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THE

DOCTRINE

OF

THE TWO COVENANTS :

WHEREIN

THE NATURE OF ORIGINAL SIN IS EXPLAINED; AND  
ST. PAUL AND ST. JAMES RECONCILED IN THE  
GREAT ARTICLE OF JUSTIFICATION.

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THE DOCTRINE  
OF  
THE TWO COVENANTS.

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“ *For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, That the man, which doeth those things, shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above;) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved,*” Rom. x. 5—9.

INTRODUCTION.

OF all the mysterious depths in the christian religion, there is none more necessary for our information, nor more influential upon our practice, than a right apprehension, and a distinct knowledge, of the Doctrine of the Covenants; for, if we be ignorant or mistaken in this, we must needs be liable to false or confused notions of the law and the gospel; of our fall in Adam, and restoration by Christ; of the true grounds of men's condemnation, and the means and terms of their justification; of the justice of God in punishing sinners, and his glorious mercy in saving believers: and, consequently, neither can

many perplexing doubts and questions be resolved, the necessity, and yet different concurrence of faith and obedience unto salvation cleared, the utter insufficiency of our own righteousness to procure acceptance for us with God, evinced, his justice vindicated, nor his grace glorified. For all these great and important truths will readily own themselves to be built upon the foundation of God's covenant and stipulation with man; as I hope to make appear in our farther progress.

And yet, though this doctrine be thus generally serviceable both to knowledge and practice, how many are there who call themselves christians, that are grossly ignorant of these transactions between God and man! that know not upon what terms they stand with the Almighty; nor what they may expect, according to the tenor of their mutual compact and agreement!

This, therefore, I shall endeavour to treat of, as briefly and as clearly as the subject will permit, from the words which I have now read unto you; which are the transcript and copy of those two great contracts made between heaven and earth, God and man: the one, from the beginning of his being, and that is the Covenant of Works; the other, immediately upon his fall and ruin, and that is the Covenant of Grace: the one, called here the Righteousness of the Law; and the other, the Righteousness of Faith.

But, before I can particularly treat on this subject, I must first show you what a Covenant is, in its general notion; and whether there is, or can be any such thing as a proper covenant between God and man.

Our English word covenant seems to be borrowed from the Latin *convenire* or *conventus*, which sig-

nifies a mutual agreement and accord, upon conditions propounded, and accepted by the parties concerned. And it may be thus described—A covenant is a mutual consent and agreement entered into between persons, whereby they stand bound, each to other, to perform the conditions contracted and indented for. And thus a covenant is the very same thing with a contract or bargain.

Now, to a strict and proper covenant there are two things presupposed.

First. That, in the persons contracting, there be a natural liberty and freedom the one from the other; that is, that the one be not bound to the other as to the things covenanted for, antecedently to that compact or agreement made between them.

For where an obligation to a duty is natural, there it cannot be strictly and properly federal, or arising from a covenant. If children should indent with their parents to yield them obedience, upon condition that they on their part will afford them fit and convenient provision, this cannot, in strict sense, be called a covenant; because neither of the parties were free from the obligation of a natural law, which obliged them antecedently to this compact. In a proper covenant, the things promised by each party must be due, only upon consent and agreement: so that there must be an equality of the persons covenanting, if not in other respects, yet in respect of that for which they do covenant, that the right of both, in what they mutually promise, be equal. If one man covenant with another to serve him faithfully, upon condition of such a reward and wages, though there may be much disparity upon other accounts between them, yet, as to the things covenanted for, there is none; the

one having as much right to the wages as the other to the service, and neither having right to either before the agreement.

Second. In a proper covenant, there must be mutual consent of the persons covenanting.

And this is called a stipulation, whereby each party doth freely and voluntarily engage himself to the other for his own particular benefit and advantage. For where both are free, and disobliged, it is generally the apprehension of some good that will accrue unto them, that brings them to enter into a federal engagement.

Now, this being plainly the nature of a covenant, it clearly follows, that there neither is, nor can be a strict and proper covenant between God and man. For,

First. Both parties covenanting are not naturally free the one from the other.

God is, indeed, naturally and originally free, and hath no obligation to man antecedent to his own gracious will and promise. But man hath a double bond to duty; both his natural obligation, as he is a creature, and his federal, as he is a covenanter; and therefore he is bound to obedience, not only by his stipulation and engagement, but also upon that natural relation wherein he stands to God as his Creator, and which alone would have been a sufficient obligation upon him, had he never entered into covenant. And,

Second. The creature's consent and agreement is not necessary to the covenant which God makes with it.

And that, because the terms of it being so infinitely to our advantage, as there can be no reason imagined why we should dissent, so, neither is there any to expect an explicit consent for the

ratification of it. Neither are we lords of ourselves ; but he who made us may impose on us what laws he pleaseth ; and, if he condescend to encourage us by promises of reward, this voluntary obligation, which God is pleased to lay upon himself, lays a farther obligation upon us to do what he requires, out of love and thankfulness, faith and hope, whereby we cheerfully expect and embrace what he hath promised ; which likewise, of itself, is so vastly transcendent and disproportionate to all our performances, that it cannot be our due, upon a strict and proper covenant, (for, in every such bargain, that which is promised by both parties must be alike valuable, at least in the esteem of the covenanters,) but rather a free beneficence, upon an arbitrary promise.

So that, between man and man, a covenant is a mutual and an equal obligation ; but, between God and man, it is only a mutual obligation ; on God's part, to a free performance of his promises, and on man's part, to a cheerful performance of his duty : wherein, as there is no equality, either in right or value, so, neither is there any necessity that man should give an explicit and formal consent thereto.

And, as God's transactions with us are not strictly and properly a covenant, so, neither are they strictly and properly a law ; although they are often called the law of works, and the law of faith. For God doth not deal with us merely out of absolute sovereignty, but he is graciously pleased to oblige himself to us by promise ; which doth not belong to a sovereign, acting as such, but carries some resemblance of a covenant. So that the agreement which God hath made with man, is not merely a covenant, nor merely a law, but mixed

of both. If God had only said "Do this," without adding "Thou shalt live," this had not been a covenant, but a law; and, if he had only said "Thou shalt live," without commanding "Do this," it had not been a covenant, but a promise. Remove the condition, and you make it a simple promise; remove the promise, and you make it an absolute law: but, both these being found in it, it is both a law and a covenant, though both in a large acceptation.

And thus you see what a covenant is, and how the transactions between God and man may be said to be a covenant, and wherein they differ from the proper notion of one.

Yet the difference is not so great, but that the scripture most frequently makes mention of covenants ratified between God and man, and chiefly insists upon the two principal ones, which indeed are the argument and substance of the whole bible, the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace; in which not only particular persons were engaged, but the whole race of mankind; the summary contents of which were, "Do this, and live," and "Believe, and live." The former is the tenor of the covenant of works, the latter the tenor of the covenant of grace. And both these are expressed in my text: the covenant of works is called the righteousness of the law, that is, the rule of righteousness by the law, the sentence of which is, that "the man which doeth those things shall live by them:" the covenant of grace is called "the righteousness which is of faith," that is, the rule of obtaining righteousness by faith, the purport of which is this, that, if thou shalt believe on the Lord Jesus, whom God hath raised from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS ON LAW AND  
 RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Now, here, before I can treat of the substance of these two Covenants, it will be requisite to explain to you—

What is meant by the *law*; and,

What by *righteousness*.

I. To the first I answer, that the *law* is taken very variously in scripture; but, most commonly, by it is meant the whole sum of those commands which Moses, from the mouth of God, delivered to the Israelites, containing that which we commonly call the moral, judicial, and ceremonial law.

But, certainly, in this place it cannot be taken in that latitude; for the judicial and ceremonial law were not branches of that covenant of works which God entered into with Adam, nor are any guilty for not observing them, except the Jews, to whom they were particularly delivered.

This law, therefore, which, according to the covenant of works, must be punctually fulfilled, in order to our obtaining justification by it, is the moral law; the law and dictates of pure and uncorrupted nature. And this law of nature is no other but a bright and shining impression of Divine light upon the soul; a kind of *parely\** and reflection of the immutable, unsearchable, and eternal law of God's holiness; a communication of Divine attributes unto us, whereby, in our first moulding, we were stamped after the similitude of God, and are said to bear his image.

\* Or *Parhelion*, a solar refraction, or reflection of the sun.

Of this moral law, God hath given the world two draughts ; the one archetypal, being the fair strictures of his own likeness, in our first creation ; the other ectypal,\* in the decalogue, wherein he hath in ten words limned out what man's nature was when it was perfect, and what it ought to be that it may be perfect. So that, for the matter and substance of them, there is no difference at all between the original law of man's first creation, the law of pure reason and uncorrupted nature, and the transcript thereof in the moral law delivered by Moses.

And, therefore, as the law of his creation was to Adam a covenant of works, so the moral law, being for the matter of it the very same, must also be acknowledged to be the matter and substance of the covenant of works. The same commands of both tables, which bind us to obedience, bound Adam himself, so far forth as his condition in paradise was capable of an actual obligation by them ; for parents, he had none to honour ; neighbours and servants, he had none to receive the offices of justice and charity. But, had he continued in his first estate till these relations had sprung up about him, the same commands, from the innate principle of his reason, would have bound him to his respective duties towards them as do now bind us.

And this may be farther discerned, even by those obscure prints of the law of nature which yet remain upon the hearts of heathens, who, though they have not the law, yet, saith the apostle, they "do by nature the things contained in the law," that is, in the moral law, Rom. ii. 14. As, when Moses brake the two tables of stone, yet something

\* Ectype, an impression, or copy.

of the commandments was still left engraven by the finger of God upon the shattered pieces of them ; so, when man fell, and brake that goodly frame of his nature, yet, still some remains and parcels of the same law, written there likewise by the finger of God, may be observed still to continue upon it.

So that, between the law of pure nature and the moral law, there is as much agreement as between an indenture and its counterpart. And, therefore, if the law of nature were to Adam a covenant of works, as doubtless it was, the moral law, being for the matter of it the same, must likewise for the matter of it be the same covenant.

Now, the moral law may be considered by us either as a covenant of works, or as a rule of life. In the former respect, it is superseded to all believers by the mercy and grace of the gospel ; in the latter, it is explained, corroborated, and protected by the gospel ; and, though it be no longer the measure of God's proceedings towards us, yet still it is the measure of our duty towards him.

And here, if a profitable digression may be allowed, give me leave to show you the agreement and difference that there is between the law and the gospel. For, since they are vulgarly thought such opposite things, it will not, perhaps, be impertinent to state and fix the limits, both of their opposition and concord.

When we speak of the law and the gospel, the words are very equivocal, and may cause many mistakes and errors in ignorant and confused minds. For,

1. By the *law*, three things may be understood.

(1.) The law, as a covenant of works.

And then, as hath been already noted, it must

be taken for the sum and substance of the moral law, as originally imprinted in our natures.

(2.) By law, may be meant the moral law, as it is the rule for our duty and obedience.

And so we understand it, when we commonly say, the law commands this or that to be done, or this and that to be avoided.

(3.) By the law, may be meant legal administrations and ceremonies, which, under the pedagogy\* of Moses, were a great part of the Jewish worship.

And thus we call their sacrifices, purifyings, ways of atonement, and other typical rites, legal observances.

2. So, likewise, when we speak of the *gospel*, two things may be meant by it.

(1.) Gospel grace, purchased for lost mankind by Jesus Christ: both relative grace, for the change of our state, in pardon, justification, adoption, &c. and real grace, for the change of our natures, in sanctification and renovation.

And thus we use to say, that the first gospel that ever was preached in the world, was to Adam, presently after his fall, by God himself, Gen. iii. 15. The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head: for this was the first discovery of grace and mercy, through Christ Jesus. Yea, and the promise made to Abraham many ages before the coming of Christ into the world, is by the apostle called the preaching of the gospel: "God," saith the apostle, "preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed," Gal. iii. 8.

(2.) By gospel, is sometimes meant the gospel administration of this grace, dispensed to the world by Christ himself and his ministers, in a more free

Teaching.

and open way, than the shadows under the law did exhibit.

3. Now, according to these various acceptations of law and gospel, we may observe a twofold difference and a twofold agreement between them.

Their *difference* is twofold.

If we understand by the law a covenant of works, and by the gospel the grace and mercy of the gospel; so, they are extremely opposite and contrary one to the other.

For, take gospel grace for relative grace, such as whereby we are pardoned, reconciled, justified, and adopted; these could have no place at all under the covenant of works. Yea, if we take gospel grace for the real grace of sanctification and renovation, so as these terms do imply the making of an unclean thing holy, and an old thing new; it had not, neither could have place under the covenant of works, because there was no uncleanness supposed to be done away, nor any thing old that should be renewed. For this covenant makes no allowances for transgression, nor any admission of repentance. Yet, indeed, the habits of grace, which now sanctify us, were also in Adam, whilst under this covenant: yea, and Christ also was the author of them; but with this difference, that to him Christ was the author of them merely as Creator, but to us as Redeemer; to him, only as God the second Person, but to us as God-man the Mediator.

If, by the law, we mean a legal administration under types and figures, such as were the sacrifices and ceremonies in use under the Jewish discipline; and, by the gospel, that clear and unveiled way of dispensing the means of salvation since the coming of Christ into the world: so,

again, they as much differ each from other, as shadows do from substance, or clouds from sunshine.

And thus may we understand that antithesis, "The law was given by Moses;" that is, the ceremonial, shady law: "but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ," John i. 17; that is, a clearer and more full manifestation of grace, and the very substance and truth of those things which were before typified and adumbrated.

These are the two differences between the law and the gospel; in both which, the gospel takes place upon the abrogation of the law: gospel grace hath abrogated the law as a covenant; and gospel dispensations have abrogated legal ceremonies.

Their *agreement* is, likewise, twofold.

[1.] If we take the moral law as it is the directive rule of our obedience, so there is a perfect harmony and accord between it and the gospel.

For the duties of the moral law are as strictly required from believers since Christ's coming, as they were before: yea, as strictly as ever they were from Adam in innocence; though not upon the same terms from us, as from him. The gospel is, in this respect, so far from weakening the law, that it doth rather much strengthen and confirm it. What saith our Saviour? I am not "come to destroy the law, but to fulfil" it, Matt. v. 17: And the apostle? "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law," Rom. iii. 31. The gospel receives the law into its protection and patronage: so that, to the obliging power, which it had before from the authority of God the great Sovereign of the world, enacting it; hereby is added the farther sanction of Christ the Mediator, ratifying and confirming it;

who likewise gives us of his Spirit, whereby we are enabled to act in conformity to the law, and to fulfil its commands. The law is, therefore, now taken within the pale of the gospel, and incorporated into it: so that it is no longer law and gospel; but, rather, an evangelical and gospel law.

[2.] If, by law, we mean the legal administrations of ceremonies and sacrifices, types and figures, used under the Mosaical discipline; and if, by gospel, we mean the grace exhibited by it of pardon, justification, &c. so neither is there any opposition or repugnance between them, but a most perfect accord and agreement.

For, before Christ's coming into the world, gospel grace was under a legal administration. When the sun is approaching us in the morning, though its body be under the horizon, and in another hemisphere, yet then we see the dawning and glimmering of its light. So was it in the church: though the Sun of righteousness was not risen upon them with its full brightness, yet they then saw and enjoyed the dawn of our perfect day; and those Jews, who lived as it were in the other hemisphere of time before Christ's coming, were as much under grace as now we are, though not under such clear and glorious dispensations of it. We read, indeed, that the disciples were first called christians some few years after our Saviour's death; but yet those saints, who lived many ages before his birth, were as truly christians as they, though not known nor distinguished by that name. Yea, and I remember I have somewhere met with a passage of St. Ambrose: \* *Priùs cæpisse populam christianum, quàm populum Judæorum*: "There

\* De Sacram. l. iv. c. 3.

were christian people in the world, before ever there was a Jewish nation." They had then the same Christ to save them, the same promises to support them, the same faith to appropriate both unto them, as now we have. They were under as great an impossibility of obtaining life by the deeds of the law, as we are; and we under as strict an injunction to fulfil the commands of the law, as was ever imposed on them. The only difference between them and us consists in this, that they saw the Sun of righteousness under a cloud; we, openly: they, by its reflection; we, directly.

And, thus much for the opening of what is meant by the law, in this text; which is the moral law, as a covenant of works.

II. The second preliminary was, to explain what was meant by *righteousness*. "Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law," &c.

And, indeed, unless we have a clear notion of this, we can neither know for what ends the covenants were made, nor wherein the nature of justification doth consist: for, because we fulfil the covenant made with us by God, therefore are we righteous; and because we are righteous according to the terms of the covenant, therefore are we justified. So that a clear knowledge of this righteousness will be serviceable to the unfolding of both; since it is the end of the covenant, and the matter of justification.

This, therefore, I shall attempt, by giving, first, several distinctions; and, then, several theses or positions, concerning righteousness.

There is, therefore, a twofold righteousness.

*Qualitative*; or that which may be understood as a quality or habit in us.

*Relative or legal*; or that, which stands in conformity to some law.

A *qualitative* righteousness is nothing else but the divine qualities of grace and holiness inherent in the soul.

Holiness and righteousness, to be gracious and to be righteous, in this sense signify one and the same thing.

Nothing doth more frequently occur in scripture, than this use of the word. So, Noah is called righteous, Gen. vii. 1. and Abraham pleads with God for the righteous in Sodom, Gen. xviii. 23, 24. and Zacharias and Elizabeth have this testimony, that they were both righteous, because they walked in all the commandments of the Lord blameless, Luke i. 6. The ways of holiness are called the ways of righteousness, Ps. xxiii. 3; and the works of holiness, works of righteousness, Ps. xv. 2. Isa. lxiv. 5, and "He that doeth righteousness, is righteous," 1 John iii. 7. Many other places there are, too numerous to be cited, wherein righteousness is taken both for the inherent principle of holiness, and for the gracious actions that proceed therefrom.

It is, indeed, improper to call our holiness, which is so imperfect and full of failings, by the name of righteousness. Nay, were it most perfect and consummate, yet it is not the same with righteousness strictly and properly taken; for righteousness, properly, is rather a denomination arising from the conformity of actions to their rule, than either the principle or substance of the actions themselves: for that is righteous, which is right; and that is right, which is agreeable to the rule by which it is to be measured. Even in Adam, whose holiness was perfect, yet was there

this difference between it and his righteousness, at least in our clear conceptions—that his grace, as it was conformable to its pattern, namely, the purity of God, so it was his holiness; but as it stood in conformity to the law of God, so it was his righteousness. For, in strict propriety of speech, the rule of holiness is different from the rule of righteousness: holiness is measured by similitude to God; righteousness, by conformity to the law; holiness may admit of degrees, and be more or less perfect in several subjects in whom it is implanted; but righteousness consists in an indivisible and unvariable point, for if it be less than a perfect conformity, it is not righteousness, and more than perfect it cannot be.

Yet our defective and imperfect holiness may obtain the name of righteousness: either because it flows from that principle, which, in its own nature, tends to a perfect conformity unto the law; or, else, because it is a necessary and inseparable concomitant of a true and proper righteousness, though not our own, yet imputed.

There is a *legal* or *relative* righteousness; and this a man is said to have, when the law, by which he is to be judged, hath nothing whereof to accuse him.

Unto this righteousness there are required,

1. A law established for the regulating of our actions.

For as, where there is no law, there can be no transgression; so, neither can there be any proper positive righteousness. And,

2. There must be a perfect conformity unto this law.

The law is the straight rule, by which all our actions are to be measured; I mean the law of

nature and right reason, enacted to all mankind ; and the superadded law of Divine revelation, to those who enjoy it. Now, it is a contradiction, to affirm that there can be a righteousness, where there is any obliquity in actions, compared to the rule and law whereby they must be judged ; for, in case of such obliquity and crookedness, the law hath an advantage to lay in an accusation against the transgressor.

So, then, we may take a brief description of righteousness, properly so called, in these terms : righteousness is a denomination, first of actions, and consequently of persons, arising from their perfect conformity to the law whereby they must be judged. It must be first of actions, and then of the person ; because the righteousness of the person results from the conformity of his actions. Nor will it suffice that some of his actions be thus conformable to the law, but every action that falls under its cognizance must be conformed unto it, or else the person can by no means be accounted righteous.

This perfect conformity being thus absolutely necessary to constitute a person righteous, and yet as absolutely impossible to us in this our lapsed state, it might therefore seem to be alike impossible that ever we should obtain a righteousness that might avail to our justification.

And, therefore, for the clearer apprehension of the nature of righteousness, and the manner how we are denominated righteous, which indeed is the very critical point in the doctrine of justification, these following distinctions, if duly pondered, will be very serviceable.

The law consists of two parts. 1. The precept, requiring obedience : " Do this." 2. The

sanction of this precept by rewards and punishments : “ The man, that doeth these things, shall live by them,” is the reward promised unto obedience ; and, “ The soul, that sinneth, it shall die,” is the punishment threatened against disobedience.

Now, according to these two parts of the law, so there are two ways of becoming righteous by the law ; so that it shall have nothing to lay to our charge. The one is, by obedience to the precept ; the other is, by submission to the penalty : not only he who performs what the law commands, is thereby righteous ; but he also who hath suffered what the law threatens.

From hence we may again distinguish righteousness, into a righteousness of obedience, and a righteousness of satisfaction : the former ariseth from performing the precept of the law ; the latter, from undergoing the penalty. Between these two righteousnesses this remarkable difference may be observed, that the promise of life being annexed to the fulfilling of the precept, the righteousness of obedience gives a full right and title unto the life promised : but no such right results from the righteousness of satisfaction ; for it is not said in the law, “ Suffer this, and live,” since the suffering itself was death, but “ Do this, and live.” So that, by mere satisfaction, a man is not accounted the fulfiller of the law ; nor yet farther, to be dealt withal, as a transgressor of it. Hence, then, the one may be called a positive righteousness, because it ariseth from actual and positive conformity of our obedience to the rules of the law : the other, only negative righteousness, because satisfaction is equivalent to innocency, and reduceth

the person to a guiltless condition ; which I here call a negative righteousness.

Now each of these, both the righteousness of obedience and that of satisfaction, may again be twofold ; either personal, or imputed. I call that personal righteousness, which a man in his own person works out, whether it be of obedience to the commands of the law, or of satisfaction to the penalty thereof. Imputed righteousness is a righteousness wrought out by another, yet graciously, by the Lawgiver himself, made ours ; and so accounted as effectual to all intents of the law, as if we had in our own persons performed it.

