

F A I T H .

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PREFACE.

WHAT may be a sufficient justification to publish a book is not yet, it is presumed, a closed question, but one on which opinion is, and is likely still to be, a good deal divided. Many who commit this act seem to be nervously anxious about the right and the wrong of it, and various reasons are advanced by them, with the view, apparently, to bespeak the good opinion of their readers. Having been so very diffident about the worth of their thoughts, nothing but the urgent entreaties of friends, so it is said, could have prevailed on some writers to run the risk of giving the world a trouble in reading them. From this influence I am entirely free; and whatever blame may arise from laying my opinions in this instance before the public must be charged solely on myself. Sometimes the importance of the subject is alleged; and if this, in my case, were of itself a sufficient warrant to employ the printer and publisher, my justification is established without argument. At any rate I may offer this for an apology. Well known as the term is in the Scriptures, thrashed out as every one of its different senses may be thought, and established as its meaning in every one of its occurrences may be considered, I have had a profound conviction, of not a few years' standing, that the last word was very far from having been said upon Faith. Yea, more, I have thought that while there are but few words in the Book of God which con-

tain significations of equal weight, that there is no one that is more ill understood in some cases, more misunderstood in others, and in others more perverted.

This little treatise has been written in the midst of other, paramount, and engrossing engagements; and this fact is mentioned for the purpose of disarming criticism and conciliating the critic respecting faults of composition. On the matter itself no favour is solicited. If, tried by the truth, this is found faulty, forty stripes, save none, will not be too severe a lashing. But if, as it is hoped, this little thing shall receive the approbation of men of understanding in the Gospel, and God shall be pleased to use it to perform a service in the churches like to that which Aquila and Priscilla rendered to Apollos, my reward will be abundant. Certain it is that the truth, with some pains, has been the object sought, and that what is set down is the fruit of conviction as in the sight of God. I will only add that, "If I have done well, and as is fitting the story (subject), it is that which I desired: but if slenderly and meanly, it is that which I could attain unto."

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CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

PURPOSING to treat on what is taught in the Scriptures concerning *faith*, in some of its principal meanings, with the light that may be vouchsafed to me, I enter on the engagement under a profound sense of the importance and difficulty of the undertaking. Any one that may have seriously asked that world-old and world-wide question, "How, then, can man be justified with God?" will know that it represents an inquiry, the importance of which on the interests of mankind is equalled by but very few others, and surpassed by none; and, whoever may have sought for a solution of this momentous problem, with a direct reference to himself, will have felt its weight with a tenfold force. Apprehending, then, in some measure, the great consequence of a sinner's justification before God, and of his everlasting salvation; and bearing in mind that we are taught in the Scriptures, that "A man is justified by faith," and that "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned;" I cannot be unconscious of having taken the teacher's chair with the view of conveying instruction on matters which are inferior to no others in their influence on the well-being of man.

Any one, too, that may have given but the slightest attention to this subject, cannot fail to feel that, in not a few respects, the undertaking is beset with no little difficulty. To mention nothing else just now, any one that is not so happy as to have, nor so unhappy as to be possessed by the conceit of having, the faculty of intui-

tion in the case, will feel, on a very slight consideration, that the exceeding equivocalness of the word *faith* must, of itself, give rise to much perplexity. Bishop Middleton, speaking on an equally equivocal word in his work on the Greek article, in Rom. ii. 13, says, "It must, indeed, be admitted, that there is scarcely in the whole New Testament any greater difficulty than the ascertaining of the various meanings of *nomos* (law) in the Epistles of St. Paul." Having stated in some following remarks what is the main object of the Epistle to the Romans, and mentioned the meanings which the word in question obtains in use, the Bishop adds, "The various senses, then, of this word are calculated to produce perplexity, especially since, as will be seen, there are passages, in which more than one meaning of the word will accord with the tenor of the argument." If we substitute the word *pistis* (faith), for *nomos* (law,) and extend the reference to the whole of the New Testament, these very just observations will be equally, if not in a higher degree, pertinent and important.

