

Scripture, that, in the case of all justified men, these two things are, in point of fact, invariably and inseparably combined; and that when God justifies a man, He not only pardons all his sins, but admits him into the enjoyment of His favour, and virtually pronounces upon him a sentence whereby He gives him a right or title to happiness and heaven, and to everything necessary for the full and permanent enjoyment of them.

The two things, however, though invariably combined, in fact, in the gospel method of salvation, and in all on whom it takes practical effect, are quite distinct in themselves, and easily separable in idea; nay, they are so entirely distinct in their own nature, that we cannot but conceive that each must have its own suitable and appropriate ground to rest upon. As the proper ground of an act of forgiveness or of immunity from further punishment, extended to a condemned criminal, in a case where there are principles that preclude a mere discretionary pardon by a sovereign act of clemency, must be the endurance of the penalty prescribed, either personal or by a vicarious satisfaction, so the proper ground of a sentence of approbation and reward must, from the nature of the case, be obedience to the law, personal or vicarious, *i.e.*, imputed. If a regard to the honour of the law demanded, in the case of sinners, that there should be satisfaction as the ground of forgiveness, because it had threatened transgression with death, so it equally demanded that there should be perfect obedience as the ground or basis of admission to life. Perfect obedience to the law,—or, what is virtually the same thing, merit the result of perfect obedience,—seems just as necessary as the ground or basis of a virtual sentence of approbation and reward, as satisfaction is as the ground or basis of a sentence of forgiveness and immunity from further punishment. And as there is no perfect righteousness in men themselves to be the ground or basis of their being accepted or admitted to favour and happiness,—as they can no more render perfect obedience than they can satisfy for their sins,—Christ's perfect obedience must become theirs, and be made available for their benefit, as well as His suffering,—His merit as well as His satisfaction.

Papists unites with Arminians in denying the necessity of a perfect righteousness, as the ground or basis of God's act in accepting men's persons, and giving them a right and title to heaven; and in maintaining that all that is implied in the justifi-

cation of a sinner, so far as it is descriptive of a mere change of state, consists only in forgiveness, based upon Christ's vicarious sufferings or penal satisfaction. The Arminians hold the doctrine of the imputation of faith for, or instead of, righteousness or perfect obedience; and the chief scriptural ground on which they defend this doctrine is the statement of the apostle,\* that "faith is counted or reckoned for righteousness,"—*πίστις λογίζεται εἰς δικαιοσύνην*. Their interpretation of this statement certainly could not be easily rejected, if the preposition *εἰς* could be shown to convey anything like the idea of substitution, as the word *for*, by which it is rendered in our version, often does. But no such idea can be legitimately extracted from it. The prepositions used in Scripture in reference to Christ's vicarious atonement or satisfaction in our room and stead, for us,—for our sins,—are, *αυτι* and *ὑπερ*, and never *εἰς*, which means towards, in order to, with a view to,—ideas which, in some connections, may be correctly enough expressed by the English word *for*, but which cannot convey the idea of substitution. Faith being counted *εἰς δικαιοσύνην*, means merely,—and cannot, according to the established *usus loquendi*, mean anything else than,—faith being counted in order to righteousness, or with a view to justification; so that this statement of the apostle does not directly inform us how, or in what way, it is that the imputation of faith bears upon the result of justification,—this we must learn from other scriptural statements,—and most certainly does not indicate that it bears upon this result by being, or by being regarded and accepted as, a substitute for righteousness or perfect obedience.

The Arminians commonly teach that faith,—and the sincere though imperfect obedience, or personal righteousness, as they call it, which faith produces,—is counted or accepted by God as if it were perfect obedience, *and in this way* avails to our justification, and more especially, of course, from the nature of the case, to our acceptance and title to heaven. Now, with respect to this doctrine, I think it is no very difficult matter to show,—though I cannot at present enter upon the proof,—first, that it is not supported by any scriptural evidence; secondly, that it has been devised as an interpretation of certain scriptural statements which have some appearance of countenancing it,—an interpretation

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\* Rom. iv. 5, 9.

that might supersede the common Calvinistic explanation of them, and might not contradict the general Arminian doctrine upon the subject of justification; and, thirdly, that it implies a virtual admission, or indicates a sort of lurking consciousness, of the scriptural truth of some general principles which really establish the Calvinistic, and overturn the Arminian, doctrine on the subject of justification,—viz., a distinction, in nature and ground, between forgiveness and acceptance; and the necessity, after all, of a perfect righteousness, actual or by imputation, as the ground or cause of acceptance and admission into the enjoyment of God's favour. These two important principles the Arminians formally and explicitly deny, and the denial of them constitutes the main ground of controversy between them and the Calvinists in this whole question. And yet their doctrine of the imputation of faith for, or instead of, righteousness, implies something tantamount to a virtual admission of both. They do not allege that this imputation of faith for righteousness is the ground of the pardon of our sins, for that they admit to be the vicarious sufferings of Christ. If it bears, therefore, upon our justification at all, it can be only, from the nature of the case, upon our acceptance and admission into God's favour; and if faith, and the imperfect obedience which follows from it, is regarded and accepted in the way of imputation instead of righteousness, this can be only because a higher and more perfect righteousness than is, in fact, found in men, *is in some way or other* necessary,—needful to be brought in,—in the adjustment of this matter, with a view to men's eternal welfare. But though all this can be shown to be fairly implied in their doctrine of the imputation of faith instead of righteousness, they continue explicitly to deny the necessity of a real or actual perfect righteousness as the ground or basis of acceptance and a title to heaven, lest the admission of this should constrain them to adopt the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness.

