant were in substance the same, then must the conditions in both be the same. For the conditions in a covenant are as essential parts of it as any other belonging to it. Though there be the same parties covenanting, and the same things covenanted for; yet if there be new articles of agreement, it is really another covenant. Now if the conditions were the same in both those covenants, then 'to do this,' and 'to believe,' faith and works are the same; whereas the Scripture, from place to place, makes the most irreconcilable opposition between them. But some, being shy of this consequence, hold 'the imputation of Christ's righteousness' (in the sense opposed) and yet demur upon an identity of the two covenants.

24. Wherefore, to prove it, I thus reason: Where the parties covenanting are the same, and the things covenanted for the same, and the conditions the same, then the covenants are the same. But if the righteousness of the Law imputed to us, be the condition of the new covenant, all the three, persons, things, conditions, are the same.

Therefore the two covenants, first and second, the old and the new, are the same; because as to the parties covenanting, and the things covenanted for, it is agreed, on both sides, they are the same.

25. If it be objected, that the righteousness of the Law imputed from another, and wrought by a man's self, are two different conditions; and that, therefore, it does not follow that the covenants are the same: to this I answer, *the substance of the agreement will be found the same notwithstanding*; the works, or righteousness of the Law are the same, by whomsoever wrought. If Adam had fulfilled the Law, as Christ did, he had been justified by the same righteousness, wherewith Christ himself was righteous. If it be said, that imputation in the second covenant, which was not in the first, makes a difference in the condition; I answer, a.) Imputation of works (or of righteousness,) is not the proviso of the new covenant, *but believing*. If imputation were the condition, then the whole covenant would lie upon God, and nothing He expected on the creature's part; for imputation is an act of God, not of men. b.) If it were granted that the righteousness (or the works of the Law imputed from Christ,) were that whereby we are justified, yet they must justify, not as imputed, but as righteousness, or works of the Law. Therefore imputation makes no difference in this respect. *Imputation can be no part of that righteousness by which we are justified, because it is no conformity with any Law, nor with any part or branch of any law, that man was ever bound to keep*. Therefore it can be no part of that righteousness by which man is justified. So that the condition of both covenants will be found the same, (& consequently both covenants the same,) if justification is held by 'the righteousness of Christ imputed' in the sense Antinomians usually do.

26. The refutation of this notion, opposed to the Holy Writ and the Article IV of the Augustana is a urgent duty to me, since I could not fail to perceive it is most delusive to the souls of men, directly destructive of moral obedience, and not less so of the Christian doctrine of the atonement of Christ, and justification by '*faith in His blood*.' The salvation of souls moves me to rebuke the errorists. It is on this ground that men who turn the grace of God into licentiousness contend, that 'being invested with the perfect righteousness of Christ, God cannot see any sin in them;' and, indeed, upon their own principles, they reason conclusively. So, justice has not to do with them, but with Christ; it demands perfect obedience, and Christ 'has rendered that perfect obedience for them,' and what He did is always accounted as done by them.

27. They are, therefore, according to this gross error, under no real obligation of obedience; they can fear no penal consequences from disobedience; and a path of the most flagrant vice, may agree with an entire confidence in the indefensible favour of God, with the profession of sonship & heritage, and the hope of heaven. These notions many shamelessly avow; and they have been too much encouraged in their fatal creed, by those who have held the same system substantially, though they abhor the bold conclusions which the open Antinomian would draw from it.

CALVIN ON JUSTIFICATION: IT IS REMISSION OF SINS AND NO ONE ELSE

28. The sentiments of Calvin on this subject may be collected from the following passages in the third book of his *Institutes*. « We simply explain justification to be an acceptance, by which God receives us into His favour and esteems us as righteous persons, and we say it consists in the remission of sins and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ.' He must certainly be destitute of a righteousness of his own, who is taught to seek it out of himself. This is most clearly asserted by the Apostle when he says, '*He hath made him to be sin [offering] for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*' We see that our righteousness is not in ourselves but in Christ. '*As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*' What is placing our righteousness in the obedience of Christ, but asserting that we are accounted righteous only because His obedience to death is accepted for us as if it were our own? »

29. In these passages, the wording of which seems at first sight to favour the opinion above refuted, there is, however, this marked difference, that *there is no separation* made between 'the active & passive righteousness' of Christ, His obedience to the precepts of the Moral Law, and His obedience to its penalty; so that one is imputed in our justification for one purpose, & the other for another; one to take the place of our obligation to obey, the other of our obligation to suffer; but the obedience of Christ *is considered as one*, as His holy life and sacrificial death considered together, and forming that righteousness of Christ which, being imputed to us, we are '*reputed righteous before God, and not of ourselves.*' This is further confirmed by the strenuous manner in which Calvin proves, that justification is simply the remission, or non-imputation of sin, « Whom, therefore, the Lord receives into fellowship with Him, him He is said to justify, because He cannot receive any one into fellowship with himself without making him from a sinner to be a righteous person. This is accomplished *by the remission*

of sins. For if they whom the Lord has reconciled to himself be judged according to their works, they will still be found actually sinners, who, notwithstanding, must be absolved and free from sin. It appears, then, that those whom God receives, are made righteous no otherwise than as they are purified by being cleansed from all their defilements by the remission of sins; so that such a righteousness may, in one word, be denominated a remission of sins. Both these points are fully established by the language of Paul, which I have already cited. *'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed to us the word of reconciliation.'* Then he adds, *'He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.'* The terms righteousness and reconciliation are here used by St Paul indiscriminately, to teach us that they are mutually comprehended in each other. And he states the manner of obtaining this righteousness to consist in our transgressions not being imputed to us; wherefore we can no longer doubt how God justifies, when we hear that He reconciles us to himself by not imputing our sins to us.' 'So Paul, in preaching at Antioch, says, *'Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him all that believe are justified.'* The Apostle thus joins 'forgiveness of sins' with 'justification,' to show that they are identically the same. » (*Institutes*, lib. 2, cap. 9.)

30. This simple notion of justification as the remission of sins, could not have been maintained by Calvin had he held the notion of a distinct imputation of Christ's active righteousness; for it has always followed from that notion, that they who have held it represent justification as consisting of two parts, first, the forgiveness of sins, and then the imputation of Christ's moral obedience, so that he who is forgiven may be considered personally righteous, and thus, when both meet, he is justified.

31. The view taken by Calvin of the imputation of Christ's righteousness in justification, is obviously, that the righteousness of Christ, that is, His entire obedience to the will of his Father both in doing and suffering, is, as he says, 'accepted for us, as though it were our own;' so that, in virtue of it upon our believing, we are accounted righteous, not personally, but by the remission, or non-imputation of our sins. Thus, he observes on Acts 13, 38—39, 'The justification which we have by Christ in the Gospel, is not a justification with righteousness, properly so called, *but a justification from sin*, and from the guilt of sin and condemnation due to it. So when Christ said to men and women in the Gospel, *'Thy sins are forgiven thee,'* then He justified them—the forgiveness of their sins was their justification.'

32. Then we must remember that if it can be shown, that neither is the 'imputation of Christ's righteousness,' in any good sense expressed or implied in Scripture, and that the phrases, being clothed and invested with His righteousness, are not used with any reference to justification, it seems preferable, at least when we are investigating truth, to discard them at once, and fully to bring out the testimony of Scripture on the doctrine of imputation.

A GOOD DEFINITION ABOUT IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS

33. The question then will be, not whether the imputation of Christ's righteousness is to be taken in the sense of the Antinomians, which has been sufficiently refuted; but *whether there is any Scripture authority for the imputation of Christ's righteousness as it is understood by Calvin*, and admitted by some others.

