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whom he made satisfaction, and brought in a righteousness, were justified in him, which seems to be the meaning of that scripture^m, “Who was deliver’d for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.” This justification of the elect, at the resurrection of Christ, and upon the foot of the oblation and sacrifice, already offer’d up, is acknowledged by many excellent and judicious divines; some of whom, tho’ they only allow a decretive justification from eternity; yet assert a real and compleat one at the resurrection of Christ, on the account of his actual oblation and sacrifice. Dr. *Ames* saysⁿ, that “The sentence of justification was, 1. As it were conceived in the mind of God, by the decree of justifying. 2. Pronounced in Christ our Head, when he rose from the dead.” The learned *Hoornbeck*, summing up the tenets of the people called *Antinomians* in *England*, takes notice of their sentiments concerning justification, and observes, that the difference between them and others, “May^o easily be reconciled,

^m Rom. iv. 25.

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

^o Quod levi negotio componi potest distinguendo justificationem *activam* & *passivam*: illa est actio Dei justificantis; hæc istius terminatio & applicatio ad conscientiam fidelium. Illa

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“ ciled, by distinguishing justification into
 “ active and passive ; the former, says he, is
 “ the act of God justifying ; the latter the ter-
 “ mination and application of it to the con-
 “ sciences of believers. The one was done
 “ at Christ’s satisfaction ; the other is, when
 “ a person actually believes.” And, a little
 after, he adds ; “ Justification was design’d
 “ for us from all eternity, in the decree of
 “ predestination ; promised immediately af-
 “ ter the fall, wrought at the death and re-
 “ surrection of Christ, (for these are to be
 “ joined together, *Rom. viii. 34.*) being, at
 “ the one, merited by Christ, and, at the
 “ other, declared and ratified by God.”
Witsius, who engaged as a Moderator in
 the *Antinomian* and *Neonomian* controver-
 sies, moved here in *England*, says : “ Christ
 “ verily ^p was justified, when God raised
 “ him from the dead, and gave an acquit-
 “ tance for the payment made by Christ,

*Illa facta est cum Christi satisfactione, haec facta quando
 quis actu credit.——Justificatio destinata nobis est ab omni
 aeternitate, in decreto praedestinationis ; promissa mox post
 lapsum, facta in Christi morte & resurrectione, (conjungenda
 etenim haec sunt, Rom. viii. 34.) ibi à Christo merita, hic à
 Deo declarata & ratihabita. Hoornbeck. Summ. Controv. lib.
 10. de Brownistis, p. 705.*

^p Sane Christus justificatus est, quando Deus eum ex mor-
 tuis suscitavit, & apocham praestitae à Christo & acceptae à se
 solutionis dedit. Idemque Christus suscitatus est ad nostri ju-
 stificationem, *Rom. iv. 25.* Nam quum ipse justificabatur,
 simul justificabantur electi in ipso, quippe quorum gerebat per-
 sonam. *Wits. Animad. Irenic. c. 10. §. 2.*

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“ and accepted by him : And the same
 “ Christ was raised again for our justifica-
 “ tion, *Rom.* iv. 25. For when he was ju-
 “ stified, the elect were justified together
 “ in him, forasmuch as he was their Repre-
 “ sentative.” And, not to forget our great
 Dr. *Goodwin*, who observes ^a, that “ At
 “ the instant when he, *i. e.* Christ, arose,
 “ God then performed a farther act of ju-
 “ stification towards him, and us in him,
 “ admitting him, as our Advocate, into the
 “ actual possession of justification of life,
 “ acquitting him from all those sins, which
 “ he had charged upon him. Therefore
 “ we read, that as Christ was made sin in
 “ his life and death, so that he was justi-
 “ fied also, 1 *Tim.* iii. 16. And that he
 “ should be thus justified, is not spoken of
 “ him, abstractly considered in himself, but
 “ as he hath us conjoined in him, and as he
 “ connotes us.” And, a little after he
 says: “ As when he ascended, we ascended
 “ with him, (and therefore we are said now
 “ to sit together with him in heavenly
 “ places, *Eph.* ii. 6.) so, when he was justi-
 “ fied, we were justified also in him. And,
 “ as it may be said, *Adam* condemned us
 “ all, and corrupted us all when he fell, so
 “ did Christ then perfect us all, and God
 “ justified us all, when he died and rose

^a Vol. IV. Par. I. p. 105, 106.

“ again.”

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“ again.” Some divines call this a virtual justification: The phrase, I confess, is unintelligible to me. The famous *Parker*^r calls it an actual justification, both of Christ and us. His words are these: “ Christ
“ is said to be justified when he rose again,
“ 1 *Tim.* iii. 16. and we to be then justified
“ in him, *Rom.* iv. 25. because the dis-
“ charge, *i. e.* his Father’s raising him up,
“ was an *actual justification* of him from
“ the sins of others, for which he had sa-
“ tisfied, and *of us* from our own sins, for
“ which he became a Surety.” Those who assert there is no justification before faith, ought duly to consider this argument, so well founded in scripture, and so agreeable to the sentiments of great and good men. But,

5. I shall go a step higher, and endeavour to prove, that all the elect of God are justified from eternity. When, I say, the elect of God are justified from eternity, I do not think, that they had an actual personal existence from eternity, though they had a representative one in Christ; or that

^r Justificatus Christus dicitur cum resurrexit, 1 *Tim.* iii. 16. Nosque in eo resurgente justificati, *Rom.* iv. ult. Quia ista solutio, *i. e.* suscitatio Patris, *actualis justificatio* fuit, illius quidem à peccatis aliorum pro quibus satis-dederit, *nostrum* vero à peccatis propriis pro quibus ille vadimonium præstitit. *Parker.* de descensu Christi ad inferos, l. 3. §. 30. p. 59.

