

IMPUTATION
OF
SIN AND RIGHTEOUSNESS.

A
SERMON FROM ROM. 5: 18, 19.

BY
J. L. WILSON.

The judgment was by one to condemnation. The free gift is of many offences unto justification. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. David describeth the blessedness of the man, to whom God imputeth righteousness without works.

HANOVER, IND.
PRINTED AT THE HANOVER COLLEGE PRESS.
1835.

UNIVERSITY OF

INDIANA

LIBRARY

Digitized by Google

PREFATORY REMARKS.

OCTOBER 5, 1834, being a communion Sabbath in the 1st Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati, I preached a sermon on **IMPUTATION**. Finding that the discussion of this subject had been profitable to some who heard it, I was induced to commit it to paper the following week, whilst confined to my room by bodily indisposition. I took the manuscript with me when I went to a meeting of the Synod of Cincinnati at Ripley. Being invited to preach there, by the pastor of the church, I read the sermon, with some modifications, in the hearing of most of the members of the Synod. A charge was brought against me, before the Synod, for preaching Antinomianism. The sermon was laid on the table, and I requested the Synod to decide on the doctrines I had advanced, that, if there was any error, I might renounce it as publicly as it had been advanced. The charge was *retracted*; and the matter, as I thought, ended. Afterwards, a motion was made to appoint a committee to request of me a copy of the sermon for publication; but as this met with opposition from a certain quarter, the motion was withdrawn. Before the close of the sessions, I received the following letter.

Ripley, October 22, 1834.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

The undersigned, believing that the Sermon delivered by you, in the presence of the Cincinnati Synod, on Friday evening last, is calculated to be of essential and seasonable benefit to the churches, do respectfully request a copy for publication.

JOHN L. BELVILLE,
SYLVESTER SCOVEL,
ARCHIBALD CRIAG,
FRANCIS MONFORT,
JAMES COE,
ROBERT RUTHERFORD,
WILLIAM KING,
JOHN BETSON,
JOHN BURT,
SAYES GAZLAY.

To the REV. J. L. WILSON, D. D.

AUG 7 '45 U OF M BINDERY
MA 21 '45 Right. Lot

To this letter I returned the following answer.

Ripley, October 22, 1834.

DEAR BRETHREN,

Yielding to your judgment, respecting the benefit which may result from the publication of the Sermon delivered by me, on the subject of Imputation, I will place a copy at your disposal, as soon as it can be prepared for the press.

Very respectfully,

J. L. WILSON.

To the REV. JOHN L. BELVILLE, and others.

I was the more inclined to comply with the request for the publication of the sermon, because I believed that those who charged me *there* with preaching false doctrine would not hesitate to repeat the charge *where* no opportunity would be afforded of refuting the *calumny*, unless by the circulation of the sermon itself. To the Presbyterian Church it is very respectfully DEDICATED, as a *small effort*, on my part, to promote her *purity*.

J. L. W.

IMPUTATION, &c.

“THEREFORE, as by the offence of one *judgment came* upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, *the free gift came* upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”—*Rom. V. 18, 19.*

No one, who attentively looks at this passage of scripture, can fail to discover a striking contrast drawn between two remarkable persons and the results of their conduct. By the disobedience of *one* “many were made sinners;” by the obedience of the *other* “shall many be made righteous.”

Curiosity, if no higher motive, might lead us to inquire who these distinguished personages were. This inquiry is fully answered in the preceding part of this chapter. The *one*, who disobeyed, was Adam, our first father—the *other*, who obeyed, was Jesus Christ, our *only* Redeemer. Adam and Christ are thus placed before us as public persons. Each one stands at the head of a *company*, designated by the same terms, *all men* and *many*; and the conduct of each is declared to have deeply affected the character and condition of the *company*, at the head of which he stood. “By the offence of *one*,” Adam, “judgment came upon *all men*”—the *many*, whom he represented—“to condemnation;” “even so”—in the same manner—“by the righteousness of *one*,” Jesus Christ, “the free gift came upon *all men*,” the *many*, whom he represented, “unto justification of life.” A multitude were made sinners, and condemned to die, for an offence which they did not commit; and a multitude shall be made righteous, and justified to life, by an obedience which they never performed. Hence arises an important question. Are these companies, thus contrasted, the same? Did Adam and Christ represent, numerically and identically, the *same* persons? In short, did Christ represent the whole race of Adam? If the *all men* and the *many* represented by Adam be numerically and identically the same *all men* and *many* represented by Christ, then the doctrine of universal salvation is undoubtedly true. For the *all men* and *many* represented by Adam, were not more certainly made sinners, and condemned to death, for his disobedience, than the *all men* and *many* represented by Christ, *shall be made righteous*, and justified to life,

