Justification

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About The Author

Charles Hodge, DD, LL.D. (1797-1878) was an American Presbyterian theologian. He was ordained in 1821, and taught at Princeton for almost his whole life. His most important writings are his commentaries on Romans (1835), Ephesians (1856), 1 Corinthians (1857), 2 Corinthians (1859), and Systematic Theology (3 vols., 1871-3). He is considered by many to be one of the greatest Calvinistic theologian and Bible commentator America has produced.

Part I: Justification

When the mind is enlightened by Divine truth, and duly impressed with a sense of guilt, it cannot fail anxiously to inquire, How can a man be just with God! The answer given to this question decides the character of our religion, and, if practically adopted, our future destiny. To give a wrong answer, is to mistake the way to heaven. It is to err where error is fatal, because it cannot be corrected. If God require one thing, and we present another, how can we be saved? If He has revealed a method in which He can be just and yet justify the sinner, and if we reject that method and insist upon pursuing a different way, how can we hope to be accepted? The answer, therefore, which is given to the above question, should be seriously pondered by all who assume the office of religious teachers, and by all who rely upon their instructions. As we are not to be judged by proxy, but every man must answer for himself, so every man should be satisfied for himself what the Bible teaches on this subject. All that religious teachers can do, is to endeavor to aid the investigations of those who are anxious to learn the way of life. And in doing this, the safest method is to adhere strictly to the instructions of the Scriptures, and to exhibit the subject as it is there presented. The substance and the form of this all-important doctrine are so intimately connected, that those who attempt to separate them can hardly fail to err. What one discards as belonging merely to the form, another considers as belonging to its substance. All certainty and security are lost, as soon as this method is adopted, and it becomes a matter to be decided exclusively by our own views of right and wrong, what is to be retained and what rejected from the scriptural representations. Our only security, therefore, is to take the language of the Bible in its obvious meaning, and put upon it the construction which the persons to whom it was addressed must have given, and which, consequently, the sacred writers intended it should bear.

As the doctrine of justification is not only frequently stated in the sacred Scriptures, but formally taught and vindicated, all that will be attempted in this article, is to give as faithfully as possible, a representation of what the inspired writers inculcate on this subject; that is, to state what positions they assume, by what arguments they sustain those positions, how they answer the objections to their doctrine, and what application they make of it to the hearts and consciences of their readers.

It is one of the primary doctrines of the Bible, everywhere either asserted or assumed, that we are under the law of God. This is true of all classes of men, whether they enjoy a Divine revelation or not. Everything which God has revered as a rule of duty, enters into the constitution of the law which binds those to whom that revelation is given, and by which they are to be ultimately judged. Those who have not received any external revelation of the Divine will are a law unto themselves. The knowledge of right and wrong, written upon their hearts, is of the nature of a Divine law, having its authority and sanction, and by it the heathen are to be judged in the last day.

God has seen fit to annex the promise of life to obedience to his law. 'The man which doeth those things shall live by them' (Rom. 10.5), is the language of Scripture on this subject. To the lawyer who admitted that the law required love to God and man, our Savior said, 'Thou has answered right: this do, and thou shalt live' (Lk. 10.28). And to one

who asked him, 'What good things shall I do, that I may have eternal life?' he said, 'If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandment.'(Mt. 19.17). On the other hand, the law denounces death as the penalty of transgression: 'The wages of sin is death.' (Rom. 6.23). Such is the uniform declaration of Scripture on this subject.

The obedience which the law demands is called righteousness; and those who render that obedience are called righteous. To ascribe righteousness to anyone, or to pronounce him righteous, is the scriptural meaning of the word 'to justify.' The word never means, to make good in a moral sense, but always to pronounce just or righteous. Thus God says, 'I will not justify the wicked'(Ex.23.7). Judges are commanded to justify the righteous and to condemn the wicked (Deut. 25.1). Woe is pronounced on those who 'justify the wicked for reward' (Isa. 5.23). In the New Testament it is said, 'By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight' (Rom. 3.20) 'It is God that justifieth, Who is he that condemneth?' (Rom. 8.33,34). There is scarcely a word in the Bible the meaning of which is less open to doubt. There is no passage in the New Testament in which it is used out of its ordinary and obvious sense. When God justifies a man, he declares him to be righteous. To justify never means to render one holy. It is said to be sinful to justify the wicked; but it could never be sinful to render the wicked holy. And as the law demands righteousness, to impute or ascribe righteousness to anyone, is, in scriptural language, to justify. To make (or constitute) righteous, is another equivalent form of expression. Hence, to be righteous before God, and to be justified, mean the same thing: as in the following passage: ' Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.'(Rom. 2.13) The attentive, and especially the anxious reader of the Bible cannot fail to observe, that these various expressions, to be righteous in the sight of God, to impute righteousness, to constitute righteous, to justify, and others of similar import, are so interchanged as to explain each other, and to make it clear that to justify a man is to ascribe or impute to him righteousness. The great question then is, How is this righteousness to be obtained? We have reason to be thankful that the answer which the Bible gives to this question is so perfectly plain.

In the first place, that the righteousness by which we are to be justified before God is not of works, is not only asserted, but proved. The apostle's first argument on this point is derived from the consideration that the law demands a perfect righteousness. If the law was satisfied by an imperfect obedience, or by a routine of external duties, or by any service which men are competent to render, then indeed justification would be by works. But since it demands perfect obedience, justification by works is, for sinners, absolutely impossible. It is thus the apostle reasons, 'As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them (Gal.3.10). As the law pronounces its curse upon every man who continues not to do all that it commands, and as no man can pretend to this perfect obedience, it follows that all who look to the law for justification must be condemned. To the same effect, in a following verse, he says, 'The law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.' That is, the law is not satisfied by any single grace, or imperfect obedience. It knows, and can know no other ground of justification than complete compliance with its demands. Hence, in the same chapter, Paul says, ' If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily

righteousness should have been by the law.' Could the law pronounce righteous, and thus give a title to the promised life to those who had broken its commands, there would have been no necessity of any other provision for the salvation of men; but as the law cannot thus lower its demands, justification by the law is impossible. The same truth is taught in a different form, when it is said, 'If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain (Gal. 2.21). There would have been no necessity for the death of Christ, if it had been possible to satisfy the law by the imperfect obedience which we can render. Paul therefore warns all those who look to works for justification, that they are debtors to do the whole law (Gal. 5.3). It knows no compromise; it cannot demand less than what is right, and perfect obedience is right, and therefore its only language is as before, ' Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them' (Gal. 3.10); and, 'The man which doeth those things shall live by them' (Rom. 10.5). Every man, therefore, who expects justification by works, must see to it, not that he is better than other men, or that he is very exact and does many things, or that he fasts twice in the week, and gives tithes of all he possesses, but that he is SINLESS.