Papists have another way of making this argument about the necessity of a perfect righteousness, in the use of which the Arminians have not ventured to follow them, and which even the Socinians hesitate to adopt. It is by asserting that, even if it be conceded that a perfect righteousness is necessary, there is no occasion to have recourse to Christ's righteousness; for that men's own inherent personal righteousness is, or may be, perfect. Belarmine distinctly lays down and maintains this doctrine, in

opposition to the common Protestant argument for the necessity of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, from there being no other that is perfect. He says that our inherent righteousness consists chiefly in faith, hope, and love, which Papists commonly call the theological virtues; he then proceeds to prove from Scripture that all these virtues may be perfect in men in this life, and thus constitute them perfectly righteous. His argument, indeed, plainly requires him to prove that these virtues are actually, and in point of fact, perfect in man in this life. This, however, he scarcely ventures to attempt, and merely labours to prove from Scripture that they *may be* perfect, or that perfection in them may possibly be attained; and after having established this to his own satisfaction,\* he triumphantly concludes, "Quod si fidem, spem, et caritatem, ac per hoc justitiam inherentem, *perfectam* habere possumus, frustra laborant hæretici in asserenda imputatione justitiæ, quasi alioqui nullo modo simpliciter, et absolute justii esse possimus."† The employment of such an argument as this brings out very clearly,—more so than their cautious and guarded general statements,—the real doctrine of the Church of Rome in regard to the ground of a sinner's justification; while, at the same time, from its manifest contrariety to the plainest scriptural declarations, it is not necessary to enlarge in refuting it.

It must, however, be acknowledged that the great direct and proper proof of the Protestant doctrine of the righteousness of Christ, given and imputed, being *that* to which God has a respect or regard in justifying a sinner, is the second position which we laid down,—viz., that the scriptural statements about Christ as the only Saviour of sinners, and about the bearing of His sufferings and obedience upon their deliverance and salvation, imply this, and indeed can be embodied in distinct and definite propositions only by asserting this doctrine. As the Scriptures indicate that a perfect righteousness is necessary, as the ground or basis of our acceptance and admission to a right to life, as well as a full satisfaction as the ground or basis of our forgiveness or exemption from punishment, so they set before us such a perfect righteousness as available for us, and actually benefiting us, in the obedience which Christ, as our surety, rendered to all the requirements of

\* Davenant. Prælectiones de Justitia Habituali et Actuali, c. 24, pp. 325-329; Allport's translation, vol. i., p. 181. | † Bellarm., De Justificat., Lib. ii., c. vii.

the law. The apostle assures us\* that "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons;" where our translation unwarrantably, by changing the construction,—giving in the one case "to redeem," and in the other, "that we might receive," while both are expressed in the original by the same word *ἵνα*,—conceals the fact that the apostle plainly declared that Christ was made under the law, and of course complied with all its requirements, both as demanding punishment, and as imposing perfect obedience, in order thereby to effect two distinct objects,—viz., that He might deliver us from its curse, and that He might invest us with the privileges of sons.† It makes no material difference whether we suppose that both the clauses introduced with *ἵνα* hold directly of, or are immediately connected in grammatical regimen with, Christ's being made under the law,—or that the latter clause, "might receive," holds directly of the preceding one,—viz., that "He might redeem us;"—for there is nothing inconsistent with the teaching of the Scripture, in regarding the blessing of forgiveness as being in some sense, in the order of nature, though not of time, antecedent and preparatory to that of acceptance, or the bestowal of a right to life and all the privileges of sonship.

The Scriptures represent the deliverance and salvation of men, and all the blessings which these require or imply, as traceable not only to Christ's sufferings and death,—i.e., to His penal satisfaction,—but generally to Christ, and to His whole work as our surety; while they also represent all that He did in our nature upon earth as vicarious,—as performed in the capacity of a surety or substitute, acting in the room and stead of others. They also more directly represent Him as our righteousness,—as made of God unto us righteousness,—and as making many righteous by His obedience; statements which, in their fair and natural import, imply that His obedience, as well as His sufferings, bear directly and immediately upon our reception into the enjoyment of the divine favour, and our participation in the blessings of redemption. And if His whole obedience to the law thus bears directly and immediately upon our enjoyment of the blessings of salvation, it

\* Gal. iv. 4, 5.

† The original is, "ἡξαπίστειλεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν Υἱὸν αὐτοῦ, γενόμενον ἐκ γυναικός, γενόμενον ὑπὸ νόμον." *ἵνα τοὺς* ὑπὸ νόμον ἐξαγοράσῃ, ἵνα τῆν υιοθεσίαν ἀπολάβωμεν." Walæi Loci Communes, "De Satisfactione," Opera, tom. i., p. 398. Lugd. Bat. 1647.

can be only by its being held or reckoned as performed in our room,—by its being imputed to us, or put down to our account, so as thereby actually to avail for our benefit.

We can form no distinct or definite conception either of the satisfaction or the meritorious obedience of Christ, acting or operating directly upon our forgiveness and acceptance with God, *except in this way*. We must bring to bear upon them the Scripture ideas both of substitution and imputation; and when we do so, we can form an intelligible and distinct conception of that which the scriptural statements upon the subject seem so plainly to indicate; while, without the introduction and application of these scriptural ideas of substitution and imputation, the whole subject is dark, obscure, and impalpable. We can give no distinct or intelligible statement or explanation of how either the satisfaction or the meritorious obedience of Christ bear upon, and affect, the forgiveness and the acceptance of sinners, except by saying that they were rendered in the room and stead of men, and that they are applied to, and made available for, those in whose room they were rendered, by being made over to them, and put down to their account, so that they in consequence are regarded and treated as if they had endured and done them themselves. This is what is obviously suggested by the general tenor of Scripture language upon the subject; and it is only in this way that we can clearly and definitely *express* the substance of what an examination of Scripture statements forces upon our minds as the actual reality of the case.