Not the least difficulty, and by no means the least in importance, which the earnest and devout student will have to cope with, is the question, In which instances of the occurrence of this word is an objective sense, and in which is a subjective to be understood? And when he may have mastered this obstacle to his satisfaction, when in a given case he is persuaded that the former of these senses is the correct one, another embarrassment will present itself when he has to decide on the particular objective sense intended. After a patient investigation of this matter, the conclusion has been arrived at by myself, that the latter of these senses has often been thrust into the place of the former, to the serious misleading of many, and to the great detriment of the truth. For, if this conviction is well founded, it will be at once apparent that, to the extent such a misinterpretation may have been accepted, the meaning of the word has been wholly misapprehended, and its teaching totally missed. Nor is this all, for while

two meanings of a word may in some particular instances be equally conformable to the truth in general, in this case the mistake is not so harmless. For the word has not only received an erroneous meaning, but one that has laid the foundation for not a little of the false doctrine about works and grace that is so widely taught so generally accepted, and so exceedingly pernicious.

For the sake of clearness, it will be necessary to treat of these two senses of the word, and it may, probably, be the most convenient course to begin with the objective. But having decided on this course, a definite plan of proceeding seems necessary; and, out of some others suggested, that which is felt most to commend itself is to consider the word "faith" when construed after another in the first place. I purpose, therefore, to pass this word under review, in some of its occurrences, when construed after nouns, prepositions, and verbs, in the order mentioned; and, afterwards, in a few instances, when it is construed before some nouns. Without at all determining the relative importance of the different examples of the association of this word when used in an objective sense and construed after a noun, or claiming for the "law of faith" any particular right of first consideration, it may be convenient to begin with this term.

CHAPTER II.

ON THE LAW OF FAITH ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE DIVINE SOVEREIGN AND HIS SUBJECTS, AS DISTIN- GUISHED FROM THE LAW OF WORKS.

If not the most, yet one of the most considerable distinctions of meaning which this word takes, when employed in an objective sense, is that of a law. As such, it may be just mentioned here, it must not be understood as a precept, nor as a code of precepts, by which a duty is defined and enforced; but as a principle of procedure, or law of living, established between the Sovereign and the subject in relation to some matter

of pure favour from the former to the latter. It may also be just mentioned that although we have but one occurrence of the terms, the law of works and the law of faith in full; yet that the words, *works* and *faith*, are frequently the conventional or technical representations of these terms elsewhere, will, on consideration, it is thought, appear incontestably evident.

Paul, treating of the justification of a sinner by "the righteousness of God without the law," says, "Where is boasting, then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay, but by the law of faith." Rom. iii. 27. Here two laws are spoken of in direct and precise terms; and it may be observed that, according to one or the other of these laws, every known relation existing between the Creator and the creature, or the Divine Sovereign and the subject, has been established; and that according to one or the other of these, all affairs between a man and his Maker, in every connection between them, are conducted. Between God and man there exists no third law of living. If, then, these laws embrace matters of so high consideration, it will be obvious that to understand their nature, and to know in what provinces they are in force, are sciences of which no man ought to be ignorant, and in which the interpreter of Scripture, and teacher of religion, especially, should be thoroughly instructed.

Moreover, it should be observed that these two laws bear their designation in no figurative sense. Indeed, so far as we know, the term, law of works, has received no figurative interpretation; yet it is very questionable whether, generally, its meaning is correctly understood. But the term, law of faith has presented some difficulty to interpreters, and there is a considerable divergence of opinion about its meaning. Some seem to fix on belief as the sense to be understood, and explain the word "law" as a catachresis employed in allusion to the law of works. Others prefer the doctrine of the gospel. But faith in this term is to be understood neither as the act of believing nor the doctrine of the gospel, but simply, as it is put, a law. Paul is speaking of boasting being

excluded in reference to a doctrine of the gospel by some law. Boasting is not excluded, according to what he here teaches, concerning this doctrine by the whole system, considered as doctrine, of which it forms a part; but by a certain law, the law of faith, which while permeating all the doctrines of the gospel, is distinct from them. Alford, expounding the place, with a rare and refreshing discrimination, says, "By what law (is it excluded? Is it by that) of works? No; but by the law (*norma*, the rule) of faith. The contrast is not between the law and the gospel, as two dispensations, but between the law of works and the law of faith, whether found under the law or gospel, or (if the case admitted) anywhere else."

These two laws are wholly diverse from and irreconcilably antagonistic to each other. Whereinsoever one is in force the other is utterly excluded. One person may be under both these laws in different respects at the same time, but he cannot be under the authority and guidance of both in relation to the same object. Neither of these laws stands for any particular code. Each of them embodies and represents a distinguished principle.