That the law of God is thus strict in its demands, is a truth which lies at the foundation of all Paul's reasoning in reference to the method of justification. He proves that the Gentiles have sinned against the law written on their hearts; and that the Jews have broken the law revealed in their Scriptures; both Jews and Gentiles, therefore, are under sin, and the whole world is guilty before God. Hence, he infers, that by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight. There is, however, no force in this reasoning, except on the assumption that the law demands perfect obedience. How many men, who freely acknowledge that they are sinners, depend upon their works for acceptance with God! They see no inconsistency between the acknowledgment of sin, and the expectation of justification by works. The reason is, they proceed upon a very different principle from that adopted by the apostle. They suppose that the law may be satisfied by very imperfect obedience. Paul assumes that God demands perfect conformity to his will, that his wrath is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. With him, therefore, it is enough that men have sinned, to prove that they cannot be justified by works. It is not a question of degrees, more or less, for as to this point there is no difference, since ' all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Rom. 3.23).

This doctrine, though so plainly taught in Scripture, men are disposed to think very severe. They imagine that their good deeds will be compared with their evil deeds, and that they will be rewarded or punished as the one or the other preponderates; or that the sins of one part of life may be atoned for by the good works of another, or that they can escape by mere confession and repentance. They could not entertain such expectations, if they believed themselves to be under a law. No human law is administered as men seem to hope the law of God will be. He who steals or murders, though it be but once, though he confesses and repents, though he does any number of acts of charity, is not less a thief or murderer. The law cannot take cognizance of his repentance and reformation. If he steals or murders, the law condemns him. Justification by the law is for him impossible. The law of God extends to the most secret exercises of the heart. It condemns whatever is in its nature evil. If a man violate this perfect rule of right, there is an end of justification by the law; he has failed to comply with its conditions; and the law can only condemn

him. To justify him, would be to say that he had not transgressed. Men, however, think that they are not to be dealt with on the principles of strict law. Here is their fatal mistake. It is here that they are in most direct conflict with the Scriptures, which proceed upon the uniform assumption of our subjection to the law. Under the government of God, strict law is nothing but perfect excellence; it is the steady exercise of moral rectitude. Even conscience, when duly enlightened and roused, is as strict as the law of God. It refuses to be appeased by repentance, reformation, or penance. It enforces every command and every denunciation of our Supreme Ruler, and teaches, as plainly as do the Scriptures themselves, that justification by an imperfect obedience is impossible. As conscience, however, is fallible, no reliance on this subject is placed on her testimony. The appeal is to the word of God, which clearly teaches that it is impossible a sinner can be justified by works, because the law demands perfect obedience.

The apostle's second argument to show that justification is not by works, is the testimony of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. This testimony is urged in various forms. In the first place, as the apostle proceeds upon the principle that the law demands perfect obedience, all those passages which assert the universal sinfulness of men, are so many declarations that they cannot be justified by works. He therefore quotes such passages as the following: 'There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one' (Rom. 3.10-12). The Old Testament, by teaching that all men are sinners, does, in the apostle's view, thereby teach that they can never be accepted before God on the ground of their own righteous ness. To say that a man is a sinner, is to say that the law condemns him; and of course it cannot justify him. As the ancient Scriptures are full of declarations of the sinfulness of men, so they are full of proof that justification is not by works.

But, in the second place, Paul cites their direct affirmative testimony in support of his doctrine. In the Psalms it is said, 'Enter not into judgment with thy servant; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified' (Ps. 143.2). This passage he often quotes; and to the same class belong all those passages which speak of the insufficiency or worthlessness of human righteousness in the sight of God.

In the third place, the apostle refers to those passages which imply the doctrine for which he contends; that is, to those which speak of the acceptance of men with God as a matter of grace, as something which they do not deserve, and for which they can urge no claim founded upon their own merit. It is with this view that he refers to the language of David; 'Blessed are they whose iniquities are for given, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin (Rom. 4.7, 8). The fact that a man is forgiven, implies that he is guilty; and the fact that he is guilty, implies that his justification cannot rest upon his own character or conduct. It need hardly be remarked, that, in this view, the whole Scriptures, from the beginning to the end, are crowded with condemnations of the doctrine of justification by works. Every penitent confession, every appeal to God's mercy, is a renunciation of all personal merit, a declaration that the penitent's hope was not founded on anything in himself. Such confessions and appeals are indeed often made by those who still rely upon their good works, or inherent

righteousness, for acceptance with God. This, however, does not invalidate the apostle's argument. It only shows that such persons have a different view of what is necessary for justification, from that entertained by the apostle. They suppose that the demands of the law are so low, that although they are sinners and need to be forgiven, they can still do what the law demands. Whereas, Paul proceeds on the assumption that the law requires perfect obedience, and therefore every confession of sin, or appeal for mercy, involves a renunciation of justification by the law.

Again, the apostle represents the Old Testament Scriptures as teaching that justification is not by works, by showing that they inculcate a different method of obtaining acceptance with God. This they do by the doctrine which they teach concerning the Messiah as a Redeemer from sin. Hence Paul says, that the method of justification without works (not founded upon works) was testified by the law and the prophets; that is, by the whole of the Old Testament. The two methods of acceptance with God, the one by works, the other by a propitiation for sin, are incompatible. And as the ancient Scriptures teach the latter method, they repudiate the former. But they moreover, in express terms, assert, that 'the just shall live by faith.' And the law knows nothing of faith; its language is, 'The man that doeth them shall live in them' (Gal. 3:11,12). The law knows nothing of anything but obedience as the ground of acceptance. If the Scriptures say we are accepted through faith, they thereby say that we are not accepted on the ground of obedience.

Again: the examples of justification given in the Old Testament, show that it was not by works. The apostle appeals particularly to the case of Abraham, and asks, whether he attained justification by works; and answers, 'No, for if he were justified by works he had whereof to glory; but he had no ground of glorying before God, and therefore he was not justified by works.' And the Scriptures expressly assert, 'Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness' (Rom. 4.3). His acceptance, therefore, was by faith, and not by works.