Romanists, accordingly, while professedly arguing against the imputation of Christ's righteousness for the justification of sinners, have felt themselves constrained to make concessions, which involve the whole substance of what Protestants contend for in this matter. Bellarmine, speaking of the views of the Reformers upon this subject, says, in an often quoted passage,\* "Si solum vellent, nobis imputari Christi merita, quia nobis donata sunt, et possumus ea Deo Patri offerre pro peccatis nostris, quoniam Christus suscepit super se onus satisfaciendi pro nobis, nosque Deo Patri reconciliandi, recta esset eorum sententia." And Protestant divines have usually answered by saying, they just mean this, and nothing more than this, when they contend that Christ's satisfactory sufferings and meritorious obedience are

\* Bellarm., De Justificat., Lib. ii., c. vii.

imputed to men for their justification,—viz., that the merits of Christ are given to them, and that they, as it were, present them to the Father as the ground of their forgiveness and acceptance. And all that they ask of the Romanists is, that, in place of evading this concession, as Bellarmine does, by attempting to involve the subject in obscurity by the help of the scholastic distinction of a formal cause, they would just form a clear and definite conception of what the statement means, and honestly apply it to the matter in hand. If it be admitted that the meritorious obedience of Christ is given to us, and may be presented or offered by us, to the Father, and if men would attempt to realize what this means, they could not fail to see that they are bound, in consistency, to hold that it was rendered in our room and stead,—that it is, in consequence, freely bestowed upon us,—and, being on this ground held or reckoned as ours, becomes thus the basis on which God communicates to us all the blessings which Christ, by His meritorious obedience, purchased for us, and which are necessary for our eternal happiness.

It is proper to mention that there have been some, though few, Calvinistic divines, who have rejected the distinction between forgiveness and acceptance, and between the passive and the active righteousness of Christ, as not being in their judgment sufficiently established by Scripture, and have appealed to the authority of Calvin, without any sufficient warrant, as sanctioning this opinion.\* The Calvinistic divines who have most distinguished themselves by deviating from the orthodox doctrine upon this subject, are Piscator and Wendelinus, who both belonged to the German Reformed Church, the former of whom flourished about the beginning, and the latter about the middle, of the seventeenth century; while, on the other hand, it is interesting to notice that, until all sound doctrine was destroyed in the Lutheran Church by the prevalence of Rationalism, these distinctions were strenuously maintained by the most eminent Lutheran divines. The general considerations on which Piscator and Wendelinus based† their opinion are of no force, except upon

\* The Reformers and Theology of the Reformation, pp. 402, etc. (Edrs.).  
 † Piscator's letter to the French clergy, in defence of his views on this subject, is given in the "Præstantium ac eruditorum virorum Epistolæ Ecclesiasticæ et Theologicæ," p. 121, 3d edition. Wendelinus, Christ. Theol. System., Lib. i., c. xxv., Thes. vii. Vide also Whitby's Commentary on the New Testament, at the end of 1 Corinthians.

the assumption of principles which would overturn altogether the scriptural doctrines of substitution and imputation. The whole question upon the subject resolves into this, Whether we have sufficiently clear indications of the distinction in Scripture,—a question in the discussion of which it has been shown that the Scripture evidence is sufficient, and that the opponents of the distinction demand a measure of evidence in point of amount, and of directness or explicitness, that is quite unreasonable. At the same time, many eminent divines have been of opinion that the controversies which have been carried on, on this subject, have led some of the defenders of the truth to give a prominence and an importance to this distinction beyond what Scripture warrants, and scarcely in keeping with the general scope and spirit of its statements. There is no trace of this tendency to excess in the admirably cautious and accurate declarations of our Confession of Faith; and the danger of yielding to it, and, at the same time, the importance of maintaining the whole truth upon the point as sanctioned by Scripture, are very clearly and ably enforced by Turretine.\*

Papists, and other opponents of the truth upon this subject, usually represent an imputed righteousness as if it were a putative, fictitious, or imaginary righteousness. But this representation has no foundation in anything that was held by the Reformers, or that can be shown to be involved in, or deducible from, their doctrine. The righteousness of Christ, including the whole of His perfect and meritorious obedience to the law, as well as His suffering, was a great and infinitely important reality. It was intended to effect and secure the salvation of all those whom God had chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. It is in due time, and in accordance with the arrangements which God in His infinite wisdom has laid down, bestowed upon each of them, through his union to Christ by faith, not in any mere fiction of law, but in actual deed; and being thus really, and not merely putatively or by a fiction, bestowed upon them, it is, of course, held or reckoned as theirs, and *thus* becomes the ground—the full and

\* Turret., De Officio Christi Mediatorio, Loc. xiv., Q. xiii., secs. xi. xii. For a full discussion of this topic, see De Moor Comment. in Marck. Compend. cap. xx., sec. xvii., tom. iii., pp. 959–77. Gerhard. Loci Communes, Loc. xvii., c. ii., secs. lvii.–lxiv., in Cotta's edition, tom. vii., pp. 61–72; folio, tom. iii., pp. 485–95.

adequate ground—on which God further bestows upon them the forgiveness of all their sins, and a right to the heavenly inheritance, and to all the privileges of sonship; so that they feel it ever thereafter to be at once their duty and their privilege, on the ground of clear and definite conceptions of what Christ has purchased and merited for them, to ascribe all that they are, and have, and hope for, to Him who not only washed them from their sins in His own blood, but has also made them kings and priests unto God and His Father.

*Sec. IV.—Justification by Faith alone.*

The justification of sinners,—*i.e.*, the actual forgiveness of their sins, and the acceptance of their persons, or the bestowal upon them of a right and title to life,—are ascribed in Scripture to God, or to His grace; they are ascribed to Christ, and to what He has done and suffered in our room and stead; and they are ascribed to faith. The propositions, then, that men are justified by God's grace, that they are justified by Christ's sufferings and merits, and that they are justified by faith, are all true, and should all be understood and believed. A full exposition of the Scripture doctrine of justification requires that all these propositions be interpreted in their true scriptural sense, and that they be combined together in their just relation, so as to form a harmonious whole. It is to the third and last of these fundamental propositions, constituting the scriptural doctrine of justification, that we have now briefly to advert,—*viz.*, that men are justified by faith.

