

BY JOHN BRINE

CHAPTER ELEVEN OF JUSTIFICATION

MR. *Foster* very frequently speaks of the dangerous Consequences, which attend representing Reason and Religion, as inconsistent. Who they are that so do, I profess, I know not, nor is he able, I am persuaded, to point out to us, any, that are guilty of maintaining such an Absurdity. However, we are not of that Number, he may allure himself. For my Part, I am so far from thinking, that there is any Repugnancy between Reason and Religion, that it is my firm Opinion, without Reason, there can be no Religion at all; but at the same Time, I must take leave to say, that there is more in Religion, than Reason can comprehend. I am for attending to Reason, in this Article of justification, before God; and doubt not, but Reason itself, if it may be heard, will convince us of the utter Impossibility, of guilty Creatures, as such, being accepted with him. The Light of Nature is sufficient to acquaint us, in some Degree with our Misery; though it is insufficient to direct us, how we may be interested in divine Approbation, and obtain Happiness. In order to clear up this weighty Point, I beg leave to advance the following Propositions, and I desire they may be well considered and examined.

**Proposition 1.** God is infinitely wise, and holy, and powerful in his Nature.

**Prop. 2.** All his Works are, and necessarily must be perfect in their Kind.

**Prop. 3.** Man, who is the chief of the lower Creation, was certainly created perfect, or absolutely free from any Defect and Disorder, in his Constitution, *viz.* without any ill Temperament of Body, and evil Habits and Dispositions, in his superior Part, the Mind. For God, who is an infinitely wise, and holy, and powerful Agent, cannot be the Author of any imperfect Work. The Perfections of his Nature, will not allow us to conceive, that the least Defect or Blemish can attend the Operations of his Hand. That his Work is perfect, is the clear Voice of Reason, as well as of Revelation. And, consequently, human Nature, in its original State, must have been wholly free from moral Defects and Imperfection.

**Prop. 4.** Man, in his primitive State, was under an indispensable Obligation, to exert, to the utmost, all his perfect Powers, in loving, fearing, and obeying his Creator.

**Prop. 5.** God would never require more of his Creature Man, than he was furnished with a Power to do, as he was created by him.

**Prop. 6.** Human Nature is actually become depraved and corrupt. This is allowed on all Hands. We, who contend, that Men cannot be justified, by their own Works, confess and bewail the sad Corruption of our Nature: And, those, who maintain, that Sincerity is accepted of God, in the room of sinless Perfection; are obliged to grant, that human Nature, is now attended with such Weakness and Imperfections, as render a perfect and universal Obedience impossible to

Mankind. The Truth, therefore, of this Proposition, is not doubted of, even by our Opponents, in the momentous Point of Justification; how much soever they may be inclined to lessen and extenuate our present Depravity. As it is sufficient to my Purpose now, to allow, that we are all corrupt and imperfect, I shall not, here, debate that Matter with them.

**Prop. 7.** A perfect Law can never be obeyed, in all Things, and in a complete Manner, by an imperfect Creature.

**Prop. 8.** God, our righteous Lawgiver and Judge, would never suffer Man to loose his Power of keeping a perfect Law, without the Commission of Sin on his Part.

**Prop. 9.** The infinitely pure Majesty of Heaven, can never approve of Imperfection. If he can, then, 1. He may command it. Whatever God approves, he may will and require of his Creatures; for that which God approves of, cannot be contrary to his Nature; and that which is not contrary to his pure and holy Nature, he may will and command. And, consequently, if imperfect Virtue, can be approved of God, he may will and command it. But if moral Defect and Impurity is opposite to the infinitely pure Nature of God, as it most certainly is, then he cannot approve of, accept, nor require it. 2. If God can approve and accept of imperfect Holiness, then, imperfect Creatures, remaining such, may have Admittance into Heaven; except, God cannot receive those to his glorious Presence, of whom he approves, which, I think, if it should ever be asserted, it will never be proved. 3. If God can approve of and justify imperfect Creatures, as such, then, they may not only be received to

Heaven with their Imperfections; but may eternally remain imperfect. 4. Upon this Principle, I am of Opinion, that it cannot be demonstrated that Man was ever perfect, or that the Angels above are so. For it seems to me nothing unreasonable, to suppose, that an intelligent Creature, may have always been, and that he may eternally continue to be, such as God can approve of and justify.

**Prop. 10.** And, therefore, God cannot approve, accept of, or justify an imperfect Creature, as such. Two Things clearly evince the Truth of this Proposition.

1. Such as, God cannot, by Reason of the Holiness and Perfection of his own Nature, make a reasonable Creature, he cannot approve of and justify as such. Now, God could not create Man with evil Inclinations and imperfect Powers, and for the very same Reason, that he could not form Man with vicious Habits and defective Powers, he cannot justify him, as he is become the Subject of depraved and corrupt Principles. Such as Men are, when accepted of God, such he might make Man, and by Consequence, if God approves of Men, as imperfect, he might create Man attended with Vice and Imperfection. The latter is shockingly absurd, and the former is no less so.

2. If an intelligent Creature is such in himself as God approves, accepts of, and justifies, there can be no Necessity of that Creature, ever being other than he is, It is sufficient to any Creature to be the Subject of such Qualities, as recommend him to the Favor, and interest him in the

Approbation of the infinitely best of Beings: Nor need any desire to become the Subjects of higher and more refined Virtue, than such, as their Sovereign Judge will accept of and justify them, on Account of; if therefore, imperfect Virtue is accepted with God, there is no Necessity of perfect Holiness, nor is there any Reason to be offered, why Men should be in the least concerned, that they are not perfectly holy and innocent. Hence, we see the fatal Tendency of the Doctrine of Justification by Works. That Opinion, is warmly contended for, under a Pretense, of Zeal for Holiness; but it leads us unavoidably to the moll monstrous and absurd Conclusions, *viz.* That, God may be pleased with Imperfection. — That, he might make Man imperfect. — And, that Men have no Occasion to regret, that they are not sinless and innocent. And, therefore, I cannot but pronounce, that Opinion irrational, absurd, and unfriendly to Holiness and perfect Virtue, which is alone acceptable to God, and is the true Glory of an intelligent Creature.

**Prop. 11.** Man's Incapacity to keep a perfect Law is wholly owing to Sin, on his Part, God is no Cause of it. 1. God created Man perfect in Holiness, or, with sufficient Ability to obey the whole Law, which he stood obliged to observe. 2. God did not deprive Man of that Power, nor suffer him to loose it; but upon Offense on his Part. I think each of these Particulars is so evident, that the Reason of every Man, will oblige him, to assent to their Certainty and Truth. And, therefore, we must necessarily conclude upon the Truth of these Things; (1.) That God is not obliged on his Part, to

make such Abatements, in his Precepts, as the present corrupt and depraved State of Mankind requires, in order to Men's Observance of them, and obtaining Justification and Life, by their own Works. No divine Perfection dictates to this Method; so far from it, that this would be an Act inconsistent with the Righteousness and Purity of the Nature of God. (2.) Nor is the divine Lawgiver under Obligation, to re-furnish Man, with a Power, which he criminally lost. (3.) Neither is it any Act of Cruelty in God, still to require of Men and condemn them for the want of it, a perfect Obedience to his perfect Law.