In all these various ways does the apostle make the authority of the Old Testament sustain his doctrine, that justification is not by works. This authority is as decisive for us as it was for the ancient Jewish Christians. We also believe the Old Testament to be the word of God, and its truths come to us explained and enforced by Christ and his apostles. We have the great advantage of an infallible interpretation of these early oracles of truth; and the argumentative manner in which their authority is cited and applied, prevents all obscurity as to the real intentions of the sacred writers. That by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified before God is taught so clearly and so frequently in the New Testament, it is so often asserted, so formally proved, so variously assumed, that no one can doubt that such is indeed the doctrine of the word of God. The only point on which the serious inquirer can even raise a question, is, What kind of works do the Scriptures mean to exclude as the foundation for acceptance with God? Does the apostle mean works in the widest sense, or does he merely intend ceremonial observances, or works of mere formality, performed without any real love to God?

Those who attend to the nature of his assertions and to the course of his argument, will find that there is no room for doubt on this subject. The primary principle on which his

argument rests precludes all ground for mistaking his meaning. He assumes that the law demands perfect obedience, and as no man can render that obedience, he infers that no man can be justified by the law. He does not argue, that because the law is spiritual, it cannot be satisfied by mere ceremonies, or by works flowing from an impure motive. He nowhere says, that though we cannot be justified by external rites, or by works having the mere form of goodness, we are justified by our sincere, though imperfect, obedience. On the contrary, he constantly teaches, that since we are sinners, and since the law condemns all sin, it condemns us, and justification by the law is, therefore, impossible. This argument he applies to the Jews and the Gentiles without distinction, to the whole world, whether they knew anything of the Jewish Scriptures or not. It was the moral law, the law which he pronounced holy, just, and good, which says, 'Thou shalt not covet'; it is this law, however revealed, whether in the writings of Moses, or in the human heart, of which he constantly asserts that it cannot give life, or teach the way of acceptance with God. As most of those to whom he wrote had enjoyed a Divine revelation, and as that revelation included the law of Moses and all its rites, he of course included that law in his statement, and often specially refers to it; but never in its limited sense, as a code of religious ceremonies, but always in its widest scope, as including the highest rule of moral duty made known to men. And hence he never contrasts one class of works with another, but constantly works and faith, excluding all classes of the former, works of righteousness as well as those of mere formality. 'Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us' (Titus 3.5). 'Who hath saved us--not according to our works (2 Tm. 1.9). We are saved by faith, not by works (Eph. 2.9). Nay, men are said to be justified without works; to be in themselves ungodly when justified; and it is not until they are justified that they perform any real good works. It is only when united to Christ that we bring forth fruit unto God. Hence, we are said to be 'His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works' (Eph. 2.10). All the inward excellence of the Christian and the fruit of the Spirit are the consequences, and not the causes of his reconciliation and acceptance with God. They are the robe of beauty, the white garment, with which Christ arrays those who come to him poor, and blind, and naked. It is, then, the plain doctrine of the word of God, that our justification is not founded upon our own obedience to the law. Nothing done by us or wrought in us can for a moment stand the test of a rule of righteousness, which pronounces a curse upon all those who continue not in all things written in the book of the law to do them.

Part II: The Demands Of The Law Are Satisfied By What Christ Has Done.

WE have thus seen that the Scriptures teach, first, That all men are naturally under the law as prescribing the terms of their acceptance with God; and, secondly, That no obedience which sinners can render is sufficient to satisfy the demands of that law. It follows, then, that unless we are freed from the law, not as a rule of duty, but as prescribing the conditions of acceptance with God, justification is for us impossible. It is, therefore, the third great point of scriptural doctrine on this subject, that believers are free from the law in the sense just stated. 'Ye are not under the law,' says the apostle, 'but under grace' (Rom.6.14). To illustrate this declaration, he refers to the case of a woman who is bound to her husband as long as he lives; but when he is dead, she is free from her

obligation to him, and is at liberty to marry another man. So we are delivered from the law as a rule of justification and are at liberty to embrace a different method of obtaining acceptance with God (Rom. 7.1-6). Paul says of himself, that he had died to the law; that is, become free from it (Gal. 2.19). And the same is said of all believers (Rom. 7.6). He insists upon this freedom as essential not only to justification, but to sanctification. For while under the law, the motions of sins, which were by the law, brought forth fruit unto death; but now we are delivered from the law, that we may serve God in newness of spirit (Rom. 7.5-6). Before faith came we were kept under the law, which he compares to a schoolmaster, but now we are no longer under a schoolmaster (Gal. 3.24, 25). He regards the desire to be subject to the law as the greatest infatuation. 'Tell me,' he says, 'ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?' and then shows that those who are under the demands of a legal system, are in the condition of slaves, and not of sons and heirs. 'Stand fast therefore,' he exhorts, 'in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.--Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace (Gal. 4.21-1; 5.1-4). This infatuation Paul considered madness, and exclaims, 'O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you. This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith ?' (Gal. 3.1-2). This apostasy was so fatal, the substitution of legal obedience for the work of Christ as the ground of justification was so destructive, that Paul pronounces accursed any man or angel who should preach such a doctrine for the gospel of the grace of God.

It was to the law, as revealed in the books of Moses, that the fickle Galatians were disposed to look for justification. Their apostasy, however, consisted in going back to the law, no matter in what form revealed--to works, no matter of what kind, as the ground of justification. .The apostle's arguments and denunciations, therefore, are so framed as to apply to the adoption of any form of legal obedience, instead of the work of Christ, as the ground of our confidence towards God. To suppose that all he says relates exclusively to a relapse into Judaism, is to suppose that we Gentiles have no part in the redemption of Christ. If it was only from the bondage of the Jewish economy that he redeemed his people, then those who were never subject to that bondage have no interest in his work. And of course Paul was strangely infatuated in preaching Christ crucified to the Gentiles. We find, however, that what he taught in the Epistle to the Galatians, in special reference to the law of Moses he teaches in the Epistle to the Romans in reference to that law which is holy, just, and good, and which condemns the most secret sins of the heart.

The nature of the apostle's doctrine is, if possible, even more clear from the manner in which he vindicates it, than from his direct assertions. 'What then?' he asks,'shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid' (Rom. 6.15). Had Paul taught that we are freed from the ceremonial in order to be subject to the moral law, there could have been no room for such an objection. But if he taught that the moral law itself could not give life, that we must be freed from its demands as the condition of acceptance with God, then, indeed, to the wise of this world, it might seem that he was loosing the

bands of moral obligation, and opening the door to the greatest licentiousness. Hence the frequency and earnestness with which he repels the objection, and shows that, so far from legal bondage being necessary to holiness, it must cease before holiness can exist; that it is not until the curse of the law is removed, and the soul reconciled to God, that holy affections rise in the heart, and the fruits of holiness appear in the life, 'Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law' (Rom. 2.31).