This proposition is so frequently asserted in Scripture, in express terms, that it is not denied by any who acknowledge the divine authority of the Bible. But the discussion of the sense in which the proposition is to be understood, and the way and manner in which this truth is to be connected and combined with the other departments of scriptural doctrine upon the subject of justification, occupied, as we have already explained, a most important place in the controversies which were carried on between the Reformers and the Romanists. The disputes upon this subject involved the discussion of three different questions,—*viz.*, First, What is the nature of justifying faith, or what is the definition or description of that faith to which justification

is ascribed in Scripture? Secondly, Whether there be anything else in men themselves that concurs or co-operates with their faith in the matter of their justification,—anything else in them that is represented as standing in the same relation to their justification as faith does? Thirdly, In what way, by what process, or by what sort of agency or instrumentality is it that faith justifies; and how is the agency or instrumentality, that is assigned to faith in the matter of justification, to be connected and combined with the causality assigned in the matter to the grace of God, and the righteousness of Christ imputed?

The first question, then, respected the nature of justifying faith, or the proper definition or description of that faith to which in Scripture justification is ascribed. I have already explained that, upon this point, the differences between the Reformers and the Romanists lay in this, that the Romanists defined faith to be *assensus*, and placed its seat in the intellect; and that the Reformers defined it to be *fiducia*, and placed its seat in the will; while, at the same time, I mentioned that a very considerable diversity of sentiment had prevailed among orthodox Protestant divines in subsequent times as to the way in which justifying faith should be defined and described, and expressed my opinion that some diversity of sentiment upon this point was not precluded by anything laid down in the standards of our church. I shall merely make a few observations regarding it, premising that this is one of the topics where, I think, it must be admitted that greater precision and accuracy, and a more careful and exact analysis, than were usually manifested by the Reformers in treating of it, were introduced into the exposition and discussion of the subject by the great systematic divines of the seventeenth century.\*

Romanists define justifying faith to be the mere assent of the understanding to the whole truth of God revealed; and in this view of its nature and import they have been followed by a class of divines who are generally known in modern times, and in this country, under the name of Sandemanians, and who have commonly been disposed to claim to themselves the credit of propounding much clearer and simpler views of this subject, and of

\* See "The Reformers and Theology of the Reformation," pp. 3, etc.—EDRS.



scriptural doctrine generally, than those who give a somewhat different definition or description of faith. Those who define faith to be the mere assent of the understanding to truth revealed, of course regard everything else that may be in any way necessary to justification, or that can be proved to exist invariably in justified men, as the fruit, or consequence, or result of faith; while they maintain that nothing but the mere belief of truth revealed enters into its proper nature, or should form any part of the definition that ought to be given of what faith is. And the Protestant defenders of this view of the nature of justifying faith differ from its Popish advocates chiefly in this,—which, however, is a difference of great importance,—that the Protestants regard everything else that may be connected with justification, or that must exist in justified men, as the *invariable and necessary* fruit or consequence of the belief of the truth; while the Romanists, as we have seen, maintain that true faith—that faith which justifies whenever justification takes place—may exist, without producing any practical result, and, of course, without justifying. We have already proved this, in regard to the Romanists, by quotations from Bellarmine; and we may add, that so confidently does he maintain this position, that he founds upon it as an argument, to prove that faith alone does not justify.

The great majority of the most eminent and most orthodox Protestant divines\* have held this view of the nature of justifying faith to be defective; *i.e.*, they have regarded it as not including *all* that ought to be included in the definition of faith. While the Reformers thought justifying faith to be most properly defined by *fiducia*, trust or confidence, they do not, of course, deny that it contained or comprehended *notitia* and *assensus*, knowledge and assent. They all admitted that it is the duty of men,—and, in a sense, their first and most fundamental duty,—in order to their salvation, to understand and believe what God had revealed; and that the knowledge and belief of the truth revealed—of what God has actually said in His word—must be the basis and foundation of all the other steps they take in the matter of their salvation, and the source or cause, in some sense, of all the necessary changes that

\* Le Blanc's "Theses Theologicæ Sedanenses," pp. 204-248. O'Brien on Justification, notes 1, 2, 3, 1st edi-

tion; notes A and B, 2d edition.—EDRS.

are effected upon them. It is by the truth which He reveals that God brings Himself into contact with His rational creatures; and we learn from His word, that the instrumentality of the truth revealed is employed by Him in all His dealings with them, and in all the changes which He effects upon them, with a view to their salvation. Now, the direct and proper correlative acts to truth revealed by God to His rational creatures, are, understanding its meaning, and assenting to it, or believing it, as real and certain; and these, of course, are acts of the intellect. The knowledge and belief of the truth revealed are, therefore, the primary and fundamental duties incumbent upon men, and are essential parts or elements of justifying and saving faith. Were we in a condition in which we were at liberty to determine this question purely upon philosophical grounds, and had no other materials for deciding it, it might be contended—and I do not well see how, *in these circumstances*, the position could be disproved—that the knowledge and belief of the doctrines revealed in Scripture must certainly and necessarily lead men to trust in Christ, and to submit to His authority, and thus produce or effect everything necessary for justification and salvation; and that, on this ground, justifying faith might be properly defined to be the belief of the truth revealed; while everything else, which some might be disposed to comprehend under it, might be rather regarded as its invariable and necessary result or consequence. The question, however, cannot *be legitimately* settled in this way; for, indeed, the question itself properly is, In what sense is the faith to which justification is ascribed used in Scripture? or what is it which the Scripture includes in, or comprehends under, the word faith? And this question can be settled only by an examination of the passages in which the word faith and its cognates occur,—an examination on which we do not propose at present to enter.

