

# The Doctrine of Justification

By the Righteousness of Christ, Stated and Maintained

JOHN GILL

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Acts 13:39

*And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses*

THIS, and the preceding verse, appear, at first view, to contain those two great doctrines of the gospel, pardon of sin, and justification from it, the former of which I have largely insisted on, from the foregoing words, and shall now consider the latter, which I propose to do in the following method.

- I. I shall explain the act of justification, and shew what it is, and what it is not.
- II. Enquire into the author of it, or who it is that justifies.
- III. Shew the matter of it, or what that is, for the sake of which any are justified.
- IV. Say something concerning the form of it, which is by imputation of righteousness.
- V. Consider the date of justification.
- VI. Point out the objects thereof, or who they are that are justified.
- VII. Mention the several effects, which follow upon it, or are closely connected with it.
- VIII. And *lastly*, Give some account of the several properties of it.

I. I shall explain the act of justification, and shew both what it is not, and what it is. And,

1. Strictly, and properly speaking, it is not the pardon of sin. These two acts of divine grace are in strict connection with each other, and are not to be separated; that is to say, where the one is, the other also is; yet, I think, they may be distinguished. Divines generally make justification to consist in the remission of sins, and in the imputation of

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Christ's righteousness; which some make different parts<sup>a</sup>; others say, they are not two integrating parts of justification, or acts numerically and really distinct, but only one act respecting two different terms, *à quo & ad quem*<sup>b</sup>; just as by one, and the same act, darkness is expelled from the air, and light is introduced into it; so by one, and the same act of justification, the sinner is absolved from guilt, and pronounced righteous. Hence they conclude, that those divines express the whole nature of justification, who say, that it consists in the remission of sins, and who say, that it consists in the imputation of righteousness; because, say they, when God forgives us our sins, he pronounces us righteous, by the imputation of Christ's righteousness; and when he pronounces us righteous, by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, he forgives us our sins. I readily allow that there is a very great agreement between justification and pardon, in their efficient, impulsive, and procuring causes, in their objects, or subjects, in their commencement, and manner of completion: the same God that pardons the sins of his people, justifies them, or accounts them righteous; the same grace, which moved him to the one, moved him to the other; as the blood of Christ was shed for the remission of sins, so by it are we justified; all who are justified are pardoned; and all who are pardoned, are justified, and that, at one and the same time; both these acts are finished at once, *simul & semel*, and are not carried on in a gradual and progressive way, as sanctification. But all this does not prove them to be one and the same, for though they agree in these things, in others they differ; for justification is a pronouncing a person righteous according to law, as though he had never sinned; not so pardon: it is one thing for a man to be tried by law, cast, and condemned, and then receive the king's pardon; and another thing to be tried by the law, and, by it, to be found and declared righteous, as though he had not sinned against it. Moreover, though pardon takes away sin, and therefore is expressed by God's casting of it behind his back, and into the depths of the sea, and by a removal of it from his people, *as far as the east is from the west*<sup>c</sup>; yet it does not give a righteousness, as justification does; pardon of sin, indeed, takes away our filthy garments, but it is justification that clothes us with change of raiment. Besides, more is required, and was given for our justification, than for our pardon; the blood of Christ was sufficient to procure pardon; but, besides, his suffering of death, the holiness of his nature, and the perfect obedience of his life, must be imputed for justification. Again, though pardon frees from punishment, yet, strictly, and properly speaking, it does not give a title to eternal life; that justification properly gives, and is one good reason why the apostle calls it *Justification of life*<sup>d</sup>. If a king pardons a criminal, he does not thereby give him a title to

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<sup>a</sup> Vid. Alting. Loc. Commun. loc. 14. p. 237. Walæi Enchirid. Relig. Reform. p. 72, 73. & Loc. Commun. p. 426, 428.

<sup>b</sup> Vid. Wendelin. Christian. Theol. I. 1. c. 25. thes. 8. p. 500.

<sup>c</sup> Isai. 38:17. Micah 7:20. Psalm 103:13.

<sup>d</sup> Rom. 5:18.

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his crown and kingdom; if he will, when he has pardoned him, take him to court, make him his son and heir, it must be by another distinct act of royal favour. Once more, justification passed on Christ, as our Head and Representative, when he rose from the dead, but so did not pardon. We may truly say, that Christ was justified, because the scriptures say so<sup>e</sup>, but we cannot say that he was pardoned; should we, it would sound very harsh in our ears, as well as be, I think, a very unwarrantable expression; therefore pardon and justification may be considered as two distinct things. In fine, if these two are one and the same, the apostle must be guilty of a tautology in our text, where he speaks distinctly of justification, having fully expressed forgiveness of sin in the preceding verse.

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2. Justification is not a teaching, or an instructing of men in the way and method how they are or may be justified. When Christ, as God's righteous servant, is said to *justify many by his knowledge*<sup>f</sup>; the meaning is, not that he, by his knowledge, or doctrine, should only teach men how they might be justified, or what is God's way and method of justifying sinners; for this is no more than what the ministers of the gospel do, who are said to *turn many to righteousness*, or, as it is in the original text, to justify many<sup>g</sup>; which they do, by preaching the gospel, wherein *the righteousness of God is revealed, from faith to faith*; and which, being blessed and owned by the Spirit of God, is *the ministration of righteousness* to many: but the meaning is, that he should give to many a spiritual knowledge of himself, which, in other words, is faith; by which they should have a comfortable apprehension in their justification by his righteousness.

3. Justification is not an infusion of righteousness into persons; to justify, is not to make men holy and righteous, who were unholy and unrighteous, by producing any physical or real change in them; for this is to confound justification and sanctification together, which are very manifestly distinct; the one being a work of grace *in us*; the other an act of grace *towards us*; the one is imperfect, the other perfect; the one is progressive, and is carried on by degrees; the other is compleat, and finished at once. Besides, justification is never used in scripture in a physical, but in a forensic sense<sup>h</sup>; and stands opposed, not to a state of impurity, or unholiness, but to a state of condemnation.

4. Justification is an act of God's free grace, whereby he clears his people from sin, discharges them from condemnation, and reckons and accounts them righteous for the sake of Christ's righteousness, which he has accepted of, and imputes unto them. Some

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<sup>e</sup> 1 Tim. 3:16.

<sup>f</sup> Isai. 53:11.

<sup>g</sup> Dan. 12:3. ומצריקי הרבים & justificantes multos, Jun. & Tremell. Arias Montan.

<sup>h</sup> See Deut. 25:1. Prov. 17:15. Isai. 5:23. Rom. 5:16, 18. and 8:33, 34.

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very excellent divines have distinguished justification into active and passive<sup>i</sup>. Active justification is God's act, it is God that justifies; passive justification is the same act, terminating on the conscience of the believer; active justification is strictly and properly justification, passive justification is improperly so; active justification precedes faith, passive justification is by faith.

Again, justification may be considered either *in foro Dei*, and so it is an eternal, immanent act in God; or *in foro conscientiaë*, and so it is declarative to and upon the conscience of the believer; or *in foro mundi*, and so it will be notified to men and angels at the general judgment.

Again, let it be farther observed, that the scriptures sometimes speak of the justification of God's people, either of their persons, or faith, or cause, before men, and then it is ascribed to their works; and, at other times, of their persons before God, which is said to be without works; it is now, not of the former, but of the latter our text speaks, and which I am considering; and shall now proceed,

II. To enquire into the author, or efficient cause of justification, who is the great God of heaven and earth: *It is God that justifies*<sup>k</sup>; which may well be wondered at, when it is considered that he is the supreme Judge of all, who will do right; that his law is the rule by which he acts in this affair; that this law is broken by the sin of man; that sin, which is a breach of the law, is especially committed against him, and is hateful to him; that he is a God that will not admit of an imperfect righteousness, in the room of a perfect one; and that he has power to condemn, and reason sufficient to do it; when, I say, these things are considered, it is amazing that this God should justify. For the farther illustration of this head, I shall endeavour to shew the concern that all the three Persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, have in the justification of the elect.

1. God the Father is the contriver of the scheme and method of our justification; he *was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses*<sup>l</sup>;" he drew the model and platform of it, which is *Nodus Deo vindice dignus*. It would have remained a puzzling question to men and angels, *How should man be just with God?* had not his grace employed his wisdom to find out a ransom, whereby he has delivered his people from going down

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<sup>i</sup> Maccov. Theolog. Distinct. c. 13. §. 1, 2. & Theolog. Polem. c. 15 Quæst. 2. & Theolog. Quæst. loc. 31. & Πρωτον ψευδος Arminian. c. 10. & Loc. Commun. c. 69. Hoornbeeck. Summ. Controvers. l. 10. p. 705. Rhaetorfort. Exercitat. Apologet. exerc. 1. c. 2. §. 20. Wolleb. Christian. Theolog. l. 1. c. 30. Essenii System. Theolog. tom. II. disp. 8. ad tit. 15.

<sup>k</sup> Rom. 8:34.

<sup>l</sup> 2 Cor. 5:19.

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to the pit of corruption; which ransom is no other than his own Son, whom he sent, in the fulness of time, to execute the scheme he had so wisely formed in his eternal mind; which he did by finishing transgression, making an end of sin, making reconciliation for iniquity, and bringing in an everlasting righteousness; which righteousness, being wrought out by Christ, God was well pleased with, because hereby his law was magnified and made honourable; and, having graciously accepted of it, he imputes it freely to all his people, and reckons them righteous on the account of it.

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2. God the Son, as God, is the co-efficient cause of it, with his Father. As he has equal power with him to forgive sin, he also has to acquit, discharge, and justify from it. As Mediator, he is the Head and Representative; *in whom all the seed of Israel are justified*; as such, he has wrought out a righteousness, answerable to the demands of the law, by which they are justified; and is the Author and Finisher of that faith, which looks unto, lays hold on, and apprehends that righteousness for justification.

3. God the Holy Ghost convinces men of the weakness, imperfection, and insufficiency of their own righteousness to justify them before God; he brings near, and sets before them, the righteousness of Christ, and works faith in them to lay hold on it, and receive it; he intimates to their consciences the justifying sentence of God, on the account of Christ's righteousness, and bears a testimony to and with their spirits, that they are justified persons; and hence the saints are said to be *justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God*<sup>m</sup>; but *this testimony of the Spirit is not so properly justification in itself, as an actual perception of it, before granted, by a kind of a reflex act of faith*, as Dr Ames expresses it<sup>n</sup>. Now this is the part which Father, Son, and Spirit, severally bear in justification: the Father has contrived it, the Son has procured it, and the Spirit applies it. I go on,

III. To consider the matter of justification, or what that is for the sake of which God's elect are justified. And,

1. Man's obedience to the law of works, is not the matter of his justification, or that for the sake of which he is justified, for this is imperfect, and therefore not justifying; and was man's obedience his justifying righteousness, his justification would be by works, and not by grace; which is contrary to the whole stream and current of scripture. Besides, *if righteousness is by the law, then Christ is dead in vain*, and his righteousness is needless and useless; which must highly reflect both on the grace and wisdom of God.

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<sup>m</sup> 1 Cor. 6:11.

<sup>n</sup> In hoc testimonio Spiritus non tam proprie ipsa justificatio consistit, quam actualis antea concessæ perceptio, per actum fidei quasi reflexum, Ames. Medulla Theolog. l. 1. c. 27. §. 9.