It is then clearly the doctrine of the Bible, that believers are freed from the law as prescribing the conditions of their acceptance with God; it is no longer incumbent upon them, in order to justification, to fulfil its demand of perfect obedience, or to satisfy its penal exactions. But how is this deliverance effected? How is it that rational and accountable beings are exempted from the obligations of that holy and just law, which was originally imposed upon their race as the rule of justification ? The answer to this question incudes the fourth great truth respecting the way of salvation taught in the Scriptures. It is not by the abrogation of the law, either as to its precepts or penalty; it is not by lowering its demands, and accommodating them to the altered capacities or inclinations of men. We have seen how constantly the apostle teaches that the law still demands perfect obedience, and that they are debtors to do the whole law who seek justification at its hands. He no less clearly teaches, that death is as much the wages of sin in our case, as it was in that of Adam. If it is neither by abrogation nor relaxation that we are freed from the demands of the law, how has this deliverance been effected! By the mystery of vicarious obedience and suffering. This is the gospel of the grace of God. This is what was a scandal to the Jews, and foolishness to the Greeks; but, to those that are called, the power of God and the wisdom of God (1 Cor. 1.23, 24).

The Scriptures teach us that the Son of God, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person, who thought it not robbery to be equal with God, became flesh, and subjected himself to the very law to which we were bound; that he perfectly obeyed that law, and suffered its penalty, and thus, by satisfying its demands, delivered us from its bondage, and introduced us into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. It is thus that the doctrine of redemption is presented in the Scriptures. 'God,' says the apostle, 'sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law' (Gal. 4.4-5). Being made under the law, we know that he obeyed it perfectly, and brought in everlasting righteousness, and is therefore declared to be 'the Lord our righteousness,'(Jer. 23.6) since, by his obedience, many are constituted righteous (Rom. 5.19). He, therefore, is said to be made righteousness unto us (1 Cor. 1.30). And those who are in him are said to be righteous before God, not having their own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ (Phil. 3.9).

That we are redeemed from the curse of the law by Christ's enduring that curse in our place, is taught in every variety of form from the beginning to the end of the Bible. There was the more need that this point should be dearly and variously presented, because it is the one on which an enlightened conscience immediately fastens. The desert of death begets the fear of death. And this fear of death cannot be allayed, until it is seen how, in consistency with Divine justice, we are freed from the righteous penalty of the law. How this is done, the Scriptures teach in the most explicit manner. 'Christ hath redeemed us

from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us' (Gal. 3.13). Paul had just said, 'As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse.' But all men are naturally under the law, and therefore all are under the curse. How are we redeemed from it? By Christ's being made a curse for us. Such is the simple and sufficient answer to this most important of all questions.

The doctrine so plainly taught in Gal. 3.13, that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by bearing it in our stead, is no less clearly presented in 2 Cor. 5. 21: ' He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,' This is represented as the only ground on which men are authorized to preach the gospel. 'We are ambassadors for Christ,' says the apostle, ' as though God did beseech you by us;: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God' (2 Cor. 5.20). Then follows a statement of the ground upon which this offer of reconciliation is presented. God has made effectual provision for the pardon of sin, by making Christ, though holy, harmless, and separate from sinners, sin for us, that we might be made righteous in him. The iniquities of us all were laid on him; he was treated as a sinner in our place, in order that we might be treated as righteous in him.

The same great truth is taught in all those passages in which Christ is said to bear our sins. The expression, to bear sin, is one which is clearly explained by its frequent occurrence in the sacred Scriptures. It means, to bear the punishment due to sin. In Lev. xx. 17, it is said that he that marries his sister 'shall bear his iniquity.' Again, ' Whosoever curseth his God, shall bear his sin' (Lev. 24.15). Of him that failed to keep the Passover, it was said, 'That man shall bear his sin' (Num. 9.13). If a man sin, he shall bear his iniquity. It is used in the same sense when one man is spoken of as bearing the sin of another. 'Your children shall wander in the wilderness forty years, and bear your whoredoms' (Num. 14.33). Our fathers have sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquities' (Lam. 5.7). And when, in Ezekiel xvii. to, it is said that 'the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father,' it is obviously meant that the son shall not be punished for the sins of the father. The meaning of this expression being thus definite, of course there can be no doubt as to the manner in which it is to be understood when used in reference to the Redeemer. The prophet says, 'The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.--My righteous servant shall justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.--He was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many' (Isa. 53.6, 11, 122). Language more explicit could not be used. This whole chapter is designed to teach one great truth, that our sins were to be laid on the Messiah, that we might be freed from the punishment which we deserved. It is therefore said, 'He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him.--For the transgression of my people was he stricken.' In the New Testament, the same doctrine is taught in the same terms. 'Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree' (1 Pet. 2.24). 'Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many' (Heb. 9.28). 'Ye know that he was manifested to take away' (to bare) 'our sins' (1 Jn. 3.5). According to all these representations, Christ saves us from the punishment due to our sins, by bearing the curse of the law in OUR stead.

Intimately associated with the passages just referred to, are those which describe the

Redeemer as a sacrifice or propitiation. The essential idea of a sin offering is propitiation by means of vicarious punishment. That this is the scriptural idea of a sacrifice is plain from the laws of their institution, from the effects ascribed to them, and from the illustrative declarations of the sacred writers. The law prescribed that the offender should bring the victim to the altar, lay his hands upon its head, make confession of his crime; and that the animal should then be slain, and its blood sprinkled upon the altar. Thus, it is said, 'He shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him' (Lev. 1.4) 'And he brought the bullock for the sin offering; and Aaron and his sons laid their hands upon the head of the bullock for the sin offering' (Lev. 8.14). The import of this imposition of hands is clearly taught in the following passage: 'And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat; and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited' (Lev. 16.21 22). The imposition of hands, therefore, was designed to express symbolically the ideas of substitution and transfer the liability to punishment. In the case just referred to, in order to convey more clearly the idea of the removal of the liability to punishment, the goat on whose head the sins of the people were imposed, was sent into the wilderness, but another goat was slain and consumed in its stead.