Between God and man the law of works will be the principle, according to which the duty of the creature to the Creator, or of the subject to the Sovereign, is to be discharged. On this matter the minds of men seem much confused. Many appear to have no other notion of the law of works than that it is the law of ten commandments recorded in the twentieth chapter of Exodus. It should be understood, if the repetition may be pardoned, that the law of works is not a commandment, nor a code of commandments which determines a duty, but the principle according to which the precepts and prohibitions enjoined are to be kept. That principle is, that a due is owed by the subject to the Sovereign, that this due is to be rendered by the discharge of a defined duty, and that when this is performed, a work is done by which, economically, a title is acquired to a reward of debt.

The nature of this law is precisely interpreted by the

words of the Lord Jesus to the lawyer, "This do, and thou shalt live," Luke x. 27. Expounded freely, and in colloquial terms, it may be put as if the Creator or Sovereign had said to his creature or subject, I enjoin a duty on you that is defined by certain precepts and prohibitions; if you faithfully render this due to me, you shall be entitled to enjoy this and that particular good which I have already put into your possession; but if you disobey me, and transgress my commandments, you shall be condemned in a forfeiture of all, and to an appropriate punishment in addition. Substantially, this may be taken as a just representation of the law of works whereinsoever this order of things obtains.

It seems necessary to observe here, that the law of works is never made the rule, or basis, of any advancement. No creature was ever put into a state with a view to his self-advancement to one that is higher by obedience to any law upon the principle of works. But of all the fallacies that the human mind has embraced, perhaps there is none that it holds more tenaciously and fondly than the notion of a probation for a higher state, according to the law of works. How many are there that are not looking to be promoted by their obedience to law as a certain reward for their good behaviour? Who has not heard of Adam being advanced, if he had obeyed instead of having broken the law? But who, at the same time, has ever heard anything that is intelligible and consistent as to the grounds on which this promotion was to have proceeded? Of any such probation in any case, whether in that of man as a creature under natural law, either in the un-fallen state, or in the fallen; or in that of the Jews under Jewish law; or in that of Christians under Christian law, the Scripture presents no evidence. Had any self-advancement to a superior state been held out, in any case, upon the principle of the law of works, it is most certain that there must have been a duty defined by some law to have been performed to this end, and a promise given accordingly. But where shall

we find the slightest intimation of anything of the kind? Nor have we any example of this sort of thing. Whatever advancement has taken place in the history of the race, either in an improved condition, as in the case of the seed of Abraham, or in the scale of being, as in the case of Christians, has proceeded, not according to the law of works, but according to the law of faith, and has been received and enjoyed as a favour pure and simple. Nor does anything of the kind seem possible in the nature of things. For though it may be easily understood that it may be given to a creature, upon the principle of the law of works, as a reward for obedience, to retain a state originally conferred by favour, it is impossible to make out, at all consistently with the nature of things, that any one could acquire for himself, according to the principle of works, an advancement upon that state. The more closely this matter is investigated, the more evident it must become, that all notions of a probation for a higher state upon the principle of works are gratuitous assumptions which have not the slightest warrant from the Scripture, that they are wholly without example, and that they are contrary to the nature of things.

The law of faith, as this is established between the divine Sovereign and his subject, is just the principle according to which absolute favour is extended by the Lord of all, and is received by his servants; and this will be the mode of living in every relation of grace which may ever subsist between them. It simply represents, and embodies in itself, the principle of giving and receiving. In every case of a due from the giver and a duty from the receiver, this order of things cannot obtain; for, so to speak, were the gift a due, it would cease to be a gift, for it would be wanting of the requisite freeness to make it one; and were the receiving a duty, it would, in like manner, no longer be a free receiving. Therefore this law can have no place, and cannot be the mode of living between God and man, about any matter in any economy wherein the Sovereign claims a right, and the subject discharges

a duty in obedience to a demand made on him. In every economy in which the law of faith is in force, there will be, indeed, divine claims advanced and enforced, and, consequently, duties to be discharged; but not in respect to the favours given and received according to this law.

