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ON JUSTIFICATION.

ROMANS 3:28.—*A man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.*

POWER, in an intelligent agent, implies an obligation to its exercise. The contrary supposition is an impeachment of the Creator's wisdom. The parable of the talents assumes this truth whilst it illustrates its application. Possession confers the right and imposes the duty. Such, too, is as plainly the common sense of mankind as it is the dictate of scripture. Hence idleness is esteemed a crime, which, if not punished by law, is at least placed under the ban of public reprobation. The buried talent will see its resurrection morn and meet its murderer at the bar of God.

Intelligent agents are moreover not accountable for the *exercise* only of their talents, but also for the *manner* of it. The Giver has defined the use of the gift, and prescribed a law to regulate it. This, too, is an original element in morals, and we can form no distinct conception of morality without it. Intelligent action, according to prescribed rule, is a leading item in our complex notion of moral agency. The very thought of an intelligent creature existing without law or rule to regulate and govern his actions, is difficult to conceive; its reality impossible to be believed. There *is* one, and we presume there *can be* but **ONE** such being. He whose understanding is infinite, and He alone, exists in simple and pure intelligence without *prescribed law*. He giveth none account. But to all created mind the prescription of rule appears a necessary adjunct.

Nor is our idea of moral existence yet complete. Law implies more than simple rule to regulate action. It also measures accountability. It is retrospective as well as prospective. It looks upon past as well as upon future action. It originates in sovereignty and flows back upon its source. Sovereign authority prescribes the rule, supreme power superintends its final application. Its alpha is legislative: its omega judicial. What the law prescribes must be done, and if done, will be rewarded; what it prohibits, must not be done, or if done, will be punished. In other words, God has always dealt with man on the principle of motive; addressing his fears on the one hand and his hopes on the other; both having their influence through the principle of self love. The desire of happiness is an essential item of our being. Thus has God formed us; and to this indestructible principle has he address-

ed his law; (at least in the only form in which we have to do with it.) He holds forth exemption from misery and the hope of enjoyment as an inducing motive to compliance with its requisitions on the one hand; and the terrors of fearful endurance, to deter us on the other, from its neglect or violation.

Thus we have arrived at the distinct notion of moral agency. It implies an intelligent creature; endowed with capacity to act; laid under *obligation* to act, and that according to law; and under the influence of hope of reward and fear of punishment, as the necessary legal results.

Now, in the important discussion to which we are approaching, it is matter of high concern, to be well settled in our elementary principles. If we have confused—half formed conceptions here, full formed confusion will pour around us the flood of its chaos ere our feet stand firm on the rock of God's eternal truth.

Let us, then, pause for a moment at the threshold of the discussion, and ask ourselves, To what has God in his law, (under its covenant form,) promised life and happiness? Is it to *holy action*—*action according to the precept of law*? Or is it to suffering—to painful endurance of the penalty?

Reward is promised. Happiness, life, blessedness is held forth and pledged to the moral being. Now the question relates to the *merit*, the *desert*—that which *merits*, which *deserves* this reward. What is it? Is there any *merit* in suffering the just consequences of sin! Does the man who has even *patiently* endured punishment for his crimes deserve reward? The moment he emerges from the gratings of his incarceration, may he put in a claim to the positive benefits and blessings which the law holds out as a motive to *holy action*? Or has he simply and only made restitution for the positive injury he inflicted upon the law? This last, beyond all question, is the true state of the case. If it were otherwise—if reward were given—because merited—if positive reward were given to mere endurance of penalty, who does not see the fearful consequences of the principle? If there is real merit in suffering penalty, then unquestionably the deeper the agony of endurance, the higher the desert of happiness! The lower a spirit sinks in the burning lake, the higher he rises toward heavenly blessedness. The more of wrath divine he drinks in, the more of the river of the water of life, is he entitled to receive! Adopt this principle, and you unpeople hell! Adopt this; and you lift Satan away above the seat he lost!! Adopt this; and you upturn the foundations of all moral order! We therefore revert with confidence to the position, that *reward is given only to holy action; positive blessedness is connected, in law, with active obedience*. This we hold to be a pure element in morals; a fundamental maxim of scripture. "If thou wilt have life, [by thine own merits,] keep the commandments." "In keeping of them there is great reward." "In the day thou eatest thereof—thou shalt surely die."