The nature of these offerings is further obvious from the effects attributed to them. They were commanded in order to make atonement, to propitiate, to make reconciliation, to secure the forgiveness of sins. And this effect they actually secured. In the case of every Jewish offender, some penalty connected with the theocratical constitution under which he lived, was removed by the presentation and acceptance of the appointed sacrifice. This was all the effect, in the way of securing pardon, that the blood of bulls and of goats could produce. Their efficacy was confined to the purifying of the flesh, and to securing, for those who offered them, the advantages of the external theocracy. Besides, however, this efficacy, which, by Divine appointment, belonged to them considered in themselves, they were intended to prefigure and predict the true atoning sacrifice which was to be offered when the fulness of time should come. Nothing, however, can more clearly illustrate the scriptural doctrine of sacrifices, than the expressions employed by the sacred writers to convey the same idea as that intended by the term sin offering. Thus, all that Isaiah taught by saying of the Messiah that the chastisement of our peace was upon him; that with his stripes we are healed; that he was stricken for the transgression of the people; that on him was laid the iniquity of us all, and that he bore the sins of many, he taught by saying, 'he made his soul an offering for sin.' And in the Epistle to the Hebrews it is said, He 'was once offered' (as a sacrifice) 'to bear the sins of many' (Heb. 9.28). The same idea, therefore, is expressed by saying, either he bore our sins, or he was made an offering for sin. But to bear the sins of anyone, means to bear the punishment of those sins; and, therefore, to be a sin offering conveys the same meaning.

Such being the idea of a sacrifice which pervades the whole Jewish Scriptures, it is obvious that the sacred writers could not teach more distinctly and intelligibly the manner in which Christ secures the pardon of sin, than by saying he was made an offering for sin. With this mode of pardon all the early readers of the Scriptures were familiar. They had

been accustomed to it from their earliest years. No one of them could recall the time when the altar, the victim, and the blood were unknown to him. His first lessons in religion contained the ideas of confession of sin, substitution, and vicarious sufferings and death. When, therefore, the inspired penmen told men imbued with these ideas that Christ was a propitiation for sin, that he was offered as a sacrifice to make reconciliation, they told them, in the plainest of all terms, that he secures the pardon of our sins by suffering in our stead. Jews could understand such language in no other way: and, therefore, we may be sure it was intended to convey no other meaning. And, in point of fact, it has been so understood by the Christian church from its first organization to the present day.

If it were merely in the way of casual allusion that Christ was declared to be a sacrifice, we should not be authorized to infer from it the method of redemption. But this is far from being the case. This doctrine is presented in the most didactic form. It is exhibited in every possible mode. It is asserted, illustrated, vindicated. It is made the central point of all Divine institutions and instructions. It is urged as the foundation of hope, as the source of consolation, the motive to obedience. It is, in fact, THE GOSPEL. It would be vain to attempt a reference to all the passages in which this great doctrine is taught. We are told that God set forth Jesus Christ as a propitiation for our sins through faith in his blood (Rom. 3.25). Again, he is declared to be a 'propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world' (1 Jn. 2.2). He is called the Lamb of God, which taketh away' (beareth) 'the sin of the world' (Jn. 1.29). 'Ye were not redeemed,' says the apostle Peter, 'with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot' 1 Pet. 1.18,19). In the Epistle to the Hebrews, this doctrine is more fully exhibited than in any other portion of Scripture. Christ is not only repeatedly called a sacrifice, but an elaborate comparison is made between the offering which he presented and the sacrifices which were offered under the old dispensation. 'If the blood of bulls and of goats,' says the apostle, 'and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself with out spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God!' (Heb. 9.13,14). The ancient sacrifices in themselves could only remove ceremonial uncleanness. They could not purge the conscience, or reconcile the soul to God. They were mere shadows of the true sacrifice for sins. Hence, they were offered daily. Christ's sacrifice being really efficacious, was offered but once. It was because the ancient sacrifices were ineffectual, that Christ said, when he came into the world, 'Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me; in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God' (Heb. 10.5-15). 'By the which will', adds the apostle, that is, by the accomplishing the purpose of God, 'we are sanctified' (or atoned for) 'through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all'; and by that 'one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified,' and of all this he adds, the Holy Ghost is witness (Heb. 10.5-15). The Scriptures, therefore, clearly teach that Jesus Christ delivers us from the punishment of our sins, by offering himself as a sacrifice in our behalf; that as under the old dispensation, the penalties attached to the violations of the theocratical covenant, were removed by the substitution and sacrifice of

bulls and of goats, so under the spiritual theocracy, in the living temple of the living God, the punishment of sin is removed by the substitution and death of the Son of God. As no ancient Israelite, when by transgression he had forfeited his liberty of access to the earthly sanctuary, was ignorant of the mode of atonement and reconciliation; so now, no conscience-stricken sinner, who knows that he is unworthy to draw near to God, need be ignorant of that new and living way which Christ hath consecrated for us, through his flesh, so that we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.

In all the forms of expression mentioned--Christ was made a curse for us; he was made sin for us; he bore our sins, he was made a sin offering--there is the idea of substitution. Christ took our place, he suffered in our stead, he acted as our representative. But as the act of a substitute is in effect the act of the principal, all that Christ did and suffered in that character, every believer is regarded as having done and suffered. The attentive and pious reader of the Bible will recognize this idea in some of the most common forms of scriptural expression. Believers are those who are in Christ. This is their great distinction and most familiar designation. They are so united to him, that what he did in their behalf they are declared to have done. When he died, they died; when he rose, they rose; as he lives, they shall live also. The passages in which believers are said to have died in Christ are very numerous. 'If one died for all,' says the apostle, 'then all died' (not, 'were dead') (2 Cor. 5.14). He that died (with Christ) is justified from sin, that is, freed from its condemnation and power; and if we died with Christ, we believe, that we shall live with him (Rom. 6. 7, 8). As a woman is freed by death from her husband, so believers are freed from the law by the body (the death) of Christ, because his death is in effect their death (Rom. 7.4). And in the following verse, he says, having died (in Christ), we are freed from the law. Every believer, therefore, may say with Paul, I was crucified with Christ (Gal. 2.20). In like manner, the resurrection of Christ secures both the spiritual life and future resurrection of all his people. If we have been united to him in his death, we shall be in his resurrection, if we died with him, we shall live with him (Rom.6.5, 8). 'God,' says the apostle, 'hath quickened us together with Christ; and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus' (Eph.2.4-6). That is, God hath quickened, raised, and exalted us together with Christ. It is on this ground, also, that Paul says that Christ rose as the firstfruits of the dead; not merely the first in order, but the earnest and security of the resurrection of his people. 'For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive' (1 Cor. 15.20, 22). As our union with Adam secures our death, union with Christ secures our resurrection. Adam is a type of him that was to come--that is, Christ, inasmuch as the relation in which Adam stood to the whole race, is analogous to that in which Christ stands to his own people. As Adam was our natural head, the poison of sin flows in all our veins. As Christ is our spiritual Head, eternal life which is in him, descends to all his members. It is not they that live, but Christ that liveth in them (Gal. 2.20). This doctrine of the representative and vital union of Christ and believers pervades the New Testament. It is the source of the humility, the joy, the confidence which the sacred writers so often express. In themselves they were nothing, and deserved nothing, but in Him they possessed all things. Hence, they counted all things but loss that they might be found in Him. Hence, they determined to know nothing, to preach nothing, to glory in nothing, but Christ and him crucified.