by his obedience. To the doctrine of universal salvation, *if it be TRUE*, I have no objections. That *it is not TRUE* is, to me, abundantly plain from many passages of scripture. What the scriptures teach respecting the covenant of works and the covenant of grace—about the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent—concerning believers and unbelievers—on earth, in the day of judgment, in heaven and hell, and their eternal separation by a *great, fixed, and impassable gulf*—proves conclusively, that the doctrine of universal salvation is **FALSE**. Men speak lies, in the name of the Lord, when they strengthen the hands of the wicked by promising them life. But if the doctrine of universal salvation be not true, then it is not true that Adam and Christ represented the *same* company. Adam represented all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation. His whole race being included with him in the covenant of works, are the *all men*, the *many*, who were made sinners and condemned to die for his offence. Jesus Christ represented those, whom the Father gave to him in the covenant of grace. They are “his seed.” They are the *all men*, the *many*, who shall be made righteous by his obedience. The *company* represented by Christ, is taken “*out of*” the *company* represented by Adam. “The covenant of works was made with Adam as a public person, not for himself only, but for his posterity.” “The covenant of grace was made with Christ, the second Adam, and in him with all the *elect*, as his seed.”

Two important facts are clearly stated in our text. Many were made sinners and condemned to die, for the disobedience of *one* man—Adam. Many shall be made righteous and justified to life, by the obedience of *one*—Jesus Christ. These facts involve a fundamental doctrine of the Bible—the *doctrine of IMPUTATION*. This doctrine lies at the foundation of all our fears and all our hopes.

The imputation of sin lies at the foundation of all the evils incident to man by the fall of Adam—the imputation of righteousness is fundamental to all the blessings conferred on the redeemed by the obedience of Christ.*

* **THE IMPUTATION OF SIN.**—After the orthodoxy of this sermon had been called in question before the Synod of Cincinnati, a debate took place on the errors specified in the “Act and Testimony.” One of these errors is stated to be “a denial of imputed sin.”

The question was asked, over and over again, and with a seeming air of triumph, “Where is the doctrine of *imputed sin* taught in the standards of the Presbyterian Church?” It was replied, that “our first parents sinned in eating the forbidden fruit,” and that “they be-

The importance of this subject, will, no doubt, secure your attention, while I attempt to show WHAT IS MEANT BY THE IMPUTATION OF SIN AND RIGHTEOUSNESS. This will pave the way for a practical conclusion.

ing the root of all mankind, the *guilt* of this sin was imputed." "O yes," said the querist, "the *guilt* of the sin was imputed; but show me where it says the sin was imputed." And thus while the member was attempting to prove that no one held or taught the errors specified in the Act and Testimony, he openly avowed one of the principal errors complained of in that document,—namely, "a denial of imputed sin." On this I remark—1st. The term *guilt*, in the time of the Westminster divines, meant the same that it does now—a *crime*, an *offence*. To be *guilty* is to be justly charged with a *crime*.

See Johnson's dictionary improved by Todd, Boston, 1828.

2. That the framers of our Standards understood it so, is evident; because, in proof of the truth of their assertion, "the *guilt* was imputed," they quote the words of my text, "by the *offence*," or *crime*, "of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation"—and because they say expressly, "the *sinfulness* of that estate whereinto man fell, consists in the *guilt*"—that is, the *crime*, the *offence*, "of Adam's first sin." If *sinfulness* consists in *guilt*, and that *guilt* is imputed, is it not worse than cavilling to say, that the imputation of the *crime*, the *offence*, is not the imputation of sin? And when our whole race is held *guilty*, that is, justly charged with a *crime*, and made to suffer for it, is it not heresy to deny the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity? Such denial is striking at the root of federal representation. It is a denial of the covenant-headship of Adam.

In the language of our Discipline, when a member is charged with an offence, "he shall be called upon to say whether he is *guilty* or not." What is the meaning of this word *guilty*? Does not the question mean, "are you justly charged with a *crime*?" If the framers of our Confession of Faith, instead of using the term *guilt*, had used the term *crime*, or *offence*, or if they had made a tautology, and said, "the *sin* of this sin was imputed," they would have said what they meant.