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2. Nor is man's obedience to the gospel, as to a new and milder law, his justifying righteousness before God. The scheme of some, if I understand it right, is this; That Jesus Christ has procured a relaxation of the old law, and has introduced a new law, a remedial law, a law of milder terms; which new law is the gospel, and its terms, faith, repentance, and new obedience; which, though imperfect, yet being sincere, will be accepted of by God, in the room of a perfect righteousness. But the whole scheme is entirely false; the law is not relaxed, nor any of its severities abated; its power is not infringed, it has the same commanding and condemning power it ever had over those that are under it; nor is the gospel a law, it is a pure declaration of grace and salvation by Christ; it has no commands, but all promises; there is nothing in it that looks like a law; and, if faith and repentance were the terms of it, and required by it, as conditions of mens acceptance with God, it would not be a remedial law, a law of milder terms; for it was much easier for *Adam*, in a state of innocence, to have kept the whole law, than for man, in his fallen state, to repent and believe in Christ of himself; besides, nothing can more reflect upon the justice of God than to say that he will accept of an imperfect righteousness in the room of a perfect one: he who is the *Judge of all the earth, will do right*; and he, whose *judgment is according to truth*, will never call or account that a righteousness which is not one.

3. Nor is a profession of religion, even of the best, a matter of our justification. Men may have a form of godliness, and deny the power of it, have a name to live, and yet be dead, appear outwardly righteous to men, and yet be inwardly full of all manner of impurity; they may submit to all Christ's ordinances, be baptized in his name, sit down at his table, and constantly attend on his word, and yet be far from righteousness, their fear towards God being only taught by the precept of men; yea, supposing they were sincere in all this, they could not be justified by it. Sincerity, in any religion, even in the best religion, is not our justifying righteousness: there may be sincere *Mahometans*, sincere *Papists*, and sincere *Pagans*, as well as sincere believers in Christ; one man may be a sincere persecutor of the true religion, as well as another may be a sincere professor of it. Our Lord told his disciples, that the time would come, when some men should think they did God service in killing them<sup>o</sup>; and it is certain the apostle *Paul*, before his conversion, *thought with himself, that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth*<sup>p</sup>. But taking sincerity in the best sense, for a grace of the Spirit of God, which indeed, runs through, and accompanies all other graces, and makes our faith to be unfeigned, our love to be without dissimulation, and our hope without hypocrisy; I say, taking it in this sense, it belongs to sanctification, and not to justification; which are two distinct things, and not to be confounded; for the whole real work of sanctification is neither the whole or a part

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<sup>o</sup> John 17:2.

<sup>p</sup> Acts 26:9.



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of our justifying righteousness; and if the whole work is not, then not a part of it; and if not a part of it, then,

4. The τὸ *credere*, or act of believing, which is a part of sanctification, is not imputed to us for justification, as *Arminius* and his followers have asserted<sup>q</sup>; endeavouring to establish this notion from some passages in *Rom.* 4:3, 5, 9. where faith is said to be counted for righteousness; particularly the faith of *Abraham*; by which the apostle means not the act, but the object of faith, even the righteousness of Christ, which God, in ver. 6. is said to impute without works. That this is his sense is manifest, from this one single consideration: the very same *it*, which was imputed to *Abraham* for righteousness, is imputed to all those who believe on him, that raised up *Jesus our Lord from the dead*, ver. 22–24. Now supposing that *Abraham's* faith was reckoned and imputed to him for a justifying righteousness, it cannot be reasonably thought that it should be imputed also for righteousness to all that believe: besides, it ought to be observed, that the apostle does not say that this was imputed, ἀντὶ δικαιοσύνης, *instead of righteousness*; but εἰς δικαιοσύνην, *unto righteousness*, and intends no more here than what the apostle elsewhere says, that *with the heart man believes unto righteousness*<sup>r</sup>; that is, with his heart, or heartily, he believes in Christ for righteousness; which righteousness, and not faith, is imputed to him for justification; for faith, as it is our act, is our own; hence we read of *his* faith, and *my* faith, and *thy* faith in scripture<sup>s</sup>; but the righteousness by which we are justified is the righteousness of another, and therefore not faith. Moreover, faith, as an act of ours, is a duty; for whatsoever we do, in a religious way, we do but what is our duty to do; and, if it is a duty, it belongs to the law; for, as all the declarations and promises of grace belong to the gospel, so all duties belong to the law; and if faith belongs to the law, as a duty, it is a work of it, and therefore by it we cannot be justified; *for by the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified*. Besides, faith is imperfect, it has many deficiencies; and, was it perfect, it is but a part of the law, though one of the weightier parts of it; and God, whose judgment is according to truth, will never reckon or account a partial conformity to the law a compleat righteousness. Add to this, that faith and righteousness are manifestly distinguished<sup>t</sup>; *the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith*; it is *unto all, and upon all them that believe*. Something else, and not faith, is represented as our justifying righteousness; faith is not the blood, nor obedience of Christ, and yet by these we are said

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<sup>q</sup> Armin. Declar. sent. ad Ord. p. 102. & Respons. ad 31. Artic. p. 138. Epistol. ad Hippolyt. Articul. Perpend p. 786. Remonstr. Confess. c 10. §. 2. & c. 18. §. 3. Bertii Epist. discept. contra Lubbert. p. 6, 81. Worstii Scholia contra Lubbert. p. 177.

<sup>r</sup> Rom. 10:10.

<sup>s</sup> Hab. 2:5. James 2:18.

<sup>t</sup> Rom. 1:17. and 3:22.

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to be justified, or made righteous<sup>u</sup>. We are, indeed, said to be *justified by faith*<sup>x</sup>, but not by faith, as an act of ours, for then we should be justified by works; nor by faith, as a grace of the Spirit, for this would be to confound sanctification and justification; but we are justified by faith objectively, as it looks to, receives, apprehends, and embraces Christ's righteousness for justification. And let it be observed, that though we are said to be justified by faith, yet faith is never said to justify us. And here give me leave to correct a vulgar, though but a verbal mistake, in calling faith, justifying faith. I am well satisfied found divines have used this phrase without any ill meaning; and no less a person than the great Dr *Goodwin*, whose works I much value and esteem, has entitled one of his treatises, *Of the Object and Acts of Justifying Faith*: But why it should be called justifying faith, any more than adopting or pardoning faith, I see not; since it has just the same concern in adoption and pardon, as it has in justification. Are we said to be justified by faith, or, by faith, to receive the righteousness of Christ for justification? We are also said, by faith, to receive the remission of sins, and to be the children of God, by faith, in Christ Jesus<sup>y</sup>. Besides, what do we, or can we say more of the righteousness of Christ, than that it is a justifying one? In one word, it is God, and not faith, that justifies. But,

5. The matter of our justification, or that for the sake of which we are justified, is the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ; by which I mean not his essential righteousness, as God; nor his righteousness and fidelity to him, that appointed him, in the discharge of his mediatorial office; nor do I take in any of his actions performed by him in heaven, as Jesus Christ the righteous; only those which he wrought in his state of humiliation here on earth; and not all these neither, for his extraordinary works and miracles must be excluded; for "they, as a great man well observes, rather transcend the predicaments of the Ten Commandments, than are parts of the righteousness of the law: they were proofs of his divinity, and the signs and badges, rather than the duties of his office. He, indeed, by them, shewed himself to be the only Mediator, but he did not act the Mediator in them; and he did them that men might believe in his righteousness, but they were no ingredients in that righteousness on which they were to believe<sup>z</sup>." But by the righteousness of Christ, I mean that which consists of what is commonly called his active and passive obedience; by the former, is meant the conformity of his life to the precepts of the law, and is, strictly speaking, that obedience of his, by which we are made righteous; and by the latter, is meant his sufferings and death, which, in scripture, are expressed by his blood. This distinction, though taken from the schools, is not very

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<sup>u</sup> Rom. 5:9, 19.

<sup>x</sup> Rom. 5:1.

<sup>y</sup> Acts 26:18. Gal. 3:26.

<sup>z</sup> Dr *Goodwin's* Works, vol. III. par. 3. p. 336.



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accurate. Passive obedience is a contradiction in terms<sup>a</sup>; nor can Christ's sufferings and death be properly called obedience. Obedience belongs to the predicament, or class of action, and sufferings and death to that of passion. Besides, Christ's sufferings and death flow from his obedience; they are the effects of it, they are in consequence of his subjection and submission to his Father's will. What looks most likely to prove Christ's sufferings and death to be an obedience, is the text in *Phil. 2:8*. where Christ is said to be *obedient unto death*. But this will fall short of doing it; for as a judicious divine observes<sup>b</sup>, it may as well be inferred, because *Peter* and *Paul* confessed Christ unto death, therefore their confession and death were one and the same. The true sense of the words is, that Christ was obedient to his Father, from the cradle to the cross, during the whole course of his life, even to the very moment of his death. It will be allowed, that Christ was, in some sense, active in his sufferings, he being God, as well as man. Hence he is said to *lay down his life of himself*; to *pour out his soul unto death*; to *give himself an offering and sacrifice*; yea, *through the eternal Spirit, to offer up himself to God*; and it will be as readily granted that Christ's sufferings and death, which are commonly called his passive obedience, are requisite unto, and are imputed to us for our justification. Hence we are said to have *healing by his stripes*<sup>d</sup>, to be *justified by his blood*, and to be *reconciled to God by his death*; but then this is not to be understood as exclusive of the imputation of his active obedience, nor of the holiness of his human nature. There are some divines<sup>e</sup> that exclude Christ's active obedience from being any part of the righteousness by which we are justified: they allow, that it is a condition requisite in him, as Mediator, which qualifies him for his office, and that without it his death would not have been effectual and meritorious. But they deny that this obedience, strictly and properly speaking, is the matter of our justification, or that it is imputed to us, or reckoned to us, as ours; they suppose that Christ was obliged to this obedience as a creature for himself, and that it was unnecessary to us, because his sufferings and death were sufficient for our justification. On the other hand, I firmly believe, that not only the active obedience of Christ, with his sufferings and death, but also that the holiness of his human nature is imputed to us for justification. The law requires an holy nature, and perfect obedience, and, in case of disobedience, enjoins punishment. Through sin, our nature is become unholy, our obedience imperfect, and so we are liable to punishment. Christ has assumed an holy human nature, and in it performed perfect obedience to the law, and suffered the penalty of it; all which he did not for himself, but for us; and unto us it is all imputed for our justification. He *is of God*,

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<sup>a</sup> Vid. Maccov. Loc. Commun. c. 69. p. 613. & Colleg. Theolog p. 141. & Theolog. Polem. c. 15. Quæst. 2. p. 133.

<sup>b</sup> Maccov. *ibid*.

<sup>c</sup> John 10:18. Isai. 53:12. Ephes. 5:2. Heb 9:14.

<sup>d</sup> Isai. 53:5. Rom. 5:9, 10.

<sup>e</sup> Vid. Wendelin. Theolog. Christian. l. 1. c. 25. thes. 7. p. 492. Of this opinion were *Piscator*, *Forbes*, and others.

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made unto us, that is, by imputation, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption<sup>f</sup>. Wisdom may stand in general for justification, because there is in it such a manifest display of the wisdom of God; and the other three may be considered as so many parts of it. Sanctification may intend the holiness of his human nature; which is that *law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which frees from the law of sin and death*. Righteousness may signify his active obedience, by which *many are made righteous*; and Redemption may express his sufferings and death, whereby *sin was condemned in the flesh*, and so the whole *righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us*. I shall now very briefly give some reasons why, I think, Christ's active obedience, in particular, as well as his sufferings and death, is imputed for justification.