The great doctrine of the vicarious sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, is further taught in those numerous passages which refer our salvation to his blood, his death, or his cross. Viewed in connexion with the passages already mentioned, those now referred to not only teach the fact that the death of Christ secures the pardon of sin, but how it does it. To this class belong such declarations as the following: 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin' (1 Jn. 1.7). 'We have redemption through his blood' (Eph. 1.7). He has 'made peace through the blood of his cross' (Col. 1.20). 'Being now justified by his blood' (Rom. 5.9). Ye 'are made nigh by the blood of Christ' (Eph. 2.13). 'Ye are come--to the blood of sprinkling' (Heb. 12.22, 24). 'Elect--unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ' (1 Pet. 1.2). 'Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood' (Rev. 1.5). 'He hath redeemed us unto God by his blood' (Rev. 5.9) 'This cup,' said the Son of God himself, 'is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for many for the remission of sins' (Mt. 26.28). The sacrificial character of the death of Christ is taught in all these passages. Blood was the means of atonement, and without the shedding of blood there was no remission; and, therefore, when our salvation is so often ascribed to the blood of the Savior, it is declared that he died as a propitiation for our sins.

The same remark may be made in reference to those passages which ascribe our redemption to the death, the cross, the flesh of Christ; for these terms are interchanged, as being of the same import. We are 'reconciled to God by the death of his Son' (Rom. 5.10). We are reconciled his cross. (Eph. 2.16). We are 'reconciled in the body of his flesh through death' (Col. 1.21, 22). We are delivered from the law 'by the body of Christ' (Rom. 7.4); he abolished the law in his flesh (Eph. 2.15); he took away the handwriting which was against us, nailing it to his cross (Col. 2.14). The more general expressions respecting Christ's dying for us, receive a definite meaning from their connexion with the more specific passages above mentioned. Everyone, therefore, knows what is meant, when it is said that ' Christ died for the ungodly' (Rom. 5.6); that he gave himself ' a ransom for many' (Mt. 20.28); that he died 'the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God' (1 Pet. 3.18). Not less plain is the meaning of the Holy Spirit when it is said, God 'spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all' (Rom. 8.32); that he 'was delivered for our offences' (Rom. 4.25); that he 'gave himself for our sins' (Gal. 1.4).

Seeing, then, that we owe everything to the expiatory sufferings of the blessed Savior, we cease to wonder that the cross is rendered so prominent in the exhibition of the plan of salvation. We are not surprised at Paul's anxiety lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect; or that he should call the preaching of the gospel the preaching of the cross; or that he should preach Christ crucified, both to Jews and Creeks, as the wisdom of God and the power of Cod; or that he should determine to glory in nothing save in the cross of Christ.

As there is no truth more necessary to be known, so there is none more variously or plainly taught, than the method of escaping the wrath of God due to us for sin. Besides all the clear exhibitions of Christ as bearing our sins, as dying in our stead, as making his soul an offering for sin, as redeeming us by his blood, the Scriptures set him forth in the character of a Priest, in order that we might more fully understand how it is that he effects

our salvation. It was predicted, long before his advent, that the Messiah was to be a Priest. 'Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek,' was the declaration of the Holy Spirit by the mouth of David (Ps. 110.4). Zechariah predicted that he should sit as 'a priest upon his throne (Zech. 6.13). The apostle defines a priest to be a man 'ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins (Heb. 5.1). Jesus Christ is the only real Priest in the universe. All others were either pretenders, or the shadow of the great High priest of our profession. For this office he had every necessary qualification. He was a man. 'For inasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also took part of the same, in order that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest; one who can be touched with a sense of our infirmities, seeing that was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.' He was sinless. 'For such a High Priest became us, who was holy, harmless, and separate from sinners.' He was the Son of God. The law made men having infirmity, priests. But God declared his Son to be a Priest, who is consecrated for evermore (Heb. 7.28). The sense in which Christ is declared to be the Son of God, is explained in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is there said, that he is the express image of God; that he upholds all things by the word of his power; that all the angels are commanded to worship him; that his throne is an everlasting throne; that in the beginning he laid the foundations of the earth; that he is from everlasting and that his years fail not. It is from the dignity of his person, as possessing this Divine nature, that the apostle deduces the efficacy of his sacrifice (Heb. 9.14), the perpetuity of his priesthood (Heb. 7.16), and his ability to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him (Heb. 7.25). He was duly constituted a Priest. He glorified not himself to be made a High Priest; but he that said unto him, 'Thou art my Son,' said also, 'Thou art a Priest for ever.' He is the only real Priest, and therefore his advent superseded all others, and put an immediate end to all their lawful ministrations, by abolishing the typical dispensation with which they were connected. For the priesthood being changed, there was of necessity a change of the law. There was a disannulling of the former commandment for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof, and there was the introduction of a better hope (Heb. 7.12, 18, 19). He has an appropriate offering to present. As every high priest is appointed to offer sacrifices, it was necessary that this man should have somewhat to offer. This sacrifice was not the blood of goats or of calves, but his own blood; it was himself he offered unto God, to purge our conscience from dead works (Heb. 9.12, 14). He has 'put away sin by the sacrifice of himself,' which was accomplished when he was 'once offered to bear the sin of many (Heb. 9.26, 28). He has passed into the heavens. As the high priest was required to enter into the most holy place with the blood of atonement, so Christ has entered not into the holy places made with hands, 'but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us, (Heb. 9.24) and where 'he ever lives to make intercession for us (Heb. 7.25).

Seeing then we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God (let the reader remember what that means), who is set down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, having by himself purged out sins and made reconciliation for the sins of the people, every humble believer who commits his soul into the hands of this High Priest, may come with boldness to the throne of grace, assured that he shall find mercy and grace to help in time of need.

Part III: The righteousness of Christ the true ground of our justification.

The practical effects of this doctrine.

THE Bible, as we have seen, teaches, first, that we are under a law which demands perfect obedience, and which threatens death in case of transgression; secondly, that all men have failed in rendering that obedience, and therefore are subject to the threatened penalty; thirdly, that Christ has redeemed us from the law by being made under it, and in our place satisfying its demands. It only remains to be shown, that this perfect righteousness of Christ is presented as the ground of our justification before God.