I am sensible, that it is often affirmed by some with great Confidence, that God cannot require his Creatures to do, what is beyond their Power. This is certainly true, if Respect was herein had to the Creature, as created by God; but that is not the Case, for they intend Man in his apostate and corrupt State; and, therefore, when they urge, that it is contrary to divine Goodness, to punish Men for not doing what is impossible, (as Mr. *Foster* frequently does) they are guilty of the most evidently false Reasoning and greatest Impertinence; unless, they really mean, that if God doth not make Abatements, in his Demands of Obedience, proportionable to that Inability to obey him, Men by Vice, become the Subjects of. If this is what they intend, then, by how much the more, Men are enslaved to Lusts, by how much the more strong evil Habits are in them, by so much the less God requires them to be virtuous, and will accept of

and justify them on Account of their Endeavors, how defective and imperfect soever they are. — Then, God sinks in commanding Holiness of his Creatures, as they grow more profligate and wicked, and are under the Influence of evil Habits, strongly and deeply rooted in the Mind. If they design this, then, let them never more pretend, that they reject the Opinion of Justification, by the Righteousness of another, out of a concern for personal Holiness and inherent Rectitude. For that Opinion is not attended with any Consequence, in the least prejudicial to Holiness, which theirs most evidently is. If what they mean is, that God commands not that, which Man never had a Power to do, they have no Opponent, except in their Imaginations, and they have full Liberty to display their Rhetoric on this Head, and may do it, without offending, or injuring of any Man, or Principle of ours.

They will never be able to prove, that it is inconsistent with the Goodness of God, to command that of his Creature Man, which he has lost a Power to do, in Consequence of a Criminal Behavior, let them wrangle, and dispute, as long as they please. They may as soon prove, that a Master is cruel, to be angry with a Servant, for not doing the Business of the Day, allotted him to do, because he rendered himself incapable of performing it, by his Intemperance; as prove, that it is any Instance of Cruelty in the divine Being, to require Man, to obey his pure and perfect Law, because, he has rendered himself incapable of it, by Sin. They may as

soon prove, that a Lord is unjust, who demands his own of his Steward, and punishes him, for not paying it; when he hath it not, because, he has spent it in Luxury and Extravagance. God furnished Man with a Power to keep his Law, that Power he did not take from Man; (none sure will say he did) but Man became enfeebled, by Sin against his Maker, and therefore, his present Inability is no Excuse for his defective Obedience. I know, that this Reasoning will be objected to, upon our Opinion of the Way, wherein human Nature became depraved; but there is no Necessity to defend it, in this Place, because Reason, if it can inform us of any Thing at all, with Relation to these Matters, will most assuredly inform us, that Man could not lose, that God would never suffer him to lose, that Power to keep the Law, without Guilt on his Part. And, consequently, this Reasoning can never be answered, let Men become guilty or chargeable with Sin, in what Way soever: In the Way we apprehend, or in any other Way imaginable. Upon the whole, I can't but apprehend, that if Men were not influenced, by a Principle of Self-Love and Tenderness for themselves. — That if they were not under strong Prejudices in their own Favor. — That if they were not too ready to conclude upon the Truth of what they wish was true, without any reasonable and solid Ground. — That if they were not backward of admitting that for Truth, which they dread should appear to be Truth, I say, I cannot but apprehend, that Reason itself, would guide them, in some Measure, into the Knowledge of their miserable Condition, and compel them to grant, that they have brought

certain and inevitable Destruction upon themselves, if God their righteous Judge, should please, as he undoubtedly may, to proceed towards them according to the Nature and Demerit of their imperfect and defective Obedience, to his pure and holy Law. For it is certainly reasonable, to conclude, that God made Man upright. That no Defect, or Blemish attended human Nature, in its original State. — It is against all Reason and Sense, to imagine, that human Nature is now perfectly holy, and free from moral Impurity. It is absurd in the highest Degree, to conceit, that Man became the Subject of evil Habits and Inclinations, without any Offense committed against God, by him. — And it is unreasonable to suppose, that Man becomes free from Obligation to Duty and Obedience, by Disobedience and Sin on his Part. — It is repugnant to Reason itself, to think, that imperfect Virtue, and Obedience stained with Guilt, as Man's is, can be approved of God and recommend him to his Favor. — It is highly irrational to apprehend, that God can justify Man, when and as he is such, as he could not create him, by Reason of his own infinite Rectitude and Purity. It is therefore, reasonable to conclude, that the State of human Nature is miserable and remediless, if Men are really to be tried and judged according to the Demerit of their Actions.

Mr. *Foster*, in treating about the Doctrine of Justification, made Choice of a Text, which it has been apprehended, establishes the important Truth of free Justification, without any Works of our own. And gives such a Sense of it, as is

quite inconsistent with that glorious Truth. Whether he has acted the Part of a *Workman, that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth*, will soon appear, by an Impartial Consideration of his Discourse upon it. His Text is contained in {Romans 10:3}. *For they being ignorant of God's Righteousness, and going about to establish their own Righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the Righteousness of God.* This Gentleman, in the Explication of the Words, it might be expected, would have shewn, what Righteousness of God, the Jews were ignorant of, which occasioned their Non-submission to his Righteousness, differently, to be understood. But this he hath not attempted. The Righteousness of God, sometimes designs the Justice, Rectitude, and infinite Holiness of his Nature: So it is to be taken, in these Words, *to declare his Righteousness, — to declare, I say, at this Time his Righteousness, that he might be just, etc. i.e.* that his Righteousness and Justice, might appear in the Justification of a Sinner. Again, it intends, *that Righteousness by which sinful Men are justified: In that Sense, it must be understood, in this Scripture; but now the Righteousness of God without a Law is manifested, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets: Even the Righteousness of God, which is by Faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe, for there is no Difference* {Romans. 3:21-22}.

That hereby a Righteousness for Justification, is intended, the whole Scope of the Place undeniably proves: For, that is the

Subject of the Apostle's Discourse in the Context, before and after these Words, and therefore, we must necessarily understand a justifying Righteousness by it. The grand Question, with Relation to this Point, is this: What that Righteousness is, which the Law and the Prophets give Testimony of, whereby Men are justified in the Sight of God, and which the Jews refused a Submission unto, in order to form a true Judgment concerning this Matter, which hath been the Subject of much Debate, it will be very proper, to consider well, what the Apostle himself delivers, on this momentous Doctrine of Justification, in his Epistle to the *Romans*, and in his Epistle to the *Galatians*.