34. With Calvin the notion of imputation seems to be, that the righteousness of Christ, that is, His entire obedience to the will of His Father, both in doing and suffering, is, upon our believing, imputed, or accounted to us, or accepted for us, 'as though it were OUR OWN.' From which we may conclude, that he admitted some kind of transfer of the righteousness of Christ to our account, and that believers are considered so to be in Christ, as that He should answer for them in Law, and plead His righteousness in default of theirs. All this, we grant, is capable of being interpreted to a good and Scriptural sense; but it is also capable of a contrary one. Thus, we can say that Christ's righteousness is imputed to us in the sense of *its being accounted of God the valuable consideration, satisfaction, & merit*, (attaining God's ends,) *for which we are* (when we by grace believe) *forgiven and justified, against the condemning sentence of the Law, and accounted and accepted of God to grace and glory.* If we take the phrase of imputing Christ's righteousness *improperly*, viz, for the bestowing, as it were, of the righteousness of Christ, including His obedience, as well passive as active, in the return of it, i. e. *in the privileges, blessings, and benefits purchased by it*, so a believer may be said to be justified by the righteousness of Christ imputed. But then the meaning can be no more than this: God justifies a believer for the sake of Christ's righteousness, & not for any righteousness of his own. Such an imputation of the righteousness of Christ as this is no way denied or questioned.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN TRUE EVANGELICAL CATHOLICS AND ANTINOMIANS

35. Between these opinions, as to the imputation of the righteousness of Christ it will be seen, that there is a manifest difference, which difference arises from the different senses in which the term imputation is taken. The latter takes it in the sense of *accounting or allowing to the believer the benefit* of the righteousness of Christ, the other *in the sense of reckoning or accounting the righteousness of Christ as ours*; that is, what He did and suffered is regarded as done & suffered by us. 'It is accepted,' says Calvin, 'as though it were our own;' so that though Calvin *does not divide* the 'active & passive obedience of Christ,' nor make justification anything more than the remission of sin, yet his opinion easily slides into the Antinomian notion, and lays itself open to several of the same objections, and especially to this, that it involves the same kind of fiction, that what Christ did or suffered, is, in any sense whatever, considered by Him who knows all things as they are, as being done or suffered by any other person, than by him who did or suffered it in fact. — For this notion, that the righteousness of Christ is so imputed as to be accounted our own, there is no warrant in the Word of God; and a slight examination of those passages, which are indifferently adduced to support either the Antinomian or the Calvinistic view of the subject, will suffice to demonstrate this.

EXAMINATION OF FURTHER BIBLE PASSAGES HELD BY ANTINOMIANS

36. Psalm 32. 1: '*Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.*' The covering of sin here spoken of, is by some considered to be the investment of the sinner with the righteousness or obedience of Christ. But this is entirely gratuitous, for the forgiveness of sin, even by the legal atonements, is called, according to the Hebrew, to *cover sin*; and the latter part of the sentence is clearly a parallelism to the former. This is the interpretation of Luther and of Calvin himself. To *forgive sin*, to *cover sin*, and *not to impute sin*, are in this Psalm all phrases obviously of the same import, and no other kind of imputation but the non-imputation of sin is mentioned in it. And, indeed, the passage will not serve the purpose of the advocates of the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's 'active righteousness,' on their own principles; for sin cannot be covered by the imputation of Christ's active righteousness, since they hold that it is taken away by the imputation of His death, and that the office of Christ's active righteousness is not to take away sin; but, to render us personally and positively holy by imputation and the fiction of a transfer.

37. Some have digged for the treasure of imputation in Isaiah 45. 24, '*Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength.*' But, first, neither is there the least breathing of that imputation so much wandered after. Secondly, the plain and direct meaning of the place is, that when God should communicate the knowledge of himself; in His Son, to the world, His people should have this sense of the means of their salvation and peace, that they receive them of the free grace of God, and not of themselves, or by the merit of their own righteousness. And Calvin's exposition is to this effect: — 'Because righteousness and strength are the two main points of our salvation, the faithful acknowledge God to be the author of both.'

THE ROBE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS PASSAGES

38. With respect to all those passages which speak of the churches, or their individual members being 'clothed with garments of salvation,' 'robes of righteousness,' 'white linen, the righteousness of the saints,' or of 'putting on Christ;' a class of texts on which, from their mere sound, the advocates of imputed righteousness ring so many times, the use which is thus made of them shows either great inattention to the context, or great ignorance of the principles of analysis: — the former, because the context will show that either those passages relate to temporal deliverances, and external blessings; or else, not to justification, but to habitual and practical sanctification, and to the honours and rewards of the saints in glory: — the latter, because nothing is more common in language than to represent good or evil habits by clean or filthy, by soiled or resplendent vestments, by nakedness or by clothing; and this is especially the case in the Hebrew language, because it was the custom of the Israelites, by changing their garments to express the changes in their condition. They put on sackcloth, or laid aside their upper robe, (which is, in Scripture style, called making themselves naked,) or rent their garments, when personal or national afflictions came upon them; and they arrayed themselves in white & adorned apparel, in seasons of festivity, and after great deliverances. In all these figurative expressions there is, however, nothing which countenances the notion that Christ's righteousness is a robe thrown upon sinful

men, to hide from the eye of justice their natural squalidness & pollution, and to give them confidence in the presence of God. No interpretation can be more far-fetched and unfounded.

THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

39. Romans 3. 21—22, *'But now 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 the faith of Jesus Christ.'* The *righteousness of God* here is, by some, taken to signify 'the righteousness of Christ imputed to them that believe.' But the very text makes it evident, that by 'the righteousness of God,' the righteousness of the Father is meant, for He is distinguished from 'Jesus Christ,' mentioned immediately afterward; and by the righteousness of God, it is also plain, that His rectoral justice in the administration of pardon, is meant, which, of course, is not thought capable of imputation. This is made indubitable by the verse that follows, *'to declare at this time his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth on Jesus.'*

40. The phrase, *the righteousness of God*, in this and several other passages in St Paul's writings, obviously means *God's righteous method of justifying sinners through the atonement of Christ*, and instrumentally, by faith. This is the grand peculiarity of the Gospel scheme, the fullness at once of its love & its wisdom, that *'the righteousness of God is manifested without law;* and that without either an enforcement of the penalty of the violated Law upon the personal offender; which would have cut him off from hope; or without making his justification to depend upon works of obedience to the Law, (which was the only method of justification admitted by the Jews of St Paul's day,) and which obedience was impossible, & therefore hopeless; He can yet, in perfect consistency with His justice and righteous administration, offer pardon to the guilty. No wonder, therefore, that the Apostle, who discourses professedly on this subject, should lay so great a stress upon it, and that his mind, always full of a subject so great and glorious, should so often advert to it incidentally, as well as in his regular discourses on the justification of man in the sight of God. Thus he gives it as a reason why he was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, that *'therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, the just shall live by faith,'* Rom. 1. 17. Thus, again, in contrasting God's method of justifying the ungodly with the error of the Jews, by whom justification was held to be the acquittal of the righteous or obedient, he says, *'for they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God,'* Rom. 10. 3.

41. The same contrast we have in Phil. 3. 9, *'Not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Jesus Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.'* In all these passages the righteousness of God manifestly signifies, *His righteous method of justifying them that believe in Christ*. No reference at all is made to the imputation of Christ's righteousness to such persons, and much less is any distinction set up between His 'active and passive righteousness.'

THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST IS OBEDIENCE TO DEATH IN THE CROSS

42. Rom. 5. 18—19, *'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 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.'* That this passage, though generally depended upon in this controversy as the most decisive in its evidence in favour of the doctrine of imputation, proves nothing to the purpose may be thus demonstrated. It proves nothing in favour of the imputation of Christ's active righteousness. For,

a. Here is nothing said of the 'active obedience' of Christ, as distinguished from His obedient suffering, which might lead us to attribute the free gift of justification to the former, rather than to the latter.

b. If the Apostle is supposed to speak here of the 'active obedience' of Christ, as distinguished from His sufferings, His death is of course excluded from the work of justification. But this cannot be allowed, because the Apostle has intimated in the same chapter that we are *'justified by His blood,'* Rom. 5. 9, and, therefore, it cannot be allowed that he is speaking of the 'active obedience' of Christ, as distinguished from His passive.

c. As the Apostle has unequivocally taught, that we are justified by the blood of Christ, or, in other words, *'that we are justified through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth a Propitiation, through faith in His blood,'* (a thing which the doctrine under examination supposes to be impossible,) there is reason to

conclude that he speaks here of His *passive*, rather than of His *active* obedience. If, indeed, His willingness to suffer for our sins were never spoken of as an act of obedience, such an observation might have the appearance of a mere expedient to get rid of a difficulty. But if, on the other hand, this should prove to be the very spirit and letter of Scripture, the justness of it will be obvious. —Hear, then, our Lord himself on this subject. *'Therefore doth my Father love me, because 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 10.17—18. This, then, was the commandment to which He rendered willing obedience, when He said, *'O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done,'* Matt. 26. 42. *'The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?'* John 18.11. In conformity with this, the Apostle applies to Him the following words: *'Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepared Me. Then said I, Lo I come to do thy will, O God! By (His performance of) which will we are sanctified; through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all,'* Heb. 10. 5—10. *'Being found in fashion as a man, (says St Paul,) He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,'* Phil. 2. 8. Such was his obedience, obedience unto the death of the cross. And by this His obedience unto the death of the cross, shall many be constituted righteous, or be justified. Where, then, is the imputation of His active obedience for justification?

43. It proves nothing in favour of the imputation of Christ's righteousness considered as one, and including what He did and suffered, in the sense of its being reputed our righteousness, by transfer or by fiction of law. For though the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity is supposed to be taught in this chapter, and the imputation of Christ's obedience in one or other of the senses above given, is argued from this particular text, the examination of the subject will show that the right understanding of the imputation of Adam's sin wholly overthrows both the Antinomian & Calvinistic view of the imputation of Christ's righteousness.

44. Then, because the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, is frequently produced to prove the imputation of Christ's righteousness; I shall lay down, with as much plainness as I can, in what sense the Scriptures stand for that imputation. *The Scriptures own no other imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, than of Christ's righteousness to those that believe.* As we said, the righteousness of Christ is imputed, or given to those, that believe, not in the letter or formality of it, but in blessings, privileges, and benefits purchased of God by the merit of it.

45. So the sin of Adam is imputed to his posterity, not in the letter and formality of it, (which is the imputation commonly urged,) but *in the demerit of it*, that is, in the curse or punishment due to it. Therefore, as concerning this imputation of Adam's sin, I answer, *First*, the Scripture nowhere affirms, either the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, or of the righteousness of Christ to those that believe; neither is such a manner of speaking anyway agreeable to the language of the Holy Ghost: for in the Scriptures, wheresoever the term IMPUTING is used, it is only applied to, or spoken of something of the same persons to whom the imputation is said to be made, and never, to my remembrance, to, or of anything of another's. So, in Rom. 4.3, *'Abraham believed God, & it was IMPUTED to him for righteousness,'* that is, his own believing was imputed to him, not another man's. So, verse 5, but *'to him that worketh not, but believeth, his faith is IMPUTED to him for righteousness.'* So, Psalm 106. 30-31, *'Phineas stood up and executed judgment, and that' (act of his) 'was IMPUTED to him for righteousness,'* that is, received a testimony from God of being a righteous act. So again, 2 Cor. 5.19, *'not IMPUTING their trespasses,'* (their own trespasses,) *'unto them.'*

46. *Secondly*, When a thing is said simply to be imputed, as sin, folly, and so righteousness, the phrase is not to be taken concerning the bare acts of the things, as if (for example) to impute sin to a man, signified this, to reputed the man, (to whom sin is imputed,) to have committed a sinful act, or, as if to impute folly, were simply to charge a man to have done foolishly: but when it is applied to things that are evil, and attributed to persons that have power over those, to whom the imputation is made, it signifies, *the charging the guilt of what is imputed upon the head of the person to whom the imputation is made, with an intent of inflicting some condign punishment upon him.* So that to impute sin (in Scripture phrase) is *to charge the guilt of sin upon a man with a purpose to punish him for it.* Thus Rom. 5.13, sin is said, *'not to be IMPUTED where there is no law.'* The meaning cannot be, that the act which a man does, whether there be a law or no law, should not be imputed to him. The Law does not make any act to be imputed or ascribed to a man which might not as well have been imputed without it. But the meaning is that there is no guilt charged by God upon men, nor any punishment inflicted for anything done by them, but only by virtue of the Law prohibiting. In which respect the Law is said to be the strength of sin, because it gives a condemning power against the doer, to that which otherwise would have had none, 1 Cor. 15. 56. So again, Job 24.12, when it is said, *'God doth not lay folly to the charge of them, (i. e. impute*

folly to them,) *that make the souls of the slain to cry out,*' the meaning is not that God does not repute them to have committed the acts of oppression, or murder. For supposing they did such things, it is impossible but God should repute them to have done them: but *that God does not visibly charge the guilt of these sins upon them, or inflict punishment for them.* So, 2 Sam. 19. 19, when Shimei prays David not to IMPUTE wickedness unto him, his meaning is, not to desire David not to think he had done wickedly in railing upon him, (for himself confessed this in the very next words,) but not to inflict the punishment that that wickedness deserved. So when David himself pronounces the man blessed to whom the Lord IMPUTES not sin, his meaning is, not that there is any man, whom the Lord would not repute to have committed those acts of sin, which he has committed; but *that such are blessed on whom God will not charge the demerit of their sins in the punishment due to them.* So yet again, (to forbear farther citations,) 2 Cor. 5. 19, when God is said, '*not to IMPUTE their sins unto men,*' the meaning is, not that God should not repute men to have committed such & such sins against Him; but that He freely *discharges them from the punishment due to them.* By all which testimonies from Scripture, concerning the constant use of the term imputing, or imputation, it is evident that the proposition, 'that the transgression of the law is imputable from one person to another,' has no foundation in Scripture.

47. And, therefore, *Thirdly* & lastly, to come home to the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, I answer, First, that either to say that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to His posterity (of believers) or the sin of Adam to his, are both expressions, at least, unknown to the Scriptures. There is neither word, nor syllable, nor letter, nor tittle of any such thing to be found there. But *that the faith of him that believeth is imputed for righteousness,* are words that the Holy Ghost uses.

48. But, then, because I would make no exceptions against words, farther than necessity enforces, I grant, there are expressions in Scripture concerning both the communication of Adam's sin with his posterity, and the righteousness of Christ with those that believe, that will fairly enough bear the term of imputation, if it be rightly understood, and according to the use of it in Scripture upon other occasions. But as it is commonly taken and understood by many, it occasions much error and mistake.