1. Because all that must be imputed for our justification, which the law requires, and without which it cannot be satisfied. Now, let it be observed, that the law, before man had sinned, only obliged him to obedience; since his fall, it obliges him both to obedience and punishment; and, unless his precepts are perfectly obeyed, and its whole penalty endured, it cannot be satisfied; and unless it is satisfied, there can be no justification by it. If Jesus Christ, therefore, engages, as a surety, to make satisfaction to the law, in the room and stead of his people, he must both obey the precept of the law, and suffer the penalty of it; his submitting to the one, without conforming to the other, is not sufficient; one debt is not paid by another; his paying off the debt of punishment did not exempt from obedience, as the paying off the debt of obedience, did not exempt from punishment. Christ did not satisfy the whole law by either of them separately, but by both conjunctly; by his sufferings and death he satisfied the threatnings of the law, but not the precepts of it; and, by his active obedience, he satisfied the preceptive part of the law, but not the penal part; but, by both, he satisfied the whole law, and magnified it, and made it honourable, and therefore both must be imputed for our justification.

2. Because we are justified by a righteousness, and that is the righteousness of Christ. Now righteousness, strictly speaking, consists in actual obedience; *it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments, Deut. 6:25*. Christ's righteousness lay in doing, not in suffering. "All righteousness is either an habit, or an act; but sufferings are neither, and therefore not righteousness: no man is righteous because he is punished; if so, the devils and damned in hell would be righteous, in proportion to their punishment; the more severe their punishment, and the more grievous their torments, the greater their righteousness must be; if there is any righteousness in punishment, it must be in the punisher, not in the punished<sup>g</sup>." If then we are justified by the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, it must be by his active obedience, and not merely

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<sup>f</sup> 1 Cor. 1:30.

<sup>g</sup> Molinæus contra Tilen. in Maccov. Loc. Commun. c. 69. p. 613.

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by his sufferings and death; because these, though they free us from death, yet they do not, strictly speaking, make us righteous.

3. Because we are expressly said to be *made righteous by the obedience of one*<sup>h</sup>, which is Christ. Now by obedience, in this place, cannot be meant the sufferings and death of Christ; because, strictly speaking, they are not his obedience, but flow from it, as has been observed. Besides, the antithesis, in the text, determines the sense of the words; for if, by one's man actual disobedience many were made sinners, so, by the rule of opposition, by one man's actual obedience, many are made righteous.

4. Because the reward of life is promised not to suffering, but to doing; the law says, Do this and live; it promises life not to him that suffers the penalty, but to him that obeys the precept. "There never was a law, as an excellent divine observes<sup>i</sup>, even among men, either promising or declaring a reward due to the criminal, because he had undergone the punishment of his crimes." Christ's sufferings and death being satisfactory to the comminatory, or threatening part of the law, are imputed to us for justification, that so we may be freed and discharged from the curse, and hell, and wrath. But these, as they do not constitute us righteous, do not, properly speaking, entitle us to eternal life; but the active obedience, or righteousness of Christ, being imputed to us, is our *justification of life*, or what gives us the title to eternal life.

5. Because Christ's active obedience was performed for us, in our room and stead, and therefore must be imputed to us for justification. If it should be said, that Christ, as a creature, being made of a woman, and made under the law, was obliged to yield obedience to that law for himself; I answer, that he assumed human nature, became a creature, subjected himself to the law, and obliged himself to yield obedience to it, were not for himself, but for us; not upon his own, but our account; *to or for us a Child is born, a Son is given*<sup>k</sup>; and if Christ only in his sufferings, and not in his obedience, is given to us, we should not have a whole Christ given us, only a suffering Christ, not an obeying one.

Let it further be observed, that Christ's active obedience to the law for us, and in our room and stead, does not exempt us from personal obedience to it, any more than his sufferings and death exempt us from a corporal death, or suffering for his sake. It is true, indeed, we do not suffer and die in the sense he did, to satisfy justice, and atone for sin; so neither do we yield obedience to the law, in order to obtain eternal life by it. By Christ's obedience for us, we are exempted from obedience to the law in this sense, but not from obedience to it, as a rule of walk and conversation, by which we may glorify God, and express our

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<sup>h</sup> Rom. 5:19.

<sup>i</sup> Dr Goodwin's works, vol. III. par. 3. of Christ the Mediator, pag. 338.

<sup>k</sup> Isai. 9:6.

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thankfulness to him, for his abundant mercies. Well then, it is what is commonly called Christ's active and passive obedience, together with the holiness of his nature, from whence all his obedience flows, which is the matter of our justification before God. Many things might be said in commendation of this glorious righteousness of the Mediator. The nature and excellency of it may be collected from the several names, or appellations, by which it is called in scripture.

1. It is called, *the righteousness of God*<sup>l</sup>; and that not only because it stands opposed to the righteousness of man, but because it was wrought out by one that is God, as well as man; and is greatly approved and graciously accepted of by God, and by him freely imputed to all his people, who are justified from all things by it in his sight.

2. It is called, *the righteousness of one*<sup>m</sup>; that is, of one of the Persons of the Trinity; it is not the righteousness of the Father, nor of the Spirit, but of the Son, who though he is a partaker of two natures, yet is but one Person; it is the righteousness of one, who is a common head to all his seed, as *Adam* was to his. It may, indeed, be called the righteousness of many, even of all the saints, because it is imputed to them, and they all have an equal right to it; but yet the Author is but one; and therefore we are not justified, partly by our own righteousness, and partly by Christ's; for then we should be justified by the righteousness of two, and not of one only.

3. It is called, *the righteousness of the law*<sup>n</sup>; for though righteousness does not come by our obedience to the law, yet it does by Christ's obedience to it; though, by the deeds of the law, as performed by man, no flesh living can be justified, yet, by the deeds of the law, as performed by Christ, all the elect are justified. Christ's righteousness may be truly called a legal righteousness; it is what the law requires and demands, and is every way commensurate to it; it is a compleat conformity to all its precepts; by it the law is magnified and made honourable. It is true, indeed, it makes no discovery of it, for it is *manifested without the law, though witnessed to both by law and prophets*; it is the gospel that is the ministration of it; for therein it is revealed from faith to faith.

4. It is called, *the righteousness of faith*<sup>o</sup>; not that faith is our righteousness, either in whole, or in part; it is not the matter of our justification, as has been before observed; it has no manner of causal influence on it, nor is it imputed to us for it; but Christ's righteousness is called so, because faith receives it, puts it on, rejoices in it, and boasts of it.

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<sup>l</sup> Rom. 1:17. and 3:22.

<sup>m</sup> Chap. 5:18.

<sup>n</sup> Rom. 8:4.

<sup>o</sup> Rom. 4:13.

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5. It is called, *the gift of righteousness*<sup>p</sup>, and a *free gift*, and a *gift by grace*; because it is freely wrought out by Christ, and freely imputed by God the Father, and faith is freely given to lay hold on it, and embrace it.

6. It is called, *the best robe*, or, as in the *Greek* text, *the first robe*<sup>q</sup>; for though *Adam's* robe of righteousness, in innocence, was first in wear, this was first provided in the covenant of grace; this was first in designation, though that was first in use: and it may well be called the best robe, because it is a better robe than ever sinful fallen man had; his being imperfect, and polluted, and insufficient to justify him before God, or skreen him from divine justice, or secure him from divine wrath; yea, it is a better robe than ever *Adam* had in *Eden*, or the angels have in heaven; for the righteousness of either of these, is but the righteousness of a creature, whereas this is the righteousness of God; besides, the righteousness of *Adam* was a righteousness that might be lost, and which was actually lost; for *God made man upright, and he sought out many inventions*, whereby he lost his righteousness; so that now there is none of *Adam's* posterity righteous in and of themselves; no, not one; and as for the righteousness of the angels, it is plain, it was a loseable righteousness, for many of them left their first estate, and lost their righteousness; and the true reason why the others stand in theirs is, because of confirming grace from Christ; but Christ's righteousness is an everlasting one, and cannot, nor will it, ever be lost.

It is a righteousness which justice can find no fault with, but is entirely satisfied with; it justifies *from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses*; it secures from all wrath and condemnation, and silences all accusations; for *who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth*: It will answer for us in a time to come, and give us an admittance into God's kingdom and glory; when such that have no better righteousness than what the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* had, shall not enter there; and all that are without this *wedding garment*, shall be shut out, and *cast into outer darkness, where is weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth*. But I proceed,

IV. To consider the form of justification, which is by the imputation of this righteousness of Christ, I have been speaking of; *even as David describeth the blessedness of the man, unto*

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<sup>p</sup> Rom. 5:15–17.

<sup>q</sup> Luke 15:22. τὴν στολὴν τὴν πρώτην, stolam primam, *Vulgat. Lat. Arias Montan*. See *Hussey's Glory of Christ unveiled*, p. 741–744, &c.



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whom God imputeth righteousness without works<sup>r</sup>. The Hebrew word **בשח**<sup>s</sup>, and the Greek words, **λογίζομαι**, **ἐλλογέω**, **ἐλλογέομαι**, which are used to express this act of imputation, signify to reckon, repute, estimate, attribute, or place any thing to the account of another; as when the apostle Paul said to Philemon, concerning Onesimus, *If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on my account*<sup>t</sup>; **τοῦτό ἐμοὶ ἐλλόγει**, let it be reckoned or imputed to me; so when God is said to impute Christ's righteousness to us, the meaning is, that he reckons it as ours, being wrought out for us, and accounts us righteous by it, as though we had performed it in our own persons. And now, that it may appear that we are justified by the righteousness of Christ *imputed* to us, observe,

1. That we are in our own persons ungodly, who are justified, for God *justifieth the ungodly*<sup>u</sup>; if ungodly, then without a righteousness, as all Adam's posterity are; and if without a righteousness, then if we are justified, it must be by some righteousness imputed to us, or placed to our account; which can be no other than the righteousness of Christ.

2. We are justified either by an inherent, or by an imputed righteousness; not by an inherent one, because that is imperfect, and nothing that is imperfect can justify us. Besides, this is a righteousness within us, whereas the righteousness by which we are justified is a righteousness without us; it is *unto all, and upon all them that believe*<sup>x</sup>. And, if we are not justified by an inherent righteousness, then it must be by an imputed one, because there remains no other.

3. The righteousness by which we are justified is not our own righteousness, but the righteousness of another, even the righteousness of Christ: *That I may be found in Christ, says the apostle, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ*<sup>y</sup>. Now, the righteousness of another cannot be made ours, or we be justified by it, any other way than by an imputation of it.

4. The same way that Adam's sin becomes ours, or we are made sinners by it, the same way Christ's righteousness becomes ours, or we are made righteous by it. Now, Adam's sin becomes ours by imputation, and so does Christ's righteousness, according to the

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<sup>r</sup> Rom. 4:6.

<sup>s</sup> **בשח**, putavit, imputavit, reputavit, æstimavit. *Buxtorf*. **λογίζομαι**, æstimo, reputo, item imputo & alicujus veluti rationibus infero, tribuo, *Scapula*.

<sup>t</sup> Philem. ver. 18.

<sup>u</sup> Rom. 4:5.

<sup>x</sup> Rom. 3:22.

<sup>y</sup> Phil. 3:9.

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apostle<sup>z</sup>: *As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so, by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous.*

5. The same way that our sins became Christ's, his righteousness becomes ours. Now our sins became Christ's by imputation only; the Father laid them on him by imputation, and he took them to himself by voluntary susception; they were placed to his account, and he looked upon himself as answerable to justice for them. Now, in the same way his righteousness becomes ours: *For he, who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. 5:21.* But I hasten,

V. To enquire into the date of justification, concerning which there have been various sentiments<sup>a</sup>. Some have thought that it will not be completed until the day of judgment; others, that it commences at, or upon believing, and not before; others, that it took place at Christ's resurrection from the dead, when he was justified, and all the elect in him; others, that it bears date from the time that Christ was first promised, as the Mediator, which was quickly after the fall<sup>b</sup>; others carry it up as high as the covenant transactions between the Father and the Son, and the suretyship engagements of Christ from eternity, which are the present sentiments of my mind. The method in which I shall endeavour to represent them to others, shall be as follows:

*First*, I shall endeavour to prove that that which is properly justification, is antecedent to any act of believing.