1. The Apostle affirms, that *this Righteousness is without a Law*, he doth not say without the Law του νομου with the Article; but νομου only, without the Article. It is therefore, without *any* Law perfect or imperfect. And he asserts, that there is *no Law given, which can give Life; and that Righteousness, i.e. for Justification, is not by a Law*. The inspired Writer fully proves, that *all Men have sinned, and come short of the Glory of God*. — That all are guilty in his Sight, and obnoxious to his Displeasure, and from thence, he infers this Conclusion, that *by the Deeds of a Law, shall no Flesh living be justified*, which Conclusion he confirms thus; *for by the Law is the Knowledge of Sin* {Romans. 3:19-20}. A Law therefore, whereby we may know that we are defective in our Obedience, — by which we may be convinced, that we have sinned, can never justify us, unless our Obedience is

such, as the Law requires; in which Case it cannot accuse of Offense. Now if it is impossible to be justified by a Law, which charges Sin upon, and convinces Men of Sin, then, if such a Law is not given of God, which Men may be said to have fully and perfectly obeyed, they must be convinced of Sin by it; and, consequently, their Justification in his Sight, cannot possibly be by that Law. If such a Law is given, by the Observation of which, Men may be justified; then they cannot be convicted of any Transgression by that Law; and, of Consequence, a justified Person must be thought not to have offended, he must necessarily be reputed innocent and sinless. If Men are accounted Sinners, they must have violated some Law, for where *no Law is, there is no Transgression*. And if the Reasoning of the Apostle is of Force, Justification cannot be by any Law, from which the Knowledge of having sinned is derived. Now there is no Law, by, or according to which, Man can be esteemed innocent, and therefore, Justification cannot be by a Law.

2. The Apostle denies that Justification is of *the Deeds of a Law*, — that it is of Works, *viz.* of our personal Obedience to a Law. To say, that it is of imperfect Works, that Men are justified in the Sight of God, is not to interpret, but to contradict the Apostle. He says, that Righteousness *without Works*, is imputed, in order to Justification: Some are pleased to contradict him, and say, that those Works of Righteousness, which Men perform, are imputed to them, or accepted, as their justifying Righteousness. *All*

Righteousness consists of Works conformable to a righteous Law. If, therefore, in the Justification of Men, any Righteousness is imputed to them, that Righteousness must be either their own personal Obedience to the Law, or the Obedience of another: If it is their personal Obedience that is imputed to them, it can never be said, with the least Appearance of Truth, that Righteousness without Works, is imputed to them; but if the Obedience of another is reckoned, it may truly be said, that *that* Righteousness imputed to them, is without Works, *viz.* any personal Works of theirs, which is the only Sense, wherein the Apostle with the least Propriety can be understood, when he says, that Righteousness *without Works is imputed* in our Justification {Romans. 4:6}.

3. In our Acceptance with God, Boasting must not have any Place. The Apostle constantly teaches, that *that* is wholly excluded, and observes, that it is not by a Law of Works. If Works are the Matter of our Acceptance with God, and the Cause of our receiving divine Benefits, then we have Ground and Foundation for Boasting. Not as if our Obedience had such intrinsic Value in it, as to merit the Reward. Perfect Obedience hath not such Worth attending it: For there is no Proportion between the sinless Obedience of a perfect Creature, and the Happiness communicated to Men, which is intended by the Reward. But the Reward would then be of Debt, that is to say, we might claim it, as our Due, upon the Foot of Right, having performed the Conditions on which the Reward is promised. This is what the Apostle designs by *Boasting*, and which he affirms is *excluded*, not by a Law of

*Works, but by the Law of Faith* {Romans. 3:27}. The *Socinians* and *Arminians* understand a Law which doth not prescribe or require perfect Works, as Conditions of Acceptance and Justification. To which I answer. (1.) The *Jews* were not of Opinion, that perfect Obedience is required to Justification; and therefore, if the Apostle excludes perfect Works only from Justification, there was no proper Foundation of Controversy between him and them. (2.) The Apostle speaks of Works, without distinguishing them into perfect and imperfect, and, therefore, this Distinction of Works, with Relation to the great Doctrine of Justification, is a mere human Invention. It cannot be supported by the Language and Reasoning of the divine Writer. (3.) Such Obedience as that Law requires of us, which is the Rule of our Behavior, is necessary to our Justification by it: That Obedience is our Duty, and nothing more; if, therefore, imperfect Works only, are required of us in order to our Acceptance with God; perfect Works are not our Duty, or we are not required to practice perfect Holiness; and if we are not obliged by the Law to perfect Works, then imperfect Works are the whole of our Duty; and we cannot be accounted Offenders, we have done what is our Duty to do, and, consequently, there is no Place for Remission, because Pardon necessarily supposes Sin, either in a Defect of performing Duty, or in acting contrary to it: And if there is no Place for Remission, Boasting cannot be excluded.

Farther, if the Law, which is the Rule of our Conduct, requires an imperfect Obedience only, in order to Justification, I should be glad to know, what Degrees of Imperfection it allows of, what Sins, and what Number of Sins may consist with Justification by it. Whether, if a Man should happen to be guilty, thro' any violent Temptation, of *Dissimulation* and *Lying*, of *Adultery* and *Murder*, of *Vanity* and *Pride*, of *murmuring against God*, and *telling him to his Face, that he does well to be angry with his Dispensations, even unto Death, of swearing and cursing with a Denial of Christ, or of Incest*: I say, I should be glad to know, whether these and such like Enormities may consist with Justification by our own Works, according to this Law, whether, it allows of such Imperfections; (I bless God, not with the least Desire to practice them, but) because I have a great Veneration for the Memory of some Persons, who were guilty of these Vices, and should be exceeding sorry, to have it prov'd, that they were not accepted with God, or justified in his Sight. If the Law requires no other Obedience in order to Justification, than what may consist with such Actions, it is easy to prove, that these Actions are not Sins: For the Law requires no more as Duty, than it requires to Acceptance by it; except a Man may be accepted and justified for what he does, tho' he does not his Duty; and if a Man may be accepted by his own Works, who does not his Duty, no Danger attends the Violation of the Law, because the Law enjoys that as Duty, which it will dispense with the Omission of, in the Business of Justification. 'Tis just the same, as to Acceptance with

God, if a Man fails in the Performance of his Duty, or punctually performs it. The Man who is imperfect in his Obedience is approved and rewarded for his Services, and if another Man could perfectly perform his Duty, it is impossible, that he should enjoy any superior Advantages.