It can scarcely be disputed that the word faith is used in Scripture in a variety of senses, and more especially that it is employed there in a wider and in a more limited signification, as if it were used sometimes to designate a whole, and at other times some one or more of the parts or elements of which this whole is composed. It is on this account that it has always been found so difficult to give anything like a formal definition of faith in its scriptural acceptation,—a definition that should include all that the Scripture comprehends under faith itself, as proper to it, and nothing

more. At the same time, while it is admitted that faith is sometimes used in Scripture in the sense of mere belief or assent to truth, in such a sense as would require us, *were it received as the only and complete definition of faith*, to regard trust or confidence in Christ, receiving and embracing Him, rather as consequences of faith, than as parts or acts of faith, I think it has been proved by Protestant divines, in opposition to the Romanists, that trust or confidence, which is an act of the will, does enter into the ordinary and full idea of scriptural faith; and that the faith by which men are said to be justified, includes in it (and not merely produces) something more than the belief of truths or doctrines,—even trust or confidence *in a person*,—in Him who has purchased for us all the blessings of redemption, who *has* all these blessings in Himself, and who, in His word, is offering Himself and all these blessings to us, and inviting us to accept them. It may be said to be more correct, metaphysically, to represent this trust or confidence in Christ, this receiving and resting upon Him for salvation, as the fruit, or result, or consequence of faith, in its strict and proper sense: and no doubt *it is* a result or consequence of knowing and assenting to the truths revealed in Scripture concerning Him, and concerning this salvation which He has purchased and is offering; but it is also true,—*i.e.*, I think this has been proved,—that Scripture represents the faith by which men are justified as including or containing that state of mind which can be described only by such words as trust and confidence, and as involving or comprehending that act, or those acts, which are described as accepting, embracing, receiving, and resting upon Christ and His work for salvation. There is nothing in this scriptural view of the matter,—nothing in this scriptural use of language,—which in the least *contradicts* any sound metaphysical principles about the connection between the operations of the understanding and the will: for the substance of the whole matter is just this, that the Scripture does not ordinarily and generally call *that* faith which is descriptive of a state of mind that is merely intellectual, and which does not comprehend acts that involve an exercise of the powers of the will; and, more especially, it does not represent men as justified by faith, or as possessed of the faith which justifies, until they have been enabled,—no doubt under the influence, or as the result, of scriptural views of Christ and His work,—to exercise trust and confidence in Him as their

Saviour; to accept, to lay hold of, and to apply to themselves, the blessings of forgiveness and acceptance, which He has purchased for them, and is offering to them in the word of the truth of the gospel.

But I need not dwell longer upon this point, and must proceed to advert to the second question, *viz.*, Whether faith alone justifies; or whether there be anything else in men themselves that is represented in Scripture as the cause, in any sense, why men individually receive forgiveness and acceptance at the hand of God? It was the unanimous doctrine of the Reformers, and one to which they attached very great importance, that men are justified by faith alone: not meaning that the faith which justified them existed alone, or solitarily; but, on the contrary, maintaining that this faith “is ever accompanied with all other saving graces:” not meaning that nothing else was required of men in order to their being forgiven,—for they believed that, in order that we may escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, God requireth of us repentance unto life as well as faith in Jesus Christ; but meaning this, that there is nothing else in men themselves to which their justification is in Scripture ascribed,—nothing else required of them, and existing in them, which stands in the same relation to justification as their faith does, or exerts any causality, or efficiency, or instrumentality in producing the result of their being justified.

The Council of Trent openly denied this fundamental doctrine of the Reformers, and maintained that there were six other virtues, as they call them, which all concurred with faith in obtaining for men the grace of justification. They did not, indeed, assign to these virtues, or even to faith itself, any power of justifying, properly so called, but only that of preparing or disposing men to justification. They did, however,—and that is the only point with which we have at present to do,—deny the Protestant doctrine, that faith is the only thing in men themselves by which they are justified; and they denied this, in the way of ascribing to these six other virtues the very same relation to justification, and the very same kind of influence in producing or procuring it, which they ascribe to faith: and this was very distinctly and explicitly brought out in the quotations I have already made from Bellarmine. These six virtues are,—fear, hope, love, penitence, a purpose of receiving the sacrament, and a purpose of leading

a life of obedience; and Bellarmine, and other defenders of the doctrine of the Church of Rome, labour to prove from Scripture that these qualities, or states of mind and feeling, are represented there as procuring or obtaining for men the forgiveness of their sins, and the enjoyment of God's favour. It is certain that there is not one of them which is ever, in express terms, said in Scripture to justify men, or by which men are said to be justified, while men are frequently and most explicitly said to be justified by faith; and this single consideration may be fairly regarded as by itself a proof that, at least, they do not stand in the same relation to justification as faith does,—that *it* holds a place, and exerts an influence, in the justification of sinners, which do not belong to any of them. All that can be proved from Scripture about these things, speaking of them generally, is, first, that they all exist in, and are wrought by God upon, those men whom He justifies; and, secondly, that they are all duties which He requires of men; and that, of course, upon both these grounds they are in some sense pleasing and acceptable to Him. These positions can be proved; but the proof of them affords no ground whatever for the conclusion that men are justified by these graces, or that they exert any influence in procuring or obtaining for men the forgiveness of their sins and the enjoyment of God's favour: for it is manifest that God may require, as a matter of duty, or bestow as a matter of grace, what may exert no influence, and have no real efficient bearing upon other gifts which He also bestows.

