

# JUSTIFICATION

*DEFINED AND EXPLAINED PLAIN SIMPLE BIBLICAL TERMS*

BY

JAMES POULSON

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JUSTIFICATION is a phrase of an extensive import, it is a *law term*, and in the court of civil judicature, the sentence of justification must take place before the persons accused can be honorably acquitted, or let go. And as it is in the civil, so it is in the Divine law, the sentence of justification must take place in the Divine mind, before the vessels of mercy and salvation were acquitted; and in order to accomplish this great work, the Almighty Saviour entered into covenant with the Father, undertook to become their surety, and paid their debt, and when justice was fully satisfied, when the law was magnified and made honourable, then a reconciliation took place between God and his people, consequently, they were then acquitted, or let go, that is, in the scripture phrase,—

Justified, Rom. viii. 29. or, as the apostle otherwise represents them, as being made *accepted in the beloved*, Eph. i. 6. and to crown the happiness of those justified ones, he describes them as being—*Complete in him*, Col. ii. 10. but if any part of their justification was lacking, they could not be said to be complete *in all the will of God*, Col. iv. 12. consequently, the sentence of justification must pass the great seal in the court above, before the birth of time, and is now enrolled among the Divine decrees in the records of eternity.

I know there are many learned and pious men who imagine, that their sacred union to Jesus, and their justification before God, takes place at the time of their effectual calling, by virtue of a saving faith then received.— I admit, in regeneration we are justified by faith in the sight of men, but faith never justifies any before God. 'Tis true, faith operates in believers and works by love in them, and is productive of good works, but if it is faith that unites them to Jesus, and justifies them before God, as some of our English divines assert, what will become of their union when their faith shall cease, must not their union be dissolved, and their justification cease also? I think it must. I readily grant that faith is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen, and by the instrumentality of this grace through the Spirit's agency, we apprehend the knowledge of our sacred union to Jesus, and our eternal justification before God, through the

righteousness of Christ imputed; but the act of justification took place in the Divine purpose before all worlds, Rev. xiii. 8. and this was the Father's act in conjunction with the Son and Spirit, without the assistance of faith, therefore said one who learned of him,—*It is God that justifieth*, Rom. viii. 33. and all his acts of grace are like himself, eternal and unchangeable. God is of one mind, and none can turn him, Mal. iii. 6. and if he was to justify any in time, that he did not from eternity, then his immutability might very justly be called in question, whereas neither time, nor place, nor eternity itself can make the shadow of a change in the LORD JEHOVAH, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever, Heb. xiii. 8.

Moreover, if faith could justify a sinner before God, then the Father's act must become void, and be of none effect; but the scriptures assure us, that *it is God that justifieth*, and the comfortable knowledge of it is revealed to believers by the agency of the Spirit in regeneration, and discovered by the eye of faith, which is of the same use to the, soul, as the eye is to the body, nevertheless, a distinguished writer whose name I have too great a veneration for to mention in public, asserts in his sermons, that “by faith we are *united* to Christ, and by faith we are justified before him; That it is not by *working*, but by *believing*, we are justified,”—But I think our celebrated writer is greatly mistaken, for faith never unites any of the vessels of mercy to Jesus, because their union to the promised Messiah

took place long before faith operated in them, neither is faith the bond of their *sacred union* to the root of David. I rather think the everlasting love of God is the only cause of their *election union* to Jesus, and his unchanging love, is the *bond* of that indissoluble union, consequently their believing in Christ must be the effects and the evidence of their justification before God, and not the cause of it.—It is really amazing that our learned divines, who are well intruded into the mysteries of the kingdom, will not give themselves a little more deliberate consideration on those momentous truths, in order to adjust them properly to the religious world—are they *champions* for truth, and *ambassadors for Christ*? Let them distinguish themselves like men in a dark benighted world, *valiant* for the principles of the oracles of Heaven, and thereby approve themselves to God workmen who need not be ashamed, *rightly dividing the word of truth*.

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