*Secondly*, That the justification, by, or at, or upon believing, is not properly justification.

*Thirdly*, Answer the objections made against this doctrine.

*First*, I shall endeavour to prove, that that which is properly justification, is before faith, or antecedent to any act of believing of ours; which, I apprehend, may be fairly concluded from the following considerations.

1. Faith is not the cause, but the fruit and effect of justification. The reason why we are justified, is not because we have faith; but the reason why we have faith is because we are justified. Was there no such blessing of grace as justification of life provided for the sons of men, there would be no such thing as faith in Christ bestowed upon them, nor, indeed, would there be any use for it; and though it is provided, yet since not for all men,

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<sup>z</sup> Rom. 5:19.

<sup>a</sup> Vid. Turret. Institut. Theolog. tom. II. loc. 16. Quæst. 9. §. 1.

<sup>b</sup> Maccov. Loc. Commun. c. 69 p. 608.

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therefore all men have not faith. The reason why some do not believe, is, because they are *not of Christ's sheep*<sup>c</sup>; they never were chosen in him, nor justified by him, but are justly left in their sins, and so to condemnation; the reason why others do believe, is, because they *are ordained to eternal life*<sup>d</sup>, have a justifying righteousness provided for them, and are justified by it, and shall never enter into condemnation: and, in asserting this, I say no more than what Dr *Twisse*, the famous Prolocutor to the Assembly of Divines, has said before me. His words are these: "Before faith the righteousness of Christ was ours, being in the intention of God the Father, and Christ the Mediator, wrought out for us; and, because wrought out for us, therefore God, in his own time, gives us grace of every kind, and among others, faith itself, and, at last, the crown of heavenly glory<sup>e</sup>." And, a little after he says: "Before faith and repentance the righteousness of Christ is applied unto us; since it is on the account of that, that we obtain efficacious grace, to believe in Christ and repent." Likewise the judicious *Pemble* writes to the same effect, when, observing a twofold justification, he says, the one is "*In foro divino*, in God's sight, and this goes before all our sanctification; for even whilst the elect are unconverted, they are then *actually justified*, and freed from all sin, by the death of Christ, and God so esteems of them as free, and, having accepted of that satisfaction, is *actually reconciled* to them. By this justification, we are freed from the guilt of our sins; and *because* that is done away, God, in due time, proceeds to give us the grace of sanctification, to free from sin's corruption still inherent in our persons<sup>f</sup>." The other is, "*In foro conscientia*, in their own sense, which is but the revelation and certain declaration of God's former secret acts of accepting Christ's righteousness to our justification." And *Maccovius* says, "That because that God justifies us, therefore he gives us faith, and other spiritual gifts<sup>g</sup>." Now, if justification is the cause, and faith the effect; then, as every cause is before its effect, and every effect follows its own cause, justification must be before faith, and faith must follow justification.

2. Justification is the object, and faith is the act, which is conversant with it. Now the object does not depend upon the act, but the act upon the object. Every object is prior to the act, which is conversant with it; unless it be when an act gives being to the object, which

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<sup>c</sup> John 10:26.

<sup>d</sup> Acts 13:48.

<sup>e</sup> Ante fidem hæc Christi justitia nostra fuit, quatenus ex intentione Dei Patris & Christi Mediatoris pro nobis præstita; & quia pro nobis præstita, ideo suo tempore Deus daturus est nobis & gratiam cujusunque generis, ipsamque etiam fidem inter alias, & tandem aliquando cœlestis gloriæ coronam— Ante fidem & resipiscentiam applicatur nobis justitia Christi, utpote propter quam gratiam consequimur efficacem, ad credendum in Christum, & agendam pœnitentiam. *Twiss. Vindiciæ Gratia*, l. 1. par. 2. §. 25. p. 197.

<sup>f</sup> Vid. *Pemble's works*, p. 24.

<sup>g</sup> Quia ex eo, quòd nos Deus justificat, concedit nobis fidem & alia dona spiritualia. *Macco* πρῶτον ψευδος Arminian. c. 10.

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cannot be the case here; unless we make faith to be the cause or matter of our justification, which has been already disproved. Faith is the evidence, not the cause of justification; and if it is an evidence, that of which it is an evidence must exist before it. *Faith is indeed the evidence of things not seen*; but it is not the evidence of things that are not: what the eye is in the body, that faith is in the soul. The eye, by virtue of its visive faculty beholds sensible objects, but does not produce them; and did they not previously exist, could not behold them. We see the sun shining in its brightness, but did it not exist before, it could not be visible to us; the same observation will hold good in ten thousand other instances. Faith is the hand which receives the blessing of justification from the Lord, and righteousness, by which the soul is justified from the God of its salvation; but then this blessing must exist before faith can receive it. If any should think fit to distinguish between the act of justification, and the righteousness of Christ, by which we are justified; and object, That not justification, but the righteousness of Christ, is the object of faith: I reply, Either the righteousness of Christ, as justifying, is the object of faith, or it is not; if it is not, then it is useless, and to be laid aside in the business of justification; if, as justifying, it is the object of faith, what is it else but justification? Christ's righteousness justifying me, is my justification before God, and as such, my faith considers it, and says with the church, *Surely, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength*<sup>h</sup>.

3. The elect of God are justified whilst ungodly, and therefore, before they believe; the reason of the consequence is plain, because a believer is not an ungodly person. That God's elect are, by nature, ungodly, will not be denied; as such, Christ died for them: *While we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly*<sup>i</sup>. And it is as evident, that, as such, God justifies them: *But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness*<sup>k</sup>. Not that God justifies the ungodly without a righteousness; but he imputes and reckons to them the righteousness of his Son; for otherwise he would do that himself which he abhors in others: *For he that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, they both are an abomination to the Lord*<sup>l</sup>. Nor does he justify them in their ungodliness, but from it; and, indeed, *from all things, from which they could not be justified, by the law of Moses*; and yet he justifies them being ungodly. Now, if it can be proved that a believer is, or may be, called an ungodly person, then there is no strength in my argument; but, I apprehend, it cannot be proved, from scripture, that a believer is so called; nor can any just reason be given why he should; seeing an ungodly person is one that is without God, that is, without the grace and fear of God; and without Christ, being destitute of a true knowledge of him, faith in him, and love to him; all which

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<sup>h</sup> Isai. 45:24.

<sup>i</sup> Rom. 5:6.

<sup>k</sup> Rom. 4:5.

<sup>l</sup> Prov. 17:15.

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is incompatible with the character of a believer. I conclude then, that if God justifies his elect when they are ungodly, then he justifies them before they believe, which is the thing I have undertaken to prove.

4. All the elect of God were justified in, and with Christ, their Head and Representative, when he rose from the dead, and therefore before they believe. The Lord Jesus Christ having, from eternity engaged as a Surety for his people, all their sins were laid upon him, imputed to him, and placed to his account; for all which he was responsible to divine justice, and, accordingly, in the fulness of time gave full satisfaction for them, by his sufferings and death; and, having done this, was acquitted and discharged: for, as he was put to death in the flesh, he was justified in the Spirit. Now as he suffered and died not as a private person, but as a public one, so he rose again, and was justified as such. Hence, when he was justified, all those for whom he made satisfaction, and brought in a righteousness, were justified in him; which seems to be the meaning of that scripture, *Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification*<sup>m</sup>. This justification of the elect, at the resurrection of Christ, and upon the foot of the oblation and sacrifice, already offered up, is acknowledged by many excellent and judicious divines; some of whom, though they only allow a decretive justification from eternity; yet assert a real and complete one at the resurrection of Christ, on the account of his actual oblation and sacrifice. Dr *Ames* says, that "The sentence of justification was, 1. As it were conceived in the mind of God, by the decree of justifying. 2. Pronounced in Christ our Head, when he rose from the dead<sup>n</sup>." The learned *Hoornbeeck*, summing up the tenets of the people called *Antinomians* in *England*, takes notice of their sentiments concerning justification; and observes, that the difference between them and others, May easily be reconciled, by distinguishing justification into active and passive, the former, says he, is the act of God justifying; the latter the termination and application of it to the consciences of believers. The one was done at Christ's satisfaction; the other is, when a person actually believes<sup>o</sup>." And a little after, he adds; "Justification was designed for us from all eternity, in the decree of predestination; promised immediately after the fall; wrought at the death and resurrection of Christ, *for these are to be joined together*, Rom. 8:34. being, at the one, merited by Christ, and, at the other, declared and ratified by God." *Witsius*, who engaged as a

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<sup>m</sup> Rom. 4:25.

<sup>n</sup> Sententia hæc fuit, 1. In mente Dei quasi concepta per decretum justificandi. 2. In Christo capite nostro a mortuis jam resurgente pronunciata. *Ames*. Medull. Theolog. l. 1. c. 27. §. 9.

<sup>o</sup> Quod levi negotio componi potest distinguendo justificationem *activam* & *passivam*: illa est actio Dei justificantis; hæc istius terminatio & applicatio ad conscientiam fidelium. Illa facta est cum Christi satisfactione, hæc facta est quando quis actu credit. — Justificatio *destinata* nobis est ab omni æternitate, in decreto prædestinationis; *promissa* mox post lapsum; *sacta* in Christi morte & resurrectione, (conjungenda etenim hæc sunt, Rom. 8:34.) ibi a Christo merita, hic a Deo declarata & ratihabita. *Hoornbeeck*. Summ. Controv. lib. 10. de Brownistis, p. 705.



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Moderator in the *Antinomian* and *Neonomian* controversies, moved here in *England*, says: "Christ verily was justified, when God raised him from the dead, and gave an acquittance for the payment made by Christ, and accepted by him: *And the same Christ was raised again for our justification*, Rom. 4:25. For when he was justified, the elect were justified together in him; for as much as he was their Representative<sup>p</sup>." And, not to forget our great Dr *Goodwin*, who observes<sup>q</sup>, that "At the instant when he, that is, Christ, arose, God then performed a farther act of justification towards him, and us in him; admitting him, as our advocate, into the actual possession of justification of life; acquitting him from all those sins, which he had charged upon him. Therefore we read, that as Christ was made sin in his life and death, so that he was justified also, 1 *Tim* 3:16. And that he should be thus justified, is not spoken of him, abstractly considered in himself, but as he hath us conjoined in him, and as he connotes us." And, a little after he says: "As when he ascended, we ascended with him, (*and therefore we are said now to sit together with him in heavenly places*, Eph. 2:6.) so, when he was justified, we were justified also in him. And, as it may be said, *Adam* condemned us all, and corrupted us all when he fell; so did Christ then perfect us all, and God justified us all, when he died and rose again." Some divines call this a virtual justification: the phrase, I confess, is unintelligible to me. The famous *Parker* calls it an actual justification, both of Christ and us<sup>r</sup>. His words are these: "Christ is said to be justified when he rose again, 1 *Tim*. 3:16. and we to be then justified in him, Rom. 4:25. because the discharge, that is, his Father's raising him up, was an *actual justification* of him from the sins of others, for which he had satisfied, and of us from our own sins, for which he became a surety." Those who assert there is no justification before faith, ought duly to consider this argument, so well founded in scripture, and so agreeable to the sentiments of great and good men. But,

5. I shall go a step higher, and endeavour to prove, that all the elect of God are justified from eternity. When, I say, the elect of God are justified from eternity, I do not think, that they had an actual personal existence from eternity, though they had a representative one in Christ; or that an actual payment of their debts, or an actual satisfaction for their sins was then made by Christ, though he engaged to do it; nor do I intend justification from eternity, in such a sense, as to set aside the imputation of *Adam's* sin to the condemnation

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<sup>p</sup> Sane Christus justificatus est, quando Deus cum ex mortuis suscitavit, & apocham præstitæ a Christo & acceptæ a se solutionis dedit Idemque Christus suscitatus est ad nostri justificationem, Rom. 4:25. Nam quum ipse justificabatur, simul justificabantur electi in ipso, quippe quorum gerebat personam. *Wits. Animadv. Irenic. c. 10. §. 2.*

<sup>q</sup> Vol. IV. par. 1. p. 105, 106.