4. We cannot be justified by our Obedience to any Law, according to which we are rightly deemed Transgressors. The Reason is very evident; if we fulfill not a Law, which is the Rule of our Conversation, we are Sinners, and must be so accounted according to that Law; and if on Account of a partial Obedience only to the Law, we really are, and must be reputed Offenders; we cannot be accounted righteous by or according to that Law, unless the Law requires one Kind of Righteousness as Duty, and accepts of another in our Justification, which it is absurd to imagine; for the Lawgiver must then account us righteous, without that Righteousness he requires us to practice. And, consequently, if God commands perfect Holiness of us, he cannot esteem us righteous in our own Obedience, if it is partial only and incomplete. We must be that in his Account, which we are an Fact, if his Judgment is according to Truth; righteous, if We have wrought such Righteousness as he demands of us in his Law; but unrighteous, if we have not. The necessary Consequence of which is this, that if God commands, or has made perfect Holiness our Duty, he cannot accept and justify us, if our Obedience is defective and imperfect, *viz.* on Account of that Obedience. This is perfectly agreeable to the Reasoning of the Apostle on this Subject. He concludes upon

the Impossibility of the Justification of any Man by the Works of a Law, from hence, *viz.* every Man being a Sinner; and to be proved such by the Law: If therefore, there is any Force in his Reasoning, we must conclude, that no Man can be justified by any Law; according to which every Man, by Reason of his defective Obedience to it, is rightly denominated a Transgressor. And, therefore, if there is any Law given, by which Men may be justified, thro' their Obedience to it; by that Law, it can never be proved, that they are Sinners. And if there really is such a Law given, whereby Men cannot be convicted of Sin, then that Law commands not perfect Holiness; unless we will maintain, that Men are sinless and perfect in their Obedience. Once more: If by this Law, supposed to be accommodated to the present State of human Imperfection and Weakness, Men may be justified, on Account of their own Works, in Obedience to it; then it demands or requires not perfect Holiness; so far from it, that no unfit Action, which hinders not our Justification, can truly be accounted criminal. If, therefore, a Man that commits Adultery or Murder, or any other unfit Action, may notwithstanding be justified by that Law, or by his own Works, performed in Obedience to it; by that Law he cannot be proved to be a Sinner; nor can such detestable Actions ever be proved criminal by that Law. The Absurdity, therefore, of this Distinction of Works, is very great, plain and evident; and as it has no Foundation in Revelation, it hath not in Reason; it is no other than a Figment, a Dream, or a foolish Invention of Men, to evade

the Force of the Apostle's clear and nervous Reasoning on this important Subject.

**5.** If Men are justified in the Sight of God by the Works of a Law, then Christ died in vain, or there was no Necessity of his Death; that stupendous Transaction, answers no important End, respecting God as a Judge, nor the Law, nor Men. For if we may be justified by our own Obedience to a Law, then we cannot be accounted Sinners by that Law; and if we are not Transgressors, or reputed such, no atoning Sacrifice is required, in order to Peace and Reconciliation; God hath nothing against us, as our Lawgiver, and Judge; his Law charges us with no Offense, pronounces no Threatening against us, nor is the Justice of God displeased with us, and, consequently, no propitiatory Sacrifice was needful to be offered for us, to secure our Pardon, to make Reconciliation, and effect our Recovery from Ruin; because no Danger can attend those, who are accepted with God on the Foundation of their own Works. For that Obedience which justifies, cannot subject Men to Condemnation and Death; that Obedience which entitles Men to Heaven, cannot reasonably be supposed to deserve Hell; on Account of any Imperfections attending it, however great, or many they may be. If it is said, that the Death of Christ was necessary to satisfy the perfect Law of God, which we have violated, and to redeem us from the Curse of that Law. I answer, (1.) If God can approve of Imperfection, he may dispense with the Want of a perfect Obedience. (2.) Then the Justice and Righteousness of God, did not require Satisfaction for Sin;

and if Satisfaction for Sin was not required by the Justice of God, the Death of Christ was unnecessary to such an End. And if the Death of Christ was not necessary to make Atonement for Sin, his dying for Sinners, could not be necessary at all. (3.) If God can approve of, and justify Men, on Account of their own Works, tho' imperfect, then it is unreasonable to suppose, that their Imperfections subject them to his Displeasure; and if the defective Obedience of Men, does not subject them to the righteous Displeasure of God, but he accepts of them, notwithstanding their Defects; then it cannot be contrary to the Justice and Rectitude of the divine Nature, to forgive Offenses, and abate of the Command of Perfection, without any Satisfaction made for sin to his Law.

**6.** God *justifies Men who work not*, and therefore Works performed by them, cannot be the Cause of their Justification. *Crellius* says, that *they work not, or obey not perfectly*: This is not to explain, but to contradict the Apostle. He says the justified Person *worketh not* {Romans 4:5}, *i.e.* in order to his Justification; says *Crellius*, he does work to that End, and his Works justify him. The Distinction of working perfectly and imperfectly, is not to be found throughout the Apostle's Discourse on this Subject. What he intends, is working in order to Acceptance, or working such a Righteousness, as is acceptable and pleasing to God, and for which he might be justified. God justifies such who do not perform Obedience, that is acceptable to him, in itself, and therefore Works cannot be the Matter and Cause of their

Justification. The Inference which *Crellius* draws from hence, is not more absurd, than it is unnatural and forced, *viz.* *That Abraham wrought nothing good, if this is true*; for the Design of the Apostle is to prove, that *Abraham* did not work out such an Obedience as justified his Person, and not, that he or any other Man, who is accepted with God, doeth no Good. It is one Thing not to perform good Works to Justification, and another, not to do any good Works: The former is true of *Abraham*, and of every other justified Person, the latter is not. These

Things sufficiently evince and prove, that Men are not justified by their own Works. If Justification is not *by a Law*, if it is not *by the Deeds of a Law*, if the Reward *is not of Debt*, and *all Boasting is excluded*, if Men in Justification are accounted righteous, and they are in themselves *Sinners*, and may be proved such by the Law, which is the Rule of their Conduct, if the Death of Christ *was unnecessary*, upon a Supposition of justification by *Works*, and if Men are justified, *who work not a justifying Righteousness*, I say, if these Things are true, which undoubtedly they are, for the Apostle affirms them in the plainest Language; no Man is or can be justified in the Sight of God, by his own Obedience to a Law. And, therefore, we conclude, with the Apostle, and shall always insist upon it, *that by the Deeds of a Law, there shall no Flesh be justified in the Sight of God.*

The Justification of a Sinner consist of two Parts. First. The Non- Imputation or Pardon of Sin. This is thro' the Sufferings and Death of Christ. *God hath set him forth to be a Propitiation, thro' Faith in his Blood to declare his Righteousness for the Remission of Sins. In him we have Redemption thro' his Blood, the Forgiveness of Sins. Much more than being justified by his Blood.* The Sufferings of the blessed Jesus therefore, are the meritorious Cause of our Discharge from Guilt: *God for Christ's Sake, i.e. on Account of his Death, hath forgiven us.* So that he is the only procuring Cause of the Forgiveness of our Sins.

Secondly. The other Branch of Justification, is accounting a Man righteous, in order to which some Righteousness must be imputed to him either his own personal Righteousness, or the Obedience and Righteousness of another. That a Sinner cannot be justified by his own Works, we have, I think, clearly proved; and therefore, if he is ever accepted and justified in the Sight of God, it must be by the Imputation of another's Righteousness. That so a Sinner is justified, I now proceed to prove.

1. *That* Righteousness of God, by which we are justified, is without a Law. Every righteous Law enjoins the Practice of Righteousness on Men; which if they perform, they have that very Righteousness, which the Law requires in order to Justification; and, therefore, it can never be said, with the least Appearance of Truth, that their justifying Righteousness

is without a Law; because the Law demands a personal Obedience to Justification, and such theirs is. Hence we must necessarily conclude, that *that* Righteousness of God, whereby we are justified, is not our personal Obedience to a Law.