Anything about which God claims a right, and man acknowledges a due, and for which man discharges a duty and God accepts an obedience, can never find a place under this order of things. Nothing but absolute favour, freely giving and freely receiving, can be known here. Whatever may be required economically, on the one hand in order to the giving, and on the other in order to the realization and enjoyment of anything given under the law of faith, grace must provide. Nothing can be suspended on any legal condition to be found in, or on any duty to be performed by, the persons to be advantaged by the establishment of this law of living between them and God. Under this law there is no promise of reward for obedience, nor threatening of penalty for disobedience. If a duty were imposed, and a reward were promised to obedience, and a penalty threatened to disobedience, dutifulness must be vindicated and rewarded as a matter of right, and undutifulness must be condemned and punished as a matter of justice; but then, as must be evident, these are conditions that, in their very nature, are wholly opposed to, and utterly inconsistent with, the law of faith. Can any man want the perspicacity to see that whereinsoever a legal right is claimed, and a due is acknowledged, and a duty is performed, and an obedience is accepted, in order to the enjoyment of any good, that, not the law of faith, but the law of works is in force? Can any man fail to see that whereinsoever the discharge of a duty is at all a factor of the enjoyment of any blessing, that this is a condition which must, in the very nature of things, wholly exclude grace and faith? Yet, axiomatic as the proposition is, that duty and faith respecting the same object exclude each other, few persons seem to appre-

hend this simple truth. Should this truth come to be universally understood, a veritable revolution in theological teaching and ministerial utterance must be the result to an almost equal extent. But the change would be a real reformation. May it come!

In sum, then, the law of works will be the governing principle, or mode of living, in some relation subsisting between God and man. The relation may be a natural one, as between the Creator and the creature; or it may be an economical one, as between the Sovereign and the subject. But whatever the relation may be wherein the law of works obtains, the essential elements of this governing principle will be a right claimed on God's part according to plain precept, and a due acknowledged on man's. In the event of a due obedience being rendered, a title to vindication and acceptance will be acquired; and in case of disobedience, a penalty of condemnation and punishment will be deserved. On the other hand, the law of faith will be the governing principle established in some connection subsisting between the Sovereign and the subject, that originated and is continued from pure favour. All the advantages arising out of this relation will be free gifts, and everything belonging thereto will bear on it the impress of grace. While on the one hand the law of works knows of no grace; on the other hand, the law of faith knows of nothing else. While under that a claim is made; under this a promise is given. While where that holds sway, a duty is to be done; where this obtains, a gift is to be accepted. While under that, a dutiful subject will be vindicated; under this, a transgressor will be justified. While under the former, disobedience will be punished; under the latter, there is no precept to keep or to break, all being pure promise and grace; and, therefore, no vindication and acceptance is to be looked for on the ground of dutifulness, and no condemnation and punishment to be dreaded for disobedience.

Here it may be proper to say a word in explanation of rewards; a subject about which a good deal of con-

fusion of thought seems to prevail. Rewards are of three kinds. Of merit, of debt, and of grace. Nowhere within the whole field of theological truth is a reward of merit to be found, save in the "joy" that was set before Christ, and for which he "endured the cross, despising the shame." Rewards of merit are impossible to men as between them and God. Rewards of debt are ever found where the law of works is in force. Of this kind of reward David speaks in Psa. xix. 11, as arising from keeping God's judgments. In respect to everything about which the law of works is in force, and in every economy where this principle obtains, "there is a reward for the righteous." Rewards of grace are those that are given according to that principle; that is, they are gifts, pure and simple, to which the name of reward is given on account of their being received by persons bearing a given character, pursuing a given course. These are found in every economy in which, and in respect to everything about which, the law of faith obtains. It was to a reward of this kind that Moses had respect when he preferred the reproach of Christ to the treasures in Egypt.

Until the mind digests these distinctions between the law of works and the law of faith, and assimilates their truth, the Word of God will be, not a revelation, but a riddle. Teachers will continue to utter contradictions, and demand for them, what is impossible to a rational being, namely, an intelligent acceptance. Thoughtful learners will be staggered. Thoughtless ones, unable to make it all out, will gape with wonder at the profoundness of things, and will swallow in indiscriminating credulity what they are taught with all the benefit that may happen under such conditions; while those that are sceptical will get their doubts deepened and strengthened.

Attention may now be turned to the provinces in which the law of works and the law of faith have been, and are, in force, in the several economies wherein they have held, and now hold, a place; together with the extent of their operation.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE LAW OF WORKS AND THE LAW OF FAITH AS
THEY OBTAIN IN THE ECONOMY OF NATURE.