49. Concerning Adam's sin or disobedience, many are said to be '*made sinners by it,*' Rom. 5. 19. And so '*by the obedience of Christ,*' it is said (in the same place) '*that many shall be made righteous.*' But if men will exchange language with the Holy Ghost, they must see that they make Him no loser. If, when they say, 'Adam's sin is imputed to all unto condemnation,' their meaning be the same with the Holy Ghost's, when He says, '*that by the disobedience of one, many were made sinners,*' there is no harm done: but it is evident by what many speak, that the Holy Ghost & they are not of one mind, touching the imputation or communication of Adam's Sin with his posterity, but that they differ as much in meaning, as in words. If when they say, 'Adam's sin is imputed to all unto condemnation,' their meaning be this, that the guilt of Adam's sin is charged upon his whole posterity, or that the punishment of Adam's sin redounded from his person to his whole posterity, a main part of which punishment lies in that original corruption wherein they are all conceived and born, and whereby they are made truly sinners before God; if this be the meaning of the term imputation, when applied to Adam's sin, I don't disagree. But if the meaning be, that that sinful act wherein Adam transgressed when he ate the forbidden fruit, is, in the letter and formality of it, imputed to his posterity, so that by this imputation all his posterity are made formally sinners: his is an imputation which the Scripture will never justify.

50. The last text necessary to mention is Rom. 4. 6, '*Even as David declareth the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works.*' Here again Calvinists and alike expositors of this class assume even against the letter of the text & context that the righteousness which God is said to impute, is the righteousness of Christ. But Calvin himself may here be sufficient to answer them. «In the fourth chapter of the Romans the Apostle first mentions an imputation of righteousness, and immediately represents it as consisting in remission of sins. David, says he, describes the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputes righteousness without works, saying, '*Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven,*' &c. He there argues, not concerning a branch, but the whole of justification; he also adduces the definition of it given by David, when he pronounces those to be blessed who receive the free forgiveness of their sins, whence it appears that this righteousness is simply opposed to guilt.» (*Institutes* b. 3, cap. 4.) The *imputation of righteousness* in this passage is, in Calvin's view, therefore, the simple, non-imputation of sin, or, in other words, *theremission of sins.*

A FURTHER COMMENT ON IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS

51. In none of these passages, is there, then, anything found to stand for even that second view of imputation, which consists in the accounting the righteousness of Christ in justification to be our righteousness. It is only

imputed in the benefit and effect of it, that is, in the blessings and privileges purchased by it; and though we may use the phrase, *the imputed righteousness of Christ*, we had better use it meaning the way of merit or effect, because it is procured for us by the merit of Christ, not because it is subjectively or inherently in Christ; yet since this manner of speaking has no foundation in Scripture, and must generally lead to misapprehensions, – it will be found more conducive to the cause of truth to confine ourselves to the language of the Scriptures. According to them, there is no fictitious accounting either of what Christ do did or suffered, or of both united, to us as being done and suffered by us, through our union with Him, or through His becoming our legal representative; but His ‘active & passive righteousness,’ understood *as one*, not divided, advanced in dignity by the union of the Divine nature and perfection, is the true meritorious cause of our justification. It is that great whole which constitutes His ‘merits;’ that is the consideration, in view of which the offended but merciful Governor of the world, has determined it to be a just and righteous, as well as a merciful act, to justify the ungodly; and, for the sake of this perfect obedience of our Lord to the will of the Father, an obedience extending unto ‘*death, even the death of the cross*,’ to every penitent sinner who believes in Him, but considered still in his own person as ‘ungodly,’ and meriting nothing but punishment, ‘*his faith is imputed for righteousness*,’ it is followed by the remission of his sins and all the benefits of the evangelical promise.

52. This imputation of Faith for righteousness is the third opinion, which we proposed to examine.

53. That this is the doctrine taught by the express letter of Scripture no one can deny, & as one well observed, ‘what that is which is imputed for righteousness in justification, all the wisdom and learning of men is not so fit or able to determine, – but the Holy Ghost, speaking in Scripture, He being the great secretary of heaven, and privy to all the counsels of God.’ ‘*Abraham believed God and it was imputed unto him for righteousness*,’ Rom.4. 3. ‘*To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted to him for righteousness*,’ verse 5. ‘*We say that this was imputed to him for righteousness*,’ verse 9. ‘*Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for us to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe in him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead*,’ verses 22—24.

54. The testimony of the Apostle, then, being so express on this point, the imputation of faith for righteousness must be taken to be the doctrine of the New Testament, unless, indeed, we admit, with the advocates of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, that *faith* is here used metonymically for the object of faith, that is, the righteousness of Christ. The context of the above passages, however, is sufficient to refute this, and makes it indubitable that the Apostle uses the term faith in its proper and literal sense. In verse 5, he calls the faith of him that believes, and which is imputed to him for righteousness, ‘*His faith*,’ but in what sense could this be taken if St Paul meant by ‘his faith,’ the ‘object of his faith,’ namely, the righteousness of Christ? And how could that be his before the imputation was made to him? Again, in verse 5, the faith spoken of is opposed to works: ‘*To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted to him for righteousness*.’ Finally, the faith imputed to us is described to be our ‘believing in Him who raised up our Lord Jesus from the dead: so that the Apostle has, by these explanations, rendered it impossible for us to understand him as meaning anything else by faith, *but the act of believing*. To those who will, notwithstanding this evidence from the context, still insist upon understanding faith, in these passages, to mean the righteousness of Christ, we bluntly observe, if it be not faith indeed that the Apostle means, the context is so far from helping our understandings, that it contributed to our unavoidable deceit or ignorance. Read over the texts, and put but ‘Christ’s righteousness’ everywhere instead of the word ‘faith,’ & see what a shocking paraphrase you will make. – Some further observations will however be necessary for the clear apprehension of this doctrine.

55. The Christian doctrine on atonement establishes that the Law of God inflicts the penalty of death upon every act of disobedience, and that all men have come under that penalty. Those men, having become totally corrupt, are not capable of obedience in future. That if they were, there is nothing in the nature of that future obedience to be a consideration for the forgiveness of past offences, under a righteous government. It follows, therefore, that, by moral obedience, or attempted and professed moral obedience, there can be no remission of sins, that is, no deliverance from the penalty of offences actually committed.

56. This is the ground of the great argument of the Apostle Paul in his Epistle to the Romans. He proves both Jews and Gentiles under sin; that the whole world is guilty before God; and by consequence under His wrath, under condemnation, from which the Gospel could only relieve them.

57. In his argument with the Jews the subject is farther opened. They sought justification by ‘*works of law*.’ If we take ‘works’ to mean obedience both to the Moral and Ceremonial Law it makes no difference; for, as they had given up the typical character of their sacrifices, and their symbolical reference to the death of the Messiah, the

performance of their religious rites was no longer an expression of faith; it was brought down to the same principle as obedience to the Moral Law, a simple compliance with the commands of God. Their case, then, was this, they were sinners on conviction of their Law, and by obedience to it their sought justification, ignorant both of its spiritual weaning and large extent, and unmindful, too, of this obvious principle, that *no acts of obedience, even if perfect, could take away past transgression*. The Apostle's great axiom on this subject is, that *'by works of law, no man can be justified,'* and the doctrine of justification which he teaches is the opposite of theirs. It is, that men are sinners; that they must confess themselves such, and join to this confession a true repentance. That justification is a gratuitous act of God's mercy, a procedure of pure grace, not of debt. That in order to the exercise of this grace, on the part of God, Christ was set forth as a propitiation for sin; that His death, under this character, is a *'demonstration of the righteousness of God'* in the free and gratuitous remission of sins; and that this actual remission or justification, follows upon believing in Christ, because faith under this gracious constitution and method of justification, is accounted to men for righteousness; in other words, that righteousness is imputed to them upon their believing, which imputation of righteousness is, as he teaches us, in the passages before quoted, the forgiveness of sins; for to have faith counted or imputed for righteousness is explained by David, in the Psalm which the Apostle quotes, (Rom. 4,) to have sin forgiven, covered, & not imputed. That this was no new doctrine, he shows also from the justification of Abraham. *'Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness,'* Rom. 4. 3. *'Know ye, therefore, that they which are of the faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So these which are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham,'* Gal. 3. 7—9.