These distinctions being thus premised, I shall now proceed to lay down some positions, which may farther clear up this subject to our apprehensions.

1. If we could perfectly fulfil the preceptive part of the law, we should thereby obtain a perfect righteousness of obedience ; and might lay claim to eternal life, by virtue of the promise annexed to the covenant of works.

This is most unquestionably true ; especially if we suppose this perfect obedience by our own natural strength, without the assistance of Divine and supernatural grace : because such an ability would infer the primitive integrity of our nature, and exclude the guilt of original sin, which hath involved all in the curse and malediction of the law.

2. If we could undergo the whole of that punishment which the law threatens for disobedience, then also should we be accounted personally righteous by a righteousness of satisfaction.

If an offender against a human law suffers the penalty which the law requires to be inflicted on

him, according to the nature of his offence, whether it be imprisonment, a pecuniary mulct, or the like, that man thereby becomes negatively righteous, because the law is satisfied, so that it hath nothing farther to charge against him for that particular fact. Thus stands the case in reference to the law of God. The transgressing of the command binds us over to suffer punishment; which suffering, if we can accomplish, and come from under, we shall be as righteous in the sight of God, as if we had never transgressed.

3. Because the punishment threatened by the law of works is such, as can never be eluctated,\* nor fully and completely borne by us; therefore, it is utterly impossible, that ever we should obtain a personal righteousness of satisfaction.

Indeed, could we suffer it, and come from under it, we should then be as righteous and innocent as if we had never transgressed.

But this is utterly impossible. For,

(1.) Infinite justice cannot be satisfied under the rate of infinite punishment. In a full satisfaction, the punishment must answer the greatness of the offence. But every offence against God hath an infinite heinousness in it, and therefore the punishment for it must be infinite. Crimes are greatened, not only from the nature of the action as it is in itself flagitious; but also from the quality and dignity of the person, against whom they are committed. Reviling and injurious speeches against a man's equal are but actionable; but, against the king, they are treasonable. A less offence against an excellent person, is more heinous than against a more ignoble person. And, consequently, God being of infinite majesty and

\* Broken through, escaped.

perfection, every offence against him must needs be infinitely heinous; and therefore must be infinitely punished, before full satisfaction can be made for it.

(2.) These are but two ways how a punishment can be imagined to be infinite. The one is intensively, when it is infinite in degrees: the other is extensively, when it is infinite in duration and continuance, though but finite in degree. If the punishment be either of these ways infinite, it is fully satisfactory and commensurate to the Divine justice, which is infinite. But,

(3.) We cannot possibly suffer a punishment which is infinite in degrees, because we ourselves are but finite in our natures; and what is finite cannot contain what is infinite: yea, though God should stretch and widen our capacities to the utmost, yet we can never become vessels large enough to hold infinite wrath at once. Therefore,

(4.) The punishment of sinners, because it cannot be infinite in degrees, that it may be satisfactory must be infinite in duration and continuance; that so a finite, yet immortal creature, as the soul of man is, may undergo a penalty some way infinite as is the justice offended.

(5.) Because their punishment must be infinite in duration, therefore it is utterly impossible that ever it should be completely borne and eluctated, since what is to last to all eternity can never be accomplished. And, therefore, it is impossible that ever we should procure to ourselves a righteousness of satisfaction; as impossible as it is to outlive eternity, or to find a period in what must continue for ever.

[1.] But it may be objected: "Is not God's justice satisfied in the punishment of the damned? why

else doth he inflict it? And, if justice be satisfied in their damnation, how then can satisfaction be a righteousness equivalent to innocence, since they shall never be discharged from their torments?"

To this I answer—

That there never shall be any time, wherein the justice of God shall be so fully satisfied by the damned in hell, as to require no more sufferings from them: for they shall be making satisfaction to all eternity. The infinite justice of God is satisfied in this, that it shall be satisfying itself to all eternity: and yet, in all that eternity, there shall be no one moment, wherein the sinner shall be able to say it is finished, and justice is fully satisfied.

2. To this may be added, that the eternal succession of their torments is, in respect of God, a permanent instant, a fixed and abiding now. So that the very infinity of their punishment, in the everlasting continuance of it, is accounted by God (to whom "a thousand years," yea, thousands of millions of years, "are but as yesterday when it is past,") as now actually present and existing. For, in his essence, there is no variation; and, in his knowledge, objects have no succession, besides that of method and order.

[2.] "But how then," may some say, "were the sufferings of Christ satisfactory, since they were not infinite, nor eternal?"

I answer—

That our Saviour Christ, being God as well as man, and so an infinite Person, might well bear the load of infinite degrees of wrath at once laid upon him, and thereby complete his satisfaction. So that his sufferings might be intensively infinite, and yet not exceed the capacity of his nature.

Or, if any should scruple whether the punishment of Christ were infinite in degrees, yet we may affirm that the dignity of his person, being God as well as man, might compound for the measure of his sufferings, and shorten their duration. For it is infinite suffering for an infinite person to suffer, it being an infinite humiliation and abasement. However, that punishment, which is stretched out by the line of eternity when laid upon the damned, was all wound up together when inflicted on Christ. He, at one large draught, drank off the cup of that fury, which they everlastingly drain by little drops. And could they, as he did, bear and eluctate the whole punishment at once, they would thereby obtain a righteousness of satisfaction, and be proceeded with as innocent, or negatively righteous.

That is the third position.

4. Another position shall be this: Because we can neither fulfil the commands of the law, nor yet undergo and eluctate the utmost extremity of the punishment; therefore, our righteousness cannot possibly be inherent or personal.

We cannot be personally righteous by perfect obedience, because of the corruption of our natures: we cannot be personally righteous by full satisfaction, because of the condition of our natures. Our corrupt state makes our perfect obedience a thing impossible; and our limited finite state makes our full satisfaction as impossible. As we are fallen sinners, so we lie under a sad necessity of transgressing the law: as we are vile creatures, so we lie under an utter incapacity of recompensing Divine justice. Well, therefore, might the apostle cry out, "There is none righteous; no, not one," Rom. iii. 10. As for a personal righ-

teousness of obedience, the prophet unfolds that goodly garment: "All our righteousnesses are but as filthy rags," Isa. lxiv. 6. Rags they are; and, therefore, cannot cover our nakedness: filthy rags they are; and, therefore, need a covering for themselves. To think to cover filth by filth, is nothing else but to make both more odious in the sight of God.

Nor can we hope to appear before God upon a righteousness of satisfaction: for how should we satisfy his justice?

Is it by doing?

Whatsoever we can do, is God's gift—our own duty, had we never sinned—and can bear no proportion to the sin committed: for no duty is of infinite goodness; but every sin is of infinite heinousness, as hath been demonstrated; and therefore no duty can make satisfaction for it.

Is it by suffering, that we hope we may satisfy God? Alas! this is nothing else, but to seek salvation by being damned: for that is the penal part of the law; and the only personal satisfaction, that the justice of God will exact of sinners.

Now, though it be thus in vain to seek for a righteousness of our own, either of the one kind or of the other; yet that corruption of our natures, which is the only cause why we have not a perfect personal righteousness of obedience, still prompts us insensibly to trust to it: and ready we are, upon all occasions, to be drawing up an inventory of our good works, as the merit of our justification; which, if they be really found, are but good evidences of it. For,

The righteousness, which alone can justify us, must be a righteousness either of obedience or satisfaction; either doing what the law hath required,

or suffering what it threatens: and, indeed, both are necessary to bring us to heaven and happiness, in a way of justification.

Perhaps God might, by the absolute prerogative of his mercy, have pardoned and saved sinners, without requiring any righteousness or satisfaction. But I say, that it is utterly impossible and contradictory, that he should justify any without a righteousness; for the very notion of justification doth essentially connote\* and infer a righteousness, since it is God's owning and dealing with men as righteous. For ought I know, God might, had he so pleased, have pardoned and saved us without any righteousness; but, certain I am, he could not justify us without it. Now that is no righteousness which doth not fully answer the law which is the rule of it: for the least defect destroys its nature, and turns it into unrighteousness.

If it be here objected, that the rule of our righteousness is not the law of works, but the law of faith; that the covenant of works is abolished, and that of grace succeeds in the place thereof, which requires faith, repentance, and sincere obedience as the conditions of our justification; and that these are now the righteousness by which we are justified: I answer, by laying down,

6. A sixth position: that the covenant of works is only so far forth repealed and abrogated, as it did require a personal righteousness to our justification; but it is not repealed, as it did require a perfect righteousness.

God did never so far disannul the covenant of works, that, whether or not his law were obeyed or his justice satisfied, yet we should be accounted righteous: but, it is only thus far repealed by the

\* Imply, include.

covenant of grace, that though we cannot perfectly obey nor fully satisfy in our own persons, yet we may be pardoned and accepted through the satisfaction and obedience of our Surety. So that, even now, under the covenant of grace, no righteousness can avail to our justification, but what, for the matter of it, is perfectly conformable to the law of works. And, when we say that the covenant of works is abrogated, and that we are not to expect justification according to that covenant, the meaning is not, that the matter of that covenant is repealed, but only the personal obligation relaxed: for still it is the righteousness of the law which justifies us, though performed by another. And, therefore, in this sense, whosoever are justified, it is according to the covenant of works; that is, it is by that righteousness, which, for the substance and matter of it, this covenant did require.

For the proof of this, which is of very great moment for the clearing the doctrine of justification, consider,

(1.) That there can be no sufficient reason given why our Saviour should suffer the penalty, who never transgressed the precepts of the law, unless it be that his sufferings might be our satisfaction.

Consequently, if Christ died for us, only to satisfy Divine justice in our stead, and as our Surety, it must necessarily follow, that this his death is our righteousness of satisfaction according to the law and covenant of works.

(2.) That law, according to the letter of which the far greater part of the world shall be judged, cannot be an abrogated, a repealed law.

But, though true believers shall indeed be judged only according to the favourable construction of the law of works, which is the accepting the righteous

ness of their surety for their own; yet all the rest of the world (and how vast a number is it!) shall be judged according to the strict letter of the covenant of works, and must either stand or fall according to the sentence of it: they must either produce a perfect sinless righteousness, wrought out personally by themselves; or else suffer the vengeance of eternal death. Indeed, all men, at the last day, shall be judged by the covenant of works: and, when they shall stand before the tribunal of God, this law will be then produced, and every man's title tried by it; and whoever cannot plead a righteousness conformable to the tenor and import of it, must expect nothing else but the execution of the punishment threatened. The righteousness of Christ will be the believer's plea; and accepted, because it fully answers the matter of the law. The rest of the world can produce no righteousness of their own, "for all have sinned;" nor can they plead this of Christ, because they have no faith, which alone can give this title, and convey it to them: so that their case is desperate, their doom certain, and their punishment remediless and insupportable; and this, according to the tenor of the covenant of works, "Do this," or "Suffer this," by which God will proceed in judging of the world.

Consider, again,

(3.) That the matter and substance of the covenant of works is nothing else but the moral law, (as I showed before,) the law of holiness and obedience: the obligation of which continues still upon us; and the least transgression of which is threatened with death and condemnation.

"What, then! doth God speak contradictions? and, in the law of works, tell us he will not punish every transgressor?" No, certainly: his

truth and his justice are immutable ; and what he hath once spoken with his mouth, he will fulfil with his hand. And his veracity is obliged to punish every offender ; for God can be no more false in his threatenings, than in his promises : and, therefore, he punisheth those whom he pardons, or else he could not pardon. He pardons their persons, according to his covenant of grace : he punisheth their Surety, according to his covenant of works : which, in a forensic sense, being the punishing of them, they have in him made a satisfaction to the justice of God, and thereby have obtained a righteousness according to the terms of the covenant of works.

I have the longer insisted on this sixth position, because it is the very critical point of the doctrine of justification, and the very hinge upon which all the controversies concerning it do turn.

7. Another position shall be this — That, though we have no personal righteousness, yet our Saviour Christ hath a personal righteousness of both kinds, both of perfect obedience to the commands of the law, and of full satisfaction to the penalty threatened in it.

(1.) Christ hath wrought out a righteousness of perfect obedience ; and that by his absolute conformity to a twofold law.

[1.] The law natural, under the obligation of which he lay as a man.

For both the first and second Adam were made under the same law of works : the first, under the mutability of his own will, which forfeited his happiness ; the second, under a necessity or infallibility of entire obedience, through the union of the Divine nature with the human, whereby it became as impossible that Christ should fail in his

obedience, as that the Godhead should fail the human nature which it had assumed.

[2.] To the law national, under the obligation of which he was born, as being of the seed of Abraham, and of the tribe of Judah.

By this national law, I mean both the judicial and ceremonial laws of the Jews, of whom Christ was, according to the flesh. For even the ceremonial law was, in a sense, national, and peculiar to the Jews: yea, and they themselves thought so, seeing they did not impose the observation of the Mosaical rites and observances upon proselyted heathens, (those whom they called *Proselyti Portæ*,\*) but admitted them to the participation of the same common hope and salvation with themselves, upon the observation of the law of nature, and the seven traditional commandments of Noah. Now Christ was made under both these laws; the law of his nature, and the law of his nation: under the former, primarily and necessarily, as he was man; and, therefore, he must obey the law of right reason: under the second, secondarily and by consequence; because the law of nature and right reason dictates that God is to be obeyed in all his positive commands. Wherefore he himself tells us, that it became him "to fulfil all righteousness," Mat. iii. 15.

Thus, then, his righteousness of obedience was both personal and perfect.

And so, likewise,

(2.) His righteousness of satisfaction was personal and plenary.

As Divine justice could exact no punishment from him, upon his own personal account, he

\* Proselytes of the gate, who professed the Jewish religion, but had not been circumcised.

being holy, harmless, and undefiled; so did it receive full satisfaction from him, for the sins of others imputed to him. Neither came he from under the penalty, till he had discharged the very uttermost farthing that was due. And therefore his active and passive obedience, as they are commonly termed, were both perfect and complete. What the sufferings of Christ were; how far he paid the *idem*,\* and how far the *tantidem*,† I shall not discuss. The Greek liturgy checks our too curious inquisitiveness in this search, by calling them *αγνωστα παθη*, “unknown sufferings.”

Only it may be here queried, “Since that all righteousness is a conformity to some law, according to what law was Christ obliged to undergo the penalty for sin? Could the same law bind him to obedience and suffering too? Or is it consistent with the measures of justice, to inflict the penalty of the law on him, who had fully observed the commands of it?”

To this I answer—That the same law cannot oblige both to obedience and to suffering: and, therefore, Christ Jesus was not bound over to undergo the penalty by that law, the precepts of which he had fulfilled. Had he been liable to suffer by the same law that we are, he would not have been a mediator, but a malefactor.

Christ was, therefore, under a twofold law, in conformity to which he obtained his twofold righteousness.

[1.] The common and ordinary law of obedience, unto which he, as well as others, was subjected upon the account of his human nature.

[2.] The peculiar law of the mediator.

By the law of the mediator I mean, that com-

\* The same.

† Just so much.

pact and engagement, which Christ entered into with God the Father, to become our Surety, to pay our debts, and to bear the punishment due to our sins; which I shall hereafter more largely open to you, when I come to treat of the covenant of redemption.

Now when Christ had perfectly fulfilled the common and ordinary law, both of his nature as a man, and of his nation as a Jew, it could in no wise be just, that he should also undergo the penalty by virtue of this law, which threatened it only against the transgressors. And, therefore, when the ordinary law acquitteth and dischargeth him as righteous, the law of the mediator interposeth, seizeth on him, and bindeth him over unto punishment. And, if Christ had not borne this punishment, though still he would have been personally righteous as a man, yet he would not have been righteous as a mediator, because not conformable to the law of the mediation or suretiship, to which he had voluntarily subjected himself, and which obliged him to suffer, John x. 18, Phil. ii. 8, but, the obligation of both laws being fully answered, he hath thereby obtained a righteousness according unto both; and, being both perfect in his obedience, and perfected by his sufferings, he is become an Almighty Saviour, "able to save unto the uttermost all" those who "come unto God by him."

That is the seventh position.

8. Christ having such an abundant righteousness of his own, God, the Lawgiver, hath been graciously pleased to bestow that righteousness upon, and impute it unto us; to all intents and purposes, as if it had been our own personal righteousness.

And in this particular lies the great mystery of our justification.

And therefore, to explain it, I shall lay down these two things :

(1.) Imputed righteousness is not God's accounting us righteous when we are not so; for that would be a false judgment, and utterly inconsistent with the truth, wisdom, and righteousness of the Divine nature: but, first, the righteousness of Christ is become ours, by the conveyance which God hath appointed to make it over unto us; and, then, it is imputed or reckoned for our justification.

For the imputation of Christ's righteousness is not *res vaga*,\* that which may agree with any person in any state and condition; as if there were no more required to justify the most profligate sinner, but only that God reckon him righteous: no; but there must be something presupposed in us, either as a qualification, condition, or means, that must give us a title to the righteousness of Christ. And that is, as shall appear in the next position, the grace of faith: so that, Christ's righteousness being made ours by faith, God doth then actually impute it to our justification.

And, therefore, the righteousness of Jesus Christ is not by God only thought to be ours; but it is ours really and truly, in a law sense. To affirm, that God imputes that to be ours which indeed is not, would be to make it only a putative righteousness, to invade the Divine verity, and to lay the imputation of a false and partial judgment upon him. The righteousness of Christ is not ours, because God accounts it to be so; but, on the contrary, therefore God accounts it ours, because it is so. It becomes not ours, by God's imputation; for it must be ours, before any act of imputation can be true and just: but, rather, it

\* An undefined thing.

becomes ours by Divine designation or donation, whereby God hath made over the righteousness of his Son as a dowry and patrimony to faith. God doth not justify us, that we may be righteous, but because we are already righteous; and that, not only imperfectly, by the inherent righteous qualities that are implanted in our regeneration; but most perfectly, by the righteousness of Christ consigned over unto us in our regeneration, by virtue of faith, which is a main part of it.

Certainly, that God, who hath told us that "he that justifieth the wicked—is an abomination" unto him, Prov. xvii. 15; will never himself make that the process of his justice. It is true, the apostle saith, that God "justifieth the ungodly," Rom. iv. 5, but this must be understood, either in a limited sense, for those who are in part so, being but in part sanctified; or, rather, it must be understood, not in a compounded sense, as if ungodliness and justification were states compatible to the same person; but in a divided sense, that is, that he justifies such who heretofore were ungodly; but their sanctification intervenes between their ungodliness and their justification. In which order the apostle recounts it, 1 Cor. vi. 11. "Such were some of you; but ye are—sanctified, but ye are justified." So that, in order of nature, faith, which is a principal part of our sanctification, precedes our right to Christ's righteousness, because it conveys it; and our right to Christ's righteousness precedes God's actual imputation of it to our justification, because it must first be ours, before it can be with truth accounted so.

It is very wonderful, that the papists should so obstinately resolve not to understand this doctrine

of imputed righteousness; but still cavil against it, as a contradiction: it being, say they, as utterly impossible to become righteous through the righteousness of another, as to become healthful through another's health, or wise by another's wisdom. And some, besides this slander of a contradiction, give us this scoff into the bargain—that the protestants, in defending an imputative righteousness, shew only an imputative modesty and imputative learning. But they might do well to consider, that some denominations are physical; others only legal and juridical. Those which are physical, do indeed necessarily require inexistent forms, from which the denominations should result: thus, to be healthful, and to be wise and learned, do require inherent health, wisdom, and learning. But, to be righteous, may be taken either in a physical sense, and so it denotes an inherent righteousness, which in the best is imperfect; or else it may be taken in a forensic or juridical sense, and so the perfect righteousness of another, who is our Surety, may become ours, and be imputed to our justification. It is the righteousness of another, personally; it is our righteousness, juridically: because by faith, we have a right and title to it; which right and title accrue unto us, by the promise and covenant of God, and our union to our Surety.

Indeed, some there are, who refer our justification wholly to the merits of Jesus Christ; but yet lay down a scheme and method of this doctrine, not altogether so honourable to our blessed Saviour as they ought. These affirm,\* that Christ, by his righteousness, hath merited that God should account our faith to be itself our righteousness: that

\* Armin. Disp. Theol. thes. 17

his is only the procatartic\* or meritorious cause procuring this grand privilege to faith, that it should itself be our righteousness, and the matter of our justification. Wherein they are so far injurious to the merits of our blessed Saviour, as to make them only the remote cause of our justification; and, consequently, necessary, rather that faith might have an object, than that we might have righteousness. But of this, perhaps, more hereafter.

However, this which hath been spoken may serve to give us a more clear and distinct notion of imputed righteousness; which is not ours, merely because God imputes it to us; but because he hath, by deed of gift in his promise, bestowed it upon us when we believe, and then imputes it to our justification.

(2.) That this righteousness of Christ, thus made ours, may serve to all ends and purposes for which we stand in need of a righteousness, it is necessary that both his active righteousness, or his righteousness of obedience, and also his passive righteousness, the righteousness of his satisfaction in suffering for us, be made ours, and imputed to us for our justification.

Though this position be much controverted; yet, possibly, the truth of it will appear from the grounds formerly laid, namely, that there are two ends, for which we stand in need of a righteousness: the one is, a freeing of us from the penalty threatened; the other is, an entitling of us to the reward promised. Now, had we no other but the righteousness of Christ's satisfaction made over unto us, this indeed would perfectly free us from our liableness to punishment; for, if our Surety hath undergone

\* The first or beginning cause.

for us, we ourselves are not liable: but still we should need a righteousness to entitle us to the reward; and that must necessarily be a righteousness of perfect obedience. For, as I noted before, it is not said, Suffer this, and live; but, Do this, and live: and, consequently, it must be obedience, and not suffering, the active and not the passive righteousness of Christ, that can give us a right unto eternal life. It is true, the satisfaction of Christ doth give a right unto eternal life concomitantly, but not formally; that is, wherever guilt is removed, there a title to heaven is procured: yet the formal reason of our title to heaven is different from the formal reason of the remission of our sins: this results from the imputation of Christ's sufferings; that, of his obedience.

But if any should in this particular dissent, as many very orthodox divines (Piscator and others) have done, upon the account of the impossibility of a neutral estate, that is, a condition neither of happiness nor misery, life nor death; I will not earnestly contend about it: so that this foundation stand firm and unshaken, that we are saved only by the righteousness of Christ made ours by God's donation, and imputed to our justification. Yet Rom. v. 18, 19, votes for it.

9. This righteousness of Christ is conveyed and made over unto us by our faith.

That is the grace which God hath purposed to honour with our justification.