<sup>r</sup> Justificatus Christus dicitur cum resurrexit, 1 *Tim*. 3:16. Nosque in eo resurgente justificati, Rom. 4. *ult.* Quia ista solutio, id est, suscitatio Patris, *actualis justificatio* fuit, illius quidem a peccatis aliorum pro quibus satis dederat, *nostrum* vero à peccatis propriis, pro quibus ille vadimonium præstitit. *Parker* de descensu Christi ad inferos, l. 3. §. 30. p. 59.

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of the elect in him; or to render Christ's bringing in an actual righteousness in time unnecessary; or to make faith useless in our justification, in our own consciences, as, I hope, I shall shortly make appear: yet, on the other hand, I mean more by justification from eternity, than merely God's prescience, or fore knowledge of it, to whom *all his works are known, from the beginning of the world, ἀπ' αἰῶνος*, from eternity<sup>s</sup>; more than a mere resolution and purpose to justify his elect in time, he *calling things that are not, as though they were*<sup>t</sup>; or, in other words, more than a decretive justification, as some divines call it; who apprehend that God's elect can, in no other sense, be said to be justified from eternity, than they may be said to be sanctified or glorified from eternity, because he had decreed to sanctify and glorify them: I say, I mean more than this, and assert, with Dr Ames, that justification "is a sentence conceived in the mind of God, by the decree of justification;" that this is an act in God, all whose acts in him are eternal; that this is the grand original sentence of justification; of which that pronounced on Christ, as our representative, when he rose from the dead, and that which is pronounced by the Spirit of God in the consciences of believers, as well as that which will be pronounced before men and angels, at the general judgment, are no other than so many repetitions, or renewed declarations; that this includes the whole compleat *esse* of justification; being, as Mr Rutherford observes<sup>u</sup>, "An eternal and immanent act in God, and not transient upon an external subject. Of which sort, adds he, are the acts of election and reprobation, which have their whole complete being before the persons elected, reprobated, or justified, either begin to be, live or believe, or do any thing good or evil." In one word, I apprehend, that as God's eternal decree of election of persons to everlasting life, is the eternal election of them, so God's will, decree, or purpose, to justify his elect, is the eternal justification of them; though his eternal will to sanctify them is not an eternal sanctification of them; because sanctification is a work of God's grace upon us, and within us, and so requires our personal existence. Justification is an act of God's grace towards us, is wholly without us, entirely resides in the divine mind, and lies in his estimation, accounting and constituting us righteous, through the righteousness of his Son; and so required neither the actual existence of Christ's righteousness, nor of our persons, but only that both should certainly exist in time. For the further confirmation and illustration of this truth, let the following things be observed:

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<sup>s</sup> Acts 15:18.

<sup>t</sup> Rom. 4:17.

<sup>u</sup> Justificare sumitur vel active, pro actu Dei judiciali, vel passive seu terminative, prout in credentem terminator; priore in modo est actus in Deo internus & immanens, non transiens in subjectum externum; ejus modi actus sunt electio & reprobatio, quæ habent totum esse completum, priusquam homines electi, reprobati aut justificati vel esse, vivere, credere incipiant, aliquid boni vel mali faciunt. *Rutherford. Apolog. Exercitat. exerc. 1. c 2. §. 20.*

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(1.) That there is an eternal election of persons to everlasting life, and that the objects of justification are God's elect: *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth<sup>x</sup>*. Now, if God's elect, as such, can have nothing laid to their charge, but are, by God, acquitted, discharged, and justified; and, if they bore this character of elect from eternity, or were chosen in Christ before the world began, then they must be acquitted, discharged and justified by God from eternity, so as nothing could be laid to their charge. Besides, electing grace before the world began, put then in Christ: *He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world<sup>y</sup>*. And if electing grace then put them in him, they must be considered as righteous in him: no man can be considered in Christ as an unrighteous person, or as unjustified, or as in a state of condemnation. And, I think, we may be allowed to argue an eternal justification from eternal election, since eternal justification is a branch of it; and, as such, as one observes, "Is the Father's eternal purpose and agreement with the Son, that the elect should be everlastingly righteous in his sight, in the righteousness of this dear Son of his; in which act he constituted and ordained them so to be<sup>z</sup>." And this act, as the same excellent person observes, is no other than "setting apart the elect alone to be partakers of Christ's righteousness, and setting apart Christ's righteousness for the elect only<sup>a</sup>." I think we may safely conclude, that if there is an eternal election of persons in Christ, there must be an eternal acceptance and justification of them in him; since as he always was the beloved Son of his Father, in whom he is ever well pleased, so he always has graciously accepted of, and is well pleased with all his elect in him.

(2.) That there was, from all eternity, a covenant of grace and peace made between the Father and the Son, on the account of these elect persons; when all the blessings of grace, and promises of life, provided and secured in that covenant, were put into the hands of Jesus Christ for his people; and though they had then no personal or actual existence, yet they had a representative Being in Christ, in whom they were then *blessed with all spiritual blessings<sup>b</sup>*. And, if with all spiritual blessings, then with this of justification; which was no inconsiderable part of that *grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began<sup>c</sup>*. But I cannot express this better than in the words of Dr *Goodwin*, who speaking of the date of justification, says<sup>d</sup>: "The first progress, or step, was at the first covenant-making and striking of the bargain from all eternity: we may say, of all spiritual blessings in Christ, what is said of Christ, that *his goings forth are from everlasting*. Justified then we

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<sup>x</sup> Rom. 8:33.

<sup>y</sup> Eph. 1:4.

<sup>z</sup> Mr *Davis*, in his letter to Mr *Beart*, published in Mr. *Maurice's* Monuments of Mercy, p. 83.

<sup>a</sup> *Ibid.* p. 85.

<sup>b</sup> Eph. 1:3.

<sup>c</sup> 2 Tim. 1:9.

<sup>d</sup> Vol. 4. par. 1. p. 104, 105.

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were, when first elected, though not in our own persons, yet in our Head, as he had our persons then given him, and we came to have a being and interest in him: *You are in Christ*, (saith the apostle) and so we had the promise made of all spiritual blessings in him, and he took all the deeds of all in our name; so in Christ we were blessed with all spiritual blessings, *Eph. 1:3*. As we are blessed with all other, and so with this also, that we were justified then in Christ. To this purpose is that place, *Rom. 8:30*. where he speaks of all those blessings which are applied to us after redemption, as calling, justification, glorification, as of things already past and done, even then when he did predestinate us: whom he hath predestinated, them he hath called, them he hath justified, them he hath glorified. He speaks it as in the time past; neither speaks he thus of these blessings, as past simply in regard of that presence, in which all things stand before him from eternity; all things past, present, and to come, being to him as present: nor doth he speak it only in regard of a resolution, or purpose, taken up to call and justify, he calling things that are not as though they were, *Rom. 4:17*. For thus it may be said, of all his other works towards the creatures in common, that he hath created and preserved them from everlasting: but in a more special relation are these blessings decreed, said to have been bestowed, because, though they existed not in themselves, yet they existed really in a Head that represented them and us, who was by to answer for them, and to undertake for them, which other creatures could not do; and there was an actual donation and receiving of all these for us, (as truly as a feoffee in trust may take lands for one unborn) by virtue of a covenant made with Christ; whereby Christ had all our sins imputed to him, and so taken off from us, Christ having then covenanted to take all our sins upon him, when he took our persons to be his; and God having covenanted not to impute sin unto us, but to look at him for the payment of all, and at us as discharged. Of this seems that place, *2 Cor. 5:19*. evidently to speak, as importing that everlasting transaction; *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses to them*, that is, not imputing them then when he was reconciling us unto himself in Christ. So as then God told Christ, as it were, (for it was a real covenant) that he would look for his debt and satisfaction of him, and that he did let the sinners go free; and so they are, in this respect, justified from all eternity. And, indeed, if the promise of life was then given us, (as the apostle *Paul* speaks, *Tit. 1:2*.) then also justification of life, without which we could not come to life. Yet this is but the inchoation, though it be an estating us into the whole tenure of life."

(3.) Christ was set up from everlasting, as the Mediator of this covenant: his goings forth, and acting therein, on the behalf of his people, were of old, from everlasting. He then engaged to be a surety for them, and was accepted of by God the Father as such; who thence forward, to use the Doctor's words, just now cited, looked for his debt, and expected satisfaction of him, and let the sinners go free, for whom he engaged. Looking at him for the payment, he looked at them as discharged; and they were so in his eternal mind, and, in this respect, were justified from eternity. And indeed, it is a rule that will

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hold good, "That as soon as any one becomes a surety for another<sup>e</sup>, the other is immediately freed, if the surety be accepted;" which is the case here. And it is certainly most prudential, when a man has a bad debt, and has good security for it, to have his eye upon the bondsman or surety for payment, and not upon the principal debtor, who will never be able to pay him.

(4.) That as soon as Christ became a surety, the sins of all those persons, for whom he became a surety, were reckoned and accounted to him; and, if accounted to him, then not to them; if they were laid to his charge, then not to theirs; and, if he was answerable for them, then they were discharged from them. If there was an imputation of them to him, then there must be a non-imputation of them to them; which the apostle plainly intimates, when he says, *God was in Christ, that is, from everlasting, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them*<sup>f</sup>. Witsius, citing this text of scripture, says<sup>g</sup>: "God hath reconciled the whole world of his elect to himself, and hath declared that he will not impute their trespasses to them, and that because of the consummate satisfaction of Christ, 2 Cor. 5:19. wherefore, says he, I am of opinion, that this act of God may be called the general justification of the elect." Nor ought it to be thought strange, foreign, or far-fetched, that the justification of God's people is inferred from the imputation of their sins to Christ, and the non-imputation of them to them; since the apostle *Paul*, in *Rom. 4:6-8*. has so manifestly deduced, and strongly concluded the imputation of righteousness, which is the *ratio formalis* of justification, from the non-imputation of sin, and remission of it.

(5.) That God from eternity willed to punish sin, not in the persons of the elect, but in the person of Christ their surety. That it is the will of God to punish sin, not in his people, but in his Son, is plain and manifest, from his *setting him up*<sup>h</sup> in his purpose, *to be a propitiation for their sins*; from his sending him forth in the likeness of sinful flesh; to condemn sin in the flesh; and from his being made both sin and a curse for them, that they might be made the righteousness of God in him. This will was notified to man quickly after the fall, though it did not then begin, for no new will can arise in God; he wills nothing in time, but what he willed from eternity. If it was God's eternal will not to punish sin in his people, but in his Son, then they were eternally discharged, acquitted from sin, and secured from everlasting wrath and destruction; and, if they were eternally discharged

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<sup>e</sup> Quia simul ac. vas aliquis fit pro altero, alter statim liberator, si vas iste acceptatur. *Maccou*. Theolog. Quæst. loc. 31. Quæst. 6.