But suppose I concede that *guilt*, in a theological sense, is not synonymous with *sin*, and that our Confession of Faith does not use the Phrase "imputed sin," I would ask, how the *guilt* could be imputed without imputing the *sin* also? *Guilt* always implies *sin*. By forgiving *sin*, *guilt* is removed, Con. F. Ch. xx. Sec. 1. It is absurd to deny that *sin* is imputed, and yet admit that *guilt* is imputed. Both must be admitted or denied together. "Every sin brings guilt (i. e. criminality) upon the sinner." Con. F. Ch. vi. Sec. 6.—*Guilt*—the state of a man justly charged with a *crime*—Bacon. A *crime*, an *offence*—Shakspeare. Obligation to punishment on account of *sin*—Turretine. The liability of the sinner to the punishment appointed by God—Marckins—Chargeableness by law in order to punishment—Brown of Had. Obligation to punishment on account of *sin*—Fisher.

Let the New School who deny imputed sin be consistent, and deny also imputed righteousness.

Sin and righteousness are opposites in the moral-system, as darkness and light are, in the natural world. Sin is the transgression of, or the want of conformity to law. Not to act, is sometimes as great a crime as to act too far. To stop short of requirements, is as criminal as to step over prohibitions. To omit the doing of what is commanded, is disobedience as great as to do what is forbidden. They who gave to Christ *no meat*, were as justly condemned as they who *pierced* his hands and his feet.

Righteousness is a perfect conformity to law—abstaining from what is forbidden, complying with what is enjoined.

The sins of a moral agent are imputed to himself, when, after their commission, he is charged with them to his own condemnation, and they form the ground and measure of his punishment. The righteousness of a moral agent is imputed to him, when, having perfectly obeyed the law, he is pronounced just, and his good deeds form the ground and measure of his reward. This kind of imputation is exemplified in the case of the sinning and unsinning angels. But this is not the *kind* of imputation involved in our subject. Here we see the condemnation of *many* for an offence they never committed, and the justification of *many* for a righteousness they never wrought out. What is meant by *this kind* of imputation? Imputation of *this kind* is an ascription to a person of that which he himself hath not personally done, and a treatment of him as though he were the actual performer.

To impute sin, in this sense, is to charge any one with a crime he never personally committed, and to punish him according to its demerit. To impute righteousness, is to ascribe to a person an obedience, the acts of which he never personally performed, pronounce him just, and reward him accordingly.

Not to impute sin, is to pardon it, and remit the punishment—not to impute righteousness, is to accuse, condemn and punish.

“David describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works—blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.”

For illustration, let us take the case of Paul, Philemon and Onesimus. Paul says to Philemon, in behalf of Onesimus, “If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee aught, put that on mine account; I will repay.”

Paul desired Philemon to ascribe or impute to him the wrong done by Onesimus, and exact from him the debt which he had contracted—that is, to consider Paul the offender and debtor,

and treat him accordingly, and to receive Onesimus as a "brother beloved"—"receive him," says Paul, "as myself."

In the holy scriptures, we are taught to view sins as debts, and the suffering of the whole punishment due to them, as the payment of the utmost farthing. Therefore, when our sins were imputed to Christ, and he bore them "in his own body on the tree," they were ascribed to him, as if he had been the offender, and he suffered the punishment which we deserved. Even so, when the first sin of Adam is imputed to his posterity, his offence is laid to our charge, and we are treated as sinners on that account, as if we had committed the crime.

For *this kind* of imputation—the laying of the misconduct of *one* to the charge of *another*, and treating him as the offender, or the setting of the good conduct of *one* to the account of *another*, and treating him as righteous—there must always be some good ground, or reason, to justify the transaction. In the case of the wrong and debt of Onesimus being ascribed to Paul, the ground, or reason of the transaction was Paul's voluntary assumption of the responsibilities of Onesimus. "Ascribe his wrong to me—put his debt to my account—I will repay—I Paul have written it with mine own hand."

The ground, or reason, in the case of Jesus Christ bearing our sins, was a covenant transaction, in which he became the representation and surety of ALL whom the Father gave him in the covenant of grace. He assumed their responsibilities, and bore the curse of the law for them. "He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." "He was made a curse for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."* And the ground, or reason of Adam's sin being imputed to his posterity, and the treatment of them as sinners on that account, is the union of representation between him and them: they being included with him in the covenant of works, and he having been put on trial, not for himself *alone*, but for himself and all his natural descendants. Adam, the covenant head of the whole human race, was placed on trial in the most favorable circumstances. Created upright, in the image of God, possessed of all the powers

* The pronouns *our* and *us* in such passages, mean *all* that are included in the election of grace. "God is not slack concerning his promise as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any (of us) should perish, but that ALL should come to repentance." "God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ"—"He was wounded for our transgressions," &c.

of a moral agent, in a condition of manhood, enjoying knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness; exempt from every evil, surrounded with every good, holding intercourse and communion with God, having all his liabilities to sin reduced to a single, easy test—the test of abstinence from a single object during the period of his probation; the threatening of death and the pledge of life both before him—not only for himself but for all his race; doubtless, if any being merely human, left to the freedom of his own will, could have withstood the power of temptation, Adam was that being. But Adam fell. And in him we all sinned and fell, in his *first* transgression.