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an actual payment of their debts, or an actual satisfaction for their sins was then made by Christ, though he engaged to do it; nor do I intend justification from eternity, in such a sense, as to set aside the imputation of *Adam's* sin to the condemnation of the elect in him, or to render Christ's bringing in an actual righteousness in time unnecessary, or to make faith useless in our justification, in our own consciences, as, I hope, I shall shortly make appear: Yet, on the other hand, I mean more by justification from eternity, than merely God's prescience, or fore-knowledge of it, to whom "all his 'works are known, from the beginning of the world, ἀπ' αἰῶνος, from eternity;" more than a mere resolution and purpose to justify his elect in time, he "calling 'things that are not, as though they were;" or, in other words, more than a decretive justification, as some divines call it, who apprehend that God's elect can, in no other sense, be said to be justified from eternity, than they may be said to be sanctified or glorified from eternity, because he had decreed to sanctify and glorify them: I say, I mean more than this, and assert, with Dr. *Ames*, that justification "Is
" a sentence conceived in the mind of God,

^f Acts xv. 18.

[†] Rom. iv. 17.

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“ by the decree of justification;” that this is an act in God, all whose acts are eternal; that this is the grand original sentence of justification; of which that pronounced on Christ, as our Representative, when he rose from the dead, and that which is pronounced by the Spirit of God in the consciences of believers, as well as that which will be pronounced before men and angels, at the general judgment, are no other than so many repetitions, or renewed declarations; that this includes the whole compleat *esse* of justification, being, as Mr. *Rutherford*^u observes, “ An internal and im-
“ manent act in God, and not transient up-
“ on an external subject. Of which sort, adds
“ he, are the acts of election and reprobation,
“ which have their whole compleat being
“ before the persons elected, reprobated,
“ or justified, either begin to be, live or
“ believe, or do any thing good or evil.” In one word, I apprehend, that as God’s eternal decree of election of persons to everlasting life, is the eternal election of them;

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

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so God's will, decree, or purpose, to justify his elect, is the eternal justification of them ; though his eternal will to sanctify them is not an eternal sanctification of them ; because sanctification is a work of God's grace upon us, and within us, and so requires our personal existence. Justification is an act of God's grace towards us, is wholly without us, entirely resides in the divine mind, and lies in his estimation, accounting and constituting us righteous, through the righteousness of his Son ; and so required neither the actual existence of Christ's righteousness, nor of our persons, but only that both should certainly exist in time. For the further confirmation and illustration of this truth, let the following things be observed.

(1.) That there is an eternal election of persons to everlasting life, and that the objects of justification are God's elect : "Who shall * lay any thing to the charge of God's elect ? it is God that justifieth." Now, if God's elect, as such, can have nothing laid to their charge, but are, by God, acquitted, discharged, and justified ; and, if they bore this character of elect from eternity, or were chosen in Christ before the world began, then they must be acquitted, discharged,

* Rom. viii. 33.

and justified by God from eternity, so as nothing could be laid to their charge. Besides, electing grace before the world began; put them in Christ: “He ^y hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world.” And if electing grace then put them in him; they must be consider’d as righteous in him ; no man can be consider’d in Christ as an unrighteous person, or as unjustified, or as in a state of condemnation. And, I think, we may be allowed to argue an eternal justification from eternal election, since eternal justification is a branch of it; and, as such, as one ^z observes, “Is the
“ Father’s eternal purpose and agreement
“ with his Son, that the elect should be
“ everlastingly righteous in his sight, in
“ the righteousness of this dear Son of
“ his ; in which act he constituted and or-
“ dained them so to be:” And this act, as the same excellent person observes ^a, is no other than “ setting apart the elect alone to be partakers of Christ’s righteousness, and setting apart Christ’s righteousness for the elect only.” I think, we may safely conclude, that if there is an eternal election of persons in Christ, there must be an eternal acceptance and justifi-

^y Eph. i. 4.

^z Mr. *Davis*, in his letter to Mr. *Beart*, published in Mr. *Maurice’s* Monuments of Mercy, p. 83.

^a Ibid. p. 85.

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cation of them in him; since, as he always was the beloved of his Father, in whom he is ever well pleased, so he always has graciously accepted of, and is well pleased with all his elect in him.

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

^b Eph. i. 3.
p. 104, 105.

^c 2 Tim. i. 9.

^d Vol. IV. Par. 10

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“ stified then we were, when first elected ;
“ though not in our own persons, yet in
“ our Head, as he had our persons then
“ given him, and we came to have a being
“ and interest in him: “ You are in Christ,”
“ (saith the apostle) and so we had the
“ promise made of all spiritual blessings in
“ him, and he took all the deeds of all
“ in our name ; so in Christ we were
“ blessed with all spiritual blessings, *Eph.*
“ i. 3. As we are blessed with all other,
“ so with this also, that we were justified
“ then in Christ. To this purpose is that
“ place, *Rom.* viii. 30. where he speaks of
“ all those blessings which are applied to
“ us after redemption, as calling, justifica-
“ tion, glorification, as of things already
“ past and done, even then when he did
“ predestinate us: Whom he hath predesti-
“ nated, them he hath called, them he
“ hath justified, them he hath glorified.
“ He speaks it as in the time past; neither
“ speaks he thus of these blessings, as past
“ simply in regard of that presence, in
“ which all things stand before him from
“ eternity ; all things past, present, and to
“ come, being to him as present: Nor
“ doth he speak it only in regard of a re-
“ solution, or purpose, taken up to call
“ and justify, he calling things that are not
“ as though they were, *Rom.* iv. 17. For