Indeed, it may be justly contended that no gift or favour which God bestows, can, *simply as such*, exert any real influence in procuring for men other favours at His hand. God may, indeed, in the exercise of His wisdom, resolve, with a view to general and ulterior objects, to bestow His gifts or favours in a certain order, and with something like mutual dependence between them; and we may be able to see something of the suitableness and wisdom of this arrangement; but this affords no ground for our asserting that the one first conferred exerted any influence in procuring or obtaining for us the one that was subsequently bestowed. As the discharge of duties which God requires of men, these virtues are, in so far as they may be really in conformity with what He enjoins, agreeable to His will, pleasing and acceptable in His sight; but this does not prove that they can procure for men the forgiveness of their sins, or a right or title to eternal life.

The fact, then, that these things are represented in Scripture as required by God of men, and as conferred by Him as graces or favours upon all those whom He justifies,—and this is all that the Scripture proofs adduced by Romanists, in discussing this subject, establish,—affords no evidence that men are justified by them, or that they have any place or influence in procuring or obtaining for men forgiveness and acceptance.

But, perhaps, it may be said that the same considerations apply equally to faith, which is also a duty required by God, and a grace bestowed by Him. We admit that they do; but then we answer, first, that we assert, and undertake to prove, as will be afterwards explained, that though faith is both a duty commanded and a grace bestowed, it is not in either of these capacities, or simply as such, that it justifies, but solely as the instrument or hand by which men receive and lay hold of the righteousness of Christ; and, secondly, that the object and the practical result of these considerations are not directly to disprove or exclude the justifying efficacy of these virtues, but *merely* to show that the inference in support of their alleged justifying efficacy,—which is based solely upon the fact that they are represented as existing in all justified men, being conferred by God and required by Him,—is unfounded. Men are never said, in Scripture, to be justified by them; and *the only* process by which it is attempted to show that any justifying efficacy attaches to them, is by this *inference* from *other* things said about them in Scripture; and if this inference can be shown to be unfounded,—and this, we think, the considerations above adduced accomplish,—then the argument which we are opposing falls to the ground. The state of the case is very different with respect to faith. We do *not need* to prove, by an inferential process of reasoning, from Scripture that faith justifies; for this is frequently asserted in express terms, and thus stands proved without any argument or inference. We have merely to *answer* the inferential process by which it is attempted to prove, in the absence of all direct scriptural authority, that men are justified by these virtues as well as by faith; and having done this, we then fall back again upon the position that men are expressly said in Scripture to be justified by faith, while it cannot be shown, either directly or by inference, that they are represented as being justified by any of those virtues to which Romanists assign a co-ordinate place with faith in the matter.



Not only, however, are men said to be justified by faith, while they are not said, directly or by implication, to be justified by anything else existing in themselves: they are also said to be justified by faith without works or deeds of law. This, indeed, is the great doctrine which the Apostle Paul lays down, and formally and elaborately proves, in the Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians; and no effort has been spared by Romanists, and other opponents of evangelical truth, to pervert the apostle's statements into an accordance with their views. This, of course, opens up a wide field of critical discussion, upon which we do not enter. The great subject of controversy is, What is it that the apostle intended to exclude from any co-operation or joint efficacy with faith in the matter of the justification of sinners, under the name of works or deeds of law? Now, it was contended by all the Reformers, that, according to the natural and proper import of the apostle's words, and the general scope and object of his argument, especially in his Epistle to the Romans, he must have intended to exclude from all joint or co-ordinate efficacy with faith in the matter of justification, all obedience which men did or could render to the requirements of the law under which they were placed, whatever that might be; while it has been alleged by Romanists, and other enemies of the doctrine of gratuitous justification, that he meant merely to exclude, as some say, the works of the ceremonial law; others, obedience to the Mosaic law in general; and others, all works performed, or obedience rendered to the divine law, by men, in the exercise of their natural and unaided powers, previously to the reception of divine grace, and the production of justifying faith.

The opinion which would limit the apostle's exclusion of works from co-operating with faith in the justification of sinners, to the observance of the requirements of the ceremonial law, is too obviously inconsistent with the whole tenor and scope of his statements, to be entitled to much consideration. It is not denied that there are statements in the apostle's writings upon the subject of justification, especially in the Epistle to the Galatians, in which he has chiefly in view those who enforced the observance of the Mosaic law as necessary to forgiveness and acceptance; and is showing, in opposition to them, that the obedience which might be rendered to it had no influence in the matter, and was wholly excluded from any joint efficacy with faith in obtaining justifica-

tion; while it is contended that, even in the Epistle to the Galatians, he argues for the exclusion of the observance of the Mosaic law, from the matter of justification, upon principles and grounds which have a wider and more general bearing, and which equally exclude all mere obedience to law, as such. And in the Epistle to the Romans,—where, after having proved the guilt and sinfulness of all men, both Jews and Gentiles, he addressed himself equally to both classes,—his object evidently required, and his statements plainly imply, that it was law, as such, under whatever form, and obedience to law, by whomsoever rendered, and from whatsoever principle proceeding, that are excluded from any influence in procuring the justification of sinners.

The Romanists generally allege that the apostle meant to exclude only works done, or obedience to law rendered, by men's natural and unaided powers, before they receive the grace of God, and are enabled to exercise faith; and thus they leave room for bringing in their six other virtues, which they ascribe to the operation of God's grace, and regard as springing from faith. This is, perhaps, upon the whole, the most plausible expedient for perverting the apostle's meaning, at least so far as the Epistle to the Romans is concerned; but it is liable to insuperable objections. It is wholly unwarranted and gratuitous. There is nothing in the apostle's statements to suggest it,—nothing in his argument, or in the principles on which it is based, to require it; nothing in any part of Scripture to oblige or entitle us to force upon him an idea which seems not to have been present to his own mind. The distinction between these two kinds or classes of works has evidently been devised,—*i.e.*, so far as its application to this matter is concerned, for in itself it is a real and important distinction,—in order to serve a purpose; and its only real foundation is, that some men have chosen to believe and assert that these virtues or graces, since they exist in justified men, must have some share in procuring their justification. And while the distinction is thus, in this application of it, wholly unwarranted and gratuitous, it can be shown to be positively inconsistent with the scope of the apostle's argument, which implies that any mere obedience rendered to any law,—any mere compliance with any of God's requirements, in whatever source originating, on whatever principles based,—*viewed simply as such*, would, if introduced into the matter of a sinner's justification, as having any efficacy in procuring or obtaining it,