<sup>f</sup> 2 Cor. 5:9.

<sup>g</sup> Deus totum electorum suorum mundum simul sibi reconciliavit, pronunciavitque, se non imputaturum iis offensas suas, atque id propter Christi consummatam satisfactionem, 2 Cor. 5:19. per me itaque licet, ut hæc Dei actio, generalis electorum justificatio dicatur. *Wits Animadv. Ircnic. c. 10. §. 2.*

<sup>h</sup> Rom. 3:25. προέθετο, fore-ordained.



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from sin, and freed from punishment, they were eternally justified. Dr *Twisse* makes the very quiddity or essence, of justification and remission of sins, which he takes to be the same, to lie in God's will not to punish. His words are these: "Forgiveness of sin, if you regard the quiddity of it, is no other than a negation of punishment, or a will not to punish: be it therefore, that to forgive sin is no other than to will nor to punish; why, this will not to punish, as it is an immanent act in God, was from eternity<sup>i</sup>."

(6.) That the saints under the Old Testament were justified by the same righteousness of Christ, as the saints under the New; and that before the Oblation, or sacrifice, was actually offered up, or the everlasting righteousness was actually brought in; before an actual payment of debts was made, or an actual satisfaction for sins given. For Christ's blood, when it was shed, was shed *for the remission of sins that were past*<sup>k</sup>. And his death was *for the redemption of transgressions that were under the first Testament*. Now if God could, and did, actually justify some, having taken his Son's word as their surety, upon a view of his future righteousness, three or four thousand years before this righteousness was actually wrought out; why could he not, and why may it not be thought that he did, justify all his elect from eternity, viewing the same future righteousness of Christ, which he had engaged to work out for them, and which he knew full well he would work out; since, though they had not then an actual, yet they had a representative Being in Christ their Head? But I proceed,

*Secondly*, To shew that the justification, which is by, at, or upon believing, is not properly justification, but the manifestation of it. The phrase we frequently meet with in scripture, of being *justified by faith*, must be understood either in a proper or in an improper sense: those who understand it in a proper sense, make the *τὸ credere*, or the act of faith, to be imputed for justification; or, in other words, to be the matter of it; or to be accepted of God in the room of a legal righteousness: this is the way the *Papists*<sup>l</sup>, *Socinians*<sup>m</sup>, and *Remonstrants* take. On the other hand, sound Protestant divines understand the phrase in an improper, tropical, or metonymical sense; and say, that faith intends neither the habit, nor the act of faith; because then our justification would be placed in that which is a part, and a principal part of sanctification; nor would there be a proper antithesis, or

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<sup>i</sup> Remissio enim peccatorum, si quidditatem inspicias, nihil aliud est, quam aut punitionis negatio, aut volltionis puniendi negatio. Sit ergo, peccata remittere nihil aliud quam nolle punire. At hoc nolle punire, ut actus immanens in Deo, fuit ab æterno. *Twiss*. *Vindiciæ Gratia*, l. 1. par. 2. § 25. p. 194. *To which Mr Eyres agrees in his Free Justification of a Sinner, &c.* p. 89, 91. *where he gives these two reasons for it.*—1. *Because it agrees with the definition the Psalmist and Apostle give of justification*, Psalm 32:1, 2. Rom. 4:6, 7.—2. *Because by it God's elect are acquitted and discharged from their sins, and secured from wrath and destruction. Mr Rutherford seems to be of the same mind.* *Exercitat. Apolog.* exerc. i. c. 2 §. 20.

<sup>k</sup> Rom. 3:25, 26. Heb. 9:15.

<sup>l</sup> Vid. *Rivet*. *Summ. Controv. Tract. 4. Quæst. 2. Ames*. *Bellarmin. Enerv. tom. IV. l. 6. c. 1.*

<sup>m</sup> Vid. *Peltii Harmon. Remonstrant. & Socin.* p. 151, 152.

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opposition, between faith and works, in the business of justification: therefore by faith they understand, and very rightly, the object of faith, as in *Gal. 3:23*. *But before faith came, &c.* that is, before Christ, the Object of faith, came: so that we may be said to be justified by faith objectively, the act of faith being put for the object of it; the reason of which is, because it is to faith that this object is revealed. Faith is the recipient of it; it is the grace by which the soul lays hold on, apprehends, and embraces Christ's righteousness, as its justifying righteousness before God. So that when we are said to be justified by faith, it is to be understood not in a proper, but in an improper, tropical, or metonymical sense; faith being not our justification itself, but the evidence of it. For

Faith adds nothing to the *esse*, but to the *bene esse* of justification. Justification is a compleat act in God's eternal mind, without the being or consideration of faith; that is to say, God does not justify any because they believe in Christ, nor on the foresight of their future faith in him. A man is not more justified after faith, than he is before faith in God's account; and, after he has believed, his justification does not depend upon his acts of faith; for though *we believe not, yet he abides faithful<sup>n</sup>* to his covenant-engagements with his Son. Faith, indeed, is of great use for our comfortable apprehension of it; without this grace we neither know, nor can claim, our interest in it; nor enjoy that peace of conscience, which is the happy result of it. But

Faith has no manner of causal influence upon our justification. It is not the impulsive, or moving cause of it, for that is the grace of God; nor the efficient cause of it, for it is God that justifies; nor is it the matter of it, for that is the obedience and blood of Christ; nor is it an instrument, or instrumental cause of it, which is no other than a less principal efficient cause. For, as Mr *Baxter* himself well argues<sup>o</sup>, "if faith be the instrument of our justification, it is the instrument either of God, or man. Not of man, for justification is God's act; he is the sole Justifier, *Rom. 3:26*. man doth not justify himself: nor of God, for it is not God that believeth." Nor is it *causa sine qua non*, or that without which a man cannot be justified in the sight of God. For, I hope, I have already proved, that all God's elect are justified in his sight, and in his account, before faith; and if before faith, then without it. Besides, all elect infants, dying in infancy, are completely justified, who are not capable of the *tò credere*, or act of believing in Christ, whatever may be said for the habit of faith in them.

Faith is the sense, perception, and evidence of our justification. Christ's righteousness, as justifying, *is revealed from faith to faith*. It is that grace whereby the soul, in the light of the divine Spirit, beholds a complete righteousness in Christ, having seen its guilt, pollution, and misery; when it is enabled to renounce its own righteousness, and submit to the

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<sup>n</sup> 2 Tim. 2:13.

<sup>o</sup> Aphorism, 56. See *Eyre's Free justification*, &c. p. 69. Ed. 2.

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righteousness of Christ; which it puts on by faith, as its garment of justification; which it rejoices in, and gives him the glory of; the Spirit of God bearing witness with his Spirit, that he is a justified Person. And so he comes to be evidently and declaratively *justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.*

Now neither the manifestation of justification to our consciences, by the Spirit of God; nor our sense and perception of it by faith, are properly our justification: for they both relate to some prior act or sentence, wherein the very essence of the thing lies. The pardon of a criminal is compleat, when signed and sealed by the king. Neither the act of bringing it to the criminal, nor his act of receiving it, is his pardon; though both are necessary to his knowledge of it, and to his pleading it in court, as well as to the peace, quiet, and satisfaction of his mind. When a man is justified and acquitted in court, and hath the copy of his indictment given him, who will say the copy of his indictment is his justification or acquittance, and not the judgment and act of the court? For a man may be truly and legally acquitted, and yet not have the copy of his indictment. For a man to have the copy of his indictment may be of great service in some cases, and be a good testimonial of his acquittance; but it is not the thing itself. Just so, neither the intimation of the sentence of justification, made to our consciences by the Spirit of God; nor our sense and perception of it by faith, so intimated, is, strictly and properly speaking, our justification: for, if they were, then believers themselves might be without it, since they may be without those intimations of the blessed Spirit, and a comfortable sense and perception of their justification by faith; which seems to be the case of *David*, when he said: *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit*<sup>p</sup>.

What I have now said, I think, perfectly agrees not only with the scriptures of truth, but with what some of the best and soundest divines have said on this subject, I have already observed that Dr *Ames* says, that “The testimony of the Spirit is not so properly justification, as it is an actual perception of it before granted<sup>q</sup>.” As also what the judicious *Pemble* has asserted, when speaking of justification *in foro conscientiae*, he says: It is “but the revelation and certain declaration of God’s former secret act of accepting Christ’s righteousness to our justification.” Besides these, give me leave to add one or two testimonies more. *Maccovius*, speaking of the *Arminian* tenet, “That we are not justified before we believe,” observes, that this mistake arises from their not allowing the distinction of active and passive justification, which he proves thus: “It is said of God

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<sup>p</sup> Psalm 51:12.

<sup>q</sup> See pag. 11.

<sup>r</sup> See pag. 37.

<sup>s</sup> Dicitur de Deo quod justificat, *Rom.* 4:5. & de nobis quod justificamur, cap. 5. Non est ergo propterea duplex justificatio; nam passiva improprie dicitur justificatio, & est tantum sensus justificationis activæ. *Maccov.* Πρωτον ψευδος *Arminian* c. 10. Vid. etiam *Theolog. Polem.* c. 15. Quæst. 2.

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that he justifieth, *Rom.* 4:5. and of us, that we are justified, chap. 5. Not that there is a twofold justification; for passive justification, says he, is improperly called justification, and is only the sense of active justification." Mr *Rutherford*<sup>t</sup> says, that "Justification taken passively, or in the termination of it, is to declare a man both living, and actually believing, righteous, by a judicial act, terminated upon the conscience of a guilty sinner, cited before the tribunal of God, and convicted of sin; in which law-suit the sinner is absolved, and actually perceives and apprehends the declared absolution, and by a fiducial stay relies on Christ, now reaching out the manifestation of this sentence: yet, says he, justification in this form of speech, so usual in the scriptures, does not suppose any new will in God, beginning in time, as the *Arminians* with their own *Socinus* assert; but an intimation of God's eternal will, now made to the conscience." I will conclude this head with the words of Dr *Twisse*<sup>u</sup>: "Justification and absolution, as they signify an immanent act of the divine will, are from eternity: but the external notification of the same will in manner of a judicial and forensic absolution, which is made by the Word and Spirit, at the tribunal of every one's conscience, is that imputation of Christ's righteousness remission of sins, justification and absolution, which follow faith. For hereupon absolution is pronounced, as it were by the mouth of a judge, and so that internal purpose of absolving, which was from eternity, is made manifest." But I shall now go on,

*Thirdly*, To consider the objections which are made against this doctrine.

1. It is objected, that persons cannot be justified before they exist; they must *be*, before they can *be* justified; and this is strengthened with some old trite philosophical maxims: as, *Non entis nulla sunt accidentia, nullæ affectiones; accidentis esse, est inesse*; "No accidents can be predicated of a non-entity; no affections can be ascribed to it, &c." To which I answer, with *Maccovius*<sup>w</sup>, That this is true of non-entities that have neither an *esse actu*,

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<sup>t</sup> Justificare terminative & passive est justum hominem & viventem, & actu credentem declarare, actu judiciali terminato in conscientiam peccatoris rei, & citati coram tremendo Dei judicis tribunali, & peccatorum convicti; quo lite forensi peccator absolvitur, & absolutionem declaratam actu sentit, apprehendit, & fiduciali innixu in Christum, jam manifestationem illius sententiæ porrigentem recumbit. At vero tò justificare, hac usitata in scripturis loquendi forma, non ponit in Deo novam volitionem, jam in tempore incipientem, ut nugantur Arminiani cum suo Socino; sed æternæ Dei volitionis intimationem conscientiæ jam factam. *Rhaetorfort.* Exercitat. Apolog. exerc. 1. c. a. §. 20.