2. This Righteousness is *without the Deeds* of a Law, or it is a *Righteousness without Works*. If Men's personal Righteousness is the Matter of their Justification, that Righteousness consists of Deeds done by themselves, in Obedience to the Law, and is made up of their personal Works, and of such Works as the Law requires in order to Justification; otherwise they cannot be justified by it; and therefore, Mens own Righteousness cannot be the Matter of their Justification; for, in no Sense, can their own personal Righteousness, be said to be without the Deeds of a Law, or without Works; and, consequently, we are justified by the Righteousness of another, which the Law makes no Discovery of, nor requires of us to Justification, and which is without any personal Works of ours. For in no other Sense, can Righteousness be said to be without the Deeds of a Law, and without Works; since all Righteousness is a Conformity to a Law, and is constituted of such Works, as are commanded by a Law.

3. That Righteousness whereby we are justified, in the Sight of God, is a free Gift. Hence it is called the *Gift of Righteousness*. If our Justifying Righteousness consists of our own Works, it is not a Gift; we have it in ourselves, or it is performed by ourselves, we do not derive it from another,

and therefore it cannot be given to us. That Righteousness on Account of which we are justified, is a free Gift; and, consequently, it is not our own personal Righteousness, or Obedience to a Law.

4. That Righteousness or Obedience, whereby we are constituted, or made righteous, is our justifying Righteousness; and that is the Obedience of another, *viz.* Christ. *By the Obedience of one, shall many be made righteous* {Romans. 5:19}. A Man that obeys the Law, is righteous in himself, and needs not any other Righteousness than his own, in order to his Justification; but he who hath not obeyed the Law, is unrighteous, and cannot be justified by his own Works; and the only Way of his being made righteous by the Obedience of another, is by the Imputation of the other's Obedience to him. The Apostle asserts, that we are made righteous by the Obedience of one, *viz.* Christ; and therefore, his Righteousness is imputed to us, for our Justification. The *Socinians* and *Arminians*, and some others say, God deals with us, as if we were righteous for the Sake of Christ, or for the Sake of his Righteousness. The Apostle says, that we are *made* righteous. To receive Favours as if we were righteous, tho' we are not, nor are made so, is one Thing; and to be made righteous is quite another. It is the latter, that the divine Writer asserts, and not the former; from hence, therefore, it is rightly concluded, that the Righteousness of Christ, and not our own personal Obedience, is imputed to us, in Order to our Acceptance with God.

5. Our justifying Righteousness is revealed to Faith. It is *revealed from Faith to Faith* {Romans. 1:17}; and, therefore, it is not Faith itself That which is discovered to Faith, and whereupon it acts in Consequence of that Revelation of it, cannot be Faith: For that which is revealed to Faith, must be something distinct from it; for a Thing revealed, and that to which it is revealed, cannot be the same. They are certainly different. Hence, we must necessarily conclude, that Faith is not our justifying Righteousness. These Things are plainly expressed; they are not delivered in obscure and figurative Terms and Modes of Speech; but in Language so clear and evident, that all the Art and Criticism Men can use, will never stifle the Evidence which they afford, to the great Doctrine of Justification, without any Works of ours.

I shall now consider Mr. *Foster's* Account of the Apostle's Doctrine with Relation to Justification.

And,

I. He thinks it is evidently this: *That both Jews and Gentiles were, upon embracing the Gospel, and professing Faith in Christ, freed from the Guilt of all their past Sins, and brought into a State of Reconciliation with God, — that Faith was accepted for the Remission of Sins that were past, — and for the Remission of them only.* \*

\* *Vol. 3 of Sermons, page 31, 33.*

I observe,

1. That it is the Blood of Christ that cleanses from all Sin, and not Faith: That is accepted for the Remission of Sins; that was shed to that End; which was the Blood of Christ alone, and not Faith. Men enjoy Reconciliation with God, in Consequence of the Death of their Redeemer, who made *Peace* for them *by the Blood of his Cross*.

2. Tho' in the Justification of a Sinner, a Discharge from Guilt is necessarily included, yet that is not the whole of Justification; it supposes Acceptance as well as Pardon, accounting a Man righteous, as well as remitting his Sins. Now if Faith with the good Works which we allow it produces, recommends our Persons to God, then Justification is of a Law. — It is then of the Deeds of a Law. — Then it is the proper Effect of our own personal Works, which the Apostle constantly denies; and, therefore, it is an Abuse of him, and an Affront to his Writings, to palm this Opinion upon them.

3. Sin that is really forgiven, will never be again charged; if any did not continue in Faith and good Works, then according to this Principle, some of their Sins were forgiven, and some not, which it is absurd to conceive.

4. I beg leave to ask what is the Cause of the Pardon of future Sins? Faith it seems is not; what then is? Such who believed the Gospel and professed Faith in Christ, afterwards sinned, for they were not perfect or sinless, after Faith and

the Profession of it. The *Gentleman* produces no Place out of the Epistles of *Paul* to prove the Principles, which he advances, though he confidently tells us, that this is his Doctrine. Some Things he cites from him, to prove what we have never denied, what we have always acknowledged, and ever shall do, *viz.* that Faith is productive of Holiness and good Works; this is evidently the Doctrine of the Apostle *Paul*. But it don't follow from hence, that the Apostle taught, *that* Faith with its Fruits is the Matter and Cause of our Justification; it is one Thing to maintain that, *that* Faith, which apprehends our free Justification by Christ, is a holy Principle, and *works by Love*; and another to assert, that it is our Faith as a working Principle in the Heart, that recommends our Persons to God, and justifies us in his Sight, the former of these the Apostle constantly taught; but of the latter, there is a deep Silence, in all his Writings. It is falsely, and without any Appearance of Truth, attributed to him by this Author, notwithstanding his Assurance and great Freedom in asserting it.

II. Mr. *Foster* goes on to observe, *that some have apprehended a Disagreement in the Writings of the Apostles Paul and James on this Argument — that James has been thought less evangelical, than the Apostle Paul.* \*

\* Page 34, 35.

Upon which Topic, the Author uses much Rhetoric, to show

the Weakness and Folly of such Apprehensions; but in my humble Opinion there was not the least Necessity, to labour this Point, in the manner he does. That some among the Ancients doubted of the Authority of the Epistle of *James* is well known; but that any now do, I am not sensible, neither do I think, that there are any among us, who are of Opinion, that the Apostle *James* is less evangelical than the Apostle *Paul*, or who think, that there is any Inconsistency between what the two Apostles assert.

I can't but apprehend that the seeming Contrariety between these two divine Writers, as one observes, may be reconciled in three Words, That it is the mere Carcass of Faith, (but by no Means an active Faith and an Attendant of Salvation celebrated of the Apostle *Paul*) which as empty and barren *James* rejects. This Observation perfectly reconciles the two Apostles on this Argument. *Paul* treats of the Matter of Justification, and *James* discourses of the true Nature and genuine Effects, which flow from a true Faith, that apprehends our justifying Righteousness.