These elementary truths adjusted, we are prepared to meet the most momentous query ever presented for human consideration, viz. "How should man be just with God?" To this our text is the true response. "A man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law."

Let us inquire,

I. WHAT IS JUSTIFICATION?

II. WHAT ARE THE REQUISITES TO MAN'S JUSTIFICATION?

III. HOW DOES HE OBTAIN THOSE REQUISITES.

I. What is justification? The prosecution of this inquiry will lead us to define the term and the thing.

1st. Let us define the term. To justify, is the opposite of to condemn. Deut. 25:1, "The judges shall justify the righteous and condemn the wicked." Prov. 17:15, "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord." Matth. 12:37, "by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Rom. 8:34, "It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?"

These passages establish undeniably two points, viz. 1st. That the terms justify and condemn are judicial. They relate to the proceedings of courts, to the acts of a judge. 2nd. They stand in contrast, as signifying acts of an opposite character.

Justification, therefore, has reference to the legal relations and condition of men; and not at all to their moral feelings and dispositions. These come in under the doctrine of sanctification, which is not before us. Ours is a simple question of right and law. The precise nature of that question may fairly be inferred from the second point just settled. If to *justify* is the opposite of to *condemn*; and if we can easily ascertain the meaning of this term and the thing signified by it, then we can also settle the meaning of the term justification and define the thing.

Now, can any man have a doubt or a difficulty about condemnation? What is it? Is it the infusion of unholy dispositions, feelings, affections into the person condemned? This were to make the judge a criminal, and in reference to God would be blasphemy! Or is it simply a declaration of the fact that the man having broken the law is now under its penalty—he deserves the reward of transgression—he is liable to punishment? Thus condemnation is passing sentence against a person. Hence we infer, that such being the true and scriptural meaning of the term and thing, the opposite term to justify does not describe the act of infusing just or holy principles into the person judged; but it is simply a declaration of the fact that, having fulfilled the precept of the law, he is entitled to the promised reward; having performed the service, the wages are his as a matter of right. In the one case to pass a sentence in favor of the person would be abomination in the sight of God; and in the other it would be abomination to pass sentence against him.

Justification therefore implies,

1. A rational, intelligent agent, whose conduct is the subject of judicial inquiry.
2. A law according to which he is bound to act, and to be judged.
3. A judge whose office is to *compare the* conduct of the subject with the law itself and to mark the agreement.
4. Action according to law; obedience.
5. Evidence that such is the fact.
6. The judge's declaration of that fact.

Now this *action* according to law is righteousness. Deut. 6:25. "And it shall be our righteousness if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God." Ps. 15:25. "He that doeth these things, (that worketh righteousness,) shall never be moved." Righteousness is often opposed to wickedness and sin; and the righteous to the wicked. Prov. 14:34. "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." Prov. 11:5. "The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way, but the wicked shall fall by his *own wickedness*." v. 8. "The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead." Now wickedness

or sin is the transgression of the law; hence righteousness is obedience or compliance with law. He that lives and acts as the law requires is a righteous man.

That this is the true and proper sense of the *term* is evident also from the Apostle's reasoning in the preceding part of the epistle. In v. 20, he concludes, "therefore by the deeds of the law, (man's active compliance,) no flesh shall be justified in his sight." This is an inference from the previous argument, wherein he had shown the entire deficiency of man's obedience. For had it been ascertained that man had actually obeyed the law, this inference could not have been drawn, but the contrary. As he said, "circumcision verily profiteth if thou keep the law," and afterwards, "the man which doeth those things shall live by them." And having, in the 20th v., set aside the active compliance of men with the law, because of its imperfection, he substitutes in its place the righteousness of God, that is, the active obedience of Christ, for it is active obedience whose deficiency he has proved. He makes deeds, works, the same as righteousness. It is this which constitutes the ground of justification. It is the meritorious procuring cause of it; agreeably to the fundamental axiom already laid down.

2d. Justification, the thing therefore is, the act of a judge declaring that the person is in possession of the righteousness of law, and by consequence is *entitled*—he has a *right* to the stipulated reward. It is the official approval of his course of action.