58. On the one hand, therefore, it is the plain doctrine of Scripture that man is not, and never was in any age, justified by works of any kind, whether moral or ceremonial; on the other, that he is justified by the imputation and accounting of 'faith for righteousness.' On this point, *until the Antinomian corruption began to infest the Churches of the Reformation*, the leading commentators, from the earliest ages, were very uniform and explicit. That when faith is said to be imputed to us for righteousness, the word is taken *literally*, & not *metonymically*, was the common interpretation anciently received and followed by the principal lights of the Church of God; and for a thousand years together (as far as my knowledge will assist me) was never questioned or contradicted. Neither did the contrary opinion ever look out into the world, till Jesuit *Molinism* arose. And from Luther's and Calvin's times, the stream of interpreters agrees therewith.

59. Barnabas (70 AD!) Cites the following words as a passage of Scripture, 'And there was a river drawing, or running, on the right hand, and out of it sprung up beautiful trees, and whosoever eats of them shall live forever;' upon which he observes, that 'this he says because we go down into the water (meaning in baptism) full of sins and filth, and we come up out of it bringing forth fruit; having in the heart fear and confidence in Jesus through the Spirit, and whosoever eats of these shall live forever;' this he says, that whosoever hears the things that are said, *kai pisteuse*, and believes, shall live forever.' Bernal. Ep. par. 1, c. 5, p. 235,236.

60. Clemens (190 AD.) Faith is *ischus eis soterian 'kai dunamis eis zoen aionion*, strength unto salvation, and a power unto everlasting life. And a little after he says, that 'his, that is, Christ's goodness towards them, who through hearing have believed, is *ametakinetos se kai arrepes*, immovable, and turns neither one way nor another.' *Stromateis*. 1. 2, p, 284; *Paedagog*. 1. 1, c. 9, p. 126.

61. Tertullian, who wrote about the year 194, in his fifth book against Marcion, says, 'But how the children of faith? or of whose faith, if not of Abraham's? For if Abraham believed God, and that was imputed unto him for righteousness, and he thereby deserved the name of a father of many nations, we, also, by believing God, are justified as Abraham was.' Therefore Tertullian's opinion directly is, that the faith which is said to be imputed to Abraham for righteousness, is faith properly taken, and not the righteousness of Christ apprehended by faith.

62. Origen, who lived about the year 203, in his fourth book upon the Romans, chap. 4, verse 3, says, 'It seems, therefore, that in this place also, whereas many faiths (that is, many acts of believing) of Abraham had gone before, now all his faith was collected and united together, and so was accounted unto him for righteousness.'

63. Justin Martyr, who lived before them both, and not long after the Apostle John's time, out the year 130, in his disputation with Trypho the Jew, led them both to that interpretation. 'Abraham carried not away the testimony of righteousness, because of his circumcision, but because of his faith. For before he was circumcised, this was pronounced of him, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness.'

64. Hilary of Poitiers (ad 350) often speaks of saving faith as invincible and immoveable. 'This is the mystery of divine revelation,' says he, 'not only to say, but also to believe, that Christ is the Son of God: —this faith is the foundation of the church, through this faith the gates of hell against it are weak.' Again, 'When He (Christ) asked Martha, praying for Lazarus, whether she believed that those that believed in Him should never die; she spake out the faith of her own conscience, saying, *Yea, Lord, I believe*, etc. *Confessio haec aeternitas est et fides ista non moritur*, this confession is eternity, and this faith dies not. *De Trinitate* 1.6. p. 74; 78. – 'The kingdom of heaven,' says also he, 'which the prophets declared, John preached, our Lord professed was in himself, He wills should be hoped for, *sine aliqua incertae voluntatis ambiguitate*, ' without any doubtfulness of an uncertain will,' otherwise 'there is no justification by faith, if faith itself should be doubtful;' for, as he observes a little after, 'In the sayings of God is truth, and all the efficacy of created things is in the Word; wherefore neither what He has promised is doubtful, nor what He speaks is ineffectual.' In Psalm 44 p. 254; Moral. c. 22, p. 386.

65. On Isaiah 51.5, says St Jerome (AD 390) The right hand and arm of the Lord is He who saves for himself those who first were lost, *us nullus periret de his quos ei Pater dederat*, 'that none of them might perish whom the Father had given to Him;' for that 'also the souls of the saints, who in the midst of the persecutions of this world, *anna in Deum solididatae sunt fide*, are established with a firm faith in God, in the multitude of churches among the Gentiles, called isles, we have frequently declared,' Comment, in Isaiah tom. 5. p. 86. C. And elsewhere he observes, that 'he who with his whole mind trusts in Christ, though as a fallen man he was dead in sin, *fide sua vivit in perpetuum*, by his faith lives forever.' *Ad Minerium*, tom. 3. p. 62, 1.

66. Chrysostom, upon Gal. 3, says, '*For what was Abraham the worse for not being under the law? Nothing at all. For his faith was sufficient unto him for righteousness.*' If Abraham's faith was enough unto him for righteousness, God must needs impute it for righteousness unto him; for it is this imputation from God that must make that sufficiency of it unto Abraham. That which will not pass in account with God for righteousness, will never be sufficient for righteousness unto the creature.

67. St. Augustine, who lived about the year 390, gives frequent testimony to this interpretation. Upon Psalm 148, 'For we by believing have found that which they (the Jews) lost by not believing. For Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness.' Therefore his opinion clearly is, that it was Abraham's faith, or believing properly taken, that was imputed unto him for righteousness, and not the righteousness of Christ. For that faith of his, which was so imputed, he opposed to the unbelief of the Jews, whereby they lost the grace and favour of God. Now the righteousness of Christ is not opposed to unbelief, but faith properly taken. Again, writing upon Psalm 70, 'For I believe in him that justifies the ungodly, that my faith may be imputed unto me for righteousness.' – The same father yet again, in his tract of Nature and Grace: 'But if Christ died not in vain, the ungodly is justified in him alone: to whom, believing in him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.'

68. Primasius, about the year 500, writes upon Romans 4, verse 3, 'Abraham's faith by the gift of God was so great, that both his former sins were forgiven him, & this faith of his alone preferred in acceptation before all righteousness.'

69. Bede, who lived somewhat before the year 700, upon Romans 4. 5, observes, 'What faith, but that which the apostle in another place fully defines? neither circumcision, nor uncircumcision, avails anything, but faith which works by love; not any faith, but that faith which works by love.' Certainly that faith, which Paul defines to be a faith working by love, cannot be conceived to be the righteousness of Christ; and yet this faith it was, in the judgment of this author, that was imputed unto Abraham for righteousness.

70. Haymo, about the year 840, on Rom. 4. 3, writes, 'Because he believed God, it was imputed unto him for righteousness, that is, unto remission of sins, because by that faith, wherewith he believed, he was made righteous.'

71. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury, about the year 1090, upon Rom. 4. 3, 'That he (meaning Abraham) believed so strongly, was by God imputed for righteousness unto him; that is, &c, by his believing he was imputed righteous before God.'

72. From all these testimonies it is apparent, that *the testimony on justification by faith was anciently obtained in the Church of God*, and no man was found to open his mouth against it, till it had been established for above a thousand years. Come we to the times of *Reformation* and post-*Reformation*; here we shall find it still maintained by men of the greatest authority and learning in the divers parties.