**III.** This Author sets himself about the reconciling *Paul* and *James*, the Method he takes to do it, is this.

1. He tells us, *That when Paul says, that we are justified by Faith without the Deeds of the Law, it can amount to no more than this, that Faith is the Condition of Pardon and Justification, — and not absolute uncorrupted Innocence, or the Perfection of Virtue. \**

\* Page 36.

I answer, 1. He will never be able to prove, that *Paul* has advanced this Doctrine, or any Thing like it. His Doctrine is plainly this, that the Righteousness of a Law — that a Righteousness consisting of our own personal Works, is not the Matter of our Justification before God. 2. It seems to me very improper to suggest, that Innocence is corrupt, Innocence is free from any Taint of Evil, if a Man is but in the lowest Degree corrupt in his Obedience, so far he is nocent, not innocent; guilty and not guiltless. 3. *Paul* has nowhere, insinuated, that an imperfect Obedience will be accepted with God, or justify the Subject of it in his Sight.

2. Says our Author, *is not this the very Thing which he (James) so earnestly contends for, viz. that Righteousness and Obedience are the Life of Faith.* \*

\* Ibid.

Answer, It is true that *that* Faith which is not productive of Obedience is a dead and barren Faith; but it doth not follow, that Faith and the Effects of it are the Cause of our Justification before God.

3. *Or suppose the former to have meant, that the Ceremonial Law, under the Gospel Dispensation, is no Part of acceptable Religion.* \*

\* Ibid.

Answer. The Apostle *Paul* cannot mean the Ceremonial Law, because in this Discourse he says not a Word concerning it. Again, he intends a Law that requires Obedience in order to Justification, and by which the Knowledge of Sin, is obtained, neither of which is true of the Ceremonial Law.

4. Says he, *If again we take St. Paul thus; that upon Faith in Christ — God was pleased to be propitious and receive his guilty Creatures into Favor, notwithstanding their former Irregularities.* \*

\* Page 37.

I answer, 1. Sir, you seem inclined to take him in any other Sense, than his true Meaning. 2. *Paul* teaches us, that God is propitious and reconciled to Men before they believe: *If when we were Enemies we were reconciled to God by the Death of his Son*; and, therefore, it is not Faith that renders God reconciled. It must be something else. 3. Faith is an Effect and not a Cause of our Reconciliation with God, according to the Doctrine of the Apostle *Paul*. 4. He teaches, that the Death of Christ is the Cause and Foundation of Peace and Reconciliation with God, and therefore, Faith is not the Cause or Foundation of it.

5. This *Gentleman* observes, *that Paul taught, that without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord*. I answer, 1. He did so, and so do we; but he did not teach that our personal Holiness

is the Matter of our Justification, and that it entitles us to the heavenly State; he always taught the Necessity of Holiness, as our Meetness for Heaven; but he has no where declared, that it gives us a Right to Happiness. 2. It is false Reasoning, to conclude, that Obedience is unnecessary, because it is not allowed to be our justifying Righteousness. Mr. *Foster* having dispatched the first Branch of his Subject, he proceeds to show what the Apostle designs, in censuring the *Jews*, for going about to establish their own Righteousness. Two Things he allows, with Respect to our personal Righteousness: 1. That it is *imperfect, and that therefore, none can entertain Hopes of being justified by it, if perfect Rectitude, is required in order to Justification.* \*

\* Page 39.

The *Jews* then, did not pretend that their Righteousness was perfect and unblemished, or that a complete Obedience to the Law was indispensably required to their Acceptance with God, and, consequently, if the Apostle, when he excludes Works from Justification, intends only perfect Works, or an unerring Obedience to the Law, there was really no difference between him and the *Jews*. They were perfectly agreed, in this, that complete Righteousness, is not the Condition of Men's Acceptance with God. 2. He grants, that *our moral. Righteousness, when carried to the utmost Height it is at present capable of, cannot be said, in strict Justice, to merit that glorious Reward of eternal Life.* \*

\* Page 40.

On which, I observe, 1. That, an unerring Obedience, cannot be said, in strict Justice to merit that Reward; because, it is due to God, it would be performed in his Strength, and there is no Proportion, between that Obedience, and this Reward. 2. The *Jews* surely did not think, that they merited eternal Life, by their strictest Observation of the Law, since they were conscious of Imperfections, attending their Obedience, and therefore, if the Apostle only excluded Works, which they might apprehend, in strict Justice merited the Reward, *viz.* perfect Works, there still was no difference between him and them; all Controversy might have ceased, betwixt the Apostle and the *Jews*, if they had understood one another, with Respect to the Influence Men's personal Righteousness has into their Salvation. The only Difference, which, upon this Principle, can be supposed, to have subsisted between them, is this; the *Jews* apprehended, that good Works were of themselves, without Faith in Christ, sufficient to Salvation; and the Apostle maintained, that Faith in him, was to be superadded to their Obedience to the Law of Righteousness if they would enter into Life. Hence therefore, it must be concluded, that the Apostle was at the Expense of great Labour to prove to them, what they did not doubt of, *viz.* That perfect Obedience is not required of Men in order to Life, and that imperfect Obedience, in strict Justice, cannot merit Heaven; neither of which, they ever believed or dreamt

of. The Apostle therefore instead of excluding Works from Justification, should have told them, you are right in seeking Life, by your own personal Obedience to the Laws of God; your only Mistake is denying *Jews* to be the *Messiah*. If he had so done, they would never have charged him, as they did, with advancing licentious Principles, *viz.* That we may do Evil that Good may come. They could not have done so, for there would not have been the least show of Truth in such a Charge.

After granting these two Things, he briskly enquires, *But of what of all this? Because Mankind are incapable of pleasing their Maker, by yielding an absolute and invariable Obedience to the eternal Law of Righteousness; does it follow from hence, that they cannot render themselves acceptable to him, by a universal Course of sincere Obedience? Are good Dispositions and sincere Endeavors to serve and honor him, of no Significancy, with the wisest and most compassionate of all Beings, for want of something, which the very original Constitution of our Nature has quite put it out of our Power? Is the prevailing Turns and Biass of our Minds insufficient to plead for us; and are involuntary and un-allowed Imperfections of Weight enough, even with impartial Mercy, to condemn us? Because Virtue, does not properly, and in an exact Notion of Equality, merit the transcendent Honor and Felicity, to which it is the gracious Appointment of God, that it shall be hereafter advanced; has it therefore, no Loveliness and Worth in it, to render it as a fit*

*and suitable Object of peculiar Favor and Complacency? These, surely, are Inferences drawn at Random, etc. \**

\* Page 41.

Sir, you are pleased to write here with a great Air of Triumph and Confidence, and seem to think, that you have unquestionably, gained your Point of establishing Works, as the Matter of our Justification; but let me beg the Favor of you to be cool and deliberate a little, as you have desired others to be, then, perhaps, you may see Reason to conclude that there is nothing of Weight in all this, against the Doctrine of Justification, without our own personal Obedience to a Law.