This is the simple scriptural idea. It is also the general sense of the term with writers on jurisprudence. When a man is put to the bar and presents a plea of justification, he undertakes to shew that the acts alleged against him were *right* in themselves—that the law approves them. If his proof is good, the sentence is not simply acquittal, but justification. He is praiseworthy instead of being censurable—he is entitled to reward instead of punishment.

II. What are the requisites to man's justification?

1st. He must have the righteousness of the law. Our apostle, having stated (chap. 1:17,) that in the gospel, the righteousness of God, that is, Christ's righteousness, or his holy obedience to the precept of the law, was revealed from the divine faithfulness, to the principle of faith in man; took up the opposite position, v. 18, and proved that man's active obedience, his works, his righteousness, could not procure him justification because of its imperfection.

This argument he brought to a close in chap. 3:29, and then set aside that righteousness, and now takes up again in its room and place the righteousness of God. Now it is all important to observe, that the righteousness whose imperfection he had demonstrated, was not the *sufferings* of men; but their *obedience*; their *deeds*; their *doings*; their *actions*. They have not conformed with the law; they have not the righteousness to which the reward of life was promised; they cannot be declared just or righteous. Such a declaration would not be true. "Therefore by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight."

Thus an alarming deficiency is demonstrated; and unless it be made up, man cannot be justified at all. Shall he make it up by his own exertions? This is impossible. The evidence of his deficiency is demonstration strong, of man's incapacity to supply it. Whence shall the deliverance come? I see my defect, says the sinner—I feel that I cannot supply it. Who will interpose on my behalf? Who will furnish me with the righteousness demanded and indispensable to my justification? "Lo! I come"—is the Savior's response. "But now, the righteousness of God without the law, (without

man's obedience to it which is imperfect,) is manifest—even the righteousness of God, which is by the faith of Jesus Christ." This is the grand requisite.

But there is something else necessary in man's case. Not the precept of the law only must be obeyed as the title to eternal life; the penalty lies upon him in all the weight of its woes, and must be met in all the awfulness of its extent. The sentence has gone forth: "thou shalt surely die;" and is irrevocable. Before therefore man can be justified, this claim too must be liquidated. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." And this curse causeless has not come. Who will meet it? Shall man? Perdition eternal, is the inevitable consequence. Salvation is then out of the question.

Here again the gracious Redeemer steps forward. "Lo! I come." He puts himself in the sinner's place. He assumes his legal relations. He takes his sin upon himself. He becomes guilty in the eye of the law. "He, his own self, bears our sins in his own body on the tree." Hence it "pleases the Father to bruise him." "He makes his soul an offering for sin." The son receives the bitter cup at the Father's hand—he drinks the wrath of God. The proper penalty of the violated law, that is death—"thou shalt surely die"—he endures. He must be God, that he might sustain and keep the human nature from sinking under the infinite wrath of God, and the power of death; give worth and efficacy to his sufferings, obedience, and intercession; and to satisfy God's justice." He must "be man, that he might perform obedience to the law, suffer and make intercession for us in our nature." What this death is—the extent of its pains, the fearfulness of its amount, the terrors of God's wrath, the awfulness of its agonies—no man can tell. The nearest approximation we can make to the proper idea, is doubtless by contemplating the blessed Lamb of God, whilst under its operations. "See if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Mark, O sinner! the unutterable anguish of his spirit. See him as he proceeds with his three disciples. How is his soul oppressed beneath the fearful load of human guilt! Now, alone he advances into the darkness; more, and still more insupportable the load becomes; when lo! the Son of God totters, he falls, he sinks beneath the wrath of God! Who will measure the woes of Gethsemane! Mark too his footsteps ascending the mount of crucifixion. See the lacerations of his blessed body. Harken to the sigh of his wounded spirit. Fathom, if thou canst, O sinner! the depth of his sorrows. Weigh the magnitude of that groan. Tell, if thou canst, the full meaning of that last desponding shriek!

