

in our relation to the will and law of God—and that view embraces, in a sense, all our relations for time and eternity—we are altogether saved by the Gospel revelation of righteousness. The solemn question asked in the Old Testament is answered in the New: *How should man be just with God?*

Jcb ix. 2

#### RIGHTEOUSNESS APPLIED TO BELIEVING MAN.

Applied  
to Man

The Divine method of conferring righteousness is, when viewed in relation to man who receives it, a manifestation of pure mercy,—continuing and applying the mercy of Christ's atonement,—which reckons to the believer through all the stages of his religious life, in time and in eternity, a righteousness he can never attain to or claim as his own. Whether it be regarded as accounting righteous or as making righteous—for both are certainly included—it is and must be ever a free gift to the faith that embraces the propitiation.

#### JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH.

Justifica-  
tion by  
Faith.

Justification is the Divine judicial act which applies to the sinner, believing in Christ, the benefit of the Atonement, delivering him from the condemnation of his sin, introducing him into a state of favour, and treating him as a righteous person. Though justifying faith is an operative principle which through the Holy Spirit's energy attains to an interior and perfect conformity with the law, or internal righteousness, it is the imputed character of justification which regulates the New-Testament use of the word. Inherent righteousness is connected more closely with the perfection of the regenerate and sanctified life. In this more limited sense, justification is either the act of God or the state of man.

I. The act of justifying is that of God the Judge. Generally

God the  
Justifier.

it is *δικαίωσις*, the word which pronounces the sinner absolved from the condemning sentence of the law ; and it refers always and only to the sins that are past. Whether regarded as the first act of mercy, or as the permanent will of God's grace towards the believer in Christ, or as the final sentence in the judgment, it is the Divine declaration which discharges the sinner as such from the condemnation of his sin. *It is God that justifieth*: God is Christ ; for all judgment is *committed unto the Son*, who both now and ever pronounces as Mediator the absolving word, declaring it in this life to the conscience by His Spirit. It is the voice of God the Judge in the mediatorial court, where the Redeemer is the Advocate, pleading His own propitiatory sacrifice and the promise of the Gospel declared to the penitence and faith of the sinner whose cause He pleads. The simplest form in which the doctrine is stated is this : *Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect ? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth ?* Here the Apostle has in view the past, the present, and the future of the believer ; the death, resurrection, and intercession of Christ ; and the one justifying sentence against which there can be no appeal in time or in eternity. God is *Θεὸς ὁ δικάων*, in one continuous ever-present act.

II. As the state into which man is introduced it is variously described according to his various relations to God and to the Mediator and to the law. As an individual sinner he is forgiven : his justification is PARDON or THE REMISSION OF SINS ; that is, the punishment is remitted. As a person ungodly, he is regarded as righteous, RIGHTEOUSNESS IS IMPUTED to him ; or his TRANSGRESSION IS NOT IMPUTED to him. His sin is pardoned, his person is justified. As a believer in Jesus, HIS FAITH IS COUNTED FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS. All these phrases describe, under its negative and its positive aspect, one and the selfsame blessing of the New Covenant, as constituting the state of grace into which the believer has entered, and in which as a believer he abides. This is attested by passages running through the Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles ; passages which only confirm the promises of the Old Testament. Our Lord's forerunner was foreannounced to give knowledge of salvation unto His people by the remission of their sins. The Saviour's word was, *Man, thy sins are forgiven thee ; but*

Rom. viii.  
33.  
John v. 22.

Rom. viii.  
33, 34.

Man as  
Justified.

Luke i.  
77.  
Luke v.  
20.