I shall not long insist upon this, because I reserve the more full handling of it to another place. Only this is here to be observed, that faith gives us a title to the righteousness of Christ, and makes it ours, not only by the promise of God, but as it is the bond of union between Christ and the

soul. By faith it is, that we are made mystically one with Christ; living members in his body; fruitful branches of that heavenly and spiritual Vine. We have the communication of the same name: "So also is Christ," saith the apostle, I Cor. xii. 12. speaking there of Christ mystical, both his person and his church. We have the same relations: "I ascend unto my Father, and to your Father," John xx. 17. We are made partakers of the same Spirit: for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his," Rom. viii. 9. "He, that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit," I Cor. vi. 17. And; finally, the very life that we live, is said not to be ours, but "Christ liveth in us," and that we "live by the faith of the Son of God," Gal. ii. 20.

So that, being thus one with Christ, his righteousness becomes our righteousness, even as our sins became his: and God deals with Christ and believers, as if they were one person: the sins of believers are charged upon Christ, as though they were his; and the righteousness of Christ is reckoned to believers as theirs. Neither is God unjust, either in the one or the other imputation; because they are mystically one: and this mystical union is a sufficient ground for imputation.

Yet from this union flows the participation only of the benefits of his mediatorship; for we are not hereby transubstantiated or deified, as some of late years have blasphemously conceited. Neither the Godhead of Christ, nor his essential righteousness as God, nor his Divine and infinite properties, are made ours; but only the fruits and effects of his mediation: so that, hereupon, God graciously accounts of us as if we had done in our own persons whatsoever Christ hath done for us; because, by faith, Christ and we are made one.

These are the positions which I thought necessary, to instruct us in a true notion of righteousness, and the manner how we become righteous.

I shall deduce from them a few corollaries.

1. Hence we learn the true difference that there is between the covenant of grace, and the covenant of works.

Whatsoever vast disproportion some have imagined, yet, indeed, these are not distinct covenants for the matter and substance of them, but only in the distinct method and manner of participating the same righteousness. They both require full satisfaction, to obtain remission of sin; and perfect obedience, to obtain eternal life. But in this lies the only difference; that the rigour and severity of the covenant of works requires that this righteousness be personal, and wrought out by ourselves; which is relaxed to us by the covenant of grace, promising us remission and acceptation through the righteousness of our Surety, conveyed to us by our faith.

Hence see, what influence faith hath into our justification.

It is not itself our righteousness, or the matter of our justification; but the instrument or means, call it which you please, of conveying over unto us the righteousness of Christ our Surety, which is perfectly conformable to the law of works, and the matter by which we are justified.

Some there are, who would have faith to justify us, as it is the fulfilling of the condition of the covenant of grace.

But, possibly, this difference might be soon compromised, if the tenor of both covenants be

heedfully observed. The covenant of works promiseth life, if we obey in our own persons: but the covenant of grace relaxeth this; and promiseth life, if we obey in our Surety. The condition of both is perfect obedience: in the one, personal; in the other, imputed. And the way how we should obtain a title to this obedience of our Surety, is, by believing. So that, when the covenant of grace saith, "Believe, and you shall be saved," it speaks compendiously; and, were it drawn out at length, it would run thus, "Procure the righteousness of Christ to be thine, and thou shalt be saved: believe, and this righteousness, which will save thee, shall be thine."

Here, then, are two conditions: the one, fundamental, primary, and immediate to our justification; and that is, the righteousness of Christ; the other, remote and secondary; and that is, our faith, which is the condition of the primary condition, and consequently of the covenant. This will appear more evident in this syllogism: if the righteousness of Christ be made thine, thou shalt be saved; if thou believest, the righteousness of Christ shall be made thine: therefore, from the first to the last, if thou believest, thou shalt be saved.

Now, though Christ's obedience be the principal, and our faith the secondary condition; yet, usually, in propounding the covenant of grace, the former is silenced, and the latter only mentioned.

And this may be for two reasons:

(1.) Because, though Christ's righteousness be more immediate to our justification, yet faith is more immediate to our practice; and, therefore, it is of more concernment to know how justification might be obtained, than critically to know wherein it doth consist. And,

(2.) Because faith doth necessarily relate unto the righteousness of Jesus Christ. So that, to say, "Believe, and you shall be saved," doth virtually and implicitly tell us also, that our justification and salvation must be by the righteousness of another.

If, therefore, those who affirm that faith justifies, as it is the performance of the condition of the covenant, intend it only in this remote and secondary sense, I see no cause of controversy or disagreement about it.

That is a second corollary.

(3.) Another inference may be this—That we should never expect justification nor salvation, upon any other terms than a perfect righteousness, fully answering the tenor of the covenant of works.

Answering it, I say, as to the substance of what it requires, although the manner of obtaining that righteousness be not conformable thereunto, but unto the law of grace. If we cannot produce a righteousness every way perfect, and tender it to God as ours, we cannot with reason expect but that God should seek for satisfaction to his justice upon us in our everlasting destruction. Ours it must be, through our union to Jesus Christ by the bond of faith; which is a sufficient foundation for a real communication of all benefits and interests.

(4.) Hence we may learn, that the two righteousnesses of which the text speaks, the righteousness which is of works, and the righteousness which is of faith, do not differ as to the nature of the things themselves, but only as to the manner of their being made ours.

The righteousness, which is of the law, must be

perfect obedience, or of full satisfaction; “the righteousness, which is of faith,” is both of obedience and of satisfaction: so that, for the matter, there is no difference between them; for the righteousness of faith is no other than what the law of works required. But, herein lies the only difference, that the one must be personal, the other imputed. The law requires obedience or satisfaction to be wrought out in our own persons: grace mitigates this strictness, and is contented with the obedience and satisfaction of another, apprehended and applied to us by our believing.

And thus you see, at large, the nature of righteousness, both legal and evangelical; wherein they do consist; and what is the true difference between them. The knowledge of these things is of absolute necessity to a clear perception of the doctrine of the covenants, and of justification. Some, perhaps, because these truths are abstruse and knotty, may think that I am teaching you, as Gideon is said to have taught the men of Succoth, Judges viii. 7. with the thorns and briers of the wilderness. Yet I doubt not but, by a diligent recollection of what hath been delivered, you may, even of these thorns, gather figs. Sure I am, that God, who once spake to Moses out of a bush, can speak to you out of these thickets. And, though they do not so immediately tend to the exciting of affections, yet those affections may be well suspected to be irregular, and experience shews they are seldom durable, that are not built upon a right information of the judgment.

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These things being thus discussed and stated, let us now proceed to a more distinct and particular consideration of the covenants: which I have

told you were principally two: the one, made with mankind in Adam, at his first creation; the other, made with mankind, upon his restoration. The tenor of the former is, "Do this, and live:" the tenor of the latter, He that believeth on Christ Jesus, shall be saved.

I. I shall first treat concerning the former, the COVENANT OF WORKS: the sum of which is, "Do this, and live; or, in the words of my text, "The man, which doeth those things, shall live by them."

And, herein, two things are chiefly to be observed: the promise, which is life; and the condition, which is, "Do this," or perfect obedience.

First. I shall begin with the former, the promise made unto Adam, and all mankind in him: "The man, which doeth those things, shall live;" which, by the rule of contraries, implies the threatening and curse against all transgressors. If he shall live, who fulfilleth law; then, by the contrary proportion, he shall die, who transgresseth it. And this threatening we find expressly annexed to one particular command of the covenant of works; "In the day that thou eatest thereof," that is, of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, "thou shalt surely die," Gen. ii. 17.: and to the general tenor of the whole; "Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law to do them," Gal. iii. 10.

Concerning this life and death, much difficulty there is to state wherein they did consist; and, truly, the Holy Ghost having spoken so sparingly of it, it would be presumption, and an affectation of being wise above what is written, to determine any thing positively and magisterially herein; God taking more care to inform us how we might

recover our lost and forfeited bliss, than wherein it consisted. Yet, possibly, something may, with modesty and probability, be spoken of it; that may give us some satisfaction in the clearing up, if not of all, yet of some truths that are pertinent to this subject, and worthy our knowledge and acceptance.

1. As for the life here promised,

(1.) There are two opinions, that carry a fair probability.

[1.] That, by life here, is meant the perpetuity and continuance of that estate wherein Adam was created; being a state of perfect happiness and blessedness, free from sin, and therefore free from misery: he, the friend of God and lord of the visible creation; all things being subject unto him, and himself subject only to his Maker: there being a perfect agreement between his God and him, and between him and himself; no tormenting conscience, no gnawing guilt, no pale fears, no pains, no sickness, no death. He might converse with God, boldly and sweetly: and God would have conversed with him, familiarly and endearingly. Then there would have been no desertion on God's part; because no apostacy on his: no clouds in his mind, no tempest in his breast, no tears, nor cause for any; but a continual calm and serenity of soul, enjoying all the innocent delights that God and nature could afford, and all this for ever. The whole world had been but a higher heaven, and a lower. Earth had been but heaven a little allayed; and Adam had been as an angel incarnate, and God all in all: and all this to be enjoyed eternally, without diminution, without period. Oh, how great a happiness may we conceive the state of upright man to be! which

nothing can resemble, nothing exceed; unless it be the happiness and bliss to which fallen man shall be restored. Had not sin soiled and drossed the world, it should never have felt the purgation of the last fire: the elements should never have been dissolved, the heavens folded up, nor the host of them disbanded; but man had been the everlasting inhabitant of an everlasting world.

This is the first opinion concerning the life promised in the covenant of works.

[2.] Others again, to avoid some inconveniences which might follow upon the former opinion, whereof the greatest seems to be a populousness beyond what the world could contain, think it more probable to affirm, that, when the multitude of mankind (which certainly had been far greater than all the generations since the beginning of it amount unto, since sin and the curse have hindered the fecundity of the first blessing,) had so far increased as to straiten the bounds of their abode, God would have translated them to heaven, without their seeing or tasting of death. As, when a land is surcharged with inhabitants, the state transplants whole colonies of them, to disburden itself; so, when this earth should have been crowded with an overplus of mankind, God would have transplanted whole colonies of them, and would have removed them from a terrestrial to a celestial paradise. God doth now, indeed, remove believers to that state of happiness; but yet they first descend into the dust; death is their passage into life, and the grave their entrance into glory. We read but of two men only who leaped that ditch, and they were Enoch and Elijah: of the one, it is said that God took him; and of the other, that God fetched him

in a fiery chariot. But, had not sin come into the world, this might have been the common and ordinary passage out of it. Eve had never been terrified by the king of terrors, nor struggled at his approach, nor feared nor detested the separation of those dear companions, the soul and body; for there had been no such thing as death, but both soul and body, jointly, and at once, should have been rapt up to the enjoyment of the same God, and the same happiness, which our faith now embraces, and our hope expects.

Which of these two is the very truth, I cannot determine; though the grand inconvenience consequent upon the former may incline a considering mind to adhere rather to the latter.

(2.) Now, here fall in two questions to be resolved.

Whether Adam, in innocence, may be said to be immortal?

What is meant by the tree of life spoken of in the history of Adam, and said to be planted in the midst of paradise?

[1.] To the first I answer, that Adam, in his state of innocence, was immortal.

For sin is not only the sting, but the cause and parent of death, and gives it not only its terrors, but its being. What saith the apostle? "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin," Rom. v. 12; so that, had there been no sin, there had been no death. But yet, even then, Adam had in him the contemperation\* of contrary qualities, and, therefore, the principles of death and corruption. And, therefore, his immortality was not such as the angels enjoy in heaven; for they are not composed of jarring and quarrelling

\* Admixture, tempering together.

elements, being pure spiritual substances: nor was it such as the bodies of glorified saints shall hereafter possess; for they shall be made wholly impassible,\* and set free from the reach of outward impressions, and the discords of elemental mutinies, that might impair their vigour, or endanger their dissolution. But it was an immortality by donation, and by the privilege of an especial providence, which engaged itself to sway and overrule that tendency which was in his body to corruption, and, notwithstanding the contrarieties and dissensions of a terrestrial constitution, to continue him in life so long as he should continue himself in his obedience.

[2.] And, as a means and sacrament of this, God appointed the fruit of the tree of life, that the eating thereof might perpetuate his duration.

Which tree of life, what it was, and why so called, was the second query.

Some suppose it was so named, because the fruit of it had a natural virtue to preserve and prolong life, and that Adam, using it as his ordinary food, should, by the medicinal force of it, have kept off or repaired all incident decays. But this, I think, sounds somewhat of the rabbi; for the guard which God set upon this tree, lest fallen Adam should once taste it, and live for ever, sufficiently overthrows this conceit, and evinces that immortality could not be the natural effect and production of it.

But the best and more received opinion is, that it was therefore called the tree of life, because it was a sacrament added for the confirmation of the promise of life. That, as now, under the covenant of grace, God hath instituted baptism and the Lord's supper, that, by being washed with the

\* Incapable of suffering.

water of the one, and eating and drinking the bread and wine of the other, he might seal to us the stability of that covenant wherein he hath promised eternal life to those who believe; so God gave Adam this tree of life, that, by his eating thereof, he might seal to him the faithfulness of the covenant of works, wherein he had promised life to him, if he would obey; that, as sure as he tasted of the fruit of that tree, so sure he should live, if he would perform the commands of God. For every covenant hath its sacraments, or seals, annexed to it. The old covenant of grace was sealed by circumcision, called, therefore, "a seal of the righteousness of faith," Rom. iv. 11; and, likewise, the passover was another sacrament of that covenant: the new covenant of grace is sealed by baptism and the Lord's supper. And, in like manner, the covenant of works was sealed by the fruit of this tree of life, which was so called, not from any inherent quality of its own, but only sacramentally, because it did confirm the promise of life; that, as surely as Adam did eat thereof, so surely he should live, if he would obey.

(3.) By these obscure and uncertain things, which cannot be recommended unto you as undoubted verities, but only as probable conjectures, you may perceive how much we are in the dark, and how subject to error, when we pretend to define, and positively determine what the Holy Ghost hath thought fit to conceal.

Yet two things I account most certain; and, with which, it will be good to put a stop to our inquisitiveness.

[1.] That this life, promised in the covenant of works, was a state, made happy and blessed by the confluence of all good things, outward and

inward, temporal and spiritual ; whatsoever man's condition could need, or his will desire.

So long as there were no defects of righteousness and holiness in his nature, there would have been none of happiness suitable to his capacities ; nor should he have any complaints to make, nor cause for them.

[2.] That this life, whether eternal on earth or in heaven, though so perfectly happy in its kind ; yet was far short of that glory and happiness which is now promised to believers under the covenant of grace.

Christ not only died to redeem a forfeiture, but his obedience merited the purchase of a richer inheritance, and he will instate his in the possession of far more transcendent glory. Adam was never so happy in his innocence, as he is now, since his fall, by his faith and repentance. He is now exalted far higher than at first he stood. And, therefore, Gregory the Great, considering the advantage which we have gained by our restoration through Christ, could not forbear exclaiming, *O felix culpa, quæ talem meruit habere Redemptorem!* "Happy sin, that obtained such a Redeemer!" And Clemens Alexandrinus hath a like passage: *ὁ ἐκ παραδείσου πεσὼν μείζων ὑπακοῆς ἀθλον βραβεύς ἀπολαμβάνει.* "His disobedience cast Adam out of Paradise: his obedience instates him in a far higher and greater reward, even heaven." So that, as Christ saith concerning John the Baptist, "Among all that are born of women, there hath not arisen a greater than he ; yet, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater ;" the same may I say concerning Adam in innocence. Among all the visible creation, there was none greater nor more happy than he ; yet, the least believer, who is now

in the kingdom of heaven, is far greater than he, when he was lord of Paradise.

Yea, should we suppose that Adam, after he had long continued in his innocence and obedience, should have been assumed into heaven; yet a believer's glory there, purchased by the merits of his Saviour, shall far outshine whatsoever glory Adam could have acquired by his own obedience. For, so much approximation and union as there is of the creature unto God, the fountain of all glory; so much participation is there of glory from God, by the creature. Now, Adam's union unto God was only moral; such a union as love and friendship doth beget: but a believer's union unto God is nearer, and mystical, and ineffable; and, therefore, from this nearer union will flow a greater glory. God hath wedded our nature to himself, in the hypostatical union; and he hath wedded our persons to himself, in a mystical union: neither of which could have had place under the covenant of works; and, therefore, the union not being so great and close, the glory promised therein would not have been so glorious, nor the life and immortality so blessed, as that which is now brought to light by the gospel.

This you may take, in answer to the first question, What the life is, that is promised in the covenant of works: "The man, which doeth those things, shall live by them."

2. Our next inquiry is, What death it is, that this covenant threatens: "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die the death." And herein, truly, we are almost as far to seek, as in the former.

(1.) Yet thus much is certain

[1.] That, by death, is meant the separation of

the soul and body, which is a temporal death : together with all its forerunners and concomitants ; pain, grief, weakness, sickness, and whatsoever doth either cause it, or attend it.

[2.] It is also certain, that here is meant spiritual death ; the loss of the image and favour of God ; a despoiling the soul of the ornaments of knowledge, grace, and righteousness, with which in its first creation it was beautified. For, as the separation of the soul from the body is the temporal death of the man ; so the separation of the soul from the love and grace of God, is the spiritual death of the soul. And,

[3.] As certain it may be, that hereby is meant likewise an eternal death, to endure for ever, because to be inflicted by an infinite justice.

(2.) But the main difficulty is, whether this eternal death should have consisted in the utter annihilation of the soul, after its separation from the body by a temporal death ; or whether both soul and body should have been again united, to suffer eternally some torments proportionable to those which the damned now suffer in hell.

To this I shall give you what I judge most probable.

And that is,

[1.] That the death threatened in the covenant of works would not have been the utter annihilation of the guilty soul, after its separation from the body.

Because annihilation is not a punishment suited to the eternally glorifying of God's justice and power ; since it would be in one moment transacted, and put the soul out of the reach and from under the dominion of omnipotency itself : for, although *non esse* be *maximum malum metaphysicum* ;\* yet,

\* Although non-existence is the chief metaphysical evil.

certainly, God will not glorify himself by metaphysical notions, but by physical and sensible punishments.

[2.] Whatsoever punishment had been eternally inflicted, either upon the separate soul alone, as some hold, or upon the whole man, both soul and body, as others affirm, had been more mild and mitigated under the covenant of works, than now the torments of the damned will be, who have despised the covenant of grace.

For, as the life promised then was inferior to the life promised now; so the death threatened then was not so rigorous, so tormenting, as the death threatened now. Certainly, the tenders that are made to men, of Christ, and salvation by him, are not mere indifferent things; that, though they slight and reject them, yet they shall be in no worse condition than when they were born: but a despised Saviour, an abused grace, a neglected salvation, are such things as will add rage to the unquenchable fire; and make it eat deeper into the soul, than if there had been no Saviour provided, no grace offered, no salvation purchased; but they had been all left in their first fallen estate, without hope, without means, without possibility of recovery.

And thus much concerning the life promised, and the death threatened, in the covenant of works.

(3.) Only, it may be queried, how God verified this threatening upon Adam. The threatening runs thus: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;" and yet we read that Adam lived nine hundred years, and more, after this peremptory sentence. How is this consistent with God's justice and veracity, who not only did not inflict death on him on the day of his

transgression, but reprieved him for many hundred years after?

To this I answer, briefly; that, when it is said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt die," by this is not meant, that he should presently upon his sinning undergo actual death; nor only that death should be then due unto him, as some would have it, for so it might, and yet never have been inflicted: but the meaning is, that he should be liable and obnoxious, yea, and ordained to death: death should certainly be inflicted on him, in the time, that God had appointed, and which he foresaw would make most for the glory of his holiness and justice. "In that day thou shalt die," is no more, than "In that day thou shalt be a mortal creature: thy life shall be forfeited to justice, to be cut off whensoever the righteous and holy God shall please."

Second. Let us, in the next place, proceed to consider the condition of the covenant of works; and that the apostle tells us is, "Do this: The man, which doeth those things, shall live by them." By doing these things is meant obedience, both in its perfection and perseverance; for perfect obedience could not justify, unless it were persevering obedience; for we find that Adam himself was not justified by his perfect conformity to the law for a time, because he did not continue in it.

Concerning this obedience, which was required in the covenant of works, we may observe,

1. That the rule of Adam's obedience in his state of innocence was principally the dictates and promptings of his own nature, and secondarily any positive law that should be given him by God.

So that, when God bids him do this and live, he doth but point him inwards to see what was written

upon his own heart, and to act suitably thereunto. God gave him one command, which was not written there; and that was, not to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And some suppose also the command of sanctifying the sabbath-day to have been a positive law given to Adam, Gen. ii. 3. where it is said, "God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it:" others suppose those words to be brought in only by way of prolepsis, or anticipation. However that be, yet certain it is, that God laid very few injunctions upon upright man, besides what the dictates of his very nature and reason did prompt him to: but, if any more had been then imposed on him, they would all have been ultimately resolved into that grand law of nature, that whatsoever God commands we ought to obey. And, therefore, though the not eating the fruit of such a tree were not a law of nature, yet this was, that he ought not to have done what God forbade him. So that, "Do this," was to Adam no more than "Act only according to the rules of nature and right reason, and thou shalt live."

2. The covenant of works required of Adam all those things which are now required of us under the covenant of grace; except it be those which suppose a sinful and a fallen state.

Some duties there are, which are in themselves absolute and perfect, and do not presuppose any sin or corruption in our nature: and such are, to love God; to reverence and worship him; to depend upon him, and believe in him; and to commit all our affairs, and the conduct of our whole lives, to his guidance and government. Other duties there are, which do necessarily connote and presuppose imperfection and sin: as patience and submission under afflictions; confessing of guilt; acts of

repentance, and of faith in the merits of Jesus Christ; relieving the necessities of the poor, forgiving wrongs and injuries, and many other such like. Now the duties of the former sort, which are required of us, were likewise required of Adam; and his continuance in them would have been his justification: but not the duties of the latter sort; for a state of innocence and perfection excludes all such duties, because it excludes all that imperfection and guilt, upon the account of which alone such duties are become necessary. Adam had the innate radical power to do them, but no occasion to exercise it.

3. Adam, in innocency, had a power to do whatsoever the law or the God of nature did require; and, by this his perfect obedience, to have preserved the righteousness of his first estate, and his undoubted right unto that life which was promised.