If you deny our representative connexion with Adam, and affirm that we did not sin in him, and fall with him, then you must maintain that every one of his posterity is placed in a state of personal probation, in circumstances far less favorable. And as it is the testimony of God, that all have gone out of the way, and it is your opinion that there is no representative connexion, it follows, that if any of our race are saved by a Redeemer, there must be as many Redeemers as there are individuals saved; or else you must plead for the representative principle in the case of Christ, whilst you deny it in the case of Adam. If the covenant of works be denied, the covenant of grace must be rejected also; and it cannot then be true, that *many* are made sinners by the offence of Adam, or that *many* are made righteous by the obedience of Christ. Thus the Apostle does not mean what he says, and the doctrine of imputation must be considered, as we are taught by some, who are making improvements in theology, “intrinsically absurd.” But if the doctrine of imputation be discarded, the doctrines of original sin, of satisfaction and redemption, as taught in the standards of the Presbyterian Church, must fall; and the doctrines, “that infants have no moral character—that every accountable agent has power to do his duty—and that the death of Christ was a governmental arrangement, made as much for one man as another”—that is, an indefinite atonement—must be substituted in their stead. Now, if there be no original sin, and if we have ample powers to do our duty, then redemption is needless, and Christ is dead in vain: and, for the plainest of all reasons; because the perfect safety of all men might have been secured without his death, by the employment of the same special power to preserve unfallen infants from sinning, as was exerted to keep the elect angels in their first estate, without interfering with their free agency. But we have not so learned the doctrines of the Bible. We have been taught, and we verily believe in the feder-

ative principle. We believe, firmly, that all die in Adam—that his offence is imputed to his posterity, on the ground of a union of representation between him and them—that “by the disobedience of one, many were made sinners”—not merely made liable to become sinners, but that “judgment came upon all men to condemnation”—that the guilt of Adam’s first sin is imputed—the crime is ascribed to his posterity, and they are treated as if they had actually and personally committed the offence—for no person can be *guilty* unless he is justly chargeable with a crime. Death the bitter wages of sin, “reigns over them who have not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression”—that is, before they wilfully disobey any known law.

Let us guard here against some mistakes. The doctrine of a union of representation does not involve in it the idea of personal identity. It does not mean, that Adam and his posterity are the same identical persons. It does not mean, that his act was personally and properly their act. Nor does it mean, that the moral turpitude of Adam’s sin was transferred to his descendants. The transfer of moral character makes no part of the doctrine of imputation.

To show that imputation involves none of these absurdities, let the whole subject be illustrated by a single case.

If Philemon complied with Paul’s request, he released Onesimus from previous obligation, received him as he would have received Paul, and exacted from Paul the obligations of Onesimus on the ground of his voluntary assumption. Did this make Paul and Onesimus the same person?—did it imply that Paul personally contracted the debt, and did the wrong?—was the immorality of Onesimus transferred to Paul, so as to make him an immoral man? If none of these absurdities were implied in the transaction, then I am prepared to say, that those who hold and teach the imputation of Adam’s first sin to his posterity, teach also the imputation of the sins of the elect to Christ; and the imputation of Christ’s righteousness to them. But do they teach that Christ and his people are the same identical persons? Do they teach that Christ ever personally committed the sins which were imputed to him? Do they teach that the moral turpitude of these sins was transferred to Christ, so as to make him an immoral man? And when Christ’s righteousness is imputed to his people, for their justification, does any one pretend that his people personally did and suffered what he did and suffered, in order to bring in everlasting righteousness? Does any one plead, that his unblemished moral character is transferred to them, so as to make them holy, harmless and undefiled

as he was? If, then, the imputation of our sins to Christ does not make him the personal doer of our acts of disobedience—does not make him the agent of our transgressions—how can the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity make them the personal actors in his first transgression? When we speak of the imputed righteousness of Christ, we never mean that we performed his acts of obedience, or that we died personally on the cross. So when we speak of the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, we do not mean that they personally took and ate the forbidden fruit.