1. Since you allow, that Men cannot possibly perform the whole of their Duty, you ought to have proved, and you must prove, before you can reasonably expect to have the Point, for which you contend, granted you, that God will accept of and justify Men for a partial Obedience to his Law. This you have not yet done, nor will you ever be able to do it, I am firmly persuaded.

2. If a universal Course of sincere Obedience, is indispensably required, as a Condition of Happiness, then, (1.) Those, who have failed of yielding such a Course of sincere Obedience to the Law of God, must inevitably perish. (2.) The Fate therefore, of those, who have been at all dissolute in their Behavior, is miserable, without Remedy.

(3.) If you say, that upon Repentance and Reformation, such may hope for Mercy; provided that, they afterwards yield this universal and sincere Obedience. I would answer, that a Man guilty of *Dissimulation* and *Lying*, of *Adultery* and *Murder, etc.* fails of yielding a universal Obedience to the Law of God, and therefore, if any Person after Repentance commits such Sins, he cannot be just with God, if a universal Obedience is the Condition required to Justification. As yet I cannot be persuaded, but that *Abraham* and *David, etc.* were accepted with God, though, I know, that they were guilty even after Repentance, of the Vices mentioned.

3. Such is the Rectitude of the Nature of God, that he cannot approve of Virtue, as imperfect, if he can, he may will and command it: For what he approves he may require, yea, he might make Man such, as he approves, and therefore, if he can accept of Men, as imperfect, he might have made Man imperfect. If this is true he did, for ought we know, or are able to prove to the contrary. He approves of virtuous Actions, as virtuous; but he disapproves of virtuous Actions, as they are imperfect. And it is only a perfectly holy Obedience that can be acceptable to him, and justify his Creatures in his Sight. He does not condemn Men, for doing an Act, which he commands; but he condemns them, for not performing that Act, in the Manner and with such Views as he requires them to do it. So did *Jehu*.

4. It is false that the original Constitution of our Nature was defective, if Respect is had to the Nature of Man, as he was created of God, for God made Man upright. If Regard is had

to the Nature of Man in his fallen State, his Imperfection in the Constitution of his Nature, is the Effect of a Criminal Behavior in Man, and therefore, that is no Excuse for the Defect of his Obedience to the Law.

**5.** What you mean by impartial Mercy I do not pretend to know. This is certain, that God is under no Obligation, to spare and pardon any Sinner. It is of his Sovereign Pleasure, that he hath Mercy on some; he had a Right to refuse it, and therefore, no Partiality is to be imputed to divine Mercy, if God does not accept of an imperfect Obedience from any Man, or if he condemns some for the Imperfection of their Obedience to his holy and just Law. Of impartial Justice I have some Idea, because Right is therein concerned; but I have none of impartial Mercy, because Mercy never acts upon the foot of Right, but freely.

**6.** Must Men for ever despair of Mercy, who have been guilty of voluntary and allowed Sins? This Reasoning leaves them without any Foundation of Hope, at all, and therefore it is most certainly false.

**7.** Imperfect Virtue hath no such Loveliness and Worth in it, as to render it the fit Object of the peculiar Favor and Complacency of God. 'Tis surprising, that any rational Creature can be so far lost to a Sense of the infinite Holiness of the Nature of God, as once to imagine, that it hath, and it is much more so, that he can express the Thought with such an Air of Confidence, as if it was, as evidently true, as any first Principle can be. Whatever hath such Loveliness and Worth in it, as renders it the fit and suitable Object of the

peculiar Favor and Complacency of God, he may undoubtedly be the Author of, for surely, God may effect that which is the Object of his peculiar Favor and Complacency. If imperfect Virtue is an Object so pleasing to him, he may be the Author of our imperfect Virtue, which it is absurd to think. Besides, no Pardon can have Place in what thus recommends itself to the peculiar Favor of the divine Being. Nor, is it any Act of Mercy to accept of our imperfect Obedience, and justify us on that Foundation: If it is thus lovely and valuable. I pass on to consider Mr. *Foster's* Objections to the Doctrine of the Imputation of Christ's Obedience to us for our Justification. And,

**I.** He objects, *That God might of his Sovereign Pleasure have determined to impute the Righteousness of another to Devils, and that, upon that Imputation, they would have been represented before the supreme Justice, as perfect, with the same strict Truth and Propriety, as sinful Men can be.* \*

\* Page 42.

I do not here transcribe the whole of what he says, because the Strength of his Objection sufficiently appears without it. I answer,

**1.** It is not said or thought, that this Imputation of Christ's Righteousness to Men, changes their Nature; it is only an Implantation of holy Principles into the Hearts of Men, that

makes them inherently holy. We will grant him all he can desire on this Head, and give him full Liberty to make the most of it he is able.

2. Though this Imputation changes not the Natures of Men, it secures their complete Sanctification: So that it gives room to none to expect Happiness without Holiness.

3. It is accounting Men righteous who are not so in themselves; but are made so by the Imputation of the perfect Righteousness of Christ to them. The blessed *Jesus* was our Surety, and paid our Debt, his Payment is reckoned to us, hence we are acquitted of our Guilt, and justified on the Foundation of what he did and suffered, as our Sponsor. Nor is there any Thing absurd in this more than there is in a Creditor's imputing to a Debtor the Payment of his Debt, by a Surety, and thereupon esteeming him no longer a Debtor to himself.

3. Sinners, as in themselves, cannot be accounted righteous, because they are not really so; nor can be so made, inherently; for if once a Transgressor is made inherently righteous, he is no longer a Sinner. Mr. *Foster* must necessarily, therefore, if he will maintain the Justification of imperfect sinful Men, he cannot avoid it, assert that God reckons them to be what they are not, in themselves, and what he does not make them, *i.e.* Righteous, without a Righteousness, personal, or imputative. Which is a manifest Absurdity.

4. The Author speaks of this Imputation to Devils, perhaps, with a twofold View, (1.) To expose the Doctrine to

Contempt; but this End cannot be answered by it; for that which secures perfect Holiness to imperfect Creatures, will never be less valuable in itself, nor the less to be desired, because some Men are pleased to despise it. Besides, what Force of Reasoning is there in this Objection? None at all. It is no more than inferring, that, since the Act of Imputation makes no inherent Change in the Subject of it, there can be no Imputation of another's Righteousness to a Sinner. The Force of the Objection therefore, will never affect the Truth, how much soever the Boldness of it may surprise serious and humble Minds, who dare not depend on their own Works for Acceptance with God; because of the Imperfections attending them, though it may be they might do this, with no more Danger than this *Gentleman*. (2.) This Objection might be started, that, the Author might have full Scope, to exercise his Rhetoric in drawing the Picture of an Apostate Creature, and at the same Time prevent his Hearers and Readers, thinking, that fallen Man is the Subject of that Rebellion, Malice and Envy, *etc.* which he imputes to Devils; left such a Representation of human Nature, should offend and weaken his Arguments to prove, that there is an innate Power in Men to do Good and obtain Happiness.