God, in his relations with man, has established three principal economies in the world. One of these may be designated the Adamic, or natural; another the Abrahamic, or typical; and the other the Christian, or gracious. The first embraces all concerns between the Creator and the whole of mankind as his creatures. The second comprehends all things relative to the distinction God conferred on Abraham and some of his descendants in giving to them the land of Canaan for a possession. The third is an economy of grace relating to a special people of every age and nation, designated "a remnant according to the election of grace," and this comprises everything concerning Christ and his church. In all these economies both the law of works and the law of faith have been established, each occupying its own appropriate sphere.

Originally, before the fall, the law of faith had no existence in the economy of nature; man was wholly under the law of works. Regarding him as a moral being, man was necessarily placed under law to his Maker. This law has never been abrogated either in whole or in part. Man, viewed simply in his relation to his Creator, was and is, subject to its claims as the rule of his obedience, and to its penalties for every disobedience. The precepts of the law of nature have their fullest codification in the tables which God gave to Moses. These the Lord Jesus reduced to two capital articles, according to which a man is required to love his Creator to the full power of all his faculties, and his neighbour as himself. The reward of obedience is represented in the words, "Thou shalt live;" and to live in this instance, must be interpreted to be the retention and enjoyment of the state in which man was created. As he originally came from his Creator's

hands, this would be life to him in the highest sense of that word known or desired. For anything beyond this state he could have no natural competency nor desire, and he had no ground of expectation. As there was a perfect congruity between his natural competency for duty and the rule of his obedience, so there was also between his faculties for enjoyment and the state in which he was created. Neither could more have been looked for by him as a reward of his obedience without a commixture of the laws of faith and works, which is never found, respecting the same object. The penalty of disobedience is contained, it may be taken, in the words, "Thou shalt die." What these words mean is, not the destruction, or annihilation, of man's existence, but the elimination therefrom of all the true elements of life in the ethical sense of this word. They comprehend the death that is upon man's existence in this sense now, and whatever there will be of the like kind in the final punishment of the wicked hereafter. The rule, the reward, and the penalty of this law in the economy of nature remain. Nothing has been altered. Indeed, about the immutability of the rule and the penalty there is no dispute, or, at most, none worthy of regard; but it is doubtful whether there is equal clearness, conviction, and general consent about the reward of obedience. However this may be, it is most certain, from repeated testimonies, that the man that performs the requirements of the law shall have his title to live vindicated. "This do," said Jesus to the lawyer, "and thou shalt live," Luke x. 28. The life spoken of here, as the reward of obedience according to the law of works in the economy of nature, must not be confounded with that eternal life which God promised in Christ before the world began, according to the law of faith, in the economy of grace. Heaven and earth, Christ and Adam, that which is spiritual and that which is natural, do not differ more than these two lives.

But it may be objected that it is impossible that any sinful man can, from a universal deficiency, keep the law perfectly, and so entitle himself to a justification be-

fore God. This is granted : and, moreover, it is contended that no works of the law can, from the very nature of the thing, justify a sinner at all. By works of law, under the law of works, a righteous man may be vindicated ; but a sinner can never be so justified. While, then, it is clear, and generally known, that no man under the fall can do anything of the kind, and in the degree required of him to constitute a complete obedience to the divine law ; it ought to be equally known that, if the self-contradictory proposition could be true, namely, that a sinner obeyed the law perfectly, his obedience would avail him nothing for his justification. Nevertheless, the reply of Jesus to the lawyer remains valid and important. If the law continues in force to condemn the transgressor, it is but equal that, if there are any vindicable, as righteous, they should be vindicated, and that the law should remain to vindicate them. This is so ; and, therefore, so far as the law itself is concerned, and the obligation under which, on the principle of works, the Creator put himself to the creature ; man is just as eligible to look for, and enjoy, the reward of a perfect obedience now, on the proper terms, as ever he was. The words, "The man which doeth those things shall live by them," are, indeed,—accepting as a first truth that "The just shall live by faith,"—a decisive testimony in their way, that the righteousness by which a sinner is justified is revealed to us upon the principle of faith ; but they are also an exact representation of a still existing truth respecting the law of works. It is still a truth, and will be until the end of time, that if a man shall meet the requirements of his Maker's law at the beginning, he shall be entitled to, and shall enjoy the life that was then possessed.

But it is time we proceeded to the consideration of the law of faith as this obtains in the economy of nature ; a branch of truth which, if it may not have the importance of some others, deserves, nevertheless, the most serious attention of all that would understand the Word of God.