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“ thus it may be said of all his other
 “ works towards the creatures in common,
 “ that he hath created and preserved them
 “ from everlasting : But in a more special
 “ relation are these blessings decreed said
 “ to have been bestowed, because, though
 “ they existed not in themselves, yet they
 “ existed really in a Head that represented
 “ them and us, who was by to answer for
 “ them, and to undertake for them, which
 “ other creatures could not do ; and there
 “ was an actual donation and receiving of
 “ all these for us, (as truly as a feoffee in
 “ trust may take lands for one unborn)
 “ by virtue of a covenant made with Christ,
 “ whereby Christ had all our sins imputed
 “ to him, and so taken off from us, Christ
 “ having then covenanted to take all our
 “ sins upon him, when he took our per-
 “ sons to be his ; and God having cove-
 “ nanted not to impute sin unto us, but to
 “ look at him for the payment of all, and
 “ at us as discharged. Of this seems that
 “ place, 2 *Cor.* v. 19. evidently to speak,
 “ as importing that everlasting transac-
 “ tion, “ God was in Christ, reconciling
 “ the world unto himself, not imputing
 “ their trespasses to them,” *i. e.* not impu-
 “ ting them then when he was reconciling us
 “ unto himself in Christ. So as then God
 “ told Christ, as it were, (for it was a real
 “ cove-

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“ covenant) that he would look for his
“ debt and satisfaction of him, and that
“ he did let the finners go free; and so
“ they are, in this respect, justified from
“ all eternity. And, indeed, if the pro-
“ mise of life was then given us, (as the
“ apostle *Paul* speaks, *Tit.* i. 2.) then also
“ justification of life, without which we
“ could not come to life. Yet this is but
“ the inchoation, though it be an estating
“ us into the whole tenure of life.”

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

^c Quia simul ac vas aliquis fit pro altero, alter statim liberatur, si vas iste acceptatur. *Maccov. Theol. Quaest. loc. 31. Quaest. 6.*

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for another, the other is immediately freed, if the Surety be accepted ;” which is the case here. And it is certainly most prudential, when a man has a bad debt, and has good security for it, to have his eye upon the bondsman or surety for payment, and not upon the principal debtor, who will never be able to pay him.

(4.) That as soon as Christ became a Surety, the sins of all those persons, for whom he became a Surety, were reckoned and accounted to him ; and, if accounted to him, then not to them ; if they were laid to his charge, then not to theirs ; and, if he was answerable for them, then they were discharged from them. If there was an imputation of them to him, then there must be a non-imputation of ’em to them ; which the apostle plainly intimates, when he says ^f, “ God was in Christ, *i. e.* from everlasting, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” *Witsius* ^g, citing this text of scripture, says: “ God hath reconciled the whole “ world of his elect together to himself,

^f 2 Cor. v. 19.

^g Deus totum electorum suorum mundum simul sibi reconciliavit, pronunciavitque, se non imputaturum iis offensas suas, atque id propter Christi consummatam satisfactionem, 2 Cor. v. 19. per me itaque licet, ut haec Dei actio, generalis electorum justificatio dicatur. *Wits.* Animadv. Irenic. c. 10. §. 2.

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“ and hath declared, that he will not im-
“ pute their trespasses to them, and that
“ because of the consummate satisfaction
“ of Christ, 2 *Cor.* v. 19. wherefore, says
“ he, I am of opinion, that this act of
“ God may be called the general justifica-
“ tion of the elect.” Nor ought it to be
thought strange, foreign, or far fetched,
that the justification of God’s people is in-
fer’d from the imputation of their sins to
Christ, and the non-imputation of them
to them ; since the apostle *Paul*, in *Rom.*
iv. 6, 7, 8. has so manifestly deduced, and
strongly concluded the imputation of righ-
teousness, which is the *ratio formalis* of
justification, from the non-imputation of
sin, and remission of it.

(5.) That God from eternity willed to
to punish sin, not in the persons of the
elect, but in the Person of Christ, their
Surety. That it is the will of God to
punish sin, not in his people, but in his
Son, is plain and manifest, from his “ set-
ting him up^h” in his purposes, “ to be a pro-
pitiatio for their sins ;” from his sending
him forth in the likeness of sinful flesh, to
condemn sin in the flesh ; and from his be-
ing made both sin and a curse for them,
that they might be made the righteousness
of God in him. This will was notified

^h *Rom.* iii. 25. *προέθετο*, fore-ordained.

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to man, quickly after the fall, though it did not then begin, for no new will can arise in God ; he wills nothing in time, but what he willed from eternity. If it was God's eternal will not to punish sin in his people, but in his Son, then they were eternally discharged, acquitted from sin, and secured from everlasting wrath and destruction ; and, if they were eternally discharged from sin, and freed from punishment, they were eternally justified. Dr. *Twisse* makes the very quiddity, or essence, of justification and remission of sins, which he takes to be the same, to lie in God's will not to punish. His words are these :
 “ Forgiveness ^h of sin, if you regard the
 “ quiddity of it, is no other than a nega-
 “ tion of punishment, or a will not to pu-
 “ nish : Be it therefore, that to forgive
 “ sin is no other than to will not to punish ;
 “ why, this will not to punish, as it is an

^h Remissio enim peccatorum, si quidditatem inspicias, nihil aliud est, quam aut punitionis negatio, aut volitionis puniendi negatio. Sit ergo, peccata remittere nihil aliud quam nolle punire. At hoc nolle punire, ut actus immanens in Deo, fuit ab aeterno. *Twiss.* Vindiciae Gratiae, l. 1. par. 2. §. 25. p. 194. To which Mr. Eyres agrees, in his *Free Justification of a Sinner*, &c. p. 89, 91. where he gives these two reasons for it.—1. Because it agrees with the definition the Psalmist and Apostle give of justification, Psal. xxxii. 1, 2. Rom. iv. 6, 7.—2. Because by it God's elect are acquitted and discharged from their sins, and secured from wrath and destruction. Mr. Rutherford seems to be of the same mind. *Exercitatus*. Apolog. exerc. I. c. 2. §. 29.

“ imma-

“ immanent act in God, was from eternity.”

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

ⁱ Rom. iii. 25, 26. Heb. ix. 15.