<sup>u</sup> Justificatio & absolutio prout significant actum divinæ voluntatis immanentem, sunt ab æterno: unius autem voluntatis notificatio externa, per modum absolutionis cujusdam judicialis & forensis quæ sit per verbum & spiritum, pro tribunali conscientiæ uniuscujusque; hæc est illa justitiæ imputatio, itemque peccatorum remissio, & justificatio atque absolutio, quæ fidem consequitur hinc enim fit ut quasi ore judicis pronuncietur absolutio, eoque internum absolvendi propositum, quod ab æterno fuit manifestatur. *Twiss.* Vindiciæ Gratiae, l. 1. par. 2. §. 25. p. 197.

<sup>w</sup> Loc. Commun. c. 69. p. 609.

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nor an *esse cognitum*; that have neither an actual being, nor is it certain, or known, that they shall have any future being. But God's elect, though they have not an *esse actu*, an actual being from eternity, yet they have an *esse cognitum*; it is certain by the prescience and fore knowledge of God, that they shall have one; for *known unto God are all his works from eternity*<sup>x</sup>. Besides, they have an *esse repræsentativum*, a representative being in Christ; which is, more than other creatures have, whose future existences are certain; and therefore they were *blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ, before the foundation of the world*<sup>y</sup>; and had *grace given them in Christ before the world began*<sup>z</sup>. Moreover, "Justification is a moral act, which does not require the present existence of the subject; it is enough that it shall exist some time or other<sup>a</sup>." It is, indeed, granted, that justification taken passively, as it is declared to, and passes upon the conscience, by the Spirit of God, and is received by faith; that this requires the actual existence of the subject on whom it terminates: but we are not speaking of justification as a transient, but as an immanent act; not as received by us, but as it is in God, who justifies.

2. It is objected, that if God's elect are justified from eternity, then they were not only justified before they themselves existed, but also from that which, as yet, was not committed, that is, sin; and it seems absurd to say, that they are justified from sins, before they were committed, or any charge was brought against them for sin. To which I answer: it is no more absurd, to say, that God's elect are justified from their sins, before they were committed, than it is to say, that their sins were imputed to Christ, and laid upon him, as he was delivered up to justice, and died for them, before they were committed. And as this will not be denied by those, who believe the substitution of Christ in the room and stead of the elect, the imputation of their sins to him, and his plenary satisfaction to divine justice for them, by his sufferings and death; so it is an answer which ought to be satisfactory to them.

3. It is suggested<sup>b</sup>, "That justification, strictly speaking, cannot be said to be from eternity, because the decree of justification is one thing, and justification itself another; even as God's will to save and sanctify is one thing, and salvation and sanctification itself another; and therefore, though the decree is from eternity the thing itself is not." To which I reply:

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<sup>x</sup> Acts 15:1.

<sup>y</sup> Eph. 1:3.

<sup>z</sup> 2 Tim. 1:9.

<sup>a</sup> Justificatio est actus moralis, qui non requirit, ut simul sit subjectum existens; sed fuisse, ut allquando existat. *Mocov. Theolog. Quæst. loc. 31.*

<sup>b</sup> Non putamus, accurate loquendo, justificationem ipsam posse dici æternam, quia aliud est decretum justificationis, aliud ipsa justificatio: ut aliud est voluntas servandi & sanctificandi, aliud verò salus & sanctificatio ipsa: voluntas seu decretum de quibusdam justificandis æternum quidem est; & sidem ipsam præcedit, fed ipsa actualis justificatio fit in tempore, & idem sequitur. *Turretin. Institut. Theolog. tom. II. loc. 16. Quæst. 9. §. 3.*



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That as God's decree to elect certain persons to everlasting life and salvation, is his election of them to everlasting life and salvation; so his decree, will, and purpose to justify any, is his justification of them: for by, or through the decree of justification, as Dr *Ames* expresses it, (which was before observed<sup>c</sup> the sentence of justification was conceived in God's mind; and, being there conceived, was compleat and perfect. God's will not to impute sin to his people, is the non-imputation of it to them; and his will to impute Christ's righteousness, is the imputation of it to them. The same may be said of all God's immanent acts of grace concerning us; such as election, &c. Which are entirely within himself, and do not require that the object should exist; only that it certainly shall exist some time or other: but this cannot be said of transient acts, which produce a real, physical and inherent change upon the subject. It is one thing for God to will to act an act of grace concerning us, and another thing to will to work a work of grace in us. God's will in the former instance, is his act; in the latter it is not: wherefore, though God's will to justify is justification itself, because justification is a compleat act in his eternal mind without us: yet his will to sanctify is not sanctification, because this is a work wrought in us. Hence it appears, that there is not the same reason to say, we were created, called, sanctified, or glorified from eternity; as to say, that we were justified from eternity. Because, as Mr *Eyres* observes<sup>d</sup>: "These import an inherent change in the person created, called, glorified; which forgiveness does not, it being perfect and compleat in the mind of God:" by which he means justification.

4. It is observed, That the apostle *Paul*, in recounting the several blessings of divine grace, in his famous chain of salvation, *Rom.* 8:30. places vocation before justification, as something antecedent to it<sup>e</sup>; from whence it is concluded, that vocation is, in order of time, before justification. To which I reply: That the order of things is frequently inverted in scripture. The Jews have a saying, That "there is neither first nor last in the law<sup>f</sup>," that is, it does not always observe to put that first which is first; and that last which is last; but frequently changes the order; so that nothing strictly is to be concluded from thence. And as this is obvious in the law, and in the other writings of the Old Testament, so it is in the books of the New Testament; where it is easy to observe, that the order of the three Persons in the Trinity is not always kept to. Sometimes the Son is placed before the Father, and sometimes the Holy Spirit is mentioned before the Father and the Son. And though this may well express the equality there is between them; yet it ought not to be urged, to confound the order among them. But, to consider the instance of vocation before us: let it

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<sup>c</sup> See page 42, 46, 47.

<sup>d</sup> *Free Justification*, &c. p. 94.

<sup>e</sup> Paulus expresse hoc confirmat in catena salutis, beneficia quæ ex externo Dei amore in electos manant ordine recensens, ubi vocationem præponit justificationi tanquam aliquid antecedens, *Rom.* 8:30. Quos vocavit, eos justificavit. *Turretin.* ubi supra, §. 4.

<sup>f</sup> אין מוקדם ומאוחר בתורה *Talmud.* Bab. Pesachim, fol. 6. col. 2.

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be observed, that this is sometimes placed before election, as in 2 Peter 1:10. *Make your calling and election sure.* And yet none but an *Arminian*, and scarcely such an one, will infer from hence, that vocation, or calling, is before election. And, on the other hand, salvation is placed before vocation, 2 Tim. 1:9. *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling.* From whence it may be as strongly concluded, that salvation, and so justification, is before vocation, as that vocation is before justification from the other text. If, indeed, by justification is meant the declarative sentence of it upon the conscience, by the Spirit of God, and received by faith, it will be allowed, that it follows vocation, and that vocation precedes it.

5. "The several passages of scripture, where we are said to be justified by, or through faith, are urged, as declaring faith to be a pre-requisite to justification; which cannot be, say they, if justification was from eternity<sup>g</sup>." To which I answer: That those places of scripture, which speak of justification, by, or through faith, do not militate against, nor disprove justification before faith: for though justification before, and by faith differ; yet they are not opposite and contradictory: yea, justification by, or through faith, supposes justification before faith. For if there was no justification before faith, there can be none by it, without making faith the cause or condition of it. As to those places of scripture, which speak of justification by, or through faith, declaring faith to be a pre-requisite to justification, I reply: If by a pre-requisite, is meant a pre-requisite to the being of justification, it is denied that those scriptures teach any such thing; for faith adds nothing to the being of justification: but if by it, is meant a pre-requisite to the sense and knowledge of it, or to a claim of interest in it, it will be allowed to be the sense of them. But a learned author says,<sup>h</sup>: That "to refer them to the sense of "justification only is weak and foreign to the mind of the apostle *Paul*." But I must beg leave to differ from him, till some reasons are given why it is so. But let us a little consider some of the scriptures which are insisted on. Perhaps the words of my text may be thought to stare me in the face, and to furnish out an objection against justification, before faith; when the apostle says, *And by him all that believe are justified.* From whence it can only be inferred; that all who believe are justified persons, which no body denies; and they may be justified before they believe, for aught that the apostle here says. And if any one should think fit to infer from hence, that those who believe not, are not justified, it will be allowed, that they are not declaratively, or evidentially justified; that they do not know that they are; that they cannot receive any comfort from it, nor claim any interest in justification; but that they are not justified in God's sight, or in Christ the Mediator, cannot be proved. Again, the

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<sup>g</sup> Nec alio tendunt varia illa loca, ubi dicimur per fidem, & sibi justificari, quam ut doceant sibi esse aliquid ad justificationem prae-requisitum; quod dici non potest, si justificatio ab aeterno facta fuisset. *Turretin.* ut supra.

<sup>h</sup> Nam haec ad sensum tantum justificationis referre dilutum est, & a Pauli mente alienum. *Turretin.* *ibid.*

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apostle in 1 Cor. 6:11. says of the *Corinthians*, that they were *now justified*, as if they were not justified before. But this, I conceive, does not at all militate against justification before faith: for they might be justified *in foro Dei*, and in their Head, Christ Jesus, before *now*, and yet not till *now* be justified in their own consciences, and by the Spirit of God; which, it is plain, is the justification the apostle is here speaking of. But the grand text, which is urged to prove justification a consequent of faith, is Gal. 2:16. *Even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ*. Here the apostle is speaking of justification, as it terminates upon the conscience of a believer: and this is readily granted to follow faith, and to be a consequent of it; for that none are justified by faith until they believe, is acknowledged by all. The apostle's meaning then is, that we have believed in Christ, or have looked to him for justification, that we might have the comfortable sense and apprehension of it, through faith in him; or that we may appear to be justified, or to expect justification alone by his righteousness, received by faith, and not by the works of the law. In the same light may many other scriptures, of the same kind, be considered.

6. It is urged<sup>i</sup>: “That justification cannot be from eternity, but only in time, when a man actually believes and repents; because else it would follow, that he, who is justified, and consequently hath passed from death to life, and is become a child of God, and an heir of eternal life, abides still in death, and is a child of wrath; because he who is not converted, and lies in sin, abides in death, 1 John 3:14. and is of the devil, 1 John 3:8. and in a state of damnation, Gal. 5:21.” In order to solve this seeming difficulty, let it be observed, That God's elect may be considered under two different *Heads*, and as related to two different covenants at one and the same time. As they are the descendants of *Adam*, they are related to him, as a covenant-head, and as such, sinned in him; and, through his offence judgment came upon them all to condemnation; and so they are all, by nature, children of wrath, even as others. But then, as considered in Christ, they were loved with an everlasting love: God chose them in him before the foundation of the world; and always viewed and accounted them righteous in Christ, in whom they were eternally secured from eternal wrath and damnation. So that it is no contradiction to say, that the elect of God, as they are in *Adam*, and according to the covenant of works, are under the sentence of condemnation; and that as they are in Christ, and according to the covenant of grace, and the secret transactions thereof, they are justified and freed from all condemnation. This is no more a contradiction, than that they are loved with an everlasting love, and yet are children of wrath at one and the same time, as they certainly are. And again, this is no more a contradiction, than that Jesus Christ was the Object of his Father's love and wrath

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<sup>i</sup> Liqueat talem justificationem non potuisse fieri ab æterno, sed tantum in tempore quum homo actu credit & poenitentiam agit; alias sequeretur, cum, qui justificatus, & per consequens transiit a morte ad vitam, & Filius Dei factus est & hæres vitæ æternæ, adhuc manere in morte. & esse Filium iræ; quia qui nondum conversus est, & in peccato jacet, manet in morte, 1 Joh. 3:14. & est ex diabolo, 1 Joh. 3:8. & in statu damnationis, Gal. 5:21. *Turretin. ibid. §. 5.*

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at one and the same time; sustaining two different capacities, and standing in two different relations, when he suffered in the room and stead of his people.