Orthodox divines speak of the imputation of our sins to Christ—of his righteousness to us—and of the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, in the same terms. So did Paul. They consider Adam and Christ public persons—representatives. So did Paul. They believe that there is a federal union between them and those whom they represented. But a union of representation is not a union of identity. When there is personal identity, there is no representation; for a person is himself and cannot represent himself. When it is affirmed that we sinned in Adam as our representative, it is denied that we sinned personally.

When the president of a corporation performs an act binding all the members of the body politic, no one believes that all the members performed the act personally, though it is held good in law, that they are all bound, whether the act be for profit or loss. It is only when there is loss, that we hear any complaint. But why complain, if it be morally certain, that no one would have done the thing better? Why complain, if it be morally certain, that each individual placed in more unfavorable circumstances, would have made the matter worse?

Adam's sin is ascribed to us, and we are punished for it, as though we had committed it, because he was our representative in the covenant of works. Even so, Christ's righteousness is ascribed to his people, and they are justified as if they had wrought it out, because he is their representative in the covenant of grace. We are made sinners by the offence of Adam, in the same way that we are made righteous by the obedience of Christ—**BY IMPUTATION**. All the objections urged against the *one*, are of equal force against the *other*. If the one be denied, the other must be rejected also.

The question is sometimes asked, "Did you ever repent of Adam's sin?" And this question is sometimes put with a confidence, as if it contained in it an argument sufficient to overturn the whole doctrine of imputation, and represent it as

supremely absurd! "Did you ever repent of Adam's sin?" Why do not the rejecters of imputation ask another question? "Did Christ ever repent of the sins of his people?" And another? "Did Paul ever repent of the wrong doings of Onesimus?" When the impugnors of the doctrine of imputation ask us, if we ever feel remorse and self-reproach for what Adam did, why do they not ask us also, if we ever feel self-approbation and self-applause for what Christ did? We know that such questions have their origin in enmity to the revelation of God, and are not asked by sincere inquirers after truth; nevertheless, we deem it our duty to give a calm and serious reply. We do not consider, that the imputation of Adam's sin makes it personally our own sin, so that we can make it the ground of self-reproach, any more than we consider the imputation of Christ's righteousness the ground of self-applause. Yet there is a sense, and we believe a very *just and proper* sense, in which we ought to repent of Adam's sin; and this duty ought to be much insisted on from the pulpit. Not on the principle that his sin is personally ours, nor on the principle that the moral turpitude of his sin is transferred to us; but on this principle, that a child should feel humbled and grieved at the misconduct of a father—that citizens should feel humbled and grieved, and deeply repent, for the sins of their representatives and rulers—that the members of a church should be deeply abased before God for the sins of their erring brethren—and all this in virtue of the relation in which they stand to the offenders. It is proper that we should recognize the justness of that administration, by which we bear the sin of our first father—remembering that he was not put on trial for himself alone, but for us also; so that when he fell, we fell. In view of the righteous judgments of God, in cursing the ground, and dooming us all to death, for the offence of our progenitor, we should all bow in deep abasement before our Maker as members of an apostate and condemned family. This is our reply to the question, "have you ever repented of Adam's sin?" And we believe that he who never *thus* repented of Adam's sin, never yet repented of his own sins. The man who can remain unhumiliated, when he hears the groans of creation, "made subject to vanity not willingly"—who can see, without deep abasement before God, the agonies and death of multitudes, for no assignable cause, but the relation they sustain to the first man—who, disregarding the instructions of the Bible, can say, "I never repented of Adam's sin, nor will I ever repent for it," gives most decisive proof that he is yet a stranger to the emotions of pious grief.

But is it *indeed* a scripture doctrine, that one person, under the righteous government of God, ever bears the iniquity of another? This question relates to a matter of fact, and shall be decided by proofs from facts.

Ham, the father of Canaan, committed an offence, and the curse fell upon Canaan. "Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." I ask not the reason why. I only *now* ask, was it true? Did the curse come down upon Canaan? Yes, verily; down, down, lower than the third or fourth generation. Where do we find the proof? In the melancholy history of all the families of the Canaanites spread abroad, from Sidon to Lasha, including the devoted cities of the plain.

Again. In the sin and punishment of Achan, we find another fact on this subject, where vengeance came down upon Israel for the sin of one man. The charge was made broad. "Israel hath sinned." They could not stand before their enemies, "because they were accursed." When the personal offender was discovered, on whom fell the punishment? On his sons and daughters, oxen, asses, sheep and tent! Can there be a more solemn lesson to parents and citizens! In an evil hour, one single compliance with temptation, by one man, brings down a curse upon all Israel, and involves a whole family in ruin! Nor was this feature in the divine government peculiar to the Jewish Theocracy. God has said in his moral code, "I am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children." Job declares, "God layeth up the iniquity of the wicked for their children." Jeremiah, in bitter lamentation, says, "Our fathers sinned, and are not; and we have borne their iniquities."