If the fall of man gave an occasion for the wrath of God to be revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, so, also, contrariwise, this terrible event afforded an opportunity for the display of the riches of the goodness and forbearance and long-suffering of God. Moreover, since Adam's crime and calamity, and the consequent guilt and misery of mankind, God, so to speak, has seized this opportunity to exhibit these excellencies of his nature in every age and nation. All sinners are existing, and are possessing whatever good of existence they have, without a right. It is purely of the Lord's mercies that all are not consumed. As, therefore, everything that is advantageous in a sinner's condition under the fall arises from the display of the riches of the goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering of God, it will be clear, seeing that the exhibition of all or each of these excellencies of the Most High is the extension of undeserved favour, that their manifestation creates a predicament of grace. Let this be clearly apprehended, and then it will become equally clear that, to whatever extent and by whatever means, if any, God may have warranted sinners to look for the manifestation of the riches of any or all of these his excellencies, or of any other similar to them, he has, by such means and so far, introduced into the economy of nature the law of faith in the conduct of affairs between his fallen creatures and himself.

What of favour Adam, as a creature under the natural economy, was warranted to expect from the correspondence he had with his Creator and Governor after his fall, it may be very difficult to say in precise terms; but that his God had introduced a dispensation of goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering, and that he was led to look for some expressions of these excellencies of his Maker there can be no reasonable doubt. It is clear that he might infer from the very words addressed to him in condemnation of his sin that his natural life would be spared for a time, and that the ground should produce what was necessary to meet

his bodily wants, albeit that he was to eat his food in sorrow all the days of his life. Whatever the goodness of his Maker warranted him to infer to his advantage herefrom, this he might believe for and expect from his God; and his posterity have the same warrant for faith and hope relative to the same things that he had.

But in whatever state of doubt the antediluvians may have found themselves relative to any reason or ground to hope in God from the absence of an express promise, all this has been removed from the post-diluvians by the word of the Lord to Noah. Of this distinguished man, after the flood, God made, as it were, a new head of mankind. In the promises he made to this eminent man, in the acceptance of the sacrifices offered by him, in the blessing he pronounced upon him, and in the covenant he made with him, God pledged himself to mankind that he would display his goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering "while the earth remaineth." A state of favour was then established, comprehending the whole race by a covenant of which the rainbow is a token "for perpetual generations," and the law of faith was introduced, as a mode of living, between man and his Maker respecting every good therein promised for all time. What, therefore, is thus promised every man may believe for, pray for, and look for; and for every good of the kind held and enjoyed every man should render thanksgiving to God; and should regard himself as being not consumed by the want of what he enjoys from the freely-bestowed favour of his Maker under a dispensation of goodness, forbearance, and long-suffering. What the wise man of the world will look for from the invariability of what he calls the laws of nature, the worshipping man of the world will look for from the unchanging covenant of the God of nature according to the law of faith. Nature, to this man, is God's creature and subject. From God she received her being. Her laws are her Maker's modes of management. On him her condition is dependent. By him her destiny is fixed.

Here a question of some importance may justly claim a little consideration. May anyone that, according to his own consciousness, is not actuated by Christian principle, worship God acceptably by prayer and thanksgiving without any reference to Christ? By some, and of these there are that are very far from being vulgar and unlearned men, the negative of this question is strongly asserted, and the assertion is not made in a merely passing peremptory utterance, but is supported, as best it may be, by much argument and appeal to Scripture. Good Mr. Romaine said, "Until Christ's righteousness be imputed to you by faith, your prayers are an abomination, and your fancied good works are nothing but sin." A little further on he added, "We doubt not but the best of them—works done before the grace of Christ—are only so many splendid sins." Mr. Haldane, in his consideration of the case of Cornelius at the end of his generally excellent Commentary on the Romans, has cited these words with approbation, and used them to assist his proof that the centurion was a godly man in the spiritual acceptance of that term.

Now if there are men who present their repentance, and prayers, and thanksgivings, or any other acts of worship, as a meritorious consideration, or as an economical means, for the acquirement of pardon and righteousness, or of any other blessing of salvation, they unquestionably commit a blunder and a crime. A blunder, because they introduce the law of works into that part of the economy of grace where it has no place whatever; and because it is evident that these things cannot possess in equity any meritorious character, nor be the economical means of acquiring anything at all. A crime, because they, in effect, contradict the testimony of God about, and trample under foot the provision he has made for, the justification and salvation of a sinner. If Mr. Romaine had the notions of such men in view, he was undoubtedly correct in saying that their prayers and good works were "only so many splendid sins." But it is very questionable