be inconsistent at once with the purely gratuitous character of God's act in pardoning and accepting, and with the place or influence assigned to faith in the matter. Grace or gratuitousness, and faith, are described as not only consistent, but as fully and admirably harmonizing with each other; while obedience to law, so far as concerns the matter of justification, is represented as a principle of an opposite character or tendency, not only having no influence in procuring justification, but tending,—so far as it may be introduced into this matter, and relied upon in connection with it,—to exclude the operation of the principles on which God has been pleased to regulate this subject, and to frustrate His gracious design. This is the doctrine taught by Paul, clearly implied in many of his particular statements, and in the general scope and substance of his argument; and there is nothing whatever in any part of his writings that requires or entitles us to modify this view of his meaning.

One main objection that has been adduced against receiving this interpretation of Paul's statements as the true doctrine of Scripture on the subject of justification, is, that the Apostle James seems to teach an opposite doctrine, when, in the second chapter of his epistle, he asserts that men are justified by works, and not by faith only; and that Abraham and Rahab were justified by works. This question of the reconciliation of Paul and James upon the subject of justification, has also given rise to much interesting critical discussion. I shall only state, in general, that I am persuaded that the two following positions have been established regarding it. First, that the Apostle James did not intend to discuss, and does not discuss, the subject of justification in the sense in which it is so fully expounded in Paul's Epistles to the Romans and Galatians; that he does not state anything about the grounds or principles on which,—the way and manner in which,—sinners are admitted to forgiveness and the favour of God; and that his great general object is simply to set forth the real tendency and result of that true living faith which holds so important a place in everything connected with the salvation of sinners. The truth of this position is very clearly indicated by the terms in which James introduces the subject in the fourteenth verse: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?" or rather *the* faith, for the original has the article, ἡ πίστις; *i.e.*, the faith

which he says he has, or professes to have, but really has not,—can that faith save him? This is the subject which alone the apostle proposed to discuss, and there is nothing in the following statements sufficient to show that any other subject than this was introduced in the course of the discussion, or that the apostle gave, or intended to give, any deliverance whatever upon the grounds or reasons of the justification of a sinner before God, or upon the way and manner in which he obtains forgiveness and acceptance. Secondly, that the justification of which James speaks, and which he ascribes to works, refers to something in men's history posterior to that great era when their sins are forgiven, and they are admitted to the enjoyment of God's favour,—*i.e.*, to the proof or manifestation of the reality and efficacy of their faith to themselves and their fellow-men. This position may be shown to be virtually involved in, or clearly deducible from, the former one, and has, besides, its own proper and peculiar evidence,—especially in the application which the apostle makes of the case of Abraham, in saying that he was justified by works, when he had offered up Isaac his son upon the altar; for it is quite certain, from the history of Abraham's life, that, many years before he was thus justified by works, he had, as the Apostle Paul tells us, been justified by faith,—*i.e.*, had had his sins forgiven, and had been admitted fully and unchangeably into the favour and friendship of God, and had thus passed that great crisis on which the eternal happiness of every sinner depends, and the nature, grounds, and means of which it was Paul's sole object to expound in all that he has written upon the subject of justification. So evident is the posteriority of the justification by works, of which James speaks, to the proper forgiveness and acceptance of sinners, that many Popish writers,—in this, manifesting greater candour than that large body of Episcopalian writers who have followed the system of interpretation set forth in Bishop Bull's "Harmonia Apostolica,"—regard James' justification as applying, not to the *first*, but to what they call the *second*, justification, or that process by which a justified person is made more righteous.

This notion of theirs about a first and second justification,—comprehending, as they do, under that word, both forgiveness and sanctification,—is utterly unfounded, and tends to pervert the whole doctrine of Scripture upon the subject. For the Scripture teaches that, while God, by His grace, makes justified men pro-

gressively more holy, He "continues to forgive" the sins which they commit, on the very same grounds, and through the very same process, by which the forgiveness of all their past sins was originally bestowed upon them. But still the application of this notion to the interpretation of James' statements upon the subject, shows a somewhat juster appreciation than many of the Protestant corrupters of the doctrine of justification have exhibited, of the difficulty of extracting anything from James that could contradict and overturn Paul's great doctrine of justification by faith alone, without deeds of law.

If these two positions can be established, the apparent discrepancy between the apostles is removed; each asserts his own doctrine without contradicting the other; and we remain not only warranted, but bound, to hold as absolute and unqualified, Paul's exclusion of works, or of mere obedience to law, from the matter of a sinner's justification before God; and to regard his doctrine that men are justified by faith, without deeds of law, as meaning, what it naturally and obviously imports, that men are justified by faith alone, or that there is nothing else in them which concurs or co-operates with faith in procuring or obtaining their forgiveness and acceptance. But here again it may be alleged that faith itself is a work or act of obedience; and that therefore, upon this interpretation of the apostles' statements, it too must be excluded from any influence or efficacy in justification. This leads us to the consideration of the *third* question, as to the way and manner in which faith justifies, or the place it holds in the matter of justification; and a brief exposition of this topic will not only solve the objection that has now been stated, but afford additional confirmation to the great Protestant doctrine, that men are justified by faith only; and at the same time lead to an explanation of the relation that subsists among the great doctrines, that men are justified by God's grace, that they are justified by Christ's righteousness, and that they are justified by faith alone.