Take another fact, on this solemn subject. King David sinned in causing the people to be numbered. In consequence of his sin, there fell of Israel seventy thousand men. This sin was not committed by David in his paternal, but regal character, and the wrath fell on his subjects. Such displays of vengeance were not confined to the Jewish nation. When the king of Assyria—not himself personally—but his legal representative, blasphemed God, and Hezekiah laid the matter before the Lord, one hundred and eighty five thousand men were struck dead in one night! What a lesson to emperors, ministers and subjects! "Be wise, O ye kings—be instructed, ye rulers of the earth—serve the Lord with fear—embrace the son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way."

The relation we sustain to Adam is, however, widely different from the relation Canaan sustained to Ham, and the people to David. These brought down temporal judgments upon the descendants of Ham, and the subjects of David; but Adam's sin brought upon himself and posterity, temporal and spiritual judgments, and exposed them all to eternal punishments. They therefore greatly err, not knowing the scriptures, who affirm that we have nothing to do with Adam's sin, more than with the sin of any other parent. We suffer for the sins of our parents, on the ground of a connexion; but not the same connexion we have with Adam. One is simply natural; the other is both federal and natural.

On this subject, facts might be multiplied, but I forbear. Enough has been advanced to satisfy all who believe the bible, that under the righteous government of God, one bears the iniquity of another; that is, suffers the punishment due to his crime. This is imputation. It is simply this, that owing to the relation in which one person may stand to another, what is done by one is ascribed to another, and he is treated as though he had done the thing himself. Without this, there could be no condemnation or punishment, where there is no personal offence committed; nor could there be any justification and reward, without personal and perfect obedience. Without imputation, every human being would stand or fall alone, for himself personally; and if once fallen, none could raise him up—fallen like Lucifer, never to hope again. No one could be permitted to step in and say, "I have found a ransom, save the rebel from going down to the pit."

And thus it turns out that they who deny the doctrine of the imputation of sin and righteousness, virtually deny the scriptures of truth, sap the foundation of a sinner's hope, and preach another gospel. How successful they may be in deluding and destroying souls cannot be told, till the great day, when the "dead, small and great, shall stand before God."

Now, let no one imagine, that the imputation of the offence of Adam, that is, the guilt of his sin to his posterity, is the same thing as a corrupted nature, or native depravity. A corrupted nature is conveyed, not imputed. Native depravity is an effect, of which the imputation of Adam's first transgression is the cause. The imputation brings guilt. No one is guilty who is not justly charged with a crime. Those who are thus "made sinners" by imputation, are bound over to the curse of the law, and subjected to death, before they have

sinned "after the similitude of Adam's transgression." But to be conceived in sin, shapen in iniquity, and born destitute of original righteousness, with the corruption of the whole nature, are so many parts of the curse, all connected with the guilt of Adam's first sin, and included in the idea of original sin, because they all precede actual transgression. The terms *original sin* are used to express a complex idea, including all "the sinfulness of that estate into which man fell," and in which they lie ruined, previous to the time of personal accountability; at which time, actual transgressions commence, and succeed each other, as feculent streams flow from a corrupt, polluted fountain. A bitter fountain never sends forth sweet waters. "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." Some, who deny original sin, as thus obviously taught in the standards of the Presbyterian church, teach us, that the posterity of Adam come into the world without being holy or unholy,—that all sin is voluntary—and that the first sin, in every one, might have been prevented by his own powers to perform his duty. Some such teachers are considered at the head of theological improvement, and are hailed as splendid luminaries of the nineteenth century. But we need not fear an eclipse from such "wandering stars," while we can stand in company with Paul, and say, "by one man's disobedience, *many* were made sinners." If we may descend from Paul, and take our stations, as we ought, with uninspired men, we prefer the company of such men as Turretine, Owen and Tuckney, to the followers of Edwards, Hopkins and Dwight.