Oh no, let us not institute metaphysical subtleties in a case where we cannot possibly know the facts. Let us not deny that Jesus took the sins of an elect world, and bore them in his own body on the tree, because, we cannot understand *how*, he could suffer to the full extent of our demerits. Let us not deny that Christ "did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified, and did make a proper, real and full satisfaction to his Father's justice in their behalf," simply because we cannot see how he should experience *remorse* of conscience. And especially let us not make this a stumbling block, seeing the term *remorse* is not in the Bible, and the thing is no where set down as constituting the proper penalty of the law. *Death* is the penalty—that death which sin deserved. "Dying, thou shalt die."

Here then are the two grand requisites to the justification of a sinner; they meet the law in the totality of its demands.

Here is atonement which meets in all their length and breadth, those claims of law which grow out of its violation. This forms the basis of par-

don and procures the acquittal, release from penal claim. Pardon is the passing by of an offender, as though he had not offended; releasing him from the penal claim of law, so that he is no longer guilty—no longer liable to be punished; it is forgiveness, remission of sin. It is an act of sovereignty, and in human affairs is always made at the expense of justice. It is an abandonment of the claim of justice. It is obvious that pardon has exclusive reference to the penalty, and has nothing to do with the precept of the law. Pardon therefore implies no positive merit on the part of the pardoned. He has in consequence of it, no claims to positive reward. He can only claim exemption from painful endurance.

Here also is the other requisite. Here is positive merit. Active, holy, perfect and perpetual obedience was rendered by Christ to the precept of the law. This constitutes the ground of justification in the strict sense of the term. This is the righteousness to which, and to which only, life is promised. This secures to its possessor more than simple acquittal. He is not simply innocent, that is, free from sin. He is not simply a cypher in morals, a mere neutral, deserving neither reward nor punishment. He has positive virtue and a right to the rewards of holy action. Life is his right of law.

Now let us remark the importance of clear distinction in these matters. Let us keep the precept and the penalty separate. The claims of both must be met: but they are different in their character and essential nature. Let us not confound them. To a holy being, the fulfilling of the precept is all enjoyment. He delights in the law of the Lord. His blessedness grows upon him continually as he advances in the work of perfecting the righteousness of the law. But not so in fulfilling the penalty. Here is unmingled and unmitigated anguish. All is wrath—the wrath of God.

III. The next question for our consideration is—how does the sinner become *actually* interested in these two grand requisites? And the answer covers the whole remaining ground of our discussion. It is two-fold, it brings before us the doctrines of imputation and of faith.

1st. God imputes to the sinner his Son's atonement and righteousness, or, in a phraseology more familiar and sufficiently precise for our purposes—The active and positive obedience of Christ.

The doctrine of imputation is as clearly set forth in the bible as language can express it. Nor is there any mystery about it. The thing itself is an original element or "principle of the doctrine of Christ." Heb. 6:1. It is the setting down to a person's account—the charging of a thing to him in right and law. Consequently a person's own act may be imputed to him, as is the case with all who remain impenitent. Their sins are set down against them. Another person's act and its legal consequences may be imputed; as when Paul requests Philemon to impute Onesimus' debt to him. "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account." Charge it to me. And in the Greek he uses the same word that is translated impute in Rom. 5:13, and the simple of which occurs so often in the same sense. See Rom. 4:6.11.22,23. Jas. 2:23, and in other places.

Imputation, when the thing imputed had been one person's and is passed over in right and law to another, is founded on the doctrine of representation.

Moral beings are necessarily social, and the existence of the social relations implies and comprehends the principle of substitution and representation. Here, too, we have one of "the principles (elementary) of the doctrine of Christ." One man often occupies the place of another; sustains his legal and moral relations; acts or suffers for him; so that the act of the substitute is, to all the intents and purposes of law, the act of his principal. This is called representation. And though it be true, as has been *seriously* objected

to it, that the term *representation* is not found in the bible, yet it is no proof that the thing is unknown on the sacred page. Many terms in common use, and highly useful, are not contained in the bible. In our English bibles you will search in vain for the words, bible, character, moral, develop, result, organization, constitution, plan, system, and a hundred others. But our business is with things. Do the scriptures recognise the principle of substitution and representation? Do they show the facts of frequent occurrence that one person acts for another, and suffers for another? Here there is no room to hesitate. And so it is in the social concerns of life. Without this principle whereby one person represents, that is, becomes accountable, and acts for another or others, the commerce of society is at an end. Government must cease. The world must speedily become a desolation. The human family must become extinct. God has created man with this principle in him. It is a part of his nature. Without it he would not be man.