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Secondly, To shew that the justification, which is by, at, or upon believing, is not properly justification, but the manifestation of it. The phrase we frequently meet with in scripture, of being “justified by faith,” must be understood either in a proper or in an improper sense: Those who understand it in a proper sense, make the *act credere*, or the act of faith, to be imputed for justification; or, in other words, to be the matter of it; or to be accepted of God in the room of a legal righteousness: This is the way the *Papists*^k; *Socinians*^l, and *Remonstrants* take. On the other hand, sound Protestant divines understand the phrase in an improper, tropical, or metonymical sense; and say, that faith intends neither the habit, nor the act of faith; because then our justification would be placed in that which is a part, and a principal part of sanctification; nor would there be a proper antithesis, or opposition, between faith and works, in the business of justification: Therefore by faith they understand, and very rightly, the object of faith, as in *Gal. iii. 23*. “But before faith came, &c.” *i. e.* before Christ, the Object of faith,

^k Vid. *Rivet. Summ. Controv. Tract. 4. Quaest. 2. Ames. Bellarmin. Enerv. Tom. IV. l. 6. cap. 1.*

^l Vid. *Peltii Harmon. Remonstrant. & Socin. p. 151, 153.*

came :

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came : So that we may be said to be justified by faith objectively, the act of faith being put for the object of it ; the reason of which is, because 'tis to faith that this object is revealed. Faith is the recipient of it ; 'tis the grace by which the soul lays hold on, apprehends, and embraces Christ's righteousness, as its justifying righteousness before God. So that when we are said to be justified by faith, it is to be understood not in a proper, but in an improper, tropical, or metonymical sense ; faith being not our justification it self, but the evidence of it. For,

Faith adds nothing to the *esse*, but to the *bene esse* of justification. Justification is a compleat act in God's eternal mind, without the being or consideration of faith ; that is to say, God does not justify any because they believe in Christ, nor on the foresight of their future faith in him. A man is not more justified after faith, than he is before faith in God's account ; and, after he has believed, his justification don't depend upon his acts of faith ; for though " we ^m believe not, yet he abides faithful" to his covenant-engagements with his Son. Faith, indeed, is of great use for our comfortable apprehension of it ; without this

^m 2 Tim. ii. 13.

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grace we neither know, nor can claim, our interest in it; nor enjoy that peace of conscience, which is the happy result of it. But,

Faith has no manner of causal influence upon our justification. It is not the impulsive, or moving cause of it, for that is the grace of God; not the efficient cause of it, for it is God that justifies; nor is it the matter of it, for that is the obedience and blood of Christ; nor is it an instrument, or instrumental cause of it, which is no other than a less principal efficient cause. For, as Mr. *Baxter* himself well arguesⁿ:
“ If faith be the instrument of our justifi-
“ cation, it is the instrument either of God,
“ or man. Not of man, for justification is
“ God’s act; he is the sole Justifier, *Rom.*
“ iii. 26. man doth not justify himself:
“ Nor of God, for it is not God that be-
“ lieveth.” Nor is it *causa sine qua non*,
or that without which a man cannot be justified in the sight of God. For, I hope, I have already proved, that all God’s elect are justified in his sight, and in his account, before faith; and if before faith, then without it. Besides, all elect infants, dying in infancy, are compleatly justified,

ⁿ Apherism 56. See *Eyre’s Free Justification*, &c. p. 69. Ed. 2.

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who are not capable of the *τὸ credere*, or act of believing in Christ, whatever may be said for the habit of faith in them.

Faith is the sense, perception, and evidence of our justification. Christ's righteousness, as justifying, is "revealed from faith to faith." It is that grace whereby the soul, in the light of the divine Spirit, beholds a compleat righteousness in Christ, having seen its guilt, pollution, and misery; when it is enabled to renounce its own righteousness, and submit to the righteousness of Christ, which it puts on by faith, as its garment of justification, which it rejoices in, and gives him the glory of; the Spirit of God bearing witness with his Spirit, that he is a justified Person. And so he comes to be evidently and declaratively "justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

Now neither the manifestation of justification to our consciences, by the Spirit of God; nor our sense and perception of it by faith, are properly our justification: For they both relate to some prior act or sentence, wherein the very essence of the thing lies. The pardon of a criminal is compleat, when signed and sealed by the king. Neither the act of bringing it to the criminal, nor his act of receiving it, is his pardon; tho' both are necessary to his knowledge

ledge

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ledge of it, and to his pleading it in court; as well as to the peace, quiet, and satisfaction of his mind. When a man is justified and acquitted in court, and hath the copy of his indictment given him, who will say the copy of his indictment is his justification or acquittance, and not the judgment and act of the court? For a man may be truly and legally acquitted, and yet not have the copy of his indictment. For a man to have the copy of his indictment may be of great service in some cases, and be a good testimonial of his acquittance; but it is not the thing it self. Just so, neither the intimation of the sentence of justification, made to our consciences by the Spirit of God; nor our sense and perception of it by faith, so intimated, is, strictly and properly speaking, our justification: For, if they were, then believers themselves might be without it, since they may be without those intimations of the blessed Spirit, and a comfortable sense and perception of their justification by faith; which seems to be the case of *David*, when he said °: “ Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit.”

What I have now said, I think, perfectly agrees not only with the scriptures of

° Psal. li. 12.