Let us now guard against another mistake. Let us not confound the imputation of righteousness with justification, or regeneration. Imputation is prior to both.* The imputation of righteousness ascribes to us an obedience, which we have not rendered. On that ascription, a plea is presented in the court of heaven for our acquittal. From the validity of this plea, the act of pardon follows as an effect from an adequate cause. Justification is an act of *grace* to us, but of *justice* to our *surety*. God is just when he justifies the ungodly, and accepts them as righteous, only for the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Faith in Christ is the instrumental cause of our justification. The righteousness of Christ is received by faith alone, when we obtain

* I mean in the order of nature. And I may add, in all human affairs, in the order of time also. The charge must be made and the plea entered, before condemnation or acquittal takes place as a judicial sentence.

pardon—"not of works, lest any man should boast." That this instrumental cause of our justification may co-operate with God's act of pardon, the Holy Spirit simultaneously renews, or regenerates the heart, by his quickening power—opens the eyes of the understanding, changes the will, persuades and enables us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the Gospel. Thus our connexion with Christ, by the principle of representation, results in our connexion with him by a new birth—and our connexion with Christ in our justification by faith in his blood, is simultaneous with our being created anew unto good works. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature." Original righteousness, of which there was an entire destitution, in our first birth, when we were born of the flesh, is restored in our second birth, when we are "born of the Spirit." The imputation of righteousness, justification by faith, the renewal of the whole man after the image of God, form the purified source whence proceed all acts of holy obedience. Love, joy, peace, mingle with all the acts of self-denial, suffering and obedience for Christ's sake. Works of faith and labors of love, which do good to all, but especially to the household of faith, are the pure streams which glide from the fountain of a purified heart. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things." Thus the antithesis between the first Adam, who ruined all his natural descendants, and the second Adam who saves all his spiritual seed, is clear, strong and complete. "For if through the offence of one MANY be dead; much more the grace of God and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto MANY."—The way is now prepared for some concluding remarks. And,

1. I am aware that there is a method of preaching the doctrine of imputation, in the very words of orthodoxy, and yet denying the very thing which is meant by those words.

The imputation taught in our standards, and maintained by the best writers, is *immediate* imputation. The imputation taught by Edwards and his disciples, is *mediate* imputation.

IMMEDIATE IMPUTATION is the ascription of sin to the posterity of Adam before they sin personally, and the ascription of righteousness to the people of Christ before they perform good works.

MEDIATE IMPUTATION is this. A child of Adam first commits an offence. By this act, he approves of the sin of Adam. Then God imputes the sin of the first apostacy to him, on the

ground that he has made it truly and properly his own. So, on the other hand, a man believes the gospel. By this he approves of what Christ has done. Then God imputes his faith for righteousness, on the ground that he thereby approves of the work and sufferings of Christ. So then it turns out, that it is not Adam's sin that is imputed to his posterity, but their own sin. It is not the righteousness of Christ which is imputed to his people, but their own faith. This imputation *consequent* and not *previous* to personal sin and personal obedience, is no imputation of Adam's sin, nor of Christ's righteousness at all. Many, however, adopt these, or kindred views, in direct opposition to the Standards of the Presbyterian Church; and yet, strange to tell, they publicly and solemnly adopt these Standards. They talk much about native depravity and imputation, while they deny original sin, and reject the representative principle.

This is a specimen of that artifice, by which a creed may be publicly professed, and ministerially destroyed—of those tactics, in new theology, by which the language of orthodoxy is used, and the plan of salvation subverted.

How far men *can*, consistently with moral honesty, profess to believe the Standards of our church, and preach another system, at the same time, I must leave for every man to judge for himself. But for myself, I have not language to express my deep abhorrence of the practice.*

* The following definitions of sin may perhaps be familiar to many of my readers, but *all* may not have seen them.

1. "In every form and instance, sin is reducible to the act of a moral agent, in which he violates a known rule of duty."
2. "Original sin is the first wrong choice of a moral agent."
3. "Actual sin is the transgression of a known law."
4. "A sin of omission is the act of a moral agent different from positive requirement."
5. "A sin of ignorance is the act of a moral agent, by which he determines not to know the rule of duty."

In view of *these*, I will give the following definitions.

1. All sin consists in voluntary exercises or wrong choices.
2. Original sin is that voluntary exercise, by which a man adopts a confession of faith which he does not believe.
3. Actual sin is that voluntary exercise by which a man uses the language of orthodoxy, and denies the obvious meaning of the language he uses.
4. A sin of omission is the voluntary exercise of using new phrases, and preaching a different system from that required by ordination obligations.