God is so just and merciful, that he lays no commands upon his creatures to any thing that is impossible, unless it be made so by an impotency wilfully contracted. God may, indeed, justly require that from us, which is now beyond our power to perform; as, the perfect fulfilling of his law; and that, because it was once possible for us in our representative. And if we have lost our power of obeying, that does not prejudice God's right of commanding; any more than the inability of a voluntary bankrupt dischargeth his obligation to his creditors. In the state of innocence, God suited the power of his creature to the law which he intended to give him; and made his obligation to duty commensurate with his ability to perform it.

4. That obedience, which was the condition of the covenant of works, was to be performed by Adam in his own person, and not by a surety or

undertaker; and, therefore, the covenant of works hath no mediator.

And this is the great, yea, for ought I can see, the only real difference between the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. They both require the same obedience and righteousness to justify men: only, the covenant of grace allows it to be the righteousness of another; but the covenant of works requires that it be wrought out by the man himself. It is true, we live by doing this, as well as Adam; but we do it by our Surety, not in our own persons. And hence we may learn what covenant it was, that Christ, the second Adam, was made under. It was strictly the covenant of works of personal righteousness; the same that God entered into with Adam; and, therefore, he is called by the apostle the second Adam; because, the first Adam failing in his undertaking, he rose up in his stead to be our federal head and representative; and, seeing the first did not rightly manage the trust deposited, Christ took the whole affair out of his hands, and hath perfectly, fully, and faithfully transacted it.

We have thus seen, both the promise and the condition of the covenant.

Third. Our next inquiry should be concerning the persons with whom it was first made, and by whom it was first broken.

1. But before I come to that, it may not be impertinent to resolve a query that may arise upon what hath been already said. And that is, Whether the afflictions and temporal evils that believers suffer in this life be not inflicted on them by virtue of the curse and threatening of the covenant of works: "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt die," and, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

For the curse of dying comprehends in it, not only temporal death itself, but all other miseries and troubles that we undergo in this present life. And, indeed, 'tis worth the inquiry, whether the afflictions and sufferings of true believers be properly punishments or not.

To resolve this, we must know that God hath two ends respecting himself, for which he brings any evil upon men. The one is, the manifestation of his holiness; the other is, the satisfaction of his justice. And, accordingly, as any affliction tends to these, so, it is either properly a punishment, or barely a chastisement and correction. If God intend by the affliction to satisfy his justice, then it is properly a punishment, and flows from the curse and threatening of the covenant; but, if God intend thereby only to glorify and manifest his holiness, then it is not a proper punishment, neither hath it any thing of the rancour and venom of the curse in it; but it is only a fatherly correction, proceeding from love and mercy.

But,

(1.) The afflictions and outward evils that true christians suffer are inflicted by God upon them, to the end that he might manifest his purity and holiness.

Indeed, there are many gracious ends respecting believers themselves wherefore God doth afflict them; as, to exercise their graces, to keep them humble and dependent, to starve their lusts, to wean them from the world, and to fit them for a better. But the great end respecting God himself is, that, by these afflictions they might know and see how holy a God they have to deal with; who doth so perfectly hate sin, that he will follow it with chastisements wheresoever it be found. Though the

sin be pardoned, though the sinner be beloved, yet God will afflict him ; not, indeed, to satisfy his justice, for that is done for him by Jesus Christ, but to satisfy his holiness, and vindicate the honour of his purity in the world, and himself, too, from contempt, when those who will presume to offend shall certainly smart for it, 2 Sam. xii. 13, 14.

(2.) The afflictions and evils that believers suffer are not inflicted by God, that thereby he might satisfy his justice upon them ; and, therefore, they are not from the curse of the law, nor properly punishments for their sins.

Punishment always connotes\* satisfaction for transgressing the law. But this satisfaction to Divine justice is not to be wrought out by believers themselves, and therefore whatsoever they suffer is not strictly punishment. Christ hath fully satisfied all the demands of justice, and therefore no farther satisfaction is expected from them, since that could not be consistent with the rules and measures of justice, to punish both the Surety and principal too. The curse of the law poured all its poison into Christ, and there is not one drop of it that falls besides upon believers : " Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," Gal. iii. 13. For that death, and all those evils threatened in the covenant of works, are curses ; not merely because they are grievous and afflicting, but because inflicted on transgressors, in order to the satisfaction of Divine justice upon them. And therefore Christ is said to be accursed, and his death to have been an accursed death, (" Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree,") not because he died, nor because he died a most bitter, painful, and shameful death ; but because he was ordained to

\* Implies, betokens.

undergo this death, as a satisfaction to the justice of God, for the sins of men. And, truly, should God inflict those very evils which he now doth upon believers, to the end that he might thereby raise some satisfaction to his justice, though the evils themselves would not be greater, nor more sharp and painful, yet they would all be curses, and make them too accursed creatures : for the true notion of a curse, and of a punishment, consists not in the quality or the measure of the evil suffered, but in the inflicting of it as penal, and in order to the satisfaction of justice.

Hence, therefore, with what calmness and sweet peace may a true christian look upon all his afflictions ! Though they be sore and heavy, and seem to carry much wrath in them, yet they have nothing of the curse. The sting was received, all of it, into the body of Christ ; so that now the covenant of works is disarmed to him ; and he need not fear the dreadful thunder of its threatenings, for the bolt is already discharged upon another. Indeed, were it God's intent to satisfy his justice by the evils which he brings upon me, I might then tremble with horror and astonishment, and account every, the slightest suffering, a presage and pledge, of far greater and eternal to come ; but if I have an interest in the righteousness of Christ, justice is already satisfied, and the curse removed ; and all the sorrows and afflictions which I suffer, are but the corrections of a gracious Father, not the revenge of an angry God. Am I pinched by poverty ? that is no curse ; God doth not seek revenge upon me, but only keeps me from the allurements to sin and vanity. Am I afflicted with losses in my relations or estate ? that is no curse ; God doth not thereby seek satisfaction to his justice, but only takes these from me, that he

might be all in all. Am I tormented with pain, and weakened with diseases, and will these bring death upon me? yet diseases and death itself are no curses; but only a necessary passage from life to life, a bad step to Canaan, a short night between one day and another. Revenging justice is satisfied; and, therefore, come what afflictions it shall please God to try me with, they are all weak and weaponless, without sting, without curse in them.

But, most sad and miserable is the condition of wicked men, whose infidelity (unbelief) excludes them from having a right in the sufferings of Christ. For there is not the least affliction that befalls them, the least gripe of any pain, the least loss in their estates, the most slight and inconsiderable cross that is, but it comes upon them through the curse of the law. God is, by these, beginning to satisfy his justice upon them; and sends these to arrest and seize them. He is beginning to take them by the throat, and to call upon them to pay him what they owe. Every affliction is to them but part of payment of that vast and endless sum of plagues, which God will, most severely and to the very utmost farthing, exact of them in hell.

And, so much, in answer to that query.

2. Let us now proceed to inquire who are the persons with whom this covenant of works was at first made, and then by whom it was broken.

(1.) But, in order to a clear and distinct resolution to this, I must first premise one or two things most necessary to be known; and which I shall lay as the basis and foundation of my ensuing discourse.

[1.] The first is this: that Adam may be considered under a twofold capacity:—As a natural root—As a federal head.

In the former respect, we were in him as in our original: in the latter, as in our representative.

There is no difficulty at all in conceiving of Adam as our natural root; for that is only in regard of the traduction\* of the same nature to all his posterity.

As all parents are the natural root of their posterity, so Adam was of all mankind, delivering his nature to his children, which hath since been handed down along from one generation to another, even unto us.

But all the difficulty lies in opening how Adam was our federal head, and what it signifies to be so.

A federal head is a common representative, or public person; a person, as it were, dilated into many; or many persons contracted into one, appointed to stand in the stead of others: so that what he doth, as acting in that public capacity, is as valid in law, to all intents and purposes, as if those, whom he represents, had in their own persons done it. This is a federal head, surety, or representative.

Now, such a representative is supposed to have a power to oblige those, for whom he appears, to any agreement or compact whatsoever, as though they themselves had personally entered into it.

And this power, that one man hath to oblige and bind another, may arise two ways:—From a voluntary delegation. From a natural, or, at least, a legal or acquired right, that the one hath over the other.

A representative by delegation is one, to whom those, whom he represents, have, by a free

\* Handing down.

and joint consent, given up their own power, and invested him in it.

As, to use a known instance in the choice of a parliament, the people give away their power to those few select men whom they send; each shire to its knight, and each corporation to its burgess: so that whatsoever these few do is, in law, not only the act of those men, but of all the people in the nation: what laws or taxes soever they impose on those whom they represent, are not only from them; but, in a law sense, the people lay them upon themselves. But Adam was not thus the federal head or representative of mankind; because, having not as then received our being, we could not, by a free consent, choose him to transact with God for us.

Therefore, there is in some a power to oblige others, arising merely from the right that the one hath over the other.

And this right is twofold: either natural, upon the account of natural production; or else legal and acquired, upon the account of purchase and redemption. For both he that begets, and he that purchases and redeems another, hath a right over him; and, by that, may become his federal head, and bind him to all just conditions; disposing of his person and concerns, as he thinks fit and expedient. Accordingly, the whole race of mankind never had but two federal heads or general representatives; and they were the first and the second Adam. The power, that Christ, the second Adam, had to represent those for whom he undertook, was founded upon a legal and acquired right over them; as being their Redeemer, who had bought them to himself out of the hands of justice, and therefore might dispose of them as he

pleased. But the power that the first Adam had to be our representative, arose from a natural right; as being the common parent of all mankind, in whose loins we all lay, and from whom we derived our being; and, upon that account, he might justly oblige us, who owe ourselves to him, as well as himself, to what terms soever God should propound, and he accepted. And the reason why we say, that Adam only was our representative or federal head, and not our other intermediate parents, from whom we sprung as well as from him, is not, because other parents have not the same power to covenant for and oblige their children as he had, (for still they have as much natural right over those that descend from them,) but, because they are not so appointed and constituted by God. Should God make a distinct and different covenant with them, they would have as much power to bind their posterity to the terms of it, as Adam had to bind all mankind to the covenant of works.

That is the first thing premised.

[2.] Because Adam was thus our federal head, we are not to be considered as distinct from him; but, as one and the same person with him, entering into covenant with God.

As the parliament is to be considered as the same with the whole body of the people, in all things wherein they do represent them; so Adam and all mankind are to be considered as one and the same person, in all things wherein he represents us. Now, our being thus one with Adam doth not denote any real physical unity or oneness: but it must be understood in *sensu forensi*, in "a judicial law sense." And this oneness with him, in a law sense, (which is a term frequently

used, and therefore it might help us to have it expounded,) signifies nothing else but that there is a real foundation laid for the law justly to reward or punish us, upon Adam's obedience or disobedience, as if we were one and the same person with him; which foundation is the right he hath over us, to oblige us to covenant conditions.

(2.) These things thus premised, which are of great moment in the doctrine of the covenants,

Take these two particulars :

[1.] That the covenant of works was not made with Adam, considered in his private and personal capacity; but as a public person, and a federal head: and, therefore, it was made with us as well as with him; yea, with us in him.

He was not a single person, but a whole world, wrapt and folded up together in one: so that all, who have since sprung from him, are, in respect of the covenant, but one Adam unravelled and drawn out at length. What the apostle saith of Levi, Heb. vii. 9, 10. "Levi—paid tithes in Abraham; for he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him;" I may say in this case: we all entered into covenant at the very beginning of the world; for we were then in the loins of our father Adam, when that covenant was made. So that, when we consider either Adam or ourselves with relation to this covenant, we must so mould our apprehensions, as if all we were Adam, and Adam all of us: for, though we then lay so deep hid in our causes, and the small principles of our beings, yet the covenant took hold of us, and bound us, either to the obedience which Adam promised both for himself and us, or to the penalty which he exposed both himself and us unto. Yet, still, our covenanting in Adam must be understood

in a law sense: for it is utterly impossible that we should personally and actually enter into covenant before we were: but the meaning is only this, that the covenant, which God made with Adam, doth as lawfully and strongly bind us to obedience, and in case of failure to punishment, as it did him; because God made this covenant with him, considered not personally but representatively, he having a power to indent\* for his posterity, from the natural right he had over them as their common parent. And yet, possibly, it may be long enough disputed, without hopes of a certain resolution, whether, when God made this covenant with Adam, he then knew himself to be a public person, and to stand as the representative of all mankind. Probable it is, that, this affair being of such vast and general concernment, some such apprehensions might be impressed upon him by God, either through natural instinct or Divine revelation: and, if so, the more inexcusable was his fault, that, knowing himself entrusted with no less a stock than the happiness of all his race, he should so wilfully sin, and thereby ruin both himself and them.

[2.] In like manner, Adam brake this covenant, not only as considered personally, but as he was a common representative, and a public person; and, therefore, not only he, but we, by eating of the forbidden fruit, sinned and fell.

We are not to look upon Adam as alone in the transgression; but we ourselves were as deep in it as he; he, indeed, by personal consent to the temptation, without which neither he nor we had sinned; but we, by a covenant or federal obligation in him, our surety and representative. Every one

\* To enter into contract.

will readily confess, that he hath been, and still is, a transgressor of the covenant of works; that his obedience falls infinitely short of the holiness and perfection of the law; but, that he should transgress this covenant so many thousand years before he was born, even in the infancy of the world, that his hand should be lifted up against God in that primitive rebellion; this some deny, few understand, and fewer lament. Yet what saith the apostle, Rom. v. 12. 18, 19? In the 12th verse, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men," *εἰς ὃ πάντες ἥμαρτον*, "for that all have sinned," saith our translation; "in whom all have sinned," saith the margin; both are right; for indeed both carry but the same sense. So, in ver. 18, "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation;" and ver. 19, "By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners." But how could many be made sinners by the sin of one? It is not by imitation only, as the Pelagians held, maintaining that Adam's sin had no more influence upon us, than the power that a bad example hath to sway that will to evil that is not necessarily confirmed in good: but this cannot be, because death is here said to reign over those who never "sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression," ver. 14, that is, over infants, for they also die in whom the example of Adam could never work any propension to disobedience; and, certainly, were there nothing else in Adam's sin to make men sinners, but only the setting of an ill example before them, I can see no reason why the example of his penitence and after obedience should not as effectually excite us to virtue, as that of his disobedience to sin:

especially, methinks, the examples of the miseries and wretchedness that sin hath brought upon Adam and upon his posterity, might much more deter them, than the examples of vice, if there were no corruption in their nature, allure them. It is not therefore by example only, that mankind are made sinners through the disobedience of one; but we became sinners by his disobedience, because in him we ourselves sinned and disobeyed: not, indeed, actually, for so we were not in him; but forensically and in a law sense, he being our representative and federal head, and God looking upon what he did as equivalent to the personal deed of all mankind; which imputation was built upon most just and righteous grounds, because Adam, being our first parent, had a natural right over us, and might bind all his posterity to the terms of any covenant that God should be pleased to make with him, and which might have been so much to their advantage.

And thus I hope these two things are sufficiently cleared, which are of great use and necessity to our right understanding the doctrine of the covenants; with whom the covenant of works was made, and by whom it was broken.

That many of these things are abstruse and difficult, I cannot deny; but that any of them are vain and frivolous, I do. It is a most ignorant and weak excuse of many, who perhaps may be well-meaning people, that these things are too high speculations for them to search into; that their eternal salvation may be secured well enough, though they know not such obscure points as these are, so long as they conscientiously practise those obvious truths and express duties which they know. I will not, I dare not deny, but men may be safe

in not knowing what they cannot attain. But, if they pretend this for a shelter of slothful and affected ignorance, let them consider, that many of the great and precious truths of the gospel are delivered obscurely; not to excuse us from, but on purpose to engage us to a diligent search and study of them. If these things were not expedient to be known, why should the holy scripture so abound with them? The epistles of St. Paul are full of these profound mysteries, which he wrote to the churches in common, and every member of them: these were read in public assemblies; and it concerned all the people to hearken to them, and consider of them: and if the pressing only of practical duties of christianity had been sufficient, most part of the apostle's writings had been needless and superfluous. It is true, we cannot determine what is the *minimum quod sic*, that is consistent with salvation; what is "the least degree," either of grace or knowledge, that may just serve to bring a man to heaven; but this we may say, that it is a very ill sign, to drive the bargain so hard with God; to desire to be saved, at the least charges and expenses possible. This I will boldly say, that he, who despiseth a more high and elevated knowledge of the mysteries of christianity, where the means to attain it are afforded; though others who are destitute of those means may arrive at heaven and happiness, yet I must needs doubt whether ever he shall. To despise evangelical truths, which do not so immediately tend to practice, is no other than to impute a trivialness to the infinite wisdom of God, who hath revealed them, and so often and largely insisted on them; and to withdraw the chief part of ourselves, whereby we most of all show

ourselves to be men, from his obedience, even our understandings. Certainly we serve God as well by endeavouring to know his truth, as by endeavouring to obey his commands; and he, who resolves to obey God when bidding him do this, but not when he bids him understand this, serves him more like an engine, than like a man.

From this, that hath been spoken, we may borrow some light to discover to us the manner how we are all become partakers of original sin, through the violation of this first covenant of works.

Many are the disputes and great the difficulties about this matter. Very much is said and written upon this subject, to very little purpose; unless it be to show us, how miserable the blindness and ignorance of human nature is, which this sin hath brought upon us. It would be a labour, as fruitless as endless, to reckon up to you the great variety of opinions herein. No one point of divinity hath been more discussed and controverted than this; and yet, if I may be allowed so to judge, all, that ever I have yet seen, hath either been false in the hypothesis, or failed in the accommodation. Some deny the imputation of guilt, and some the corruption of nature; and, because they cannot comprehend the way and manner of its conveyance, destroy original sin itself. Others that grant both, yet puzzle themselves and their readers with strange assertions: some holding that the soul is propagated from the parents even as the body is, and therefore no wonder that a defiled soul should beget another such: others, who hold the souls of men to be immediately created by God, affirm that it contracts pollution by being infused into a polluted body. But, yet, the absurdities, that will follow upon all these ways are so many so very gross and palpable,

that such hypothesis, instead of satisfying, must needs only disquiet and torment an inquisitive mind. And yet, if, after all these differences and disputes, the certainty of the truth in this matter could be evidenced, it would more than recompense the pains of all, and the errors of many who have attempted it; for, though it be certain that niceties in religion are not necessities; yet, if ever difficulty and usefulness were conjoined together in any one point, it is in this of original sin. I intend not to handle the question at large; but only briefly speak to it, as a deduction and corollary from this doctrine of the covenants.

To enter into it, I must first premise a distinction or two concerning original sin; and then lay down some positions, from which it may be cleared to you, that the true ground of our partaking of it is only the covenant of works.

Original sin therefore is twofold:

The imputation of guilt,

The inhesion of corruption.

There is an imputation of guilt.

To impute guilt, is, to reckon a person a transgressor of the law; and therefore liable to the punishment threatened, whether he hath in his own person transgressed the law or not. And here lies a great part of the difficulty, how we can become guilty of another man's transgression, which we never acted in, nor consented unto, and which was committed some thousands of years before we were born: and yet we shall be punished for it; and that as justly as if we had in our own persons committed it.

Besides this imputation of guilt, there is in original sin an inherent corruption of nature.

The former is by the schools called *peccatum*

*originans* :\* and this, *peccatum originatum* : † barbarously indeed, but yet significantly.

Inherent corruption of nature is commonly made to consist of two parts.

The loss and privation of the image of God: the clarity ‡ of our understandings, the obedience of our wills, the order of our affections, the perfect harmony of the whole man in the subjection of his inferior faculties to his superior, and all unto God, being utterly lost and renounced; so that now we are become both unable and averse to every thing that is good.

Besides this, it is commonly affirmed, that there is some positive malignant quality in original sin, namely, a violent propension and strong bent of the whole man unto what is evil and sinful.

The former is called the privative, this latter the positive part of original sin.

Yet I think, if it be well weighed, as there may be insuperable difficulties in admitting such a positive corruption in our frame and composition, so there is not any necessity to grant it. We need not, I say, superadd any positive corruption in original sin, to the privation of original righteousness: for a mere privation of rectitude in an active subject, will sufficiently solve all those phenomena for which a positive corruption is pleaded. We shall find man's nature wicked enough by his fall, though there were no evil principles infused into him (for from whence should they come?) but only holiness and righteousness taken from him: for, the soul being a busy creature, act it must and will: without grace and the image of God adorning and assisting it, it cannot act regularly nor holily: its nature makes it active; the loss of God's

\* The originating sin. † Sin originated. ‡ Brightness.

image, which alone can raise the soul to act spiritually, makes all its actions defective: and this alone is sufficient to make all its actions corrupt and sinful, without admitting any positive corruption. There needs no more to make a man halt, that must walk, but to lame him; and, certainly, he that doth lame him, doth it, not by infusing into him any habit or principle of lameness, but only by destroying that strength and power which before he had. So stands the case here:—we are all lamed by the fall we took in Adam: our natures are despoiled of their primitive integrity and perfection, so that there needs not any positive vicious habit implanted in our original, to make our actions vicious and irregular; but it is sufficient, that we have lost those holy habits and principles of righteousness and knowledge, which we were at first endowed with, and which alone could direct every action *in ordine ad Deum*, as the schools speak, “with a reference to God,” and his honour and glory.

Thus then you see, original sin may be either the guilt of the first transgression imputed to us, or the corruption of nature inherent in us: to which corruption nothing more is required, than the loss of God’s image in an active subject.

It remains now to open, how this imputation lies upon us, and this corruption cleaves unto us, merely upon the account of the covenant of works; whereby we may clearly understand how it is that we become partakers of original sin.

This I shall endeavour to do as to both branches.

As to the imputation of Adam’s sin to us, take these two particulars; which will explain how original sin, as to the guilt of it, lies upon us.

1. If Adam had not been our federal head, if

the covenant had not been made with us in him, but had respected him alone, yet his sin might have been justly so far imputed to us, as to subject us to temporal evils and punishments; because of that relation which we bear unto him as our natural head, and the common root from whence we all sprang.

And the reason of this is, because God might justly have punished the transgression of Adam, in all his concerns, and in whatsoever was dear unto him; as his posterity would have been. So that, to us, these evils would have been only a *simplex cruciatus*, "only painful," because inflicted without any respect to our own sin; but, to Adam, they had been penal, and properly punishments. This I think may be made good by many places of scripture, where God is set forth as punishing some for the sins of others, who were not their federal heads: "Visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children," Exod. xx. 5. "The seed of evil-doers shall never be renowned. Prepare slaughter for his children, for the iniquity of their fathers," Isa. xiv. 20, 21: and so, for the sin of David, seventy thousand of his subjects were slain: and yet those fathers were not the representatives of their children, neither was David of his subjects. But God might justly thus punish them in their relations: for a father is punished, in the evils that befall his children; and a king, in those that befall his subjects: and, though it be true that they have evil enough of their own, to deserve these, yea, and greater plagues; yet, if they should be supposed to be innocent and without sin, God might justly thus afflict them, not indeed as punishing them, but those that sinned, they being made only the passive conveyors of those punishments to them.