He spoke of the publican as praying *God be merciful to me a sinner!* and as going down to his house *justified*: his prayer was *ἰλάσθητί μοι*, and his blessing that he was *δεδικαιωμένος*: these words being here introduced for the first time; and, both severally and in their mutual connection, being reserved for abundant future service in the New Testament, especially in the writings of St. Paul. He left the commission that *remission of sins should be preached in His name*. St. Peter preached that *remission of sins* on the Day of Pentecost, and afterwards varied the expression, *that your sins may be blotted out*: counterparts in meaning. But St. Paul takes up the Saviour's own words and unites them: *through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by Him all that believe are justified from all things*. And in his great Epistle he adds all the other terms, and unites the whole in one charter of privileges: *But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness; even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered: blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin*. In this classical passage all the phrases are united without exception; and they are represented both as the act of God and the state of man, the one and various blessing of habitual experience. To sum up: the state of *δικαιοσύνη* is that of conformity to law, which, however, is always regarded as such only through the gracious imputation of God who declares the believer to be justified negatively from the condemnation of his sin, and positively reckons to him the character, bestowing also the privileges, of righteousness. The former or negative blessing is pardon distinctively, the latter or positive blessing is justification proper.

III. Whether the act or the state is signified the phraseology of justification is throughout Scripture faithful to the idea of imputation. The verb *justify* is not used of making righteous save as the notion of declaring or reckoning is bound up with it.

1. The Hebrew word *צָדַק* is almost always translated by the Septuagint in the sense of making or pronouncing righteous through a judicial sentence; and that in the negative sense of vindication and in the positive of declaring just. *She hath been*

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Luke  
xviii. 13.  
14.

Luke  
xxiv. 47.  
Acts ii. 38,  
iii. 19.

Acts xiii.  
38, 39.

Rom. iv.  
4—8.

The word  
Justify.

Old Tes-  
tament.

Gen.  
xxxviii  
28

- Isa l. 8. *more righteous than I*: Tamar was proved just, δεδικαίωται. *He is near that justifieth me*, ὁ δικαίωσας με. One striking passage deserves careful observation: *I will not justify the ungodly*, where, if the Septuagint had not followed another reading, we should have had the very words of St. Paul that omit the NOT, τὸν δικαιοῦντα τὸν ἀσεβῆ; also *Which justify the wicked for reward*, οἱ δικαιοῦντες τὸν ἀσεβῆ. The general strain is only confirmed by two passages which seem to be exceptions, including with the external the internal righteousness: *By His knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many. And they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever*. To these may be added παραίως ἐδικαίωσα, *I have cleansed my heart in vain*, where undoubtedly our term is once used as the translation of the Hebrew יָצִיץ, I made pure.
- New Testament.
2. In the New Testament there is no exception. A few specimens will be sufficient, especially as they are taken from the Gospels as well as the Epistles. *By thy words thou shalt be justified, δικαιωθήσῃ, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned, κατὰδικασθήσῃ. Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, δικαιοῦντες ἑαυτοὺς. Wisdom is justified of all her children, ἐδικαίωθη*, where there is both a negative and positive sense: wisdom is both cleared from imputation and highly approved, the former predominating. *And the publicans justified God, ἐδικαίωσαν*. Compare also κατὰκρμα and δικαίωσις ζωῆς, *judgment and justification of life. It is God that justifieth, Θεὸς ὁ δικαίων; who is he that condemneth? τίς ὁ κατακρίνων; Yet am I not hereby justified, δεδικαίωμα*: this does not prove me righteous. The passages in St. James, to be considered hereafter, are consistent with this. They speak of a declaratory justification, and not of the making righteous: of a justification pronounced on the evidence of works. Even those who suppose that St. James teaches a righteousness of works must admit that his use of δικαιοῦν is quite consistent with a declaratory meaning. He is writing only of the evidences of righteousness, precisely in harmony with the Sermon on the Mount, and expressly uses the Pauline language of imputation: ἐλογίσθη εἰς. He employs the word exclusively in its judicial sense. What he is pleading against is a mistaken apprehension of Faith, not a mistaken apprehension of justification. The Divine judgment pronounced on Abraham's faith when Isaac was promised in
- Isa l. 8.  
Ex. xliii. 7.  
Rom. iv. 5.  
Is v. 23.  
Is. liii. 11.  
Dan. xii. 3.  
Ps. lxxiii. 13.  
Matt. xii. 37.  
Luke xvi. 15.  
Luke vii. 35.  
Luke vii. 29.  
Rom. v. 18.  
Rom. viii. 33, 34.  
1 Cor. iv. 4.  
James ii. 23.