**Object. 2.** *The Scriptures teach that, not Christ's Obedience; but our own Faith is imputed to us for Righteousness. \**

f130 \* Page 44.

**Answ. 1.** That Obedience by which Men are made righteous is imputed to them, for that is the only possible way wherein we can be made righteous by the Obedience of another. We are made righteous by the Obedience of Christ, and consequently his Obedience is imputed to us, or made ours, by an Act of Sovereign Favor. Again, Righteousness without Works is imputed to us, that Righteousness cannot be our own personal Obedience to the Law of God, it must be the Obedience of another, because that is the only Sense, in which, it can be said with Propriety, that Righteousness is without Works. 2. Faith itself is not imputed; but the Object of it, as I hope, is fully and clearly proved in my Answer to Ruin and Recovery, to which I beg leave to refer the Reader for Satisfaction on this Point.

**Object. 3.** *Then we are not in ourselves moral and accountable Creatures. \**

\* Ibid.

**Answ. 1.** Creatures subject to a Law are certainly accountable. Men are subject to a Law and eternally will be, and therefore, they will for ever be accountable, though not in order to the Acceptance of their Persons and the Enjoyment of Bliss. To this End, such to whom Christ's Righteousness is imputed, are not now accountable. 2. And, therefore, we are not under the Law in order to Justification by our Performance of the Works of it. Christ is the End of

the Law in this View to all his People. 3. But it no way follows from hence, that we are not obliged to practice the Duties of it. For our Obligation to obey the Law, arises not from the Promise of Reward annexed to its Precepts, in Case of Obedience; but from our Dependence on the Lawgiver, and his Command in his Law.

**Object. 4.** *God can demand nothing more of us: Repentance, personal Reformation and inherent Rectitude are entirely needless.\**

\* Page 45.

**Answ. 1.** God requires not Obedience in order to our Acceptance with him, if he should, we must perish inevitably. Because God cannot accept of and justify us; but upon our yielding a sinless Obedience to his Law which we cannot do. 2. But still he requires Righteousness and Obedience of us, though not with a View to our Justification, as we obey, or to our Condemnation, as we disobey his holy and perfectly just Law. 3. And, therefore, the Believer, is under an indispensable Obligation to Obedience, notwithstanding his Justification by the Righteousness of Christ. 4. The Saints are so fully convinced of the intrinsic Excellence of Holiness, and of the Malignity of Sin — and they have such a Sense of divine Goodness, which has acted in their Favor, that they most freely love and chuse Holiness, and detest and forsake Sin; though their most important

Interest is fully and everlastingly secured by the Blood and Righteousness of Christ.

**Object. 5.** *This Imputation of another's Righteousness makes not Men holy, etc. \**

\* Page 46.

**Answ. 1.** The Substance of this Objection has been before expressed, and it has been before answered. 2. It is allowed, that the Act of Imputation works no physical Change in us; the Reason is evident, it is an Act in God towards us, and not a divine Act put forth upon us. 3. We are not accounted righteous in ourselves, upon the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness, but only as inverted with that perfect Righteousness. 4. We shall be sanctified and made completely holy in Consequence of our Justification, by the Obedience of Christ imputed to us.

**Object. 6.** *Christ's Obedience was wholly due for himself, and therefore, it cannot be imputed to any other Person. \**

\* Ibid.

**Answ. 1.** Christ had a Right to Glory upon a higher Foundation, than that of his Obedience, *viz.* his personal Union with the Sort of God. (The Doctrine of Christ's Deity Mr. *Foster* denies; but I beg leave to take it for granted in

answering to this Objection) And therefore, Obedience was not required of him on his own Account. 2. He was made under the Law for us by a special Constitution or Appointment. 3. His Obedience to the Law, was therefore performed for us, and it is imputed to us in order to our Acceptance and Justification. I desire to conclude this Subject with a serious Address to the Reader. It is proper to think closely of the Holiness and Greatness of God our righteous Judge, before whom *the Heavens are not clean, and who charges his Angels with Folly. He is of purer Eyes than to behold Iniquity.* Sin is contrary to his infinitely pure Nature, he cannot, therefore, but abhor it. Due Apprehensions of divine Holiness, and Indignation against Sin, will raise in our Minds a holy Dread of appearing before God's awful Tribunal, where Justice we are sure will be administered with the utmost Impartiality and Strictness. Consider how many your Transgressions have been, what Duties you have neglected, and what Evils you have committed, and what Imperfections attend, even your best Services, what vain and wandering Thoughts, arise and gain upon your Mind in the most sacred and solemn Duties, with what Coolness, and want of Love to the infinitely glorious Object of your devotional Acts, your religious Performances are mingled; as well as, how backward you have sometimes, and in some Instances been, to the Discharge of them. Consider with yourself the great Depravity of your Heart — what evil Habits it is the Subject of — what numberless unholy Conceptions it naturally forms, and then think, that

you must stand before and be judged by an infinite Being, who hates all Sin, and who perfectly knows all your Offense and Imperfections, and who cannot but disapprove of them. If you form a right Notion of God your just and righteous Judge, and of yourselves, as unholy and guilty, you will proceed with proper Caution in your Enquiries, about the Way of your Acceptance with him in Judgment. But if you have slight Thoughts of Sin, of divine Resentment against it, and flatter and relieve your Minds under a Consciousness of Guilt, and some Apprehensions of the Demerit of it, according to the Law, from a bare Consideration of divine Mercy without a proper Consideration, at the same Time, of divine Justice and Vengeance against all Unrighteousness, no Wonder, if you content yourselves with flight and superficial Arguments, in Favor of Justification, by your own imperfect and defiled Obedience. But if these Things have their proper and necessary Weight with you, you will say, as holy *Job* did, *How shall Man be just with God?* You will be convinced, that it is impossible, that, he should be justified in his Sight by his own personal Obedience, because, that is imperfect and polluted, and God is infinitely pure and holy, and necessarily hates all Sin. Consider the Danger which attends being mistaken in this Point, that the Consequence will be more dreadful than Language can express, or the Mind conceive, if you reject that Way of Acceptance which God has provided and appointed, you will certainly be condemned in Judgment, and inevitably sink into Ruin, into black Horror and Despair, If, therefore, there was but so

much as a Probability of the Truth of the Doctrine of Justification by the Obedience of Christ, it would be the safest, and, consequently, the wisest Method, when you have been as exact, watchful and regular in your Behavior, as you possibly could be, to renounce your own Works, with Respect to Justification in the Sight of God, and to depend solely and alone on the Blood and Righteousness of Christ for Pardon of Sin and Acceptance with God your supreme Judge. No Damage can attend this humble Acting of your Souls, you will not be the less accepted with God if you endeavor to obey him, though you should not think, that your imperfect Obedience recommends you to his Favor — you will not lose the Reward any may think is due to Virtue, because, you cannot be persuaded, that such imperfect Virtue, as yours is, can be rewarded with the Glory of Heaven.