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truth, but with what some of the best and soundest divines have said on this subject. I have already observed ^p, that Dr. *Ames* says, that “ The testimony of the Spirit “ is not so properly justification, as it is “ an actual perception of it before granted.” As also what the judicious *Pemble* ^q has asserted, when, speaking of justification *in foro conscientiae*, he says: It is “ but the revelation and certain declaration of God’s “ former secret act of accepting Christ’s “ righteousness to our justification.” Besides these, give me leave to add one or two testimonies more. *Maccovius*, speaking of the *Arminian* Tenet, “ That we are not justified before we believe,” observes, that this mistake arises from their not allowing the distinction of active and passive justification, which he proves thus ^r: “ It is “ said of God that he justifieth, *Rom. iv. 5.* “ and of us, that we are justified, *Chap. v.* “ Not that there is a twofold justification; “ for passive justification, says he, is im-

^p See *Pag. 11.*

^q See *Pag. 37.*

^r Dicitur de Deo quod justificat, *Rom. iv. 5.* & de nobis quod justificamur, *cap. 5.* Non est ergo propterea duplex justificatio; nam passiva improprie dicitur justificatio, & est tantum sensus justificationis activae. *Maccov. πρῶτον ψευδος, Arminian. c. 10.* Vid. etiam *Theolog. Polem. c. 15. Quaest. 2.*

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“ properly called justification ^c, and is on-
 “ ly the sense of active justification.” Mr.
Rutherford says, that “ Justification, ta-
 “ ken passively, or in the termination of
 “ it, is to declare a man living, and a-
 “ ctually believing, righteous, by a judi-
 “ cial act, terminated upon the conscience
 “ of a guilty sinner, cited before the tri-
 “ bunal of God, and convicted of sin;
 “ in which law-suit the sinner is absolved,
 “ and actually perceives and apprehends
 “ the declared absolution, and by a fidu-
 “ cial stay relies on Christ, now reaching
 “ out the manifestation of this sentence :
 “ Yet, *says he*, justification in this form of
 “ speech, so usual in the scriptures, does not
 “ suppose any new will in God, beginning
 “ in time, as the *Arminians* with their
 “ *Socinus* assert; but an intimation of God’s
 “ eternal will, now made to the conscience.”

^c Justificare terminative & passive est justum hominem
 & viventem, & actu credentem declarare, actu judiciali termi-
 nato in conscientiam peccatoris rei, & citati coram tremendo
 Dei judicis tribunali, & peccatorum convicti; quo lite forensi
 peccator absolvitur, & absolutionem declaratam actu sentit,
 apprehendit, & fiduciali innixu in Christum, jam manifestatio-
 nem illius sententiae porrigentem, recumbit. At vero τὸ ju-
 stificare, hac usitata in scripturis loquendi forma, non ponit
 in Deo novam volitionem, jam in tempore incipientem, ut nu-
 gantur Arminiani cum suo Socino; sed aeternae Dei volitionis
 intimationem conscientiae jam factam. *Rutherford. Exercitat.*
Apolog. exerc. 1. c. 2. §. 20.

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I'll conclude this *Head* with the words of Dr. *Twisse* : “ Justification and absolution, “ as they signify an immanent act of the “ divine will, are from eternity : But the “ external notification of this will, in man- “ ner of a judicial and forensic absolution, “ which is made by the Word and Spirit, “ at the tribunal of every one's conscience, “ is that imputation of Christ's righteous- “ ness, remission of sins, justification, and “ absolution, which follow faith. For “ hereupon absolution is pronounced, as it “ were by the mouth of a judge, and so “ that internal purpose of absolving, which “ was from eternity, is made manifest.” But I shall now go on,

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

1. It is objected, that persons cannot be justified before they exist, they must *be*, before they can *be* justified : And this is strengthen'd with some old trite philoso-

† Justificatio & absolutio prout significant actum divinae voluntatis immanentem, sunt ab aeterno : Hujus autem voluntatis notificatio externa, per modum absolutionis cujusdam judicialis & forensis, quae fit per verbum & spiritum, pro tribunali conscientiae uniuscujusque ; haec est illa justitiae imputatio, itemque peccatorum remissio, & justificatio atque absolutio, quae fidem consequitur ; hinc enim fit ut quasi ore judicis pronuntietur absolutio, eoque internum absolvendi propositum, quod ab aeterno fuit, manifestatur. *Twiss. Vindiciae Gratiae*, l. 1. par. 2. §. 25. p. 197.

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phical maxims: As, *Non entis nulla sunt accidentia, nullae affectiones; accidentis esse, est inesse*; “No accidents can be predicated of a non entity; no affections can be ascribed to it, &c.” To which I answer, with *Maccovius* ^u, That this is true of non entities, that have neither an *esse actu*, nor an *esse cognitum*; that have neither an actual being, nor is it certain, or known, that they shall have any future being. But God’s elect, though they have not an *esse actu*, an actual being from eternity, yet they have an *esse cognitum*: It is certain, by the prescience and fore-knowledge of God, that they shall have one; for “known unto God ^x are all his works from eternity.” Besides, they have an *esse representativum*, a representative being in Christ; which is more than other creatures have, whose future existencies are certain; and therefore they were “blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ, before the foundation of the world ^y; and had “grace given them in Christ before the world began ^z.” Moreover, “Justification “is a moral act ^a, which does not require

^u Loc. Commun. c. 69. p. 609.

^x Acts xv. 18.

^y Eph. i. 3.

^z 2 Tim. i. 9.

^a Justificatio est actus moralis, qui non requirit, ut simul sit subjectum existens; sed sufficit, ut aliquando existat. *Maccov. Theolog. Quaest. loc. 31.*

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“ the present existence of the subject ;
“ it is enough, that it shall exist some
“ time or other.” It is, indeed, granted,
that justification taken passively, as it is
declared to, and passes upon the con-
science, by the Spirit of God, and is received
by faith ; that this requires the actual exi-
stence of the subject, on whom it termi-
nates : But we are not speaking of justifi-
cation as a transient, but as an immanent
act ; not as received by us, but as it is in
God, who justifies.

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

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divine justice for them, by his sufferings and death ; so it is an answer which ought to be satisfactory to them.