7. It is objected, that this doctrine makes assurance to be of the essence of faith. And, indeed, I think, that assurance, in some degree or other of it, is essential to faith: but then by this I do not mean such an assurance as excludes all doubts and fears, and admits of no alloy of unbelief; which the apostle calls, *The full assurance of faith*<sup>k</sup>, and is the highest degree thereof. Nor do I intend assurance in so low a sense, as the mere assurance of the object; for this may be in devils, in hypocrites, and formal professors: but I mean an assurance of the object with relation to a man's self in particular. As for instance: That faith by which a man is said to be justified, is not a meer assurance of the object, or a bare persuasion that there is a justifying righteousness in Christ; but that there is a justifying righteousness in Christ for him; and therefore he looks unto, leans, relies, and depends on, and pleads this righteousness for his justification: though this act of his may be attended with many doubts, fears, questionings, and unbelief. And what is short of this I cannot apprehend to be true faith in Christ, as the Lord our righteousness.

8. It is objected: That if justification is before faith, then there is no need of faith; it is a vain and useless thing. To which I answer, that though faith does not justify us, it being neither the whole, nor a part of our justifying righteousness, nor the cause or condition of our justification; yet, as it apprehends and receives Christ's righteousness for our justification, it brings much peace, joy, and comfort into our hearts. The awakened sinner, before faith is wrought in his soul, or he enabled to exercise it on Christ, finds himself in a state of bondage, and under a sentence of condemnation; as he really is, as a descendant of *Adam*, and according to the open rules of God's word: so that there is nothing else but a fearful expectation of fiery indignation to consume him. But when the Spirit of God brings near Christ's righteousness, and puts it into the hand of faith, and declares the justifying sentence of God, upon the account of that righteousness, in the conscience, his mind is unfettered, his soul is set at liberty, and filled *with a joy unspeakable and full of glory*. So that faith is just of the same usefulness in this respect, as a condemned malefactor's actually receiving the king's pardon into his own hand is to him; when, in consequence of this, he is not only delivered from prison and confinement, and all the miseries which attended such a state; but also freed from all those fears, terrors, horrors, and tortures of mind, which arose from his daily expectation of just punishment. In fine, justification is by faith, and in a way of receiving, as the whole of salvation is, *That it might be by grace*, that is, that it might appear to be of grace, and not of works. Thus have I freely given my thoughts concerning justification, both before and at believing, and have endeavoured to

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<sup>k</sup> Heb. 10:22.

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remove the objections made against it. I leave what I have said to the blessing of God, and pass on,

VI. To consider the objects of justification, who are God's elect<sup>l</sup>: *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifies*, that is, his elect; who are described,

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1. By their number: They are many: *By his knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many<sup>m</sup>. And, by the obedience of one many are made righteous<sup>n</sup>. Jesus Christ engaged as a surety for many, and gave his life a ransom for many<sup>o</sup>, and was offered up to bear the sins of many; which is the true reason why many are justified by him. Many are brought to believe on him for life and salvation, even as many as were ordained to eternal life<sup>p</sup>; and many sons, in consequence of all this, will be brought to glory: Many shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven<sup>q</sup>. And hence there are many mansions in Christ's Father's house preparing for them. This leads us to observe,*

(1.) That they are not a few who are justified by Christ. Though Christ's flock is but a little flock, in comparison of the world's goats; though Christ's people are but few in comparison of the vast number of hypocrites and formal professors; (*for many are called, but few chosen<sup>r</sup>; many strive to enter in at the strait gate, but few there be that enter in at it;*) yet, considered in themselves, they are a great number, which no man can number. Now this serves to magnify the grace of God, to exalt the satisfaction and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, and to encourage distressed souls to seek and look to Christ for righteousness; seeing it is wrought out for many, and many are justified by it. *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, they shall be filled<sup>s</sup>.*

(2.) This shews that all mankind are not justified. Though they are many who are justified, yet they are not all. For all men have not faith to receive Christ's righteousness; nor are all men saved, as they would be, if they were justified: for those who *are justified by his*

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<sup>l</sup> Rom. 8:33, 34.

<sup>m</sup> Isa. 53:11.

<sup>n</sup> Rom. 5:19.

<sup>o</sup> Matt. 20:28. Heb. 9:28.

<sup>p</sup> Acts 13:48.

<sup>q</sup> Matt. 8:12. John 14:2.

<sup>r</sup> Matt. 20:16. Luke 13:24.

<sup>s</sup> Matt. 5:6.



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blood, shall be saved from wrath through him<sup>t</sup>. Yet all the elect are justified: For *in him shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory*<sup>u</sup>.

2. The objects of justification are described by the quality of them, or by their state and condition. Before conversion, they are represented as ungodly; and after conversion as believers in Christ. Thus, in our text: *All that believe are justified*. By whom we are to understand, not nominal believers, or such who only profess to believe in Christ; but real ones, who with the heart believe unto righteousness, and whose faith works by love to Christ and to his people. But I go on,

VII. To mention the several effects of justification, which are these following:

1. A freedom from all penal evils in this life, and that which is to come. A justified person shall never enter into condemnation; his afflictions in this life are not, strictly speaking, punishments for sins, but fatherly chastisements. They are not inflicted in a way of vindictive wrath, or that by bearing them they should make satisfaction for their sins; for this would highly reflect on the justice of God, be a lessening of the satisfaction of Christ, and contrary to the whole gospel-declaration.

2. Peace with God is another consequent, or effect of justification: *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God*<sup>w</sup>, that is, peace of conscience, which passeth all understanding, and is one of the most valuable blessings of life.

3. Access to God through Christ with confidence is another effect of it. A justified person can go to God, in the name and strength of Christ, with much boldness, making mention of his righteousness, and of his only; and use much freedom at the throne of grace, in asking for such things as he stands in need of.

4. Acceptance of person and service with God, through Christ, follows upon our justification. God is well pleased with his righteousness, and, for the sake of it, with all his people. Their persons are accepted in the beloved, and their sacrifices and services are also acceptable to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

5. Adoption is another consequent of justification: for though this blessing was originally provided, bestowed, and secured in predestination; yet way is made for our actual reception of it, by our redemption, which is in Christ Jesus; who hath redeemed *them that*

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<sup>t</sup> Rom. 5:9.

<sup>u</sup> Isai. 45:25.

<sup>w</sup> Rom. 5:1.

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were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of children<sup>x</sup>. Hence Junius calls Justification *via adoptionis*, the way to adoption.

6. Sanctification is also an effect of justification: faith, as has been already shewn, follows upon it, and is a very considerable part of sanctification. In fine, certainty of salvation, which may be strongly concluded from our justification, and an undoubted title to the glorious inheritance; yea, the full possession of it arise from it, and depend upon it: for *whom he justified, them he also glorified*<sup>y</sup>. But I proposed only to mention these things, and therefore proceed to the

VIII. And last thing, which is to consider the several properties of justification.

1. It is an act of God's free Grace: *Being justified freely by his grace*<sup>z</sup>. It was grace that resolved on, and fixed the scheme and method of justification: and which called and moved Christ to engage as a surety for his people; and which sent him, in the fulness of time, to work out a righteousness for them. And then it was grace in God to accept of this righteousness for them, and to impute it to them, and bestow faith on them to receive it; especially will all this appear to be free grace, when it is considered that these persons are all by nature sinners, and ungodly ones; yea, many of them the chief of sinners.

2. It is universal and not partial. All God's elect are justified, and that from all things, as in our text, that is, from all their sins, and are freed from all that punishment which is due unto them. The whole righteousness of Christ is imputed to them; by being hereby justified, they are perfect and compleat in him.

3. It is an individual act, which is done at once, and admits of no degrees. The sins of God's elect were laid at once on Christ, and he made satisfaction for them at once. God accepted of Christ's righteousness, and imputed it at once unto his people, who all have their sins and transgressions forgiven at once. The sense of justification, indeed, admits of degrees: for *the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith*<sup>a</sup>; but justification itself does not. There are several fresh declarations, or manifestations, or repetitions of the act of justification; as at the resurrection of Christ; and again, by the testimony of the Spirit to the conscience of the believer; and last of all, at the general judgment, before men and

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<sup>x</sup> Gal. 4:5.

<sup>y</sup> Rom. 8:30.

<sup>z</sup> Rom. 3:24.

<sup>a</sup> Rom. 1:17.

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angels. But justification, as it is an act in God, is but one, and is done at once, and admits of no degrees; and is not carried on in a gradual and progressive way as sanctification is.

4. It is equal to all, or all are alike justified. The same price was paid for the redemption of one, as for another; and the same righteousness is imputed to one, as to another; and, like precious faith, is given to one, as to another; though not to all in the same degree, yet the weakest believer is as much justified as the strongest, and the greatest sinner as the smallest. Though one man may have more sanctifying grace than another, yet no man has more justifying righteousness than another.

5. It is irreversible and unalterable. It is according to an immutable decree, which can never be frustrated. It is one of God's gifts, which are without repentance: it is one of the blessings of the covenant of grace, which can never be broken. The righteousness by which the saints are justified is an everlasting one; and that faith, by which they receive it, shall never fail: And though a righteous man may fall into sin, yet he shall never fall from his righteousness, nor shall he ever enter into condemnation, but be eternally glorified.

6. Justification, though it frees persons from sin, and discharges them from punishment due unto it, yet it does not take sin out of them. By it, indeed, they are freed from sin, insomuch that God sees no iniquity in them to condemn them for it. Though he sees and beholds all the sins of his people, *in articulo providentiæ*, in respect of providence, and chastises them for them; yet *in articulo justificationis*, in respect of justification, he sees none in them; they being acquitted, discharged, and justified from all. Nevertheless sin dwells in them: *For there is not a just man upon earth that liveth and sinneth not<sup>b</sup>*.

7. It does not destroy the law, nor discourage a careful performance of good works. It does not destroy the law, or make it void; no, it establishes it; for the righteousness by which we are justified, is every way commensurate to the demands of the law; by it the law is magnified, and made honourable. Nor are persons, by this doctrine, discouraged from the performance of good works; for this doctrine of grace teaches men, *That denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, they should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world<sup>c</sup>*. To conclude: If your souls are under the powerful and comfortable influence of this doctrine, you will, in the first place, bless God for Jesus Christ, by whose obedience you are made righteous: You will value his justifying righteousness, and make mention of it at all proper times; you will glory alone in Christ, and will give the whole glory of

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<sup>b</sup> Eccles. 7:20.

<sup>c</sup> Tit. 2:11, 12.

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your justification to him; and will be earnestly and studiously desirous of having your conversations as become the gospel of Christ, and this truth of it in particular.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gill, J. (1778). *A Collection of Sermons and Tracts: Vol. III* (pp. 147–184). George Keith.