I remember Plutarch gives this reason, in his treatise "Of those who are late punished," why it may be just to revenge the fathers' offences upon the children: *ἔθεν δεινον, σαίη η, ἔδ' ἀτοπον ἀν ἐκεῖνων οὐτες ἐχῶσι τὰ ἐκεῖνων*. "It is nothing strange nor absurd, that, since they belong to them, they should suffer what belongs to them." So, then, though we had never sinned in Adam, and the covenant made with him had never reached us; yet God might justly have brought temporal evils upon us, because of the relation we bear unto him, as our natural head, and as we are parts of him.

That Adam's sin is imputed unto us, so far as thereby to make us liable to eternal death and damnation, results not from his being our natural, but our federal head.

2. Adam's sin is imputed to our condemnation, only because we covenanted in him, and not merely because we descended from him. It is an everlasting truth, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die:" and, "The son shall not bear the iniquity of" his "father," Ezek. xviii. 20. that is, the punishment of his father's iniquity. So, "Every man shall bear his own burden," Gal. vi. 5. These expressions cannot be meant of temporal sufferings; for I have already showed, that God may and doth inflict them upon children, for the parents' sins: but they are meant of future punishments, and eternal death; that none shall eternally perish for his father's crimes, but only for his own. "But," you will say, "how then comes it to pass, that we are liable to eternal death through the sin of another, if so be the son shall not bear the iniquity of his father, and only the soul that sinneth shall die?" I answer: This is still true, because we are the souls that sinned; we, in Adam, who then rose

up our representative, in whom we covenanted with God, and in whom we brake that covenant: and therefore God inflicts death eternal upon his posterity, not as a punishment for his sin, but for their own; for his sin was theirs, though not committed personally by them, yet legally and judicially charged upon them. The grounds of this I have before mentioned, and therefore shall spare to enlarge upon it here: only take the sum and abstract of it, in brief, thus: God was, at first, willing of free grace to enter into covenant with Adam; that, if he would obey, he should live; if he would disobey, he should die the death: but, lest this grace should be too narrow and stinted, if it had been limited to Adam's own person only, therefore God extends it to all mankind, and bids Adam stand forth as the representative and surety of all his posterity, and indent for them as well as for himself; which he might justly do, being the common parent of mankind, and therefore having a natural right to dispose of them, especially when in all appearance and probability it would have proved so incomparably to their advantage: he therefore disobeying, the death threatened is as much due to us, as to him; it being, in law, not only his act, but ours. And this is plainly the manner how we, who live so many thousand years after, are made liable to death by the first transgression. And, therefore, Alvarez de Auxil. d. 44. n. 5. saith well, "*Proprie loquendo omnes filii Adæ peccaverunt originaliter in eo instanti, in quo Adam peccavit actualiter:*" that is, All the children of Adam are not only then guilty of original sin when they are first conceived or born, but "properly they sinned originally in the same instant in which Adam sinned actually" by eating the forbidden fruit,

because they were then in Adam as in their representative, and upon that account his transgression was legally theirs.

And thus, I hope, I have made it clear, that, as for that part of original sin which consists in the imputation of the guilt of the first transgression, it lies upon us merely from the covenant of works, into which we entered with God in Adam.

There is another branch of original sin, which consists in the corruption of our natures, through the loss of the image of God. This also had never seized on us, but by the covenant of works.

Many perplexed disputes there are, how we became so totally depraved, and whence we derived that corruption. I shall, as clearly as I can, lay open to you the true and genuine grounds of it; which, in general, I affirm to be the violation of the covenant of works.

To make this evident, consider these three particulars.

(1.) It must again be remembered, that the loss of God's image, that is, of all that grace and holiness wherewith our natures were primitively endowed, is the true and only ground of all original corruption and depravation.

Men's natures are not now become sinful, by putting any thing into them to defile them; but by taking something from them, which should have preserved them holy. We have nothing more in us by nature, than Adam had in innocency: and, if it be said we have corruption in us by nature, which he had not, that is not to have more, but less. He had the free power of obedience; he had the perfect image of his Maker, in all the divine qualities of knowledge and holiness, which we have not, and are therefore said to be

corrupt; not as though there were in our original any real positive qualities which were not in Adam, but because he had those holy qualities which are not in us. And, therefore, when we say that Adam communicated to his posterity a corrupted nature, it must not be understood as if that nature which we receive were infected with any vicious inclinations or habits, which would sway and determine our wills unto evil; but the meaning is, that Adam communicated to us a nature, which hath a power to incline and act variously: but, withal, he did not communicate to us the image of God, nor the power of obedience, which should make all its inclinations and actions holy and regular; and, therefore, he communicated a nature corrupted, because it was deprived of that grace which should have kept it from sin.

That is the first particular.

(2.) The loss of this image of God was part of that death threatened in the covenant of works. "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die;" that is, thou shalt die a spiritual death, as well as a temporal and eternal death.

And this spiritual death was the very despoiling him of the image of God, and the habits and principles of holiness: so that corruption of nature seized upon Adam through the curse of the covenant: God taking from him his image, and thereby executing upon him this spiritual death literally, even in the very day wherein he transgressed.

(3.) Adam being our federal head, and we disobeying in him, God doth justly deprive us of this image; that thereby also he might execute upon us the spiritual death threatened in the covenant of works, which covenant we brake in our representative.

And this I take to be the true account of the corruption of our nature. It is a curse threatened, in the covenant, to those that shall disobey; and inflicted upon us, because we were those that did disobey, in Adam our federal head. We have our beings delivered down to us: but that grace, which should have enabled us to act without sin, is lost, because the covenant of works threatened it should be lost upon the first transgression. And, indeed, this loss of God's image was the only death that was immediately upon the fall inflicted: God did not presently bring either temporal or eternal death upon sinful Adam; but he instantly brought spiritual death upon him, as judging him, who had a will to disobey, unworthy any longer to enjoy a power to obey, nor would he have his image profaned by being worn by a rebel and a malefactor.

And thus I have stated and answered that great and much controverted question; and think it to be the clear, yea, indeed the only satisfactory way to resolve how we are become originally sinners, both by the imputation of guilt, and corruption of nature.

And, yet, to add some more light and confirmation to this, two particulars more are considerable.

Most probable it is, that, though Adam had sinned, yet by that one act of disobedience he would not utterly have lost the image of God, had it not been taken away from him according to the terms of the covenant of works. It was rather forfeited by law, than destroyed by the contrariety of sin.

So that, it is only upon the account of the covenant, that both his nature and the nature of his posterity were corrupted by that first transgression. For it is very hard to conceive how Adam's sin,

which was but one transient act, should formally eat out and destroy the innate habit of grace in him ; and therefore it did it meritoriously and federally. All grace depends necessarily upon the influence of the Spirit of God, both to preserve and to actuate it ; and sin provoked God to withdraw that influence, according as he had threatened to do and, hence it came to pass, that Adam's grace decayed and perished, at once ; and left him nothing but mere nature, despoiled of those divine habits and principles with which it was before endowed.

Though Adam had lost God's image himself, yet, if he had not been our federal head and representative, I can see no reason but that we should have been created with the perfection of that image upon us, notwithstanding his sin and transgression.

And, therefore, it is not merely our being born of sinful Adam, nor of sinful parents, that must be assigned as the true and principal cause why our natures are corrupted ; but because we are born of that sinful Adam, who was our federal head, in whom we covenanted, and in whom we ourselves sinned and transgressed. Not our birth from him, but our sinning in him, derives corruption upon us. Though he had corrupted himself, yet, if he had not been a public person, his corruption had not infected our nature ; any more than the sins of intermediate parents do the natures of those who descend from them. Nor doth Job contradict this when he asks, chap. xiv. ver. 4. " Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean ? " for there he shows the impossibility of it, as the case now stands ; not, how it might and would have been, if the whole mass had not been federally corrupted in Adam. And he, who seriously considers the most pure and

immaculate conception of our blessed Saviour, will be convinced of the truth of this: for, though he descended from Adam as a natural root, yet he descended not from him as a federal head; the covenant of works reaching only unto those, who were to be his ordinary and common offspring; and, therefore, though he partook of his nature, yet he did not partake of his guilt and corruption.

And thus I have, as I could, stated this much disputed and very difficult point of our partaking of original sin, both as to the imputation of the guilt of it, and the corruption of our nature by it; and have resolved all into the covenant of works, into which we entered with God, in our first father and common representative. The guilt of the primitive transgression lies upon us, because we both covenanted, and brake that covenant in him; so that his sin is legally become ours: the corruption of nature, through the loss of God's image, cleaveth unto us, because this was part of the punishment contained in the death threatened against those that should violate and break that covenant.

Here then let us, with a silent awe upon our souls, tremble at the hidden depths of God's justice.

It is the hardest task in the world, to bring carnal reason to submit to and approve of the equitableness of God's proceedings against us for the sin of Adam.

“Is there any shadow of reason, that I should be condemned for the sin of another, which I never abetted, never consented to, never knew of? a sin, which was committed so many hundreds of ages before ever I was born? If God be resolved I shall perish, why doth he thus seem to circumvent me? why doth he use such ambages\* and captious

\* Idle circumlocutions.

circumstances of indicting me for Adam's sin, which I never entered into? Were it not far more plain dealing, more direct proceeding, to cast me into hell, and to justify it by the mere arbitrariness of his will, and the irresistibleness of his power? Who can oppose the one, or prevail against the other? But to implead me before justice, and to urge equity in condemning me by a law made on purpose to ensnare me, seems only the contrivance of an almighty cruelty; which yet might be safe enough in its own force, without any such pretexts and artifices."

Let every such blasphemous mouth be stopped, and all flesh become guilty before the Lord. Tell me, thou, who thus disputest against God's equity, and complainest of his severity in this particular, tell me, wouldst thou have been content, or thought thyself well dealt with, to have been left out of the covenant of works, and by name excepted, if Adam had continued in his integrity? and, when all others of mankind for whom he engaged had been crowned with life and happiness, that thou alone shouldst have no share in their blessedness, no title to it, no plea for it, it being due only upon a covenant-stipulation? Wouldst not thou have thought that God had dealt very hardly with thee, to omit, to except thee only, for want of thy express consent? so that, though thou hadst obeyed, yet life should not have been due to thee, nor couldst thou have had any plea for it. For I have heretofore showed you, that, if God had not entered into this covenant with Adam, though he had observed all that God commanded him, yet he could not challenge life and happiness as a debt due to his obedience. And, indeed, was God severe in threatening death to the transgressors of his law, when yet he pro-

mised life to those who observed it, which life he was not bound to bestow; and deposited this in the hands of one, who might as easily have kept as lost it, and whose interest did infinitely oblige him to a punctual observance? What more equitable, what more reasonable terms could be offered than these, or more favourable to all mankind? Was this severity? was this a design to entrap or ensnare us? Wouldst not thou thyself, hadst thou then lived, have consented to this transaction; and have infinitely blessed God, for the mercy of the condescension in making such a covenant, whereby, if man should prove any other than a vast gainer by it, it must be through the mere fault of his own will? Again, to vindicate the righteousness of God in involving us in the guilt of the first Adam, consider, Do you not think it is just with God to save your souls from everlasting condemnation, through the merits of the second Adam, Jesus Christ, imputed unto you? and shall it not, then, be as just with God, to account you liable and obnoxious to it, through the sin of the first Adam, imputed to you? If the one be just because of the covenant made between God the Father and our blessed Saviour, this likewise is just because of the covenant made between Adam and God: you gave no more consent to that, than to this; and Adam had as much power to appear and undertake for you upon the account of production, as Christ had upon the account of redemption: only, such is the partiality of our self-love, that we are ready to think that God is only then just, when he is merciful; and we reckon his dealings with us equal, not by the strict measures of justice, but by our own successes, interests, and advantages.

Let this, therefore, be an apology for God, to vindicate his proceedings with us upon the account of Adam's transgression. I had not so largely insisted on it, but that there are secret heart-risings in the very best, against the righteousness of God, in this particular. Flesh and blood can hardly brook it; and, when it hath nothing left to reply, yet still it will be murmuring and rebelling against this truth. When the mouth of carnal reason is stopped, yet then it will vent itself in carnal repinings. But it becomes us to lay our hand upon this mouth also, and to give God the glory of his justice; acknowledging it is most righteous, that we should be actually and personally wretched, who were federally disobedient and rebellious.

Many nice questions might be here propounded; but because they are so, I shall only propound them.

As: If Adam had continued in innocence for some certain time, whether God would have so confirmed him in grace as he hath done the holy angels, that he should infallibly have persevered in his original state. Whether, though Adam had stood, his posterity might have sinned and fallen. Whether, upon their fall, their posterity had been guilty of original sin. Whether, if Adam had stood some years in innocence, and afterwards had sinned, his children born before his fall had been involved in it. Whether, if Eve only had transgressed, and not Adam by her persuasion, mankind had thereby been originally sinful. But these things, being rather curious than necessary speculations, which are not revealed to us in the scriptures, I look upon it, as an unprofitable, so a bold and rash undertaking, positively to determine what might have been in such cases; and think it

safest, and most satisfactory to acquiesce in sober and modest inquiries.

I shall, therefore, add no more for the doctrinal part of this covenant of works, but shall close it up with some practical application.

1. Is it the tenor of the covenant of works, that the man, which doth those things that the law requires, he only shall live by them? This then may be for conviction to all the world.

It is a doctrine, that will strike through all self-justiciaries, that trust to their own works and righteousness to save them. Let the scripture tell them ever so often, that there is none righteous, no, not one; that all have sinned, and are fallen short of the glory of God: let God offer Christ unto them; Christ offer himself, his righteousness, his sufferings, his obedience, and a life ready purchased to their hands; yet still they retreat; and appeal from him, to the works and righteousness of the law, for justification.

Well, then, to the law they shall go. And, by three demonstrations, I shall convince men, that it is utterly impossible for them to be justified by the law, or according to the terms of a covenant of works.

(1.) It is utterly impossible for them to act answerably to the exact strictness and holiness of the law; and, if they fail in the least jot, read but that terrible sentence pronounced against them, "Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things, which are written in the book of the law, to do them," Gal. iii. 10. This is the tenor of the law.

And dare you now maintain your plea, and bring it to an issue with God? What can you produce, that may justify you according to this sentence? Perhaps, among many thousand works of darkness and of the devil, may stand up a few

shattered prayers, a few faint wishes, a few pious resolutions; but the prayers heartless, the wishes ineffectual, and the resolutions abortive! Is this the righteousness of the law, which Moses describes? Is heaven grown so cheap, as to be set to sale for this? If you depend upon your works for life, bring forth an angelical perfection. Can you tell God, that you never had a thought in you, that stepped awry? not an imagination, tainted with any the least vanity, impertinency, frivolousness, not to say uncleanness, malice, blasphemy, and atheism? Can you say, that you never uttered a word that so much as lisped contrary to the law? that you never did an action, which innocence itself might not own? If not, as certainly there is no man that liveth and sinneth not, you can expect nothing but condemnation according to the sentence of the law, and the tenor of the covenant of works, which thunders forth the curse against every transgressor.

(2.) It is alike utterly impossible for you to make any satisfaction to justice for the violation of the law.

Thy own conscience, which tells thee thou hast sinned, summonses thee before the great and righteous Judge, who demands full satisfaction for the violation of his laws, and thy offences committed against him. Suffering cannot satisfy, unless it be in thy eternal damnation: and all, that thou canst do, will not satisfy; for all that thou canst do, is but thy duty however. And yet, without a full personal satisfaction, thou canst expect no salvation, according to the covenant of works. Yet, farther,

(3.) Could you perfectly obey, and in your own persons meritoriously suffer, yet still there would

be a flaw in your title; for still there would be original sin, which would keep you from obtaining a legal righteousness.

It is true, the law saith, "Do this, and live;" but to whom doth it speak? not to fallen, but to innocent, upright man. It is not only a "Do this" can save you; but the law requires a "Be this," too. Now, can you pluck down the old building, and cast out all the ruins and rubbish? Can you, in the very casting and moulding of your beings, instamp upon them the image of God's purity and holiness? If these impossibilities may be achieved, then justification by a covenant of works were not a thing altogether desperate. But, whilst we have original corruption, which will cause defects in our obedience; whilst we have defects in our obedience, which will expose us to Divine justice; whilst we are utterly unable to satisfy that justice; so long we may conclude it altogether impossible to be justified by a covenant of works. Instead of finding life by it, we shall meet with nothing but death and the curse.

2. This, therefore, might endear to us the unspeakable love of God, in the inestimable gift of his Son Jesus Christ; by whom both this covenant is fulfilled, and a better ratified for us. Either obligation of the law was too much for us: we could neither obey nor suffer: but He hath performed both; fulfilling the precept, and conquering the penalty; and both, by a free and gracious imputation, are reckoned to our justification, and the obtaining of eternal life.

3. This declares the desperate and remediless estate of those who, by unbelief, refuse Jesus Christ, and the redemption he hath purchased: for they are still under the covenant of works;

and shall have sentence pass upon them, according to the tenor of that covenant.

There are but two covenants between God and man. The one saith, "Do this, and live;" the other saith, "Believe, and live." Men are left to their own choice, to which they will apply. If they refuse the conditions of the latter, they must perform the conditions of the former, or else perish eternally. Now, every unbeliever doth actually thrust Christ from him; and reject that great salvation which he hath purchased: they will not have him to be their Lord and Saviour; and therefore God will certainly judge every such wretch according to the strictest terms of the covenant of works; and then woe, everlasting woe unto him. For every, the least transgression, of the least tittle of the law will certainly, as God's threatenings are true, be punished with eternal death. And how many deaths and hells then must be put together, and crowded into one, to make up a just and fearful reward for him, who, scorning the way of salvation by believing, shall put himself upon his trial by the covenant of works! Whither will such an one fly? what will be his refuge? Plead his innocence, he cannot: conscience will take him by the throat, and tell him loudly he lies. Plead the righteousness and satisfaction of Jesus Christ, he cannot: he scorned it, he rejected it; and, therefore, cannot expect it should ever appear for him, or avail him. There is no hope, no remedy for such a wretch; but, being thus cast and condemned by law, he must for ever lie under the revenges of that wrath, which it is impossible for him either to bear or to evade.

And thus much, concerning the covenant of works.

## PART II.

Let us now proceed to consider and treat of the COVENANT OF GRACE, the sum and tenor of which is delivered to us from the 6th to the 10th verse.

This Covenant of Grace is propounded to us, upon a supposed impossibility of obtaining righteousness and justification according to the terms of the covenant of works.

And, lest it might seem as impossible to be justified by this covenant, the apostle removes the two great objections that lie in the way.

For, it may be argued, that the abode and residence of Christ, the Son of God, who is to work out this righteousness for us, is in the highest heavens; and how then shall he be brought down to earth, to fulfil the law in our stead?

To this the apostle answers: "Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? that is, to bring Christ down from above." That care is already taken; and God, the eternal Son, hath left those glorious mansions, to shroud and eclipse himself in our vile flesh. He was born of a woman, and made subject to the law, and hath wrought out all righteousness for us; that, through his obedience, sinners might be pardoned and justified.

But then, again, it might be objected, That whosoever will appear to be our Surety, must not only yield perfect obedience to the law of God, but pay down his life to the justice of God for our

offences: and if Christ thus die for us, how can he then appear before God in our behalf, to plead our cause, to justify and acquit us? We cannot be justified unless Christ die; neither can we be justified by a dead Christ: and who is there that can raise this crucified and murdered Saviour to life again, that we might obtain righteousness by him?

To this also the apostle answers: "Say not in thine heart—Who shall descend into the deep?" that is, into the grave, where his body lay entombed; or into Hades, the place and receptacle of separate souls: or, if you will, into both these depths; into Hades, to bring back the soul of Christ to his body; and into the grave, to raise his body with his soul, and to rescue him from the power of death and corruption? That work is already done. He hath, by his almighty Spirit and Godhead, broken asunder the bands of death, and the bars of the grave, it being impossible that he should be holden of it; and that, having discharged the debt, he should any longer lie under arrest and confinement.

And thus the apostle, as I conceive, answers these two objections against the possibility of our being justified by Christ, according to the terms of the covenant of grace, taken from the grand improbability both of his incarnation and resurrection: how, being God, he should descend from heaven, and become man; and how, being man, he should ascend out of the grave, and become a fit Mediator between God and men. And, therefore, both these being done, though the righteousness of the law be impossible, yet you need not despair of a righteousness: the matter of your justification is already wrought out: Christ, by his

incarnation, hath subjected himself to all obedience both of the precept and penalty of the covenant of works; and, by his resurrection and intercession, will take care to secure the application of his merits and righteousness unto you.

These two objections being thus removed, the apostle proceeds on, in the eighth and ninth verses, to give us the sum and tenor of the covenant of grace.

“What saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart:” (expressions borrowed from Moses concerning the delivery of his law, Deut. xxx. 12. 14. which the apostle applies here to the gospel of Christ) and tells us, that “the word of faith, which we preach,” is, “that, if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe with thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” As if the apostle should have said, ‘God requires no impossible thing for thy salvation. He doth not bid thee pluck Christ from heaven, and thrust him into a body. He doth not bid thee descend into the bowels of the earth, and there rescue Christ from the power of the grave. These are not within the compass of thy ability; nor doth God require for thy justification and salvation any thing that is impossible to be done. No: but ‘the word of’ righteousness ‘which we preach,’ that is, the manner of obtaining righteousness which we exhibit in the gospel, is no other than what lieth in the heart and in the mouth. Thou needest not go up to heaven, to bring Christ down from thence; nor down to the grave, to raise him from the dead: these things are already done; and thou needest go no farther than thy heart and thy mouth for salvation. God hath placed the conditions of it in them: that, if thou believest on

Christ in thy heart, and if thou confessest him with thy mouth, thou shalt be saved.'

This, I suppose, is the clear scope and intent of the apostle in these verses.