3. 'Tis suggested ^a, “ That justification,
 “ strictly speaking, can't be said to be from
 “ eternity, because the decree of justifi-
 “ cation is one thing, and justification
 “ it self another ; even as God's will to
 “ save and sanctify is one thing, and salva-
 “ tion and sanctification it self another; and
 “ therefore, though the decree is from eter-
 “ nity, the thing it self is not.” To which
 I reply : That as God's decree to elect cer-
 tain persons to everlasting life and salva-
 tion, is his election of them to everlasting
 life and salvation ; so his decree, will, and
 purpose to justify any, is his justification
 of them : For by, or through the decree
 of justification, as Dr. *Ames* expresses it,
 (which was before observed ^b) the sentence
 of justification was conceived in God's
 mind; and, being there conceived, was
 compleat and perfect. God's will not to im-

^a Non putamus, accurate loquendo, justificationem ipsam posse dici aeternam, quia aliud est decretum justificationis, aliud ipsa justificatio ; ut aliud est voluntas salvandi & sanctificandi, aliud vero salus & sanctificatio ipsa : voluntas seu decretum de quibusdam justificandis aeternum quidem est ; & fidem ipsam praecedat, sed ipsa actualis justificatio fit in tempore, & idem sequitur. *Turretin. Institut. Theolog. Tom. II. loc. 16. Quaest. 9. §. 3.*

^b See *Pag.* 42, 46, 47,

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pute sin to his people, is the non-imputation of it to them; and his will to impute Christ's righteousness, is the imputation of it to them. The same may be said of all God's immanent acts of grace concerning us; such as election, &c. Which are entirely within himself, and do not require that the object should exist; only that it certainly shall exist some time or other: But this can't be said of transient acts, which produce a real, physical and inherent change upon the subject. 'Tis one thing for God to will to act an act of grace concerning us, and another thing to will to work a work of grace in us. God's will, in the former instance, is his act; in the latter it is not: Wherefore, though God's will to justify is justification it self, because justification is a compleat act in his eternal mind without us; yet his will to sanctify is not sanctification, because this is a work wrought in us. Hence it appears, that there is not the same reason to say, we were created, called, sanctified, or glorified from eternity; as to say, that we were justified from eternity. Because, as Mr. *Eyres* observes^c: “ These import an
“ inherent change in the person created,
“ called, glorified; which forgiveness does
“ not, it being perfect and compleat in

^c *Free Justification, &c.* p. 94.

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“ the mind of God:” By which he means justification.

4. It is observed^d, That the apostle *Paul*, in recounting the several blessings of divine grace, in his famous chain of salvation, *Rom. viii. 30.* places vocation before justification, as something antecedent to it; from whence 'tis concluded, that vocation is, in order of time, before justification. To which I reply: That the order of things is frequently inverted in scripture. The *Jews* have a saying^e, that “ There is neither “ first nor last in the law,” *i.e.* it does not always observe to put that first which is first; and that last which is last; but frequently changes the order; so that nothing strictly is to be concluded from thence. And as this is obvious in the law, and in the other writings of the Old Testament, so it is in the books of the New Testament; where 'tis easy to observe, that the order of the three Persons in the Trinity is not always kept to. Sometimes the Son is placed before the Father, and sometimes the Holy Spirit

^d Paulus expresse hoc confirmat in catena salutis, beneficia quae ex externo Dei amore in electos manant ordine recensens, ubi vocationem praeponit justificationi, tanquam aliquid antecedens, *Rom. viii. 30.* Quos vocavit, eos justificavit. *Turretin. ubi supra, §. 4.*

^e אין מוקדם ומאוחר בתורה *Talmud. Pesachim, fol. 6. col. 2.*

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is mentioned before the Father and the Son. And though this may well express the equality there is between them ; yet it ought not to be urged, to confound the order among them. But, to consider the instance of vocation before us: Let it be observed, that this is sometimes placed before election, as in 2 *Pet.* i. 10. “ Make your calling and election sure.” And yet none but an *Arminian*, and scarcely such an one, will infer from hence, that vocation, or calling, is before election. And, on the other hand, salvation is placed before vocation, 2 *Tim.* i. 9. “ Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling.” From whence it may be as strongly concluded, that salvation, and so justification, is before vocation, as that vocation is before justification from the other text. If, indeed, by justification is meant the declarative sentence of it upon the conscience, by the Spirit of God, and received by faith ; ’twill be allowed, that it follows vocation, and that vocation precedes it.

5. “ The several passages ^f of scripture, “ where we are said to be justified by, or “ through faith, are urged, as declaring

^f Nec alio tendunt varia illa loca, ubi dicimur per fidem, & fide justificari, quam ut doceant fidem esse aliquid ad justificationem praerequisitum ; quod dici non potest, si justificatio ab aeterno facta fuisset. *Turretin.* supra.

“ faith

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“ faith to be a pre-requisite to justification ;
 “ which cannot be, say they, if justifica-
 “ tion was from eternity.” To which I
 answer: That those places of scripture,
 which speak of justification, by, or through
 faith, do not militate against, nor disprove
 justification before faith : For though justifi-
 cation before, and by faith differ ; yet they
 are not opposite and contradictory : Yea,
 justification by, or through faith supposes
 justification before faith. For if there was
 no justification before faith, there can be
 none by it, without making faith the cause
 or condition of it. As to those places of
 scripture, which speak of justification by,
 or through faith, declaring faith to be a
 pre-requisite to justification : I reply, If by
 a pre-requisite, is meant a pre-requisite to
 the being of justification, 'tis denied that
 those scriptures teach any such thing ; for
 faith adds nothing to the being of justifi-
 cation : But if by it, is meant a pre-requi-
 site to the sense and knowledge of it, or to
 a claim of interest in it, it will be allowed
 to be the sense of them. But a learned
 author says^s : That “ to refer them to the
 “ sense of justification only, is weak, and
 “ foreign to the mind of the apostle *Paul*.”