Are we told that it is inexplicable? no man can understand *how* the moral character, the very being as it were, of a moral agent, is divided and sent into different quarters of the world, and there transacts various business at the same time; forms contracts that are morally binding in law, and yet the individual himself remains all the while at his own proper home. Be it so that you cannot explain *how* it is; does your ignorance nullify the **FACT**? Must society cease to act upon its own general laws until you are able to explain the *how* of every thing? No, truly, you cannot explain the manner of this moral transformation and transmission. But then the facts you know. And the reason of the difficulty in their explanation lies simply here—Representation is an original element in morals; a first principle occupying the same position here that his axioms do in the science of the mathematician, or that gravitation does among the laws of the astronomer. Let us not attempt to simplify simplicity itself. There are bounds to human knowledge.

There is, however, no danger of men rejecting the principle. In a representative government, and a world where no one man can ever do with his own hands all the things which he must do in order to live, we are secured against that measure of idiocy that would reject the principle. Yet, men there are, who wish to deny its application in the great question of justification.

The bible, however, does teach that "sin entered into the world by one man," "and death by sin." "By one man's offence, death reigned." "By the offence of one, *judgment* came upon all men to condemnation." "By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners." They also shew that this one man was Adam. Here we see, that not only were men *made sinners* by the sin of Adam, but placed under *condemnation*. The apostle moreover states, (Rom. 5:12,) that they all sinned in him. "Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; even so death passed upon all men *by him*, in whom all have sinned."*

*This I feel assured is a correct translation. Because, 1st, It preserves the comparison, which in the Greek is very formal, and which by our common translation is destroyed. *As by one—even so*. This formal expression *as* and *even so*, answering to one another is always used by the Apostle when the comparison is full. See, Chap. 5: 19.21—6:4.19—11:30,31.—1 Cor. 11:12.15.22—16:1.—2 Cor. 1:7.—Gal. 4:29.—Eph. 5:24. In all of which the same terms occur, and are translated as I have given it above.

2nd. There is not another case in the New Testament, in which the words rendered in our common translation, "for that," either are or can be so rendered without marring the sense. It is used in the New Testament only six times, viz. Matt. 26:50—"wherefore," Mark 2:4, "the bed *wherein*," Luke 5:25, "bed *whereon*," Phil. 3:12, "*for which*," Phil. 4: 10, "*wherein*,"—every case may therefore be rendered *in*, or *by whom*, or *which*, not one "for that."

3d. The verb translated "passed," occurs forty-two times in the New Testament, and

This shews the manner in which sin entered our world, viz. by Adam's act of disobedience. It shews the manner of death's entrance; it is the same. It avers, that exactly in the same way, that is, by or through the one man, death entered upon all, and the reason of death's passing upon all men through Adam, viz. they all have sinned in him.

Men may attempt to throw difficulties in the way of the Apostle's doctrine. They may ask, *how could* I sin in Adam before I was born? Still *difficulties* cannot disprove *facts*. There is the fact, "All sinned in Adam and fell with him."

But where, after all, is the difficulty? Do not mankind universally act on the principle of federal representation? Do not the acts of the representative bind the represented? Does not your servant's contract at the merchant's counter bind you? Can you evade the payment of the debt thus contracted? Explain this and I will explain the mystery of "all sinning in Adam." There is not a particle of difficulty in the one which does not exist in the other, except simply the question of fact, whether Adam was the moral head—the federal or covenant head to his posterity. Now for proof of this fact, we need scarcely pass beyond the present context. (Rom. 5:12,13, &c.) In presenting it, let us remark,—

1st. The Judge of all the earth will do right. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne." Hence we infer, that wherever he visits his moral creatures with the legal consequences of sin, sin itself preceded the visitation. But death is a legal consequence of sin. Men die, and infants before they have done good or evil die; therefore they have sin upon them.

2nd. The apostle expressly says, that death entered the world by the one man and passed upon all men. Here then is the fact. Adam acts, and his action has a *moral* and *legal* effect, most serious and awful, upon all men. Now, from the moral effect, the moral cause is proved. The legal consequences can only follow from the legal relation. Adam was connected with all men, and his deeds brought all under their moral effects.