#### *Sec. V.—Office of Faith in Justifying.*

We have good and sufficient grounds in Scripture for maintaining—first, that the justification of a sinner is a purely gratuitous act of God, to the exclusion of all merit or desert on the part of the sinner himself; secondly, that the imputed righteousness of

Christ is the sole ground, basis, or reason of the divine procedure in justifying a sinner,—the only thing to which God has respect or regard, as that on account of which He acts, in bestowing upon any one pardon and acceptance; and, thirdly, that faith in Jesus Christ is the only thing in men themselves, to the exclusion of all works, or mere obedience to law, to which their justification is ascribed, or which is represented as exerting, in any sense, anything like a causality or efficiency in obtaining for them pardon and acceptance at God's hand. And if Scripture fully sanctions each of these three positions separately, then the whole doctrine of Scripture upon the subject can be brought out and set forth, only by combining them all into one general statement, and by unfolding the harmony and relations of the different truths of which this general statement is made up.

The objection adduced against the entire exclusion of works from the matter of justification,—one of the elements involved in the third of these positions,—that faith itself is a work, and that, therefore, if the exclusion is to be strict and absolute, faith, being a work, must be excluded, it is easy enough to answer. Faith, of course, *cannot* be excluded; for justification is frequently and most expressly ascribed to it; and, therefore, had we nothing else to say upon the subject, we would be fully entitled to make faith an exception to the apostle's unqualified exclusion of works: because, to suppose that it was not to be excepted, would involve the apostle in a self-contradiction, too gross and palpable to be ascribed to any man without absolute necessity; while, at the same time, by admitting, upon this ground, that faith must necessarily be excepted from his exclusion of works, we would be under no obligation, in sound argument, to admit of any other exception to the exclusion, unless as conclusive a reason could be brought forward for excepting it as exists for excepting faith. The apostle says, with reference to another subject,\* "But when He saith, All things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted which did put all things under Him." So we say, upon a similar principle, that when deeds of law are excluded, faith must be excepted; for the very same statement which excludes them, expressly includes *it*,—*that statement being*, that men are justified by faith without deeds of law.

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\* 1 Cor. xv. 27.

As to the allegation which may be said to constitute the objection, viz., that if we are to except from the exclusion of works, faith, which is a work, we may except other works also, the answer is obvious and conclusive,—viz., that any proposed exception to the apostle's general and unlimited exclusion of works, must be individually warranted and established by scriptural evidence,—that we might possibly admit other exceptions, if good scriptural evidence could be adduced in support of them,—but that, in point of fact, no good reason has been, or can be, adduced in support of any other exception to the exclusion but faith. This is quite a sufficient answer to the objection; and as a mere question of dialectics, nothing more need be said about it. But then, as we have already intimated, it suggests some further considerations of importance as to the way and manner in which faith justifies, and the relation which subsists among the great truths which go to make up the scriptural doctrine of justification.

It is manifest, not only from Paul's particular statements in discussing this subject, but from the general scope of his argument, and the principles on which it is all based, that his exclusion of works or deeds of law was intended to be very full and complete; and that, therefore, the more nearly we can make it absolute, as he *in terminis* represents it, the more nearly we approach to the views which filled his mind. Now, the general doctrine, upon this subject, of those Protestant divines who have maintained the theology of the Reformation, has been this, that though faith cannot be excluded from the justification of a sinner, and though faith is a work,—*i.e.*, an act of obedience rendered by men, and, at the same time, a grace conferred on them, and wrought in them by God,—yet it is not *as a work* that it justifies, or is concerned in the matter of a sinner's justification, but in a different capacity or relation,—*viz.*, simply as the instrument of apprehending or receiving the righteousness of Christ. And it is manifest that, if good evidence can be adduced in support of this view of the place which faith holds, or the influence which it exerts in the justification of sinners, this must be an additional confirmation of the great Protestant doctrine, that men are justified by faith alone, without deeds of law, in its obvious and literal import, while it will also contribute to elucidate the whole subject of justification.

Now, it is admitted that there are no statements contained in

Scripture which professedly and directly explain, in any very formal or categorical manner, *how* it is that faith acts or operates in the justification of a sinner; but it is contended that there are sufficient materials in Scripture to establish satisfactorily the common Protestant doctrine upon this subject. There is not much that is very definite to be learned upon this precise point,—*viz.*, as to the way in which faith justifies,—from the general and fundamental declaration, that men are justified by faith. The forms in which this is expressed in Scripture are these, *πιστει*, *εκ πιστεως*, and *δια πιστεως*; in Latin, *fide*, *ex fide*, and *per fidem*. These expressions all indicate, in general, that some sort of causality, or efficiency, or instrumentality, is ascribed to faith in the matter of justification, without specifying what,—though the fact that men are never said in Scripture to be justified, *δια πιστιν*, *propter fidem*, on account of faith, may, when taken in connection with the assertion that they are justified freely or gratuitously, and that works or deeds of law, mere obedience to requirements, are excluded, be fairly regarded as amply sufficient to disprove the common Popish doctrine that faith justifies on account of its worth, dignity, or excellence,—meriting God's favour *ex congruo* though not *ex condigno*. This may, accordingly, be received as our negative position as to the way and manner in which faith justifies; and some direct and positive light is thrown upon the subject by those scriptural statements which represent faith as a looking to Christ, receiving Him, apprehending Him, laying hold of Him. These scriptural representations naturally and obviously suggest the idea, that the essence of that which men do when they believe in Christ, in so far as the matter of their justification is concerned, is, that they receive or accept of Christ, held out to them, or offered to them; and that the proper, direct, and immediate effect of their faith in Christ, is, that they in this way become possessed of Him, and of the blessings which are in Him,—*i.e.*, the blessings which He purchased, and which are necessary to their salvation. If this, then, be the process,—as the scriptural representations referred to plainly indicate,—by which men individually become possessed of the blessings which Christ purchased and merited for them, including pardon and acceptance, then it plainly follows that faith justifies, as it is put by Turretine,\* “*non propriè et per*

\* Turret., Locus xvi., Q. vii.