^s Nam haec ad sensum tantum justificationis referre dilu-
 tum est, & à Pauli mente alienum. *Turretin. ib.*

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But I must beg leave to differ from him, till some reasons are given why it is so. But let us a little consider some of the scriptures which are insisted on. Perhaps the words of my text may be thought to stare me in the face, and to furnish out an objection against justification, before faith, when the apostle says: "And by him all that believe are justified." From whence it can only be infer'd, that all that believe are justified persons, which no body denies; and they may be justified before they believe, for ought that the apostle here says. And if any one should think fit to infer from hence, that those who believe not, are not justified, it will be allowed, that they are not declaratively, or evidentially justified; that they do not know that they are; that they cannot receive any comfort from it, nor claim any interest in justification; but that they are not justified in God's sight, or in Christ the Mediator, cannot be proved. Again; the apostle in 1 Cor. vi. ii. says of the *Corinthians*, that they were "now justified," as if they were not justified before. But this, I conceive, does not at all militate against justification before faith: For they might be justified *in foro Dei*, and in their Head, Christ Jesus, before this *now*; and yet

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this not till *now* be justified in their own consciences, and by the Spirit of God ; which, it's plain, is the justification the apostle is here speaking of. But the grand text, which is urged to prove justification a consequent of faith, is *Gal. ii. 16.* “ Even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ.” Here the apostle is speaking of justification, as it terminates upon the conscience of a believer : And this is readily granted to follow faith, and to be a consequent of it ; for that none are justified by faith until they believe, is acknowledged by all. The apostle's meaning then is, that we have believ'd in Christ, or have looked to him for justification, that we might have the comfortable sense and apprehension of it, through faith in him ; or that we may appear to be justified, or to expect justification alone by his righteousness, received by faith, and not by the works of the law. In the same light may many other scriptures, of the same kind, be consider'd.

6. 'Tis urged^h: “ That justification cannot be from eternity, but only in time,
“ when

^h Lique talem justificationem non potuisse fieri ab aeterno, sed tantum in tempore, quum homo actu credit & paenitentiam agit ; alias sequeretur, eum, qui justificatus, & per consequens transit à morte ad vitam, & Filius Dei factus est & haeres

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“ when a man actually believes and re-
 “ pents ; because else it would follow, that
 “ he, who is justified, and consequently
 “ has passed from death to life, and is
 “ become a child of God, and an heir of
 “ eternal life, abides still in death, and is
 “ a child of wrath ; because he who is
 “ not converted, and lies in sin, abides in
 “ death, 1 *John* iii. 14. and is of the de-
 “ vil, 1 *John* iii. 8. and in a state of dam-
 “ nation, *Gal.* v. 21.” In order to solve
 this seeming difficulty, let it be observed,
 That God’s elect may be considered un-
 der two different *Heads*, and as related
 to two different covenants at one and the
 same time. As they are the descendants of
Adam, they are related to him, as a cove-
 nant head, and, as such, finned in him ;
 and, through his offence, judgment came
 upon them all to condemnation, and so they
 are all, by nature, children of wrath, even as
 others. But then, as consider’d in Christ,
 they were loved with an everlasting love.
 God chose them in him before the foun-
 dation of the world, and always viewed
 and accounted them righteous in Christ, in

haeres vitae aeternae, adhuc manere in morte, & esse Filium
 irae ; quia qui nondum conversus est, & in peccato jacer,
 manet in morte, 1 *Joh.* iii. 14. & est ex diabolo, 1 *Joh.*
 iii. 8. & in statu damnationis, *Gal.* v. 21. *Turretin.* *ibid.*
 §. 5.

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whom they were eternally secured from everlasting wrath and damnation. So that it is no contradiction to say, that the elect of God, as they are in *Adam*, and according to the covenant of works, are under the sentence of condemnation; and that as they are in Christ, and according to the covenant of grace, and the secret transactions thereof, they are justified and freed from all condemnation. This is no more a contradiction, than that they are loved with an everlasting love, and yet are children of wrath at one and the same time, as they certainly are. And again, this is no more a contradiction, than that Jesus Christ was the Object of his Father's love and wrath at one and the same time: sustaining two different capacities, and standing in two different relations, when he suffered in the room and stead of his people.

7. 'Tis objected: That this doctrine makes assurance to be of the essence of faith. And, indeed, I think, that assurance, in some degree or other of it, is essential to faith: But then by this I don't mean such an assurance as excludes all doubts and fears, and admits of no alloy of unbelief; which the apostle calls, "The full assurance of faith," and is the highest degree thereof. Nor do I

¹ Heb. x. 22.

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intend assurance in so low a sense, as the mere assurance of the object ; for this may be in devils, in hypocrites, and formal professors : But I mean an assurance of the object with relation to a man's self in particular. As for instance : That faith by which a man is said to be justified, is not a mere assurance of the object, or a bare persuasion that there is a justifying righteousness in Christ ; but that there is a justifying righteousness in Christ for him, and therefore he looks unto, leans, relies, and depends on, and pleads this righteousness for his justification : Tho' this act of his may be attended with many doubts, fears, questionings, and unbelief. And what is short of this, I cannot apprehend to be true faith in Christ, as the Lord our righteousness.

8. It is objected: That if justification is before faith, then there is no need of faith ; it is a vain and useless thing. To which I answer, That though faith does not justify us, it being neither the whole, nor the part of our justifying righteousness, nor the cause or condition of our justification ; yet, as it apprehends and receives Christ's righteousness for our justification, it brings much peace, joy, and comfort into our hearts. The awakened sinner, before faith is wrought in his soul, or he enabled

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enabled to exercise it on Christ, finds himself in a state of bondage, and under a sentence of condemnation; as he really is, as a descendant of *Adam*, and according to the open rules of God's word: So that there is nothing else but a fearful expectation of fiery indignation to consume him. But when the Spirit of God brings near Christ's righteousness, and puts it into the hand of faith, and declares the justifying sentence of God, upon the account of that righteousness, in the conscience, his mind is unfetter'd, his soul is set at liberty, and is filled with a "Joy unspeakable, and full of glory." So that faith is just of the same usefulness in this respect, as a condemned malefactor's actually receiving the king's pardon into his own hand is to him, when, in consequence of this, he's not only delivered from prison and confinement, and all the miseries which attended such a state; but also freed from all those fears, terrors, horrors, and tortures of mind, which arose from his daily expectation of just punishment. In fine, justification is by faith, and in a way of receiving, as the whole of salvation is, "That it might be by grace," *i. e.* that it might appear to be of grace, and not of works. Thus have I freely given my thoughts concerning justification,