3d. The same is evinced by the comparison instituted between Adam and Christ. The former, Paul says, was the figure—the type of the latter. And the same apostle assures us elsewhere, (Col. 2:19. Eph. 1:22,) that Christ is a head to his body, the church. If, therefore, Jesus is a head of moral influence and responsibilities—if he acted for his people; if he obeyed and suffered and died for them, as their surety and friend; so must Adam have been a moral head, acting for his people; and this is representation.

But, will some men say, how did Adam become a moral head to his people? By the highest of all authority. How came he to be the first man? Had not he, who formed him, power to make him thus?

Or will any still object, that the consent of the represented—their voluntary appointment is necessary to a fair and equitable representation. Is it not hard to be represented where the opportunity of voluntary action was not afforded? I answer, No. Consent is not material to constitute the representative character. All minors, all aliens, all minorities are represented by men who never had their consent, and who, in many cases, if it were

always, when thus compounded, governs a case by the preposition included in it. Sometimes the preposition is repeated separately; sometimes not; sometimes the governed case is understood; oftener it is expressed. But always the force of the preposition requires a case. There must be a case understood here. "Even so upon all men death passed through"—this is the Greek most literally. Now I ask, through what did death pass? The answer is given by the Apostle in the former part of the comparison—"through the one man." To make the grammatical construction full, the case must be supplied, "through *him*, in whom all sinned." 4th. This last, in *whom*, is precisely literal.

asked, would refuse to give it; yet are they bound by their acts? This will doubtless be considered an imperfection in human arrangements, and so it is. But no such imperfection existed in our first representative. He was perfect, holy and happy, and was appointed to his station by infinite wisdom. And were he alive to-day, and all his posterity with him on the earth, and all pure and holy, he would have their universal suffrage to represent them before God.

A word will shew how and wherefore the benefits of Christ's atonement and righteousness became his people's. God, their Father, views them as morally one with his Son. He is their living head, and they are his members. Consequently his acts and sufferings, as their covenant head, belong to them in law and right, and are therefore set down to their account—are imputed to them. Jesus says to the Father, in reference to them, as Paul said to Philemon, in reference to Onesimus, If they have wronged thee or owe thee aught, put that on mine account; I Jesus, have written it with mine own hand; I will repay it. With this voluntary proposition of the Son, the Father complies.

Thus it is that "God imputeth righteousness without works." Thus independently on his own personal acts of obedience to the divine law, a man is "made righteous." The Savior's satisfaction to the penalty, and his fulfillment of the precept of the law—both performed as the sinner's friend, surety, representative, and both therefore being his—are set down in the book of God's account to his favor. God, as the righteous Judge, inspects his book, finds the individual sinner in righteous possession of the whole righteousness of the whole law, and *declares the fact*. This is justification.

Hence it is plain how God is just, that is, righteous; when "he justifies the ungodly." In Rom. 4:5, we are told explicitly, that the persons whom God justifies were ungodly; they were sinners, in themselves corrupt and deserving of his wrath. But now being personally interested by faith, (as we shall see,) in the righteousness of the Savior, they have in him a title to life; and the righteous Father declares the fact—he justifies them. Clearly then to the sinner, his justification is a matter of pure grace; whilst to the sinner's representative, surely friend, it is all of debt. He, the **LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**, claims as our Advocate, our acceptance before the Father's glory. The Father admits the justice of his claim. He is a just God and a Savior.

2nd. We are now to contemplate the doctrine of saving faith.

A man is justified by *faith*. In illustrating the nature, origin, and acting of that faith which saves the soul, let us remark,

1st. There is a principle of faith in the human constitution. Men are so formed by their Creator, that to believe, to exercise confidence, trust, in the testimony or declarations of others, is, a law of their being—a part of their nature. This law is universal. All men are under its influence. All men are prone to accredit the testimony of their fellow men. Without this principle they would not be men. It is essential to their nature. Accordingly you find that, in early life, credulity is characteristic—universally characteristic of the race. Little children believe what is told them, and that with unwavering confidence, until they learn by experience that lies are sometimes told. Their incredulity is an *acquisition*—a result of experience; their disposition to credence is *natural*. Now it is to this characteristic of little children, the Savior has reference when he says, (Matt. 18:3) "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Humble faith—childlike confidence in God is the leading feature of a true christian.