73. Luther on Gal. 3. 6, 'Christian righteousness is an affiance or faith in the Son of God, which affiance is imputed unto righteousness for Christ's sake.' And in the same place, not long after, 'God for Christ's sake, in whom I have begun to believe, accounts this (my) imperfect faith, for perfect righteousness.'

74. Peter Martyr declares himself of the same judgment, upon Rom. 4. 3, 'To be imputed for righteousness in another sense, that by which we ourselves are reckoned in the number of the righteous. And this Paul attributes to faith only.'

75. Calvin has the same interpretation upon Rom. 4. 3, 'Wherefore Abraham, by believing, does only embrace time grace tendered unto him, that it might not be in vain. If this be imputed unto him for righteousness, it follows, that he is no otherwise righteous, but as trusting or relying upon the goodness of God, he has boldness to hope for all things from him.' Again, upon verse 5, 'Faith is imputed for righteousness, not because it carries any merit from us, but because it apprehends the goodness of God.' Hence it appears, that he never thought of a metonymical sense in the word *faith*; hut that he took it in the plain, ready, and grammatical signification.

76. Lutheran Musculus contends for this imputation, also, in his common place of justification, sect. 5, 'This faith should be in high esteem with us; not in regard of the proper quality of it, but in regard of the purpose of God, whereby He has decreed, for Christ's sake, to impute it for righteousness unto those that believe in Him.' The same author upon Gal. 3, 'What did Abraham that should be imputed unto him for righteousness, but only this, that he believed God?' Again, 'But when he firmly believed God promising, that very faith was imputed to him, in the place of righteousness, that is, he was of God reputed righteous for that faith, and absolved from all his sins.'

77. Gnesio Lutheran Illyricus forsakes not his fellow interpreters in this point, upon Romans 4.3, 'That same believing was imputed unto him for righteousness.'

78. Hunnius, another Lutheran divine, on Romans 4. 3, 'The faith whereby Abraham believed God promising, was imputed unto him for righteousness.'

80. Beza, upon the same Scripture, says, 'Here the business is, concerning that which was imputed unto him, viz, his faith.'

81. Junius & Tremellius are likewise of the same mind, on Gen. 15.6, 'God esteemed (or accounted) him for righteous though wanting righteousness, and reckoned this in the place of righteousness, that he embraced the promise with a firm belief.'

EXPLANATION OF TERMS

82. When, however, we say, that faith is imputed for righteousness, in order to prevent misapprehension, and fully to answer the objections raised on the other side, the meaning of the different terms of this proposition ought to be explained. They are **RIGHTEOUSNESS**, **FAITH**, and **IMPUTATION**.

83. To explain the first, reference has at times been made to time three terms used by the Apostle Paul, *dikaiwma*, *dixaiwsi~*, and *dikaiousunh*; of which, as it was said, 'the first usually signifies the practical or preceptive matter, that is, righteousness; the second, active, efficient justification; the third, the state of the just, qualitative or relative, or *ipsam iustitiam*.' The Apostle often uses the term *dikaiousunh*, righteousness, in a passive sense for justification itself. So in Gal. 2.21, 'If *righteousness* (justification; as in Spanish, 'justicia,' 'justificación') come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.' Gal. 3. 21, 'For if, there had been a law given which could have given life, verily *righteousness* (justification) should have been by the law.' Rom. 9.30, 'The Gentiles have attained to *righteousness*, (justification,) even the *righteousness* (justification) which is by faith.' And in Rom. 10.4, 'Christ is the end of the law for *righteousness* to everyone that believeth;' where, also, we must understand *righteousness* [Latin *iustitiam*,] to mean *justification*. Rom. 5.18—19, will also show, that with the Apostle, 'to make righteous,' and 'to justify,' signify the same thing; for '*justification of life*,' in verse 18, is called in the 19, being '*made righteous*.' To be accounted righteous is, then, in the Apostle's approach, where there has been personal guilt, to be justified; and what is accounted or imputed to us for righteousness, is accounted or imputed to us for our justification.

84. The second term of the above proposition which it is necessary to explain, is **FAITH**. The true nature of justifying faith will be explained below; all that is here necessary to remark is, that it is not every act of faith, or faith in the general truths of revelation, which is imputed for righteousness, though it supposes them all, and is

the conclusion of them all. By faith we understand that the Word of God framed the worlds; but it is not our faith in Creation, which is imputed to us for righteousness. So in the case of Abraham; he not only had faith in the truths of religion, of which he was the teacher & guardian, but had exercised affiance, also, in some particular promises of God, before he exhibited that great act of faith, which was '*counted to him for righteousness,*' and which made his justification the pattern of the justification of sinful men in all ages. But having received the promise of a son, from whom the Christ should spring, in whom all nations were to be blessed; and, '*being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about a hundred years old, nor yet the deadness of Sarah's womb; he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform, and therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness,*' Rom. 4. 19—23. His faith had the Christ for its great and definitive object, and in its nature it was an entire affiance in the promise and faithfulness of God, with reference to the holy seed. So the object of that faith which is imputed to us for righteousness is Christ; Christ as having made atonement for our sins, (the remission of our sins, as expressly taught by St. Paul, being obtained by '*faith in His blood;*') and it is in its nature an entire affiance in the promise of God to this effect, made to us through His atonement, and founded upon it. Faith being thus understood, excludes all notion of its meritoriousness. It is not faith, generally considered, which is imputed to us for righteousness; but faith (trust) in an atonement offered by another in our behalf; by which trust in something without us, we acknowledge our own insufficiency, guilt, and unworthiness, and directly ascribe the merit to that in which we trust, and which is not our own, namely, *the propitiation of the blood of Christ.*

85. The third term is IMPUTATION. The original verb is well enough translated to impute, in the sense of *to reckon, to account;* but, as we have stated above, it is never used to signify imputation in the sense of accounting the actions of one person to have been performed by another.

86. A man's sin or righteousness is imputed to him, when he is considered as actually the doer of sinful or of righteous acts, in which sense the word *repute* is in more general use; and he is, in consequence, reputed a vicious or a holy man. A man's sin or righteousness is imputed to him in its legal consequence, under a government by rewards & punishments; & then to impute sin or righteousness, signifies, in a legal sense, to reckon and to account it, to acquit or condemn, and forthwith to punish, or to exempt from punishment. Thus Shimei entreats David, that he would '*not impute folly to him.*' That is, that he would not punish his folly. In this sense, too, David speaks of the blessedness of the man, to whom the Lord '*imputeth not sin,*' that is, whom He forgives, so that the legal consequence of his sin shall not fall upon him. This non-imputation of sin, to a sinner, is expressly called the '*imputation of righteousness, without works;*' the imputation of righteousness is, then, the non-punishment, or pardon of sin; and if this passage be read in its connection, it will also be seen, that by '*imputing*' faith for righteousness, the Apostle means precisely the same thing. '*But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness; even as David, also, describeth the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, blessed is the man whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered, blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not sin.*' This quotation from David would have been nothing to the Apostle's purpose, unless he had understood the forgiveness of sins, and the imputation of righteousness, and the non-imputation of sin, to signify the same thing as '*counting faith for righteousness,*' with only this difference, that the introduction of the term '*faith,*' marks the manner in which the forgiveness of sin is obtained. To impute faith for righteousness, is nothing more than to be justified by faith, which is also called by St. Paul, '*being made righteous,*' that is, being placed by an act of free forgiveness, through faith in Christ, in the condition of righteous men; in this respect, that the penalty of the Law does not lie against them, and that they are restored to the Divine favour.