In scriptural language, condemnation is a sentence of death pronounced upon sin; justification is a sentence of life pronounced upon righteousness. As this righteousness is not our own, as we are sinners, ungodly, without works, it must be the righteousness of another, even of Him who is our righteousness. Hence we find so constantly the distinction between our own righteousness and that which God gives. The Jews, the apostle says, being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, would not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God (Rom. 10.3). This was the rock on which they split. They knew that justification required a righteousness; they insisted on urging their own, imperfect as it was, and would not accept of that which God had provided in the merits of his Son, who is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes. The same idea is presented in Rom. ix. 30-32, where Paul sums up the case of the rejection of the Jews and the acceptance of believers. The Gentiles have attained righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel hath not attained it. Why? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. The Jews would not receive and confide in the righteousness which God had provided, but endeavored, by works, to prepare a righteousness of their own. This was the cause of their ruin. In direct contrast to the course pursued by the majority of his kinsmen, we find Paul renouncing all dependence upon his own righteousness, and thankfully receiving that which God had provided; though he had every advantage and every temptation to trust in himself, that any man could have; for he was one of the favored people of God, circumcised on the eighth day, and touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless; yet all these things he counted but loss, that he might win Christ, and be found in him, not having his own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith (Phil. 3.4-9). Here the two righteousness are brought distinctly into view. The one was his own, consisting in obedience to the law; this Paul rejects as inadequate, and unworthy of acceptance. The other is of God, and received by faith; this Paul accepts and glories in as all-sufficient and as alone sufficient. This is the righteousness which the apostle says God imputes to those without works. Hence it is called a gift, a free gift, a gift by grace, and believers are described as those who receive this gift of righteousness (Rom. 5.17). Hence we are never said to be justified by anything done by us or wrought in us, but by what Christ has done for us. We are justified through the redemption that is in him (Rom. 3.24). We are justified by his blood (Rom. 5.9) We are justified by his obedience (Rom. 5.19). We are justified by him from all things (Acts 13.39). He is our righteousness (1 Cor. 1.30). We are made the righteousness of God in him (2 Cor. 5.21). We are justified

in his name (1 Cor. 6.11). There is no condemnation to those who are in him (Rom. 8.1) Justification is, therefore, by faith in Christ, because faith is receiving and trusting to him as our Savior, as having done all that is required to secure our acceptance before God.

It is thus, then, the Scriptures answer the question, How can a man be just with God? When the soul is burdened with a sense of sin, when it sees how reasonable and holy is that law which demands perfect obedience, and which threatens death as the penalty of transgression, when it feels the absolute impossibility of ever satisfying these just demands by its own obedience and sufferings, it is then that the revelation of Jesus Christ as our righteousness is felt to be the wisdom and power of God unto salvation. Destitute of all righteousness in ourselves, we have our righteousness in him. What we could not do, he has done for us, The righteousness, therefore, on the ground of which the sentence of justification is passed upon the believing sinner, is not his own, but that of Jesus Christ.

It is one of the strongest evidences of the Divine origin of the Scriptures, that they are suited to the nature and circumstances of man. If their doctrines were believed and their precepts obeyed, men would stand in their true relation to God, and the different classes of men to each other. Parents and children, husbands and wives, rulers and subjects, would be found in their proper sphere, and would attain the highest possible degree of excellence and happiness. Truth is in order to holiness. And all truth is known to be truth by its tendency to promote holiness. As this test, when applied to the Scriptures generally, evinces their Divine perfection, so when applied to the cardinal doctrine of justification by faith in Jesus Christ, it shows that doctrine to be worthy of all acceptation. On this ground it is commended by the sacred writers. They declare it to be in the highest degree honorable to God, and beneficial to man. They assert that it is so arranged as to display the wisdom, justice, holiness, and love of God, while it secures the pardon, peace, and holiness of men. If it failed in either of these objects; if it were not suited to the Divine character, or to our nature and necessities, it could not answer the end for which it was designed.

It will be readily admitted, that the glory of God in the exhibition or revelation of the Divine perfections, is the highest conceivable end of creation and redemption; and consequently, that any doctrine which is suited to make such an exhibition is, on that account, worthy of being universally received and gloried in. Now, the inspired writers teach us, that it is peculiarly in the plan of redemption that the Divine perfections are revealed; that it was designed to show unto principalities and powers the manifold wisdom of God; that Christ was set forth as a propitiatory sacrifice to exhibit his righteousness or justice; and especially, that in the ages to come he might show forth the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. It is the love of God, the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of which pass knowledge, that is here most conspicuously displayed. Some men strangely imagine that the death of Christ procured for us the love of God; whereas it was the effect and not the cause of that love. Christ did not die that God might love us; but he died because God loved us. 'God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.' (Rom. 5.8). He 'so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever

believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life' (Jn. 3.16). 'In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins' (1 Jn. 4.9-10).

As this love of God is manifested towards the unworthy, it is called grace, and this is what the Scriptures dwell upon with such peculiar frequency and earnestness. The mystery of redemption is, that a Being of infinite holiness and justice should manifest such wonderful love to sinners. Hence the sacred writers so earnestly denounce everything that obscures this peculiar feature of the gospel; everything which represents men as worthy, as meriting, or, in any way, by their own goodness, securing the exercise of this love of God. It is of grace, lest any man should boast. We are justified by grace; we are saved by grace; and if of grace, it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace (Eph. 2.8, 9; Rom. 11.6). The apostle teaches us not only that the plan of salvation had its origin in the unmerited kindness of God, and that our acceptance with him is in no way or degree founded in our own worthiness, but moreover that the actual administration of the economy of mercy is so conducted as to magnify this attribute of the Divine character. God chooses the foolish, the base, the weak, yea, those who are nothing, in order that no flesh should glory in his presence. Christ is made everything to us, that those who glory should glory only in the Lord (1 Cor. 1.27-31).

It cannot fail to occur to every reader, that unless he sincerely rejoices in this feature of the plan of redemption, unless he is glad that the whole glory of his salvation belongs to God, his heart cannot be in accordance with the gospel. If he believes that the ground of his acceptance is in himself, or even wishes that it were so, he is not prepared to join in those grateful songs of acknowledgment to Him, who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which it is the delight of the redeemed to offer unto him that loved them and gave himself for them. It is most obvious, that the sacred writers are abundant in the confession of their unworthiness in the sight of God. They acknowledged that they were unworthy absolutely, and unworthy comparatively. It was of grace that any man was saved; and it was of grace that they were saved rather than others. It is, therefore, all of grace, that God may be exalted and glorified in all them that believe.