2. Let us look upon ourselves and the whole human race, by nature, in the ruins of the fall—no more able to save our souls from hell than to rescue our bodies from the grave. Let us look at our actual transgressions, numerous, diversified and highly aggravated. Let us look to the only remedy which God, in mercy, has set before us. “It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.” In this remedy, there is ample encouragement to every sinner, who comes to Christ, for free and full salvation. “Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden,” is the kind invitation of Christ Jesus. “Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out,” is the solemn assurance of the son of God. In this remedy we have hope also for our children, who die before they have committed sin, personally. It made no part of Christ’s plan to save his people from the grave, till the resurrection. The fact that infants die, proves their connexion with the first Adam, but does not prove that they are *not* connected with the second Adam. Jesus Christ has said,—“Suffer the little children, *infants*, to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven. Infants, then, fallen, condemned, and treated as sinners, for a crime not personally their own, may be raised up, justified, sanctified, and treated as saints, for a righteousness wrought out by one, whom they neither know nor sought. If there be laudable contention in heaven, who shall sing the highest note to free and sovereign grace, methinks the “mouths of babes and sucklings” will *sing*, if not the highest, the *sweetest* note of praise to that kind power, that saved them from the ruins of a fallen world. But how dark and cheerless is that scheme, which rejects the doctrine of imputation—contemplates children without any covenant relation—without any moral character—neither holy nor unholy. They have their characters to form by voluntary exercises, either in this world, or in the next, wherever they may *be*, when the period of personal accountability arrives, possessed of ample powers to do their duty, and yet “born under a divine Constitution, which makes it absolutely certain that they will sin from the first moment of accountability.” Children dying before “they have done good or evil,” not fallen in Adam, cannot be redeemed by Christ; for “he came to seek and save that which was lost.” And this dark and desperate scheme, of

5. A sin of ignorance is that voluntary exercise, by which a man determines *not to know* that ALL THESE ARE WRONG CHOICES.

which this forms but a single feature, we are told, is to introduce the millennium! From such a millennium may the Lord of all grace deliver us!*

3. Let us bear the reproach, so liberally bestowed on those, who continue to avow their belief in the peculiar doctrines of the cross. To see the finger of scorn *pointed*, and hear the mouth of reproach tauntingly say, "There is the man that teaches—there is the church, where men are taught, to repent of Adam's sin," brings a trial, which we should be unable to bear, if we did not "consider him who endured the cross, and despised the shame."

O how ought we to mourn over the apostacy of man! How ought we to abhor ourselves, and repent in dust and ashes, under a sense of the sin and misery, into which our whole race have fallen! Can any one be so vain as to imagine that he would have done better than Adam, had he been placed in his stead? Can any one suppose that his own standing would have been more secure, had he been born into the world without any representative connexion with the firstman? When we recognize our relation to Adam in the covenant of works, we *feel*, and *own*, with deep abasement before God, the justness of that administration, under which, "through the offence of *one* MANY are dead." But how is our mourning turned into joy, when we look to him who is the surety of the "better covenant, established upon better promises"—when we recognize that "the grace of god and the gift by grace, by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto MANY."—"For the judgment was by one

* Some may be at a loss to know how men professing to adopt an orthodox creed can propagate any scheme of doctrines totally different. I will show you how it is done. They divide the doctrines of an orthodox creed into two classes, *primary* and *secondary*. The primary doctrines they call the cardinal doctrines of the reformation; the secondary, they call explanatory. They profess to believe the *primary*, and reject the *secondary*. For example—In words, they admit the depravity of our race, as a result of the fall of Adam; but the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, so as to make them guilty, and liable to be punished for his act, they deny. Again, in words, they admit that justification by faith is a cardinal doctrine; but the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the believer, as the ground of his participating in the benefits of his death, they deny. Once more, they admit the necessity of regeneration by the influences of the spirit; but they deny the inability of the sinner to change his own heart, and as they say that nothing in man is perverted but the *will*, "all the spirit *can do* in the day of his power, is to persuade the sinner to be willing." And thus all the distinguishing doctrines of grace are subverted.

to condemnation, but the free gift is of *many offences* unto justification." Christ has told us that *his blood was shed for MANY, for the remission of sins*. Had he done no more than expiate the *one offence* of Adam, our condition would be still hopeless. But Jehovah has said, "my righteous servant shall justify *MANY*, for he shall bear their *iniquities*,"—and our text says, "by the obedience of *one* shall *MANY* be made *righteous*." How *MANY*? "A multitude which no man can number?" Delightful thought! "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied," when the anthem shall swell before the throne of God—"thou has redeemed us to God, by thy blood, *out of every kindred, and tongue, and nation*." O my brethren what themes of meditation are here presented! Look to the garden of Eden, and to the garden of Gethsemane—look to the flaming sword, and to the blood of the cross, in which the flame was quenched—look to Calvary, and look to mount Zion. Take your station, not as a spectator, but as one of the redeemed multitude—wear with them the spotless robes of righteousness—carry with them the palms of victory—raise your voice in the shout of triumph—"salvation to our God and unto the Lamb"—and then take a *future eternity*, to enjoy the "blessedness of the man to whom the Lord will not *impute sin*."