Yet here we must also take notice,

1. That, though the apostle seems here to make the believing that Christ is raised from the dead to be a true, saving, and justifying faith; yet it must not be so understood, as if only a dogmatical belief of this proposition—That Christ is risen from the dead, were faith sufficient to justify us; but, as it is common in holy scripture, by mentioning one principal object of faith, to mean the whole extent of it, so here, though only the resurrection of Christ be mentioned, yet all his merits and righteousness are intended, which, by virtue of his being raised from the dead, may by faith be effectually applied unto the soul. So that, "If thou believest that Christ is raised from the dead," is no other than, "If thou believest on Christ, who is raised from the dead." And so the apostle himself expounds it, ver. 11. "Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." For saving faith is not only a mere assent to any proposition concerning Christ, whether it be his Deity, his incarnation, his death, his resurrection, or the like; for, so, "the devils believe, and tremble," and many thousand wicked nominal christians do believe that God raised Jesus Christ from the dead, and all the other articles of their creed; but yet, this speculative faith, being overborne by their impious and unholy practices, will not at all avail to their justification; but, if thou so believest that Christ is risen from the dead, that this thy faith hath an effectual influence to raise thee from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, thou shalt be saved.

2. What the apostle speaks here, of confessing Christ with our mouths, must not be restrained only to a verbal confession of him; but it comprehends, likewise, our glorifying him by the whole course of our professed obedience and subjection to him.

So that, in these two, is comprehended the whole sum of christian religion—faith, and obedience; the inward affections of the heart, and the outward actions of the life.

In brief—all that here the apostle speaks falls into this, “If thou wilt believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and if thou wilt sincerely obey him, thou shalt be saved:” and this he gives as the sum and tenor of the righteousness of faith, and the covenant of grace.

First. That we may aright conceive of the covenant of grace from the very first ground and foundation of it, I shall lead you through these following positions.

1. God having, in his eternal decree of permitting it, foreseen the fall of man, and thereby the breach and violation of the covenant of works, graciously resolved not to proceed against all mankind according to the demerits of their transgression, in the execution of that death upon them which the covenant threatened; but to propound another covenant unto them upon better terms, which whosoever would perform, should obtain life thereby: purposing, likewise, by his grace and Spirit so effectually to work upon the hearts of some, that they should perform the conditions of this second covenant, and thereby obtain everlasting life.

God would have some of all those creatures, whom he made capable of enjoying him, to be brought to that most blessed and happy fruition. The angels did not all fall, but multitudes of them kept their

first estate and glory; and, therefore, as some think, God never found out a means to reconcile those that fell. But all mankind at once sinned, and fell short of the glory of God: and, therefore, lest they should all perish, and a whole species of rational creatures, who were made fit to behold and enjoy him in glory, should for ever be cut off from his presence and the beatific vision, he resolves, that, as the fall of all was by the terms of one covenant, so the restoration of some should be by and according to the terms of another. And, thus, in reference to this eternal purpose, the apostle calls it "eternal life," which was "promised before the world began," Tit. i. 2. and also, 2 Tim. i. 9. he speaks of the "purpose" and "grace" of God, "which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began."

Now, in this design of entering into another covenant, besides the restoring of fallen man, God the Father intended the glorifying of himself and his Son Jesus Christ.

(1.) He intended to glorify himself, his manifold wisdom and unsearchable counsel, in finding out a means to reconcile justice and mercy, to punish the sin, and yet to pardon the sinner: his righteousness; in the remission of sins through the propitiation of Christ, Rom. iii. 25. "God hath set" him "forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood; to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins:" and, likewise, his rich and abundant grace; in giving his Son to die for rebels; to make him a curse, that we might receive the blessing; and to make him sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God through him.

(2.) By the covenant of grace, the glory of Christ Jesus was also designed: God appointing him to be the Mediator of this new covenant: and thereby

giving a glorious occasion to demonstrate the riches of his free love, in subjecting his life to such a death, and his glory to such a shame; and all to purchase such vile and worthless creatures as we are, and to redeem us from eternal woe and misery: to exalt likewise the glory of his almighty power; in supporting the human nature under the vast load of the wrath of God, and the curse of the law: the glory of his uncontrollable sovereignty, in voluntarily laying down his life and taking it up again; of his complete and all-sufficient sacrifice, in fully perfecting all those who are sanctified; of his effectual intercession, in the gifts and graces of his Holy Spirit impetrated\* thereby.

These may be some of the reasons, why, after the foresight of the breach of the covenant of works, God purposed from all eternity to establish another and a better covenant with mankind.

2. Upon this purpose of God to abrogate the covenant of works, that it should no longer be the standing rule according to which he would proceed with all mankind, there came in the room and stead thereof a twofold covenant:

A Covenant of Redemption.

A Covenant of Reconciliation.

The covenant of redemption was everlasting, from before all time; made only between God the Father, and Jesus Christ.

The covenant of reconciliation was temporal; made between God and men through Christ, and took place immediately after the fall: of which the first exhibition was that promise, that the Seed of the woman should break the serpent's head.

The covenant of redemption, or of the mediatorship, was made only between the Father and the Son

\* Obtained by prayer.

before the foundations of the world were laid. And, though it was entirely for man's infinite benefit and advantage, yet he was taken into it as a party. The form of this eternal covenant we have at large expressed, Isa. liii. from the 10th verse to the end: "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days—He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied—He shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death;" and, "by his knowledge," that is, by the knowledge and faith of him, he shall "justify many." All which is spoken of the reward, which God would give unto Christ, for his great and arduous undertaking of the redemption of fallen mankind.

From this covenant of redemption do flow,

(1.) Many of those relations, wherein God the Father and the Son do stand mutually engaged each to other, which are founded upon Christ's undertaking our redemption.

As, from this eternal covenant it is, that Christ Jesus is related unto God, as a surety to a creditor: and, therefore, he is called "the Surety of a better testament," Heb. vii. 22. Hence, likewise, he bears the relation of an Advocate to a judge, 1 John ii. 1: "We have an Advocate with the Father." Hence, also, ariseth the relation of a servant to his lord and master: Isa. xlii. 1. "Behold my Servant, whom I uphold:" and, again, "It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my Servant, to raise up the tribes of Jacob" only—"I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth," Isa. xlix. 6: and so, again, Christ is called God's "Servant, the Branch," Zech. iii. 8. Hence, likewise, it is, that, although Christ, considered essentially

as God, be equal in glory and dignity, yea the same with the Father, "I and my Father are one," John x. 30. yet, because he entered into this covenant of redemption, engaging himself to be a Mediator and his Father's Servant, in accomplishing the salvation of his elect, therefore he may be said to be inferior to the Father. In which sense, he himself tells us, "My Father is greater than I," John xiv. 28. It is no contradiction, for Christ to be equal with God, and yet inferior to the Father. Consider him personally, as the eternal Son of God, and the second hypostasis in the ever-blessed Trinity; so, he "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," Phil. ii. 6. Consider him federally, as bound by this covenant of redemption to serve God, by "bringing many sons unto glory;" so, he thought it no debasement to be inferior unto God. And, therefore, whatsoever you meet with in scripture, implying any inequality and disproportion between God the Father and his Son Jesus Christ must still be understood with reference to this covenant of redemption. For, essentially, they are one and the same God; personally, they differ in order and original; but, immediately, they differ in authority and subjection, and all the economy of man's salvation, designed by the one, and accomplished by the other.

(2.) From this covenant of redemption flows the mutual stipulation or agreement between the Father and the Son, upon terms and conditions concerning man's salvation; or rather, indeed, it formally consists in it.

Christ was originally free; and no way obliged to undertake this great and hard service, of reconciling God and man together. He well knew what it would cost him to perform it; all the contempt

and reproach, the agonies and conflict, the bitter pains and cruel torments, which he must suffer to accomplish it. And, though the Deity was secure in its own impassibility; yet he knew that the strict union between his human nature and Divine would, by a communication of properties, make it the humiliation and abasement of God, the sufferings and the blood of God. And, therefore, God the Father makes Christ many promises, that, if he would undertake this work, he should “see his seed, prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand;” as in the forecited Isa. liii: yea, that all principality and dominion, both in heaven and earth, should be consigned over unto him; and that he should be the Head, King, and Governor, both of his church and of the whole world. And, therefore, when he had fulfilled and accomplished this great work, he tells his disciples, “All power is given unto me,” both “in heaven and in earth,” Matt. xxviii. 18.; and, Eph. i. 20—22. the Father “set” Christ “at his own right hand—far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in” the world that “is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and” hath given him “to be Head over all things to the church.” Upon these articles and conditions Christ accepts the work; and resolves to take upon him the form of a servant, to be made under the authority of the law, and to bear the curse of it, and the whole load of his Father’s wrath due unto sin and sinners. “He shall bear their iniquities: therefore will I divide him a portion with the great and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death,” Isa. liii. 11, 12. And thus the covenant of redemption is,

from all eternity, agreed and perfected between the Father and Jesus Christ.

3. This undertaking and agreement of Christ in eternity was as valid and effectual for procuring all the good things of the covenant of grace, and the making of them over unto believers, as his actual performing of the terms afterwards in the fulness of time.

Upon this lies the stress of our affirming the covenant of grace to be exhibited before Christ's coming into the world. For, had not Christ's undertaking been as effectual as his actual fulfilling, this covenant of grace could have been of no force till his coming in the flesh and his dying upon the cross. And therefore he was the Mediator of the new covenant, to the Jewish believers, under the administration of the law; to the patriarchs, before the promulgation of the law; yea, to Adam himself, instantly upon his fall: because the covenant of redemption, that he had entered into with his Father, gave him present right and title to enter upon his office, and to act as Mediator, upon the account of his future sufferings. As a man, that purchaseth an inheritance, may presently enter upon the possession, though the day for the payment of the price be not yet come: so Christ, upon the contract and bargain made with the Father, of purchasing the whole world to himself at the price of his death and blood, entered presently upon his purchase, though the day set for the payment of the price was some thousand years after. And thus Christ is called a "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," Rev. xiii. 8; though some, indeed, would refer these words, "from the foundation of the world," to the writing of the names, and not to the slaying of the Lamb; making the sense thus—whose

names were not written from the foundation of the world, in the book of life of the Lamb slain: and for this interpretation they allege, Rev. xvii. 8. yet, certainly, this slaying of the Lamb from the foundation of the world, may well be understood concerning the death of Christ, either typically represented in those sacrifices of lambs which Abel offered in the beginning of the world, or else decreed in God's purpose from all eternity, and thereupon valid to procure redemption for believers in all ages, even before his actual suffering of it.

These things I premise, that, in them, you might see upon what foundation the whole transaction between God and man stands, in entering into a covenant of grace. That man is at all restored, can be founded upon nothing but God's absolute purpose of having "mercy on whom he will have mercy." That this restoring him to grace and favour, and consequently to eternal life, should be by a covenant of grace sealed and confirmed in the blood of Christ, is founded only on the eternal covenant of redemption made between the Father and the Son. The covenant of reconciliation is built upon the covenant of redemption; the covenant between God and man, on the covenant between God and Christ.

(1.) Here, possibly, some, instead of glorifying the infinite wisdom of God in thus laying the model and platform of our salvation, may be apt to cavil against the tediousness of the proceeding. "For, might not God, by one act of sovereign mercy, have pardoned our sins, and remitted the punishment, though Christ had never died to satisfy justice? Might he not have accepted the sinner to favour and salvation, though Christ had never been sent to work out a perfect righteousness for him? What needed then this long and troublesome method, of

designing him from eternity to be a Mediator, of appointing his own Son to so base a humiliation, and so cursed a death; since all that is now purchased for us at so mighty a rate, might have been conferred upon us by a free and absolute act of mercy?" Thus, possibly, the thoughts of men may work. But to this I answer,

[1.] It is saucy and unwarrantable presumption, for us to dispute whether God could have saved us otherwise; since it is infinite love and mercy, that he will vouchsafe to save us any way. And, if so be it were not simply necessary that Christ should die to bring us to glory, this should the rather engage us to admire and adore the supererogation of the Divine love, which designed him primarily a gift to men, as well as a sacrifice to God; and sent him into the world, not so much upon the necessity of satisfying justice, as of demonstrating infinite love and mercy, John iii. 16.

[2.] Whether God might, according to his absolute pleasure, have saved us, without the satisfaction of Christ, is not necessary for us to know; since it is clearly revealed in scripture, that this is the way that God designed from all eternity; and by which, in the fulness of time, he accomplished our salvation. Who can peremptorily determine what God might or might not do, in this particular? Can we set limits to his power, or bound his prerogative? It should satisfy our inquiries, that this way of salvation is attainable; and that God is resolved to save us no other way than this. "There is none other name under heaven, given among men, whereby we must be saved," Acts iv. 12.

[3.] Yet, if any be further inquisitive, only out of an awful reverence to search out the wonderful mystery of his redemption, I assert that it is most

probable that God might, according to his absolute power and good pleasure, have saved fallen mankind, though Christ had never been appointed to the work of redemption, nor any covenant of grace been made with us in him. Nor doth this position hold any correspondence with Socinianism; since we absolutely maintain, that it is God's revealed will and purpose to save none, but through the satisfaction of Christ.

(2.) If it be said, that "no other way could be consistent with God's justice; and that therefore the apostle tells us, Rom. iii. 26. that Christ was set forth as a propitiation, to declare the righteousness of God, that he might be just, and the justifier of those that believe: and how could God be just, if he should pardon sin without a satisfaction; and by whom should this satisfaction be made, but by Christ the Mediator?"

To this I answer, that the justice of God may be considered—In its absolute nature, as an infinite attribute and perfection of the Divine essence—As to the external expressions of it in punitive acts, taking vengeance on offenders.

If we take the justice of God in the former respect, so it is essential to him, yea, the same with him; and it is as blasphemous a contradiction, to say that God can be, and yet not to be just; as to say, that he may be, and yet not be holy, wise, almighty, &c.

But, if we take the justice of God for the external expressions of it in a vindicative way upon offenders, I can see no contradiction nor absurdity, in affirming that God might, if he had so pleased, have pardoned sinners without any satisfaction. If he punish without pardoning, he is just; and, if he should have pardoned without punishing, still he had been

just. God created this world, to declare his power, wisdom, and goodness; yet still he had been essentially almighty, wise, and good, if he had never expressed these attributes in any effects of them. So God punisheth sin, to declare and glorify his justice: yet he would have been as essentially just, had he remitted it without exacting any punishment. And why should it be unjust with God, to acquit a guilty person without punishment; seeing it is not unjust with him, to assign an innocent person, his own Son, to bear the punishment of the guilty? Certainly, there was no more natural necessity, antecedent to the free determination of his own will, to punish another, than he might show mercy unto us, than there was, to show mercy to another, only with a design to punish us: and, therefore, there was no more need that God should punish Christ, than he might pardon us, than there was, that he should pardon Christ all the sins imputed to him, than he might justly punish us. For, if punitive justice be natural to God, so also is pardoning mercy. Yet I suppose none will deny, that God might, without wrong to his nature, have damned all men for sin, without affording pardon to any of them: and there can be no reason imagined, why it should be more natural to God to punish, than to pardon; unless we would make him, as the Marcionites and Manichees of old did, a *sævus et immitis Deus*.\* Sin doth, indeed, naturally and necessarily deserve punishment; but it doth not therefore follow, that God must, by the necessity of his nature, punish it: for then it would be as necessary for him to pardon, because the sinner deserves it not; because a sinner, deserving punishment, is as much the object of mercy, as of

\* A cruel and remorseless God.

justice; both being equally essential attributes of the Divine nature.

The truth is, that though all the Divine perfections be natural and necessary to God, yet his will governs the external expressions of them: omnipotence, wisdom, justice, and mercy are in God naturally, and not subject to the determination of his will: so that it is not from his will that he is almighty, all-wise, holy and righteous; but from his nature. But the outward expressions of these are arbitrary, and subject to his will: omnipotence is natural and essential unto God; yet it is his will that applies his power to such and such effects: so, likewise, though it be natural and necessary that God be just; yet the particular expression and manifestation of his justice, in a vindicative manner, is not necessary, but subject to the free determination of his will. As God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardens; so, he will have vengeance on whom he will have vengeance, and whom he will he might have pardoned, and that merely by the prerogative of his will.

(3.) And if it be said, that “God, being a holy God, must necessarily hate sin, and therefore punish it—”

I answer, that, though God’s holiness doth necessarily infer his utmost hatred of sin, yet that hatred of sin doth not necessarily infer his punishing of sinners. For it must be acknowledged, that God may hate sin, *odio simplici, et non redundant in personam*: that is, “with a simple abhorrency and detestation of it, yet not with any ireful effects flowing from it upon the sinner.” It is, indeed, absolutely necessary, that sinners should deserve punishment: this flows not from the will and con-

stitution of God, but from the nature of the thing itself. But, that they be actually punished according to their deserts, depends wholly upon the determination of the Divine will.

That is the third position.

4. Whether this way of salvation by Christ were simply and absolutely necessary, or not; yet, certain it is, that no other way could be so suited to the advancement of God's glory as this; and, therefore, it was most congruous, and morally necessary, that our salvation should be wrought out by his sufferings and satisfaction. For,

(1.) This is the most decent and becoming way, that God could take to reconcile sinners unto himself.

So the apostle says expressly, Heb. ii. 10. "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." It would not become the great Majesty of heaven and earth, whose sovereign authority was so heinously violated by such a vile and base creature as man is, to receive him into his love and favour without some reparation made unto his honour. And, if there must intervene a satisfaction, there is none who could make it but only Jesus Christ.

(2.) No other way could so jointly glorify both the mercy and the justice of God, as this of bringing men to salvation by Christ.

If God had absolutely remitted punishment, and accepted the sinner to life by his mere good pleasure, this indeed had been a glorious declaration of his mercy, but justice had lain obscured. If God had made a temporary punishment serve for an expiation of sin, here indeed both justice and

mercy had been glorified; justice in punishing, mercy in relaxing the eternity of the punishment: but neither the one nor the other had been glorified to the utmost extent of them. But, in this redemption by Christ, justice hath its full glory, in that God takes vengeance on the sin to the very uttermost: and yet mercy is likewise glorified to the full; for the sinner is, without his own sufferings, pardoned, accepted, and saved. That none but Christ could do this is evident, because no mere creature could bear an infinite punishment so as to eluctate and finish it, and no finite punishment could satisfy an infinite justice: he must be a man, that satisfies; else satisfaction would not be made in the same nature that sinned: he must be God, likewise; else human nature could not be supported from sinking under the infinite load of Divine wrath: and, unless we would have either the Father or the Holy Ghost to become incarnate, this work of man's redemption must rest on Christ. And, indeed, who so fit to become a Mediator between God and man, as the middle Person in the Godhead? Thus then we see how expedient and fit it is, that our redemption should be accomplished by Christ Jesus: and, therefore, because the Divine wisdom takes that way which is most expedient, it is, in a moral sense, necessary that it should be by him brought to pass; though, simply and absolutely, God might have laid another design for our salvation. *Potuit aliter fieri de potentiâ medici, sed non potuit commodiùs aut doctiùs præparari ut esset medicina ægroti.\** August. Serm. iii. de An-nunt. Dom.

\* By the power of the physician, it might be effected otherwise; but it could not be better or more wisely prepared, that it may benefit the sick as a medicine.

And this, certainly, may commend the infinite love of God unto us; since he would not go the thriftiest way, in accomplishing our salvation. Although it were not simply necessary, yet, if it be more conducive to make the mercy of our redemption glorious, the Son of God must become the Son of man, and the Son of man “a man of sorrows.” He gives his natural Son, to gain adopted ones. He punisheth a righteous person, that he might pardon the guilty. God spares nothing, he saves nothing, that he might spare and save fallen man in a way most adapted to glorify, both the severity of his justice, and the riches of his grace and mercy.

I shall not any longer detain you with preliminary truths. You see upon what the covenant of grace is grounded, namely, the covenant of redemption; and how far forth it was necessary, that Jesus Christ should be our Redeemer, and the Mediator of this covenant of reconciliation.

Second. To come now more immediately to the subject intended, we must know, that the covenant of grace made by God with man, is twofold.

There is the absolute covenant of grace, and the conditional.

Indeed, if we lay stress upon the words, as some do, there can be no such thing as an absolute covenant; because every covenant supposeth conditions, and a mutual stipulation: but yet we may be well contented with the impropriety of the word, so long as we use scripture language.

1. Frequent mention is made of this absolute covenant; as, Jer. xxxii. 38—41; Ezek. xi. 17—20: but, most fully and clearly, Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. “This shall be the covenant, that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts,

and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people :” which the apostle quotes and transcribes, Heb. viii. 10.

It is not this absolute covenant, or promise, call it which you will, that I intend to insist on ; and, therefore, I shall only give you some brief remarks concerning it, and so proceed to treat of the conditional covenant.

(1.) That this absolute covenant is made only to those, whom God foreknew according to his eternal purpose ; but the conditional covenant is made with all the world.

God hath promised a new heart, only to some : but he promiseth life and salvation to all the world, if they convert and believe. And hence it follows, that the absolute covenant is fulfilled to all with whom it is made : but the most part of mankind fall short of obtaining the benefits of the conditional covenant, because they wilfully fall short of performing the conditions

(2.) The absolute covenant of grace is so called because the mercies promised in it are not limited nor astricted \* to conditions.

For though, in the ordinary method of God’s sanctifying grace, a sedulous and conscientious use of the means is necessary to our conversion, and the making of a new heart and spirit in us ; yet these means are not conditions, because God hath not limited himself thereto. It is certain and infallible, that no man shall ever attain salvation without faith, repentance, and obedience ; but no man can say it is impossible that any should attain a new heart, faith, and conversion without preparations and previous dispositions.

(3.) Faith is the very mercy itself promised in

\* Confined.

the absolute covenant: but it is only a condition for obtaining the mercy promised in the conditional covenant.

In this, God promiseth salvation to all men, if they will believe: in the other, he promiseth grace to his elect, to enable them to believe. All the benefits of the conditional covenant we receive by our faith; but our faith itself we receive by virtue of the absolute covenant; and therefore it follows, by necessary consequence, that though no man can plead the promise of the absolute covenant for obtaining the gift of the first grace, yet likewise no man can receive comfort by the conditional covenant, till he be assured that the promise of the absolute be performed to him.

(4.) In brief, the absolute covenant promiseth the first grace of conversion to God: the conditional promiseth life, if we be converted. The conditional promiseth life, if we believe: the absolute promiseth faith whereby we may believe to the saving of our souls.