87. From this brief, but, it is hoped, clear elucidation of these terms, *righteousness, faith, and imputation,* it will appear, that it is not quite correct in the advocates of the Scripture doctrine of the imputation of faith for righteousness, to say, that our faith in Christ is accepted in the place of personal obedience to the Law, except, indeed, in this loose sense, that our faith in Christ as effectually exempts us from punishment, as if we had been personally obedient. The Scriptural doctrine is rather, *that the death of Christ is accepted in the place of our personal punishment, on condition of our faith in Him;* and, that when faith in Him is actually exerted, then comes in, on the part of God, the act of imputing, or reckoning righteousness to us; or, what is the same thing, accounting faith for righteousness, that is, *pardoning our offences through faith,* and treating us as the objects of His restored favour.

88. To this doctrine of the imputation of faith for righteousness, the principal objections which have been made, admit of an easy answer.

89. The first is that of some among the papists, who take the term justification to signify the making men morally just or righteous; and they, therefore, argue that as faith alone is not righteousness in the moral sense, it would be false, and, therefore, impossible, to impute it for righteousness. But, as we have proved from Scripture, that justification simply signifies the pardon of sin, this objection has no foundation.

90. A second objection is, that if faith, that is, *believing*, is imputed for righteousness, then justification is by works, or by somewhat in ourselves. In this objection, the term works is equivocal. If it mean works of obedience to the Moral Law, the objection is unfounded, for faith is not a work of this kind; and if it mean the merit of works of any kind, it is equally without foundation, for no merit is allowed to faith, and faith, in the sense of exclusive affiance, or trusting in the merits of another, shuts out, by its very nature, all assumption of merit to ourselves, or there would be no need of resorting to another's merit; but if it mean, that faith or believing is the doing of something, in order to our justification, it is, in this view, the performance of a condition, a *sine qua non*, which is not only not forbidden by Scripture, but required of us, — 'this is the work of God, that ye *believe* on Him whom He hath sent;' 'he that *believeth* shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.' And so far is this considered by Apostle Paul, as prejudicing the free grace of God in our justification, that he makes our justification by faith, the proof of its gratuitous nature, 'for by grace are ye saved, through faith.' 'Therefore, it is by faith, that it might be through grace.'

91. A third objection is, that the imputation of faith for righteousness gives occasion to boasting, which is condemned by the Gospel. The answer to this is, a. That the objection lies with equal strength against the theory of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, since faith is required in order to that imputation. b. Boasting of our faith is cut off by the consideration that this faith itself is the gift of God. c. If it were not, yet the blessings which follow upon our faith, are not given with reference to any worth or merit which there may be in our believing, but are given with respect to the death of Christ, from the bounty and free grace of God. d. St Paul was clearly of the contrary opinion, who tells us that '*boasting is excluded by the law of faith:*' the reason of which has been already stated, that trust in another for salvation, does, *ipso facto*, attribute the power, and consequently the honour of saving, *to another*, and denies both to ourselves.

92. Since, then, we are 'justified by faith,' our next inquiry must be, somewhat more particularly, into the specific quality of that faith, which by the appointment of God, leads to this important change in our relations to the Being whom we have offended, so that our offences are freely forgiven, and we are restored to His favour.

93. On the subject of justifying faith, so many distinctions have been set up, so many logical terms and definitions are found in the writings of systematic divines, that the simple Christian, to whom this subject ought always to be made plain, has often been grievously perplexed, and no small cause has been given for the derision of infidels. On this, as on other points, we appeal '*to the law and testimony,*' to Christ and His apostles, who are, at once, the only true authorities, and teachers of the greatest simplicity.

94. We remark, then: a. That in Scripture faith is presented to us under two leading views. The first is that of *assent or persuasion*; the second, that of *confidence or reliance*. That the former may be separated from the latter is also plain, though the latter cannot exist without the former. Faith, in the sense of logical assent to truth, is allowed to be possessed by devils. A dead inoperative faith, is also supposed, or declared, to be possessed by wicked men, professing Christianity; for our Lord represents men coming to Him at the Last Day, saying, '*Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name,*' &c, to whom He will say, '*Depart from me, I never knew you,*' and yet the charge, in this case, does not lie against the sincerity of their belief, but against their conduct as 'workers of iniquity.' As this distinction is taught in Scripture, so it is also observed in experience, that assent to the truths of revealed religion may result from examination and conviction, while yet the spirit and conduct may be un-renewed and wholly worldly.

95. On the other hand, that the faith, which God requires of men, always comprehends confidence or reliance, as well as assent or persuasion, is equally clear. The faith by which '*the elders obtained a good report,*' was of this character; it joined assent to the truth of God's revelations, to a noble confidence in His promises. '*Our fathers trusted in Thee, and were not confounded.*' We have a further illustration in our Lord's address to His disciples upon the withering away of the fig tree, '*Have faith in God.*' He did not question whether they believed the *existence* of God, but exhorted them to *confidence in His promises*, when called by Him to contend with strong difficulties. '*Have faith in God, for verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that these things which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith.*' It was in reference to his simple confidence in Christ's power, that our Lord so highly commended the centurion, Matt. 8. 10, and said, '*I have not found so*

great faith, no, not in Israel. And all the instances of faith in the persons miraculously healed by Christ were also of this kind: it was belief in His claims, and confidence in His goodness and power.

96. Faith in Christ, which in the New Testament is connected with salvation, is clearly of this nature; that is, it combines assent with reliance, belief with trust. *'Whatsoever ye ask the Father in My name,'* that is, in dependence upon My interest and merits, *'He shall give it you.'* Christ was preached both to Jews and Gentiles as the object of their trust, because He was preached as the only true sacrifice for sin; and they were required to renounce their dependence upon their own accustomed sacrifices, and to transfer that dependence to His death and mediation, —and *'in His name shall the Gentiles trust.'* He is set forth as a propitiation, *'through faith in His blood,'* which faith can neither merely mean assent to the historical fact that His blood was shed by violent death nor mere assent to the general doctrine that His blood had an atoning quality; but as all expiatory offerings were trusted in as the means of propitiation both among Jews and Gentiles, that faith or trust was now to be exclusively rendered to the blood of Christ, heightened by the stronger manifestation of a Divine appointment.

97. To the most unlettered Christian this then will be most obvious, that that faith in Christ which is required of us, consists both of assent and trust; and the necessity of keeping these inseparably united will farther appear by considering, that it is not a blind and superstitious trust in the sacrifice of Christ, like that of the heathens in their sacrifices, which leads to salvation; nor the presumptuous trust of wicked and impenitent men, who depend on Christ to save them in their sins; but such a trust as is exercised according to the authority & direction of the Word of God; so that to know the Gospel in its leading principles, and to have a cordial belief in it is necessary to that more specific act of faith which is called reliance, or in systematic language, *fiducial* assent, of which comes salvation. The Gospel, as the scheme of man's salvation, supposes that he is under Law; that this Law of God has been violated by all; and that every man is under sentence of death. — Serious consideration of our ways, confession of the fact, and sorrowful conviction of the evil and danger of sin, will follow the gift of repentance, and a cordial belief of the testimony of God, and we shall thus turn to God with contrite hearts, and earnest prayers and supplications for His mercy. This is called *'repentance toward God;'* & repentance being the first subject of evangelical preaching, and then the belief of the gospel, it is plain that Christ is only immediately held out in this Divine plan of our redemption as the object of trust in order to forgiveness to persons in this state of penitence, and under this sense of danger. The degree of sorrow for sin, and alarm upon this discovery of our danger as sinners, is nowhere fixed in Scripture; only it is supposed everywhere, that it is such as to lead men to inquire earnestly *'what shall I do to be saved'* and to use all the appointed means of salvation as those who feel that their salvation is at issue; that they are in a lost condition, and must be pardoned or perish. To all such persons, Christ, as the only atonement for sin, is exhibited as the object of their trust, with the promise of God, *'that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.'* Nothing is required of such but this actual trust in, and personal apprehension or taking hold of the merits of Christ's death as a sacrifice for sin; and upon their thus believing they are justified, their faith is *'counted for righteousness.'*