Faith is not simply an act of the mind; but an abiding principle. Believing is its exercise. Hence we speak of acts of faith. But if there were no fixed principle; if faith were merely an act, it would be absurd to speak of acts of faith, that is, acts of "an act of the mind."

2nd. Faith has for its specific object truth. What the mind perceives to be true it believes—it rests upon. Veracity is the attribute in a witness which secures the mind's belief and confidence.

3rd. Sin has so impaired the original powers of the soul that men, in their unconverted state, are unable to perceive the truth of God's testimony concerning his Son. They have no spiritual vision and consequently are shut up in unbelief. Their understanding is blinded; their foolish heart is darkened; their affections are alienated from God. They have no fixed habitual disposition to accredit the testimony of God in the matters of salvation. "The carnal mind is enmity against God." And in this wretched condition men abide until renewing grace, restores them.

4th. Saving faith is a grace, wrought in the heart of a sinner by the Spirit and word of God: whereby he assents to the truth of the promise of the gospel, and receives and rests upon Christ and his righteousness therein held forth, for pardon of sin and for the accepting and accounting of his person righteous in the sight of God for salvation. In the gospel are presented atoning blood and meritorious, justifying righteousness, viz. Christ's passive and active obedience. The veracity of God in Christ is pledged to impute these to every believer, to every sinner who by trusting in Jesus shows that he is one of his people, for whom he obeyed suffered and died. "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." (Eph. 2:8.) "To another is given faith by the same spirit." (1 Cor. 12:9.) If the gifts alluded to in this last text and those connected with it, are gifts, as distinguished from graces: if the faith of miracles is meant, it strengthens the argument. Because graces are superior to mere gifts: if therefore the power of the Holy Ghost is necessary to confer gifts: much more to confer graces. Accordingly Paul (Eph. 1:19,) speaks of "the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power," and compares the energy operated in the heart of the believer to that by which Christ was raised from the dead. He also speaks (Heb. 13:21,) "of the God of peace—working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight." And undoubtedly the chief thing is that faith "without which it is impossible to please God." Hence the prayer "increase our faith—help thou mine unbelief." Hence,

5th. Faith is the instrumental cause of justification. It is not the acting of the principle, it is not the principle itself; but it is the righteousness of Christ—his active and passive obedience—that is imputed, set down to the believing sinner, and makes him righteous. "By the obedience of one," not the act of the believer's mind—but the obedience of the *one* many are"—not treated as if they were righteous—but "made *righteous*." Christ's whole righteousness, the entire, seamless, unorn robe, passes over to the believer—it is his. The Father declares the fact. The believer is justified. Faith justifies by uniting us to Christ.

6th. One remark more and we have done with saving faith and the doctrinal discussion of the whole subject. It is this, that faith is a duty; or in other words, that all men are bound to accredit all the testimonies of God presented to them, and to exercise the highest measure of confidence in him.

Let the remark be taken as universal. All intelligent beings are bound to exercise faith in God. In every form of its presentation to him, for his belief, Satan is under perpetual obligation to accredit God's testimony. And

thus it is in reference to every other moral duty. He is bound to be holy—to return to his allegiance—to obey his Creator. He is unable and unwilling. But neither the indisposition, nor the incapacity cancels the obligation.

Thus, too, men are bound to return to God and obey his law. They will thus be bound in eternal ages. The principle, that incapacity to perform duty, cancels obligation, places the sinner above law. And he who, to a race of sinful beings, prescribes their present abilities as the limit and measure of their present duties, is a dangerous man and ought to be watched. I would not lend him money; for, feeling that his inability to pay, released him from the obligation, I should fear he would never be able to pay. This principle, in the business world, would be even more efficient than the statutes of limitation and the laws of Chancery.

Apply the true principle, that faith is a duty, and you make men feel that their unbelief is a sin. They are opposites. If therefore unbelief is a sin, faith is a duty. "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar." God testifieth that adherence to mere human works as the ground of justification leads to death. The unbeliever denies. He testifies that faith in Christ secures life. The unbeliever denies; he rejects the testimony of God against his own soul, and perishes.