And therefore it is called an absolute covenant, because the first grace of conversion unto God cannot be given upon conditions. It is indeed commonly wrought in men by the right use of means; as, hearing the word, meditation, prayer, &c. but these means are not conditions of grace, because we have found, that, in some instances, God hath not limited himself to them. And, indeed, what is there, that can in reason be supposed as a condition of God's bestowing the gift of the first grace upon us? Either it must be some act of grace, or of mere nature: not of grace; for then the first grace would be already given: nor of nature; for then the grace would be given according to works, which is the sum and upshot of

Pelagianism. Whence it follows, that the absolute covenant, of giving grace and a new heart, is made only to those who shall be saved; but the conditional covenant, of giving salvation upon faith and obedience, is made with all the world, and we may and ought to propound it to every creature, If thou wilt believe, thou shalt be saved.

2. It is not the absolute, but the conditional covenant that the apostle speaks of in the text.

For life and salvation are here promised upon the terms and conditions of believing on Christ with the heart, and confessing him with the mouth; that is, of faith and obedience, as hath before been explained: and, therefore it is called the conditional covenant, because these conditions must be first fulfilled on our part, before any engagement can lie upon God to give us the salvation promised.

Here observe,

(1.) That the salvation, which the text mentions, when it saith, "If thou believest in thy heart, and confessest with thy mouth, thou shalt be saved," comprehends in it all the benefits of the covenant of grace.

Not only glorification, which it doth most signally denote; but also pardon, justification, reconciliation, and adoption: all which are called salvation, because they all tend thereunto, and terminate in it.

(2.) Though conditions are required on our part, yet the mercies of the covenant are promised to us out of mere free grace.

For, "therefore," saith the apostle, are justification and salvation "of faith, that" they "might be of grace," Rom. iv. 16. For God's grace and free mercy, in enabling us to believe and obey, and thereupon saving us, is altogether as glorious, as if

he should save us without requiring faith and obedience from us at all.

(3.) Though faith and obedience are the conditions, which God requires for the obtaining of salvation, yet these conditions are themselves as much the free gift of God, as the salvation promised upon them.

By whom they are required, by the same God they are effectually wrought in the hearts of all those who shall be saved. And, therefore, as there is no absolute covenant, properly so called; so neither, in strictness of speech, is there any conditional covenant between God and man: because a condition, to which a promise is annexed, must, in propriety, be somewhat of our own, and within our own power; otherwise, the promise is but equivalent to an absolute denial. But, the conditions of the covenant of grace are not simply in our power to work them in ourselves; but to those, who shall be heirs of salvation, they are made possible by grace: to the rest, they were once possible; which power they have lost—nor is God bound to repair it.

If it be said, “ True: it is impossible for us to believe, unless God enable us; yet this doth not prove that it is not in our own power to believe: for without the assistance of God, and his influence, we cannot think, nor speak, nor move: “ In him,” saith the apostle, “ we live, and move, and have our being;” yet who is so unreasonable as to say, that, because these are God’s gifts, therefore we do not perform them by our own power? So, likewise, though faith be the gift of God, yet it may also be in the power of nature.”

This is the refuge of some, to which they retire, when they are forced by scripture evidence to

acknowledge that faith is the gift of God; as if a common providential influence were alike sufficient, to enable men to believe, and to perform any ordinary and natural action.

To this, therefore, I answer: That some actions depend only upon the concurrence of common providence; others, upon the influence of special grace. And this I apprehend to be the true difference between these two: that the former are wrought in us by God, without the reluctance and opposition of our natural faculties; but the latter, against the bent and bias of our natures, which are now corrupted by the fall. And, therefore, we may affirm, that the obedience, which Adam performed during his continuance in the state of innocence, was but a common work wrought in him by God's common influence; but our faith, and the same obedience in us, though it be far more imperfect, is from special grace: because, in him, it was wrought suitably to the tendency of his nature; but, in us, contrary to all its appetites and inclinations, which in this lapsed state of mankind are wholly evil and corrupt. And thus much the apostle intimates unto us concerning faith: "That ye" might "know—what is the exceeding greatness of his power" towards us "who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead," Eph. i. 18—20: therefore was the power, which God declared in raising Christ from the dead, an extraordinary and special power, because it was contrary to the course of nature, and far above the ability of any created agent to effect; and such, saith he, is the power that worketh faith in us. And so, again, Col. ii. 12. "Ye are risen with" Christ, "through the faith of the operation of God;

who hath raised him from the dead." By the faith of the operation of God, we may rather understand the faith of God's operation, (that is, which he worketh and implanteth in us,) than our faith in God's operation of raising Christ from the dead; so that the scope of the place is plainly this—As Christ is raised, so are we raised with him by faith; which faith is wrought in us by the same almighty operation that raised him from the grave, and therefore wrought in us by the supernatural efficacy of Divine grace. Hence all those places, which mention faith to be the gift of God, must be understood not as of a gift of course, and of common influence; but of extraordinary power, and special influence. So Phil. i. 29. "Unto you it is given—not only to believe—but also to suffer:" where, though it may seem that to suffer for the name of Christ denotes not any special work of God; yet, to suffer from a right principle and to a right end, to suffer with a calm submission and a conquering patience, is not less a gift and a special privilege bestowed upon us by the special and supernatural grace of God, than we assert faith itself to be. So, 2 Pet. i. 1, 3. "To them," who "have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God: according as his Divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness." I omit Eph. ii. 8. Ye are saved by "faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God;" because, though this place be commonly produced to prove that faith is God's gift, yet I suppose that the word *gift* refers rather to salvation, than to faith: for so it must needs be, according to grammatical construction; *Ἔτε σωσμενοι δια της πισεως και τωτο Θεο δωρον*; else it would not be *τωτο*, but *αυτη*: so that the words do of necessity carry it, that this expression,

*not of yourselves, it is the gift of God*, must be understood, that the salvation, which we obtain by faith, is not of ourselves, but God's free gift.\*

And thus you see that it is very well consistent, for faith and obedience to be conditions on our part, and gifts on God's.

Third. These things being premised, that which I shall now pursue is, to open to you WHAT CONCURRENCE FAITH AND OBEDIENCE HAVE INTO OUR JUSTIFICATION AND SALVATION. Which certainly is as difficult a point to be explained, as it is necessary to be understood.

And, in order to this, I shall inquire into the nature,

Of justification itself: what it is, and signifies.

Of justifying and saving faith.

Of that obedience, which the covenant of grace requires from believers, as necessary to salvation. And,

Lay down some positions, in answer to the question.—And this I shall do with all the brevity and perspicuity, that the subject will permit.

1. Justification, therefore, in the most general and comprehensive notion of it, signifies the making of a man just and righteous.

(1.) And this may be done two ways.

[1.] By making a real change in a man's nature, through the infusion of the inherent qualities of holiness and righteousness.

\* “For by grace ye are saved through faith, and this *affair* is not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God.” The relative *τουτο*, as Chandler observes, being in the neuter gender, cannot stand for *πιστις*, faith, which is feminine; but it has the whole sentence which goes before, as its antecedent. To show this, I have supplied *το πραγμα*, this affair—namely, your salvation through faith is not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.—*Macknight*.

[2.] By making a relative change in his state, in respect of the sentence of the law: that is, when the law acquits and absolves a man from punishment, whether he hath committed the fact or not.

The former may be termed a physical justification; the latter, a legal. The former justification is opposed to unholiness; the latter, to condemnation: the one properly removes the filth; the other, the guilt of sin.

Now, when we speak of the justification of a sinner before God, it must still be understood of justification in this latter sense, namely, as it signifies a judicial absolution of a sinner from guilt and punishment, according to a legal process, either at the bar of God or of conscience.

And herein lies the great error of the papists in the doctrine of justification, that they will not understand it as a law phrase, and a relative transaction in the discharge of a sinner; but still take it for a real change of a man's nature, by implanting in him inherent principles of holiness. We grant, indeed, that, in order of nature, sanctification is before justification; for we are justified by faith, which faith is one great part of our sanctification; but, in respect of time, sanctification and justification are together; for, in the very same instant that we believe, we are justified. Yet justification is not the making of a man's person inherently just or holy: if it were, certainly the wise man would not have said, "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord," Prov. xvii. 15. That man certainly would not be an abomination to the Lord, who should be serviceable to the implanting habitual holiness in another; since Daniel tells us, ch. xii. ver. 3, "They that turn many to

righteousness, shall shine as the stars for ever and ever." Many differences might be assigned between these two justifications; but the chief are these: that man is the subject of the one, because holiness is wrought in him; but he is the object of the other, for the judicial sentence of absolution is an act in God terminated upon the creature: the one, is by inherent grace; the other, by imputed righteousness: the one, is gradual; the other, complete at once: in brief, they differ as much as sanctifying our nature differs from acquitting and absolving our persons.

(2.) This justification doth always presuppose a righteousness in the person justified: for God doth not make a man inwardly righteous, because he justifies him; but therefore he justifies him, because he is righteous.

The righteousness therefore, that a man must have before he can be justified, is either,

[1.] A righteousness of innocency, whereby he may plead the non-transgression of the law, and that it was never violated by him. Or,

[2.] A righteousness of satisfaction; whereby he may plead, that, though the command were transgressed, yet the penalty is borne, and the law answered.

These two respect the avoiding of the punishment threatened. Or,

[3.] A righteousness of obedience, which he may plead for the obtaining of the good things promised; and this respects the reward propounded.

Now, accordingly as any man can produce any of these righteousnesses, so shall he be justified. Innocency cannot be pleaded; for "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God:" neither can we produce a personal satisfaction, nor a per-

sonal obedience wrought out by ourselves: and, therefore, our justification is either utterly impossible for want of a righteousness, or else we must be justified by the righteousness of another imputed unto us.

(3.) Christ, therefore, as our Surety, hath wrought out for us,

[1.] A righteousness of satisfaction, which, in the eye and account of the law, is equivalent to innocency. And, by this, we are freed from the penalty threatened against our disobedience.

[2.] A righteousness of obedience, whereby we may lay claim to the reward of eternal life.

I am now the briefer in these things, because I have before opened them at large.

(4.) We, therefore, having this twofold righteousness given to justify us, our justification must accordingly consist of two parts:—The pardon and remission of our sins—Our acceptation unto eternal life.

[1.] Our justification consists in the pardon of sin. And this flows from the righteousness of Christ's satisfaction imputed to us. For guilt is nothing else but our obligation to punishment; and therefore pardon, being the removal of guilt, must needs remove our obligation to punishment. But no man can be justly obliged to that punishment, which he hath already satisfactorily undergone. And, therefore, Christ having satisfactorily undergone the whole punishment that was due to us, and God graciously accounting his satisfaction as ours, it follows, that we lie under no obligation to punishment; and are therefore, by the righteousness of Christ's satisfaction, pardoned and justified, ransomed and delivered from bearing the penalty of the law. It is true, a pardon and full satisfaction

are, in themselves, *ασυατα*\* and inconsistent: if a man receive satisfaction for an injury done unto him, he cannot be said to pardon and remit it: how then can God be said to pardon sin, since his justice is fully satisfied by Christ? I answer—Those very sins, which God doth pardon to the justified, he did not pardon to Christ, when they were made his by imputation: for his justice seized on him, and demanded and received the utmost farthing of all the debts he was surety for. And, therefore, pardon of sin is indeed inconsistent with personal satisfaction; but not with the satisfaction of another imputed to us: if God had satisfied his justice on us for our sins, then he could not have pardoned them: but to satisfy his justice on another for our sins, was at once to take punishment, and vouchsafe pardon; to punish our Surety, and to pardon us. That is, therefore, the first part of our justification, namely, pardon of sin.

[2.] In justification, there is the imputation of the active righteousness and obedience of Christ, whereby we obtain a right and title, and are accepted, unto eternal life.

He hath fulfilled all righteousness for us, and we are “accepted in the Beloved.” The law saith, “Do this, and live;” and God accounts Christ’s doing it as ours. And, therefore, believers have as just a claim to life, as Adam could have had, had he never transgressed. I shall not again discuss, whether the right, which justification gives us to eternal life, flows from Christ’s righteousness of obedience or of satisfaction: to me, it seems to be from his obedience, and not so directly from his sufferings; for, though his sufferings be ours, yet the law

\* Repugnant.

saith not, Suffer this, and live, but, "Do this, and live;" as I observed before.

And if it be objected, that, by a man's not being accounted a sinner, he must needs be accounted righteous; by his not being liable to damnation, he must needs have a right to salvation; and, therefore, that there is no more required unto justification, than the imputation of Christ's satisfaction, which carries with it both pardon and acceptance to eternal life—To this I answer,

1. That pardon of sins, through the satisfaction of Christ, doth give a man a negative righteousness: that is, he is no longer accounted unrighteous, and therefore not liable to punishment: but this gives him no positive righteousness, which consists in a conformity to the precepts of the law, by that active obedience, which should entitle him to the promised reward.

2. Though damnation and salvation be contrary states, so that he who is not liable to the one, hath right to the other; yet they are not immediate contraries in their own nature, but only by Divine appointment and institution. And, therefore, though a man should not be liable to damnation, yet his right to salvation doth not naturally result from this, but from God's appointment. It is true, if it be not night, it must be day; if the line be not crooked, it must be straight; because those are naturally opposite, and the one follows upon the denial of the other. But it is not true, that a man must either be liable to eternal death, or have a right to eternal life, because these states are not naturally and immediately opposite: for God, after he had pardoned a sinner, might justly annihilate him; or otherwise dispose of him, without bestowing upon him the eternal joys of heaven.

And, therefore, pardon of sin, and acceptation unto eternal life, being two such distinct things, may well be allowed to proceed from distinct causes: the one, from the imputation of Christ's satisfaction; the other, from the imputation of his active obedience.

(5.) So that you may take a brief description of justification in these terms: it is a gracious act of God, whereby, through the righteousness of Christ's satisfaction imputed, he freely remits to the believing sinner the guilt and punishment of his sins; and, through the righteousness of Christ's perfect obedience imputed, he accounts him righteous, and accepts him into love and favour, and unto eternal life. This is justification: which is the very sum and pith of the whole gospel, and the only end of the covenant of grace. For, wherefore was there such a covenant made with us through Christ, but, as St. Paul tells us, Acts xiii. 39. that, "by him, all that believe" might be "justified from all things from which" they "could not be justified by the law of Moses?"

Possibly some things may occur, in the opening of this point, hard and rugged: and, though this doctrine be in itself sweet and refreshing, and like rivulets of water to the dry and parched earth; yet this water must be smitten out of a rock. Rivers, generally, the deeper they are, the more smoothly do they flow: but these waters of the sanctuary are of a quite different nature, and the deeper they are, usually the more rough and the more troubled. But beware you do not think every thing unnecessary, that is not plain and obvious. It is the fault of many christians, and a fault that deserves reproof, to pass slightly over the great mysteries of religion under a vilifying conceit which they have of them

as unprofitable and unpracticable notions. They do not find, when they sit under such discourses as these, that their affections are so moved, their hearts so warmed, their love so inflamed, their desires made so spiritually vehement, their whole souls so wrought upon and melted, as when threatenings are thundered, duties pressed, promises applied, and the more affecting part of religion dispensed; and so they go away, reckoning they have but lost their time, and the opportunity of an ordinance. For my part, it should be my importunate prayer, that all christians were so taught of God, and built up in the truths of the gospel, that there might need no more instruction, but only admonition, exhortation, reproof, comfort, and the more practical part of the ministerial work: but, when we see so many old babes, so many monstrous and misshapen christians, whose heads are the lowest and most inferior part about them, still we find abundant cause and need to inculcate truths, as well as to raise desires; that so their zeal and affections may be built upon, and regulated according to knowledge. Certainly, the more you know of God and Christ, and the way of your salvation through an imputed righteousness, the more will you admire, adore, and advance Divine love and wisdom, and the more humble and abase yourselves. And, though some of these things be difficult, yet it is very unworthy of a christian not to take some pains to understand what God, if I may be allowed so to speak, took so much pains to contrive.

2. Having thus shewed you what justification is, the next thing propounded was, to open the nature of justifying and saving faith, which is the great condition of the covenant of grace.

And, indeed, of all gospel truths, it is most

necessary to have a clear and distinct knowledge of this: for it is in vain to press men to this duty of believing, as that whereon the whole weight of their salvation depends, if yet they know not what this grace of faith is, nor what it is to believe. There is no one duty, that the gospel doth more frequently command, or ministers inculcate, or hath so great a stress laid upon it; and, yet, because men know not what it is, and how they must act it, this ignorance either discourageth them into an utter neglect, or else misleads them to exert other acts for saving faith, and to build their hopes of heaven and eternal happiness upon a wrong foundation.

And, truly, it is a point of some difficulty, precisely to state wherein lies the formal nature of this grace. For,

(1.) Many formerly, and those of the highest remark and eminency, have placed true faith in no lower a degree than assurance; or the secure persuasion of the pardon of their sins, the acceptance of their persons, and their future salvation.

But this, as it is very sad and uncomfortable for thousands of doubting and deserted souls, concluding all those to fall short of grace, who fall short of certainty, so hath it given the papists too great advantage to insult over the doctrine of our first reformers, as containing most absurd contradictions. Nor, indeed, can their argument be possibly avoided or answered: for, if pardon and justification be obtained only by faith, and this faith be only an assurance or persuasion that I am pardoned and justified, then it will necessarily follow, that I must believe I am pardoned and justified, that I may be pardoned and justified; that is, I must believe I am pardoned and justi-

fied, before I either am or can be; which is to believe a lie. This will necessarily follow upon limiting faith to assurance. Faith, therefore, is not assurance: but this doth sometimes crown and reward a strong, vigorous, and heroic faith; the Spirit of God breaking in upon the soul with an evidencing light, and scattering all that darkness and those fears and doubts which before beclouded it.

(2.) Some, again, place faith only in an act of affiance, or incumbence, upon the mercies of God and the merits of Jesus Christ, reposing all our hope for heaven and happiness in them alone.

This, indeed, must be allowed to be one act of a true and saving faith, but cannot be the entire and adequate notion of it.

(3.) Others make faith to consist in an undoubting assent to the truths and promises of the gospel. An assent, not only forced and compelled by the mere evidence and light of the truths therein delivered; for so, the devils believe, and tremble; and, from their natural sagacity and woful experience, know the great truths of the gospel to be unquestionably so, as they are there revealed. But an assent, wrought in the soul from the reverent and due regard of God's authority and veracity; yielding firm belief to all that the scripture propoundeth, because of the testimony of that God, who can neither deceive, nor be deceived; such an assent to truth, as prevails upon the conscience; and influenceth the conversation; a belief that is not overborne by corrupt and vile affections, but conforms the life and practice, and makes them suitable to the rules of God's word.

This many, and that with a great deal of reason, make to be the proper notion of a true and saving

faith. And the scripture doth so far affirm, that such an assent as this is true faith; that, in very many places, it seems to require no more than barely to believe those truths concerning God and Christ, which are revealed in it; as, “that Jesus is the Son of God;” that he came into the world to save sinners; 1 John iv. 15, and v. 5; and that God raised him from the dead. Yet these places must not be so understood, as if nothing more were required to constitute a true believer, besides a mere assent to these things; but that this assent is then true faith, when it overcomes the will, seasons the affections, and regulates our lives and actions. He hath true and saving faith, who believes that Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the true Messiah, is come into the world, and submits his conscience and his conversation to the consequences of such a belief; that is to say, to love and obey him as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. Now, the very reason, why the scripture doth express faith by an assent unto certain propositions, is, not that such a dogmatical faith as rests only in notion and speculation, will suffice to bring any to heaven and happiness; but because the Holy Ghost aimed chiefly at that, which was least known and most gainsayed by the Jews and the unbelieving world: for it was not at all unknown or contradicted by them, that, if Jesus Christ were the Son of God, all adoration and obedience ought to be paid unto him; but they denied that Jesus was this Son of God and the Saviour of the world. Therefore, the scripture requires an assent unto these propositions—that “Jesus is the Christ;” that “he died for our sins, and rose again from the dead;” and calls this true and saving faith, because, wheresoever

this assent hath its due and proper effect, to engage us to the performance of all those duties which naturally depend upon it, and flow from it, there this faith is undoubtedly justifying and saving.

(4.) Some make faith to consist in the hearty and sincere acceptance of Christ Jesus, in his person and offices, as he is represented and tender himself unto us in his gospel.

These offices of Christ are three.

[1.] He is our Prophet, to instruct us in the will of God, and to declare unto us the way of salvation.

[2.] He is our Priest, to expiate our sins, and reconcile us unto God by the sacrifice of himself, and to present our duties and services to God by his prevailing and eternal intercession.

[3.] He is our King, to rule and govern us, by the laws of his word, and by the conduct of his Holy Spirit.

And whosoever he may be, that doth cordially and entirely receive Christ in all these offices, and submit his soul to the authority of them, he is the person, whose faith will justify him; for he believes to the saving of his soul.

Now, between this description of faith and the former, there is no such difference, but that they may very amicably conspire and be joined in one. For he that gives a firm assent to all the truths of the gospel, doth thereby own his subjection to the prophetic office of Christ, as the great Teacher of his church. And if this assent influence both his affections and his conversation, it will make him likewise submit to the priestly office of Christ, in relying only upon his merits for the pardon of his sins, and eternal salvation; and also to his kingly office, in submitting to his sceptre,

and conforming his heart and life according to his holy laws.

Yet, to proceed a little more exactly in this matter, let us observe, that when we speak of a true, saving, and justifying faith, it is not any one single act, either of knowledge or will; but a complicated grace, made up of many particular acts, and is nothing else but the motion of the whole soul towards God and Christ. For we are not now speaking of faith, philosophically taken; for that is no other than a bare act of the understanding, assenting to the truth of a testimony: but we speak of faith in a theological and moral sense; and so, though it bear the name but of one grace, yet it consists of many acts of the soul. It supposes knowledge; it connotes assent; it excites love, and engages to obedience; yet still, that which gives it the formal denomination of faith, is assent to the truth. As for assurance, I look upon that, not as a distinct part of faith, but a high and exalted degree and measure of it; not vouchsafed to all, scarcely to any at all times; but only to some few, through the special witness of the Holy Spirit with their spirits.

So that, if we would at once see, in brief, what a true and saving faith is, we may take the sum of it in this description. It is when a sinner, being, on the one hand, thoroughly convinced of his sins, of the wrath of God due to him for them, of his utter inability either to escape or bear this wrath; and, on the other hand, being likewise convinced of the sufficiency, willingness, and designation of Christ to satisfy justice, and to reconcile and save sinners; doth hereupon yield a firm assent unto these truths revealed in the scripture, and also accepts and receives Jesus Christ in all his offices:

as his Prophet, resolving to attend unto his teaching; as his Lord and King, resolving to obey his commands; and as his Priest, resolving to rely upon his sacrifice alone; and doth accordingly submit to him, and confide in him sincerely and perseveringly. This is that faith which doth justify, and will certainly save all those in whom it is wrought.