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fication, both before and at believing, and have endeavoured to remove the objections made against it. I leave what I have said to the blessing of God, and pass on,

VI. To consider the subjects, or objects of justification, who are God's ^k elect: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifies," *i. e.* his elect, who are described,

1. By their number: They are many: "By his knowledge ^l shall my righteous Servant justify many." And, "by the obedience of one ^m, many are made righteous." Jesus Christ engaged as a Surety for many, and "gave his life a ransom for many ⁿ," and "was offered up to bear the sins of many," which is the true reason why many are justified by him. Many are brought to believe on him for life and salvation, even "as many ^o as were ordained to eternal life;" and many sons, in consequence of all this, will be brought to glory: "Many shall sit down with *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, in the kingdom of heaven. ^p" And

^k Rom. viii. 33, 34.

v. 19.

xiii. 48,

^l Isai. liii. 11.

ⁿ Matt. xx. 28. Heb. ix. 28.

^p Matt. viii. 12. John xiv. 2.

^m Rom.

^o Acts

hence

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hence there “are many mansions in Christ’s Father’s house” preparing for them. This leads us to observe,

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

(2.) This shews that all mankind are not justified. Though they are many who are justified, yet they are not all. For all men have not faith to receive Christ’s righteousness; nor are all men saved, as they would

^a Matt. xx. 16. Luke xiii. 24.

^r Matt. v. 6.

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be, if they were justified : For those who “ are justified ^f by his blood, shall be saved from wrath through him.” Yet all the elect are justified : For “ in him ^t shall all the seed of *Israel* be justified, and shall glory.”

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

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

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

^f Rom. v. 9.

^t Isai. xlv. 25.

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lessening of the satisfaction of Christ, and contrary to the whole gospel declaration.

2. Peace with God is another consequent, or effect of justification: "Being" justified by faith, we have peace with God," *i. e.* peace of conscience, which passeth all understanding, and is one of the most valuable blessings of life.

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

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

5. Adoption is another consequent of justification: For though this blessing was originally provided, bestowed, and secured in predestination, yet way is made for our actual reception of it, by our redemption,

" Rom. V. 1,

which

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which is in Christ Jesus, who hath redeemed “ them that were under the ^x law, that we might receive the adoption of children.” Hence *Junius* calls justification *via adoptionis*, the way to adoption.

6. Sanctification is also an effect of justification : Faith, as has been already shewn, follows upon it, and is a very considerable part of sanctification. In fine, certainty of salvation, which may be strongly concluded from our justification, and an undoubted title to the glorious inheritance ; yea, the full possession of it arises from it, and depends upon it : For “ whom he ^y justified, them he also glorified.” But I proposed only to mention these things, and therefore proceed to the

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

1. It is an act of God’s free grace : “ Being ^z justified freely by his grace.” ’Twas grace that resolved on, and fixed the scheme and method of justification, and which called and moved Christ to engage as a Surety for his people, and which sent him, in the fulness of time, to work out a righteousness for them. And then ’twas grace in God to accept of this righteous-

^x Gal. iv. 5.

^y Rom. viii. 30.

^z Rom. iii. 24.

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ness for them, and to impute it to them, and bestow faith on them to receive it; especially will all this appear to be free grace, when 'tis consider'd that these persons are all by nature sinners, and ungodly ones; yea, many of them the chief of sinners.

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

3. It is an individual act, which is done at once, and admits of no degrees. The sins of God's elect were laid at once on Christ, and he made satisfaction for them at once. God accepted of Christ's righteousness, and imputed it at once unto his people, who all have their sins and transgressions forgiven at once. The sense of justification, indeed, admits of degrees, for "the righteousness^a of God is revealed from faith to faith;" but justification it self does not. There are several fresh declarations, or manifestations, or repetitions of the act of

^a Rom. i. 17,

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justification; as at the resurrection of Christ; and again, by the testimony of the Spirit to the conscience of the believer; and last of all, at the general judgment, before men and angels. But justification, as it is an act in God, is but one, and is done at once, and admits of no degrees; is not carried on in a gradual and progressive way, as sanctification is.

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

5. It is irreverfible and unalterable. 'Tis according to an immutable decree, which can never be frustrated. It is one of God's gifts, which are without repentance: It is one of the blessings of the covenant of grace, which can never be broken. The righteousness by which the saints are justified is an everlasting one; and that faith, by which they receive it,

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it, shall never fail : And though a righteous man may fall into sin, yet he shall never fall from his righteousness, nor shall he ever enter into condemnation, but be eternally glorified.

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

7. It does not destroy the law, nor discourage a careful performance of good works. It does not destroy the law, or make it void ; no, it establishes it, for the righteousness by which we are justified, is every way commensurate to the demands of the law ; by it the law is magnified, and made honourable. Nor are persons,

^b Eccles. vii. 20.

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by this doctrine, discouraged from a performance of good works ; for this doctrine of grace teaches men, “ That denying^c ungodliness, and worldly lusts, they should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” To conclude : If your souls are under the powerful and comfortable influence of this doctrine, you will, in the first place, bless God for Jesus Christ, by whose obedience you are made righteous : You will value his justifying righteousness, and make mention of it at all proper times ; you will glory alone in Christ, and will give the whole glory of your justification to him ; and will be earnestly and studiously desirous of having your conversations as become the gospel of Christ, and these truths of it in particular.

^c Tit. ii. 11, 12.

F I N I S.