The doctrine of the gratuitous justification of sinners by faith in Jesus Christ, not only displays the infinite love of God, but it is declared to be peculiarly honorable to him, or peculiarly consistent with his attributes, because it is adapted to all men. 'Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, seeing it is one God which shall justify the circumcision by faith, and uncircumcision through faith' (Rom. 3.29, 30). 'For the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For WHOSOEVER Shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved' (Rom. 10.12, 13). This is no narrow, national, or sectarian doctrine. It is as broad as the earth. Wherever men, the creatures of God, can be found, there the mercy of God in Christ Jesus may be preached. The apostle greatly exults in this feature of the plan of redemption, as worthy of God, and as making the gospel the foundation of a religion for all nations and ages. In revealing a salvation sufficient for all and suited for all, it discloses Cod in his true

character, as the God and Father of all.

The Scriptures, however, represent this great doctrine as not less suited to meet the necessities of man, than it is to promote the glory of God. If it exalts God, it humbles man. If it renders it manifest that he is a Being of infinite holiness, justice, and love, it makes us feel that we are destitute of all merit, nay, are most ill-deserving; that we are without strength; that our salvation is an undeserved favor. As nothing is more true than the guilt and helplessness of men, no plan of redemption which does not recognize these facts, could ever be in harmony with our inward experience, or command the full acquiescence of the penitent soul. The ascription of merit which we are conscious we do not deserve, produces of itself severe distress; and if this false estimate of our deserts is the ground of the exhibition of special kindness towards us, it destroys the happiness such kindness would otherwise produce. To a soul, therefore, sensible of its pollution and guilt in the sight of God, the doctrine that it is saved on account of its own goodness, or because it is better than other men, is discordant and destructive of its peace. Nothing but an absolutely gratuitous salvation can suit a soul sensible of its ill desert. Nothing else suits its views of truth, or its sense of right. The opposite doctrine involves a falsehood and a moral impropriety, in which neither the reason nor conscience can acquiesce. The scriptural doctrine, which assumes what we know to be true-namely, our guilt and helplessness--places us in our proper relation to God; that relation which accords with the truth, with our sense of right, with our inward experience, and with every proper desire of our hearts. This is one of the reasons why the Scriptures represent peace as the consequence of justification by faith. There can be no peace while the soul is not in harmony with God, and there can be no such harmony until it willingly occupies its true position in relation to God. So long as it does not acknowledge its true character, so long as it acts on the assumption of its ability to merit or to earn the Divine favor, it is in a false position. Its feelings towards God are wrong, and there is no manifestation of approbation or favor on the part of God towards the soul. But when we take our true place and feel our ill desert, and look upon pardoning mercy as a mere gratuity, we find access to God, and his love is shed abroad in our hearts, producing that peace which passes all understanding. The soul ceases from its legal strivings; it gives over the vain attempt to make itself worthy, or to work out a righteousness wherewith to appear before God. It is contented to be accepted as unworthy, and to receive as a gift a righteousness which can bear the scrutiny of God. Peace, therefore, is not the result of the assurance of mere pardon, but of pardon founded upon a righteousness which illustrates the character of God; which magnifies the law and makes it honorable; which satisfies the justice of God while it displays the infinite riches of Divine tenderness and love. The soul can find no objection to such a method of forgiveness. It is not pained by the ascription of merit to itself, which is felt to be undeserved. Its utter unworthiness is not only recognized, but openly declared. Nor is it harassed by the anxious doubt whether God can, consistently with his justice, forgive sin. For justice is as clearly revealed in the cross of Christ, as love. The whole soul, therefore, however enlightened, or however sensitive, acquiesces with humility and delight in a plan of mercy which thus honors God, and which, while it secures the salvation of the sinner, permits him to hide himself in the radiance which surrounds his Savior.

The apostles, moreover, urge on men the doctrine of justification by faith with peculiar earnestness, because it presents the only method of deliverance from sin. So long as men are under the condemnation of the law, and feel themselves bound by its demands of obedience as the condition and ground of their acceptance with God, they do and must feel that he is unreconciled, that his perfections are arrayed against them. Their whole object is to propitiate him by means which they know to be inadequate. Their spirit is servile, their religion a bondage, their God is a hard Master. To men in such a state, true love, true obedience, and real peace are alike impossible. But when they are brought to see that God, through his infinite love, has set forth Jesus Christ as a propitiation for our sins, that he might be just, and yet justify those that believe; that it is not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saves us--they are emancipated from their former bondage and made the sons of God. God is no longer a hard Master, but a kind Father. Obedience is no longer a task to be done for a reward; it is the joyful expression of filial love. The whole relation of the soul to God is changed, and all our feelings and conduct change with it. Though we have no works to perform in order to justification, we have everything to do in order to manifest our gratitude and love. 'Do we then make void the law through faith! God forbid: yea, we establish the law' (Rom. 3.31). There is no such thing as real, acceptable obedience, until we are thus delivered from the bondage of the law as the rule of justification, and are reconciled to God by the death of his Son. Till then we are slaves and enemies, and have the feelings of slaves. When we have accepted the terms of reconciliation, we are the sons of God, and have the feelings of sons.

It must not, however, be supposed that the filial obedience rendered by the children of God, is the effect of the mere moral influence arising from a sense of his favor. Though, perhaps, the strongest influence which any external consideration can exert, it is far from being the source of the holiness which always follows faith. The very act by which we become interested in the redemption of Christ, from the condemnation of the law, makes us partakers of his Spirit. It is not mere pardon, or any other isolated blessing, that is offered to us in the gospel, but complete redemption, deliverance from evil and restoration to the love and life of God. Those, therefore, who believe, are not merely forgiven, but are so united to Christ, that they derive from and through him the Holy Spirit. This is his great gift, bestowed upon all who come to Him and confide in Him. This is the reason why he says, 'Without me ye can do nothing.--As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit' (Jn. 15.4, 5).

The gospel method of salvation, therefore, is worthy of all acceptation. It reveals the Divine perfections in the dearest and most affecting light, and it is in every way suited to the character and necessities of men. It places us in our true position as undeserving sinners; and it secures pardon, peace of conscience, and holiness of life. It is the wisdom and the power of God unto salvation. It cannot be a matter of surprise that the Scriptures represent the rejection of this method of redemption as the prominent ground of the condemnation of those who perish under the sound of the gospel. That the plan should be so clearly revealed, and yet men should insist upon adopting some other, better suited to

their inclinations, is the height of folly and disobedience. That the Son of God should come into the world, die the just for the unjust, and offer us eternal life, and yet we should reject his proffered mercy, proves such an insensibility to his excellence and love, such a love of sin, such a disregard of the approbation and enjoyment of God, that, could all other grounds of condemnation be removed, this alone would be sufficient. 'He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God' (Jn. 3.18).