3. The next thing propounded, was to open the nature of that obedience which the covenant of grace requires as necessary to salvation.

This I shall do very briefly. And, therefore, I take it for granted, that obedience is required under the covenant of grace, as strictly as ever it was under the covenant of works; and required, not only to show our gratitude and thankfulness, but necessarily and indispensably, in order to the obtaining of heaven and eternal life.

If I should quote to you all the scriptures which are plain proofs for this, I should repeat a great part of the bible. The moral law requires perfect obedience from us, and condemns every failure as sinful: and this moral law is still in force even to believers themselves; commanding and requiring from them the highest degree of obedience, as absolutely and authoritatively as if they were to be saved by a covenant of works: for faith makes not void the preceptive part of the law. But the covenant of grace insists not so much on the measure and degree of our obedience, as on the quality and nature of every degree, that it be sincere and upright.

Yet, certainly, that is not sincere obedience, which doth willingly and allowedly fall short of the highest degree of perfection. For this sincerity consists in a universal hatred of all sin, without

sparing or indulging ourselves in any; and in a universal regard to every command of God's law, not dispensing with, nor exempting ourselves from the most difficult, severe, and opposite duty to flesh and blood, that is therein enjoined us.

He whose conscience can thus testify to him, that, though he doth too often transgress and offend, yet he ever hates what he sometimes doth; that he abhors every false way; that he opposes and resists, and is rather through the subtlety of Satan and the deceitfulness of sin surprised unawares, than voluntarily and premeditatedly contrives and determines to sin; and, though he doth fall infinitely short of the exact strictness and holiness of the law, yet that he hath a cordial respect to all God's commandments, and doth both desire and endeavour to conform his life and conversation to that most perfect rule; that man may certainly know, that, let his obedience be more or less perfect, according to the greater or less measures of sanctifying grace received from God, yet it is such as the covenant of grace requires, and God will accept unto his salvation. But, let no one take this for an encouragement of sloth and negligence in God's service: for, let not that man think that his obedience is sincere, who doth not, with unwearied pains and industry, strive to his very utmost to please and serve God in all things. But for those whose consciences bear them witness that they do so, let them know, for their comfort, that, though they fall far short of what they should and would be, yet the sincerity of their obedience is accounted and accepted with God for perfection.

When God first established the moral law, which was when he first wrote it upon the heart of Adam, he made it a covenant, that whosoever should

answer the perfection of that law should obtain life : but, by the fall we having lost the power of obedience, the grace of the gospel promiseth acceptance to our imperfect obedience, if performed sincerely. The law requires, as necessary to our conformity to God's purity and holiness, that our duties be perfect : the corruption of our nature makes them imperfect and defective, both from their rule and pattern. The covenant of grace requires, as necessary to salvation, that that obedience, which ought to be perfect according to the rule, but is imperfect by reason of our corruption, should be sincere and upright : and this, God will accept and crown with eternal life and glory.

And thus I have opened to you, as briefly and clearly as I could, what justification, faith, and evangelical obedience are.

4. There remaineth but one thing more, which when I have finished, I shall close up this subject of the doctrine of the covenants : and that is, to show what influence faith and obedience have as to our justification and salvation. And here,

(1.) I shall lay down these following positions.

[1.] That faith doth not justify us, as it is in itself a work or act exerted by us.

It is true, the apostle tells us that Abraham's faith "was imputed to him for righteousness," Rom. iv. 22 : but this cannot be understood literally and properly, as if the very act of believing were his righteousness ; for then it would contradict many other places of scripture, asserting that Christ Jesus is our righteousness. It must therefore be taken tropically,\* as relating to Christ : that is, faith is our righteousness no otherwise than

Rhetorically changed from the original meaning.

as it makes over the righteousness of Christ unto us; and not as it is in itself a work or grace. For, did it justify us as a work, then the apostle had very incongruously opposed him that “worketh,” to him that “believeth:” “To him that worketh not, but believeth—his faith is counted for righteousness,” Rom. iv. 5: for were faith our righteousness as a work, then he that believeth, would be he that worketh; and his work would be accounted to him for righteousness. Neither, indeed, is it any whit less absurd, to think that our faith, which is an imperfect grace, can yet be a perfect and complete righteousness: for faith itself hath its manifold failings, and is, as one saith well, like the hand which Moses stretched out in working of miracles; for, as that hand was smitten with leprosy, to show that it was no efficacy in the hand itself that wrought those wonders, so even the faith that justifies hath a leprosy, an uncleanness cleaving to it, to show that it justifies not by its own virtue, not as it is a work and act of ours, for so itself needeth justification.

[2.] Neither doth faith justify, as it is the fulfilling of the condition of the covenant of grace: “He that believeth shall be saved.”

For, as I have observed before, faith is not properly and immediately the condition of this covenant, but remotely and secondarily. For we must resolve this covenant thus: He that can produce a perfect righteousness, shall be saved; but he that believes, shall have the perfect righteousness of Christ made his: so, from the first to the last, “He that believeth shall be saved.” Where it is to be noted, that faith is not made the immediate condition of salvation; but only it is the immediate condition of obtaining an interest in a perfect

righteousness, by which we are justified and saved.

[3.] Faith justifying neither as a work nor as a condition, and therefore not as being itself our righteousness, it remains, that it must needs justify as it gives us a right and title to the righteousness of another, even of Jesus Christ.

So that we are not so properly justified by faith, as by the righteousness which faith apprehends and applies: for, the righteousness of Christ being made ours, God is engaged in justice to justify us, because then we are righteous persons. This virtue, that faith hath to justify, is not its own; neither proceeds from itself, but from the object, which it apprehends and makes ours, namely, the righteousness of Christ, by which we are justified directly and immediately, but by faith only correlatively and metonymically,\* as it relates unto the righteousness of Christ. When the woman was healed only by touching Christ's garments, the virtue that healed her proceeded not from her touch, but from Him whom she touched: yet our Saviour tells her, that her faith had made her whole, Matt. ix. 22. which can no more be properly understood of her faith, than of her touch; for still the healing virtue was from Christ, conveyed to her by her faith, and that faith testified by her touch: so, when we say that we are justified by faith, we must understand that faith doth it not through its own virtue, but by virtue of Christ's righteousness, which is conveyed to us by our faith. This righteousness of Christ, as I observed before, is both a righteousness of satisfaction and of obedience; for we need both unto our justification: and these must be

\* A rhetorical figure, by which one word is put for another.

made ours, or else we can never be justified by them: ours they cannot be naturally, as wrought out by ourselves; consequently they must be ours legally, and by imputation; the law looking upon what our Surety hath done, as though we had done it, and accordingly dealing with us.

Now, if we can but apprehend how faith makes the righteousness of Christ to be ours, it will be very easy and obvious to apprehend the way and manner how we are justified.

To clear up this, therefore,

[4.] Faith makes the righteousness of Christ's satisfaction and obedience to be ours, as it is the bond of that mystical union which there is between Christ and the believing soul.

If Christ and the believer be one, the righteousness of Christ may well be reckoned as the righteousness of the believer. Nay, mutual imputation flows from mystical union: the sins of believers are imputed to Christ, and the righteousness of Christ to them; and both justly, because being united each to other by mutual consent (which consent on our part is faith) God considers them but as one person. As it is in marriage—the husband stands liable to the wife's debts, and the wife stands interested in the husband's possessions; so it is here: faith is the marriage-band and tie between Christ and a believer; and, therefore, all the debts of a believer are chargeable upon Christ, and the righteousness of Christ is instated upon the believer: so that, upon the account of this marriage-union, he hath a legal right and title to the purchase made by it. Indeed, this union is a high and inscrutable mystery; yet plain it is, that there is such close, spiritual, and real union between Christ and a believer: the scripture often both expressly affirms

it, "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit," 1 Cor. vi. 17. and also lively illustrates it by several resemblances. It is likewise plain, that the band of this union, on the believer's part, is faith: consult Rom. xi. 17. compared with the 20th verse. And, therefore, from the nearness of this union, there follows a communication of interests and concerns: insomuch, that the church is called Christ, "So also is Christ," 1 Cor. xii. 12. and their sufferings are called the sufferings of Christ, Col. i. 24. Acts ix. 4. So, likewise, from this mystical union, the sins of believers are laid upon Christ, and his righteousness imputed unto them: see this as to both parts, "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. v. 21. and, He "hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us—that the blessing of Abraham might come on us," Gal. iii. 13. 14. It is still upon the account of this union, that Christ was reckoned a sinner, and we are reckoned as righteous. And, therefore, as faith is the bond and tie of this union, so it is, without more difficulty, the way and means of our justification: by faith, we are united unto Christ; by that union, we have truly a righteousness; and, upon that righteousness, the justice of God, as well as his mercy, is engaged to justify and acquit us.

And thus you see this great truth explained, of justification by faith; which hath, indeed, been as great a torment and vexation to men's understandings to conceive how it should be, as it hath been peace and quiet to their consciences in the certainty it was so. And, if these things were duly pondered, they might perhaps put a speedy issue to many laborious and testy disputes; especially concerning

faith's instrumentality and causality in our justification.

(2.) Concerning obedience, or good works, two things remain to be inquired into.

Their necessity and influence into salvation, or our obtaining the state of eternal glory.

Their necessity and influence into justification, which gives us a right and title to that eternal glory.

[1.] The covenant of grace requires good works of believers, as necessary to salvation.

There is a lazy and lethargic error, that hath seized on many, who make Christ not only their Surety to work out a righteousness, but also their servant to work out an obedience and holiness for them. What need they pray, or hear, or perform any other duty of religion or obedience; for Christ hath done all for them, and, if they believe, they are sure of being accepted and saved? and, therefore, they count it the sign of a legal spirit, to do any more than idly sit down, and believe; expecting to be carried to heaven in such a vain dream and contemplation. Here,

It is true, that obedience is not necessary as the procuring or meritorious cause of our salvation.

In respect of merit, we are to sit down and believe; and those good works are saucy and sacrilegious, that aim at heaven upon the account of desert, "By grace are ye saved, not of works," Eph. ii. 8, 9. Indeed the scripture doth frequently call salvation by the name of a reward: "Of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance," Col. iii. 24. "He had respect unto the recompence of the reward," Heb. xi. 26. And it doth as frequently call the obedient worthy of this reward: "they which shall be accounted worthy to

obtain" the "world" to come, "and the resurrection from the dead," Luke xx. 35. "That ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God," 2 Thess. i. 5. Yet neither of these expressions doth amount to a proper merit, such as commutative justice may require, where the price must fully answer the value of the thing purchased; but only such a merit and worthiness, as ariseth from the free promise of God. God hath promised salvation to those who obey him; and, therefore, because of this promise, it is bestowed upon them as a reward of their obedience: and they are said to be worthy of such a reward, not because their obedience is in itself worthy of it; but, rather, because it is worthy of God to stand to his word, and to fulfil the promises he hath made.

Further: Good works are necessary to eternal salvation, though not as the meritorious cause of the reward, yet as the disposing cause of the subject; for these are they which do dispose and prepare us for salvation.

And therefore the apostle, Col. i. 12. speaks of being made "meet to be partakers of the inheritance" with "the saints in light." If a wicked person should be made partaker of this inheritance, how strange, how vexatious a thing would it be to him, to spend an eternity there in holiness, who had here spent all his time in sin and wickedness! And, therefore, God accustoms those whom he saves by ordinary means, unto the work of heaven, while they are here on earth. Let those consider this, to whom holiness is so irksome and unsuitable now: it is utterly impossible, that such men can be made happy and blessed; for, if God should take them up to heaven with their natures unchanged, unrenewed, he would only free them from a painful

hell, to sentence them to a troublesome one. How shall they sing the song of the Lamb, who never had their hearts and voices tuned unto it! Or how shall they endure to behold the glorious majesty of God face to face, who never before saw him so much as darkly through a glass by the eye of faith! It is a perfect torture, for eyes, locked up in a long and dismal darkness, to be suddenly stretched open against the bright beams of the sun: and so would it be, if men, who have long lived in a blind and wicked state, should suddenly be stricken with the dazzling glory of heaven flashing in their faces. And therefore God usually prepares them, both to do the work and to bear the reward of heaven before he brings them thither. It is said of the godly, Rev. xiv. 13. that they "rest from their labours, and their works do follow them:" this is especially meant, I doubt not, of the reward of their works: but yet it holds true also of the works themselves: though, in heaven, they rest from their labour in working—in working against temptations, against corruptions, and under afflictions—yet they rest not from their working, for those very works, in which they employed themselves on earth, they also perform in heaven, so far forth as they have there an object for them. Were it, therefore, only to dispose and qualify the soul for the everlasting work of heaven, this were reason and ground enough to require obedience and good works as necessary to salvation.

Again, I need not tell you, that good works are necessary, upon the absolute and sovereign command of God.

If God should command good works for no other end, but to show the authority which he hath over us, and for us to show our obedience again unto

him, yet that cannot be any longer an unnecessary thing which the great God of heaven and earth enjoins. "This is the will of God;" that is, this is the great command of his revealed will, "even your sanctification," 1 Thess. iv. 3. And we are said to be the "workmanship" of God, "created unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them," Eph. ii. 10.

Further: They are necessary, as a debt of gratitude.

If we had no other law, yet christian ingenuousness would oblige us to obey that God, who hath already done so much for us, and from whom we expect such great things for the future. Hath God given us a spiritual life in present possession, and an eternal life in reversion; and is it possible we should be careless of his honour and service? Certainly, the love of Christ must constrain us to live no longer to ourselves, but to him, who died for us: as the apostle urgeth it, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. It is such a powerful and persuasive motive, that we cannot resist it, without the blackest brand of disingenuousness and ingratitude. Thus, again, the apostle argueth: "Ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's," 1 Cor. vi. 20. So that, upon the account of our redemption, we are obliged, by the strictest and most sacred bonds of gratitude, to serve and glorify our Redeemer. Yet, though this be the sweetest, it is not the only tie to duty. It will, indeed, be so when we come to heaven; but, whilst we have the mixture of a base and sordid spirit, God hath not left his service to stand at the courtesy of our ingenuity; but hath laid as absolute and peremptory commands upon us, as though he dealt only with slaves and vassals; and yet urgeth it as much

upon our gratitude and ingenuousness, as if the only prerogative he had over us, were but love and friendship.

Finally : Obedience and good works are necessary, as the way and means whereby we must obtain salvation.

And so, though they have no necessity of causality in procuring it by their own merit, yet they have a necessity of order or method, according to which God will bestow it, and not otherwise. And therefore the apostle tells us, that God hath "fore-ordained" good works, "that we should walk in them." They are the pathway, that he hath chalked out for us to heaven; and, therefore, as ever we will arrive thither, it is necessary that we walk in this way. Yea, should it be supposed that an elect or a regenerate person should forsake this way of obedience, and betake himself unto the broad way wherein the most walk, we affirm that he is going the direct and ready road to hell; and hell he cannot escape, unless he stop and return. Let their mouths, therefore, be for ever silenced, who exclaim against the doctrine of justification and salvation by faith, as that which destroys the necessity of good works. We are far from that libertinism to conclude, that, because Christ hath obeyed the whole law for us, therefore we are exempted from obedience. He hath done for us whatsoever was required, in order to merit and satisfaction; yet he hath not done for us whatever was required, in order to obedience and a holy conversation: that is, Christ hath done his own work for us; but he hath not done our work for us: he hath done the work of a Mediator and Redeemer; but he never did the work of a sinner that stood in need of a Redeemer, so as to excuse him from it. And, therefore, though men may be justified by

a surety, yet they cannot be sanctified by a surety; but still, holiness, obedience, and good works must be personal, and not imputative.

Thus then you see the absolute necessity of good works, in those who are capable of performing them, in order unto eternal salvation. They are necessary, not indeed as the meritorious cause of it, but as a preparing and disposing cause; necessary, by God's absolute and indispensable command; as a debt of gratitude; and, lastly, as the way and means by which alone it can be attained. Thus the apostle, Heb. v. 9, Christ is become "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."

[2.] The next thing to be inquired into is, the necessity and influence of obedience and good works into our justification.

And, in order to this, I shall lay down these following particulars.

1. Good works, or obedience, doth not justify us in the sight of God, as it is itself our righteousness.

This is the main scope and drift of the whole epistle to the Romans, and of a great part of the epistle to the Galatians. It were endless to cite all the texts: see only Rom. iii. 20. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight:" and ver. 28. the apostle lays down this great conclusion as the upshot of his dispute, "Therefore we conclude," saith he, "that a man is justified—without the deeds of the law;" and, Gal. ii. 16. "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law." It is needless to add more.

And, therefore, I shall only answer an objection or two, drawn from scripture, against this doctrine. For,

(1.) Some may say that the scripture seems to attribute justification unto works, as well as unto

faith: for it is said of Phinehas, Psa. cvi. 30, 31. that he "executed judgment" (namely in killing Zimri and Cosbi) "and that was" imputed "unto him for righteousness."

But to this the answer is easy: that the psalmist speaks only of the righteousness of that particular act of Phinehas, that it was imputed to him for righteousness, that is, it was accounted by God as a righteous deed; though, perhaps, others might censure it, as proceeding from rash and unwarrantable zeal, acting without a commission. But,

(2.) The great place, most urged and insisted on for justification by works, is James, chap. ii. from the 14th verse to the end; especially ver. 24. "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."

Here the grand difficulty is, how we shall reconcile St. Paul, asserting that we are justified by faith only without works, with St. James, affirming we are justified by works, and not by faith only.

To this I answer: that there is no opposition at all between the two apostles. For St. Paul only excludes works from being the way and means of our justification; and St. James only excludes that faith which is without works. St. Paul disputes against legalists and self-justiciaries, who trusted to their own works to justify them; and, against them, he lays down this conclusion, that it is faith, and not works, that doth justify: but St. James disputes against the gnostics and libertines, who trusted to an outward and fruitless profession of faith, or rather indeed to a vain fancy instead of faith; and, against them, he lays down this conclusion, that not by faith only, but by works, a man is justified. St. Paul's scope is, to show by what we are justified; and that, he tells us, is by

faith: St. James's scope is to show what kind of faith that is, which must justify us; not an empty, vain, fantastical faith, but such as is operative, and productive of good works: his intent is not, to exclude faith from our justification, no, nor so much as to join works with it in partnership and commission; for, ver. 23, he tells us, "the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness;" the very place, which St. Paul (Rom. iv. 3. Gal. iii. 6.) makes use of to prove justification by faith: and, therefore, when he saith a man is justified by works, he contends for nothing else but a working faith: Abraham, saith he, was "justified by works," ver. 21. if you ask how that doth appear, he tells you it was because his faith "was imputed unto him for righteousness:" now, let any man declare, that can, what sense there can be in this proof, if, by being justified by faith, he should mean any thing else besides a working faith. So that the upshot of all that St. James here intends, is, to show us, that the faith which justifies us, must be a faith bringing forth good works; and that we grant and contend for: and, likewise, to exclude a barren speculative faith, which is not accompanied with good works; to exclude it, I say, from having any influence as to our justification. So, in the 14th ver. "What doth it profit—though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?" that is, Can such a faith as hath no works save him? This faith he calls a "dead" faith, ver. 17; the faith of "devils," ver. 19; and the faith of a "vain man," ver. 20: now, a dead faith, a faith that may be in devils and vain men, is no true faith, nor can any affirm that it will justify. Thus you see St. Paul and St. James fully accorded, about this

doctrine of justification by faith. St. Paul affirms, that it is faith alone that justifies ; St. James denies, that a lonely faith can justify : and we assent to both as true ; for the faith, which alone justifies us is not a lonely or solitary faith, but accompanied and attended by good works.

That is the first particular. Good works are not the righteousness by which we are justified.

2. Though we are not justified by works, yet good works are necessary to our justification, so that we cannot possibly be justified without them.

There must, at least, be those inward good works of sorrow for sin, hatred of it, true repentance and humiliation, hope in the pardoning mercy of God through Jesus Christ. Yea, faith itself must be in the soul as it is a good work, before it can justify : this is evident ; for if faith justify, and a justifying faith be a good work (though it doth not justify as it is so) then some good work is absolutely necessary to justification. Yea,

3. Good works are absolutely necessary, to preserve the state of justification when once obtained.

It is impossible that we should maintain our justification, without believing, repenting, mortifying the deeds of the body, and performing the duties of new obedience ; all which are good works : and the reason is, because, as soon as these cease, their contraries, which are utterly inconsistent with a justified estate, succeed in the room of them. If faith, repentance, and mortification cease, it is impossible that justification can be preserved : otherwise, a man might be a justified unbeliever, a justified impenitent, a justified slave to his lusts ; which is a contradiction. You see then that good works are necessary, both for

the first obtaining of justification, and for the preservation of it when obtained. Hence, then,

4. We may easily determine that much debated question—Whether good works be required in the covenant of grace as a condition of justification.

For if, by a condition of justification, we negatively understand that, without which we cannot be justified, then certain it is, that, in this sense, good works are a condition of it. But, if we take condition positively, for that whereby we are justified; so, not works, but a working faith is the condition. We are not justified by works, neither can we be justified without them. And, therefore, when the apostle tells us, that we are “justified by faith without the deeds of the law,” Rom. iii. 28. this must not be understood without the presence of works, for that I have shown you is necessarily required, but without their causality and influence into our justification. Conditions we may call them, in a large sense, because they are indispensably required in the person justified; but they are, in no wise, causes or means of our justification.

So that you see the doctrine of justification by faith is no patronage for looseness and libertinism. Good works are now as necessary under the covenant of grace, as ever they were under the covenant of works; but only to other ends and purposes. The covenant of works required them, that we might be justified by them; but the covenant of grace requires them, that we might be justified by faith. Let none think, that the covenant of grace gives any dispensation from working; or that an airy and speculative faith, and a barren and empty profession, are enough to answer the terms of this covenant: “Can faith save him?” and yet what other is the faith of many professors? Should I

bid them show me their faith by their works, I much doubt, that, besides phrases and canting, we should have but very slender evidences of their christianity; and yet these men are very apt to condemn others for carnal legalists, and low attainers. But let such notionists flatter themselves as they please; yet, certainly, they will find such low attainers, who work out their salvation with fear and trembling, more exalted saints in glory, than those who think both working, fear, and trembling too slavish and servile, and below the free spirit of the gospel.

“ Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect—to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory for ever and ever.” Amen.

THE END.