Accordant with this view, you find every where faith is presented with authority. "Come unto me all ye that labor." "Seek the Lord while he may be found." "Call ye upon him while he is near." "Repent ye and believe the gospel." The language is mandatory; the duty imperative.

It remains to make a few practical remarks from the whole subject.

1st. This doctrine presents the beautiful consistency of the divine attributes, justice and mercy. All the schemes of human device "set at odds heaven's jarring attributes." "A God all mercy, is a God unjust." This brings them together. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne." Thence in awful and frowning majesty the minister of vengeance issues forth, arrayed in terrible grandeur, his wings plumed with lightning, and in his hand a flaming sword. Downward to this world of rebels is his rapid flight. By Orno's threshing floor he takes his stand. "Where is the blasphemer of my God! The rebel where, on whom this arm must execute due vengeance."

To meet him from the opposing mount advances meek eyed mercy, daughter too of heaven by birth: her head a rainbow circles; in her hand the price untold of man's redemption; her bosom open thrown. "On me thou messenger of wrath thy stroke let fall." They close on Calvary's day-dark brow. A groan proclaims—" 'Tis finished." The darkness flees away. When lo! these cherubim that met in hostile attitudes, stand with outstretched wings over the mercy-seat, whence issue pardons bought with blood. "Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace kiss each other." "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men."

2nd. This doctrine "stains the pride of all human glory." Not Abraham himself hath whereof to glory before God. He is made to feel, as he is enabled to see, that his own righteousness has not merited this lofty seat which he occupies. He is made to feel that his patience, and trials, and sufferings have not extinguished the fires of death. In the smoke of his altar, on mount Moriah, he sees the victim of Calvary, and exclaims "Jehovah-Jireh."

3rd. This doctrine puts the crown of glory on the only head worthy to wear it. It holds up the only begotten and the well beloved, to the admiring gaze of redeemed millions; whilst it extorts from the myriads of rebellion,

an acknowledgment of propriety in the song, "worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

4th. This doctrine leads to holiness of life. Faith is a living principle. It works by love—it purifies the heart—it overcomes the world—it transforms the sinner into the moral image of his Savior.

5th. This doctrine gives *security* to God's redeemed. They are not simply treated, by an arbitrary or sovereign act as if they were righteous, but they *are righteous*, and therefore are justified, and have in their Savior a title to life and glory. To them it is all of grace, but in him it is of merit. It is secured by the perfection of his work on their behalf. Their Advocate is their Judge and will not deny himself.

6th. This doctrine teaches the true position of good works in the economy of redemption. They follow justification as necessarily as the goodness of the fruit is secured by the change in the nature of the tree.

7th. This doctrine presents the church in a glorious attitude. Her robes are of needle wrought. "Her garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia." The righteousness in which the believer stands enrobed before the bar of God, is not the righteousness of a man, nor of an angel—it is the **RIGHTeousNESS OF GOD.**

8th. Every sinner of Adam's race is either a believer or an unbeliever; in a state of justification or of condemnation. There is no middle ground. There can be none, for there is no neutrality in morals. "He that is not with me is against me." Reader! you are now an heir of glory or a child of wrath. The curse of God's law is *now* upon you, or you have passed from death unto life, and are rejoicing in Christ Jesus. On whose side do you stand?

9th. Let me invite, and beseech, and command you in the name and by the authority of the Lord of all worlds, to flee from the coming wrath. Lo! upon mount Calvary, the bleeding cross. See the outstretched arms of a dying Savior. "Turn ye—turn ye—why will ye die?" "Oh! Jerusalem, Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Therefore, lastly,

10th. Where the gospel is preached no man can perish, but by a double destruction. He must *reject* Christ. There must necessarily be a deliberate and wilful *thrusting away* of the Redeemer—a *positive action* of the soul in opposition to him. This Stone is again placed before thee, reader! Thou must either build upon it a house that will stand the storms of time and the tempests of eternity, or thou *wilt* stumble over it and plunge into the burning lake of God's eternal wrath. May He forbid it in tender mercy. Amen.