98. This appears to be the plain Scriptural representation of this doctrine, and we may infer from it, a. That the faith by which we are justified is not a mere assent to the doctrines of the Gospel, which leaves the heart unmoved and unaffected by a sense of the evil and danger of sin, and the desire of salvation, though it supposes this assent: nor, b. Is it only that more lively & cordial assent to, and belief in the doctrine of the Gospel, touching our sinful and lost condition, which is wrought in the heart by the Spirit of God, and from which springs repentance, though this must precede it; nor, c. Is it only the assent of the mind to the method by which God justifies the ungodly by faith in the sacrifice of His Son, though this is an element of it; but it is a nearly concurrence of the will and affections with this plan of salvation, which implies a renunciation of every other refuge, and an actual trust in the Saviour, and personal apprehension of His merits: such a belief of the gospel by the power of the Spirit of God as leads us to come to Christ, to receive Christ, to trust in Christ, and to commit the keeping of our souls into His hands, in humble confidence of His ability & His willingness to save us.

99. This is that qualifying proviso to which the promise of God annexes justification; that without which justification would not take place; and in this sense it is that we are justified by faith; not by the merit of faith, but by faith instrumentally as this condition, for its connection with the benefit arises from the merits of Christ and the promise of God. — If Christ had not merited, God had not promised; if God had not promised, justification had never followed upon this faith; so that the indissoluble connection of faith and justification is from God's institution, whereby He has bound himself to give the benefit upon of the condition. Yet there is an aptitude in this faith to be made a condition, for no other act can receive Christ as a priest propitiating, & pleading the propitiation, and the promise of God for His sake to give the benefit. As receiving Christ and the

gracious promise in this manner, it acknowledges man's guilt, and so man renounces all righteousness in himself, and honours God the Father, and Christ the Son, the only Redeemer.

100. Justification by faith is thus clearly the doctrine of the Scriptures; and it was this great doctrine brought forth again from the Scriptures into public view, and maintained by their authority, which constituted one of the main pillars of Augustinians against Molinist Popery; and on which no compromise could be allowed with that corrupt Church which had substituted for it the merit of works of our own. Melancthon, in his Apology for the Augsburg Confession, said: — 'To represent justification by faith only has been considered objectionable, though Paul concludes that *'a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law; 'that we are justified freely by his grace,' and 'that it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast.'* If the use of the exclusive term only is deemed inadmissible, let them expunge from the writings of the Apostles the exclusive phrases, 'by grace,' 'not of works,' 'the gift of God,' and others of similar import.' (IV, 73.) 'We are accounted righteous before God,' says the eleventh Article of the Church of England, 'only for the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ, by faith, not for our works and deservings;' and again, in the *Old Homily on Salvation*, 'St Paul declares nothing upon the behalf of man, concerning his justification, but only a true and lively faith, which, nevertheless, is the gift of God and not man's only work without God. And yet that faith doth not shut out repentance, hope, love, dread, and the fear of God, to be joined with faith in every man that is justified; but only shutteth them out from the office of justifying. So that although they be all present together in him that is justified, Yet they justify not altogether.'

APPENDIX

SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES ON JUSTIFICATION

1. The first point, which we find established by the language of the New Testament, is, that justification, the pardon and remission of sins, the non-imputation of sin, and the imputation of righteousness, are terms and phrases of the same import. The following passages may be given in proof: — Luke 28. 13 —14, *'I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other.'* Here the term 'justified' must mean pardoned, since the publican confessed himself 'a sinner,' and asked 'mercy' in that relation.

2. Acts 13. 38—39, *'Be it known unto you, men and brethren; that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him, all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the Law of Moses.'* Here, also, it is plain that forgiveness of sins and justification mean the same thing, one term being used as explanatory of the other.

3. Romans 3. 25—26, *'Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for 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.'* To remit sins & to justify are here also represented as the same act; consequent upon a declaration of the righteousness of God, and upon our faith.

4. Rom. 4. 4—8, *'But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness; even as David describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom GOD imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed is the man whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; blessed is the man to whom the LORD will not impute sin.'* The quotation from David, introduced by the Apostle, by way of pointing up his doctrine of the justification of the ungodly, by 'counting his faith for righteousness,' shows clearly, that he considered 'justification,' 'the imputing of righteousness,' 'the forgiveness of iniquities,' 'the covering of sin,' the 'non-imputation of sin,' as of the same import; acts substantially equivalent one to another, though under somewhat different views, and therefore expressed by terms respectively convertible ;—this variety of phrase being adopted, probably, to preserve the idea which runs throughout the whole Scripture, that in the remission or pardon of sin, almighty God acts in His character of Ruler and Judge, showing mercy upon terms satisfactory to His justice, when He might in rigid justice have punished our transgressions to the utmost. The term justification especially is judiciary, & taken from courts of law and the proceedings of magistrates; and this judiciary character of the act of pardon is also confirmed by the relation of the parties to each other, as it is constantly exhibited in Scripture. God is an offended Sovereign; man is an offending subject. He has offended against public law, not against private obligations; and the act therefore by which he is relieved from the penalty, must be magisterial and regal. It is, also, a farther confirmation that in this process Christ is represented as a public Mediator & Advocate.

5. The importance of acquiring and maintaining this simple and distinct view of justification, that it is the remission of sins, as stated in the passages above quoted, will appear from the following considerations :—

a. We are taught that pardon of sin is not an act of prerogative, done ABOVE law; but a judicial process, done consistently with law. For in this process there are three parties. God, as Sovereign; *'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth ?'* Christ, as Advocate; not defending the guilty, but interceding for them; *'It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us,'* Rom. 8. 33—34. *'And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father,'* 1 John 2. 1. The third party is man, who is, by his own confession, 'guilty,' 'a sinner,' 'ungodly;' for repentance in all cases precedes this remission of sins, and it both supposes and confesses offence and desert of punishment. God is Judge in this process, not, however, by the law of creation, and of works, but by the law of redemption and grace. Not as merely just, though just; but as merciful. Not as merciful in general, and *ex muda voluntate*, without any respect had to satisfaction; but as propitiated by the blood of Christ, and having accepted the propitiation made by His blood. Not merely propitiated by His blood, but moved by His intercession, which He makes as our Advocate in heaven; not only pleading the propitiation made and accepted, but the repentance and faith of the sinner, and the promise of the Judge before whom He pleads.

b. Thus as pardon or justification does not take place but upon propitiation, the mediation and intercession of a third party, and on the condition on the part of the guilty, not only of repentance, *but of faith in Christ's blood*, which, as before established, means faith in His sacrificial death; it is not an act of mere mercy, or of prerogative; but one which consists with a righteous government, & proceeds on grounds which secure the honours of the Divine justice.

c. We are thus taught that justification has respect to particular individuals, and is to be distinguished from that gracious foundation of God, by which, for the sake of Jesus Christ, He, according His antecedent will, so far delivers all mankind from the guilt of Adam's sin, as to call them, notwithstanding their natural link with the fallen progenitor of the human race, to salvation by the Means of Grace. Justification is a blessing of a much higher and more perfect character, and is not common to the human race at large, but experienced by certain persons in particular, those foreseen as firmly believing to the end, though their salvation always comes from the merits of Christ.

Dom + EIB HonThD

Pentecost, Fourteenth Dominica, 2004.

SOLI GLORIA DEO