Genesis xv. was confirmed in the later evidence of Isaac's surrender in Genesis xxii. In the former he was justified, in the latter his justification or righteousness was acknowledged. The seeming exception in the Apocalypse is removed by the right reading, *δικαιοσύνην ποιῶν*, *let him work righteousness*, and thus *let him be righteous still*, but not *ὁ δίκαιος δικαιοθήνῃ ἔτι*. On the evidence of such an unvarying usage we may conclude that this word never occurs in the Scripture in relation to man's acceptance saving in the sense of a declaratory sentence which pronounces the man righteous whom God for Christ's sake reckons to be such. Whatever righteousness is spoken of as imparted and infused requires itself to have righteousness imputed to it. If the reading *δικαιοθήνῃ ἔτι* were correct, it would only make the New Testament close with a great testimony to the truth, That he that is righteous in his internal conformity to law must be JUSTIFIED STILL through all ages of the Gospel economy.

Rev. xxii  
11.

#### JUSTIFYING FAITH.

The faith which is the condition and instrument of justification is the trust of the soul in Christ as the only propitiation for human sin. It is a personal act of the penitent sinner under the influence of the Holy Spirit, Who reveals the Atonement to the mind, infuses desire into the heart, and thus persuades the will to embrace the Saviour. This faith, as receptive, renounces self in every form, obtains forgiveness and is reckoned for righteousness: these being one blessing under two aspects. As an active principle it appropriates the promise or the virtue of Christ's atonement; and, working by love, belongs not to the entrance into justification, but to the justified state. Its genuineness is approved by Evangelical works of righteousness, without which therefore the state of justification cannot be retained. Hence there is a justification by faith without the merit of works, and a justification by faith on the evidence of works; but in both cases the justification is declaratory and altogether of grace.

Justifying  
Faith.

## WITHOUT WORKS.

- Faith without Works.** I. Faith, without works, is both the instrument and the condition of justification : as the condition, it renounces every other dependence than the Atonement ; as the instrument, it embraces Christ, or appropriates the promise in Him, or rests upon His atoning work.
- The Condition.** 1. The righteousness which is of God by faith is as a condition opposed to man's own righteousness, which is of the law.
- Renounces.** (1.) Faith acknowledges that the legal, proper, primitive sense of the term justify, as the pronouncing him to be righteous who is righteous, is for ever out of the question. First, as to the law : it has been broken and its condemnation is acknowledged ; it demands an obedience that never has been rendered since the Fall. Then as to man himself, faith renounces all trust in human ability. It utterly abjures the thought of a righteousness springing from self. It acknowledges past sin ; and present impotence ; and the impossibility of any future obedience cancelling the past.
- Gal. ii. 16.** *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law : for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.* It disclaims all human creaturely righteousness as such : the nullity of this is taught by conviction, felt in repentance, and confessed by faith.
- Faith counted for Righteousness.** (2.) Hence the specific Evangelical phrase that *faith is counted for righteousness*. This implies the absence of personal righteousness, and the reckoning of a principle, not righteousness, in its stead by a kind of substitution. In its stead : not as rendering good works needless, but displacing them for ever as the ground of acceptance. Therefore faith does not justify as containing the germ of all good works : as *fides formata charitate*, or faith informed and vivified by love. Not justifying through any merit in itself, it justifies as the condition on which is suspended the merciful application of the merits of Christ : *κατὰ χάριν*. Faith is not righteousness, as justifying : it is *counted for righteousness*.
- Rom. iv. 4.** It is *put to the account* of man in the mediatorial court as righteousness ; not as a good work, but reckoned instead of the good works
- Phil. 18.**

which it renounces. Lest the faith as itself a work should be regarded as righteousness the Apostle varies the expression. He also says, again and again inversely, that righteousness—not, however, Christ's—is imputed to the believer: not to faith itself, as if God regarded the goodness wrapped up in it. *The man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works . . . it was imputed to him for righteousness . . . for us also, to whom it shall be imputed.* It is the man, in the naked simplicity of his self-renouncing, work-renouncing trust in God—in naked faith, simple faith, faith alone, words which are not in Scripture but which sums up its meaning—on whom the sentence of justification is pronounced. When our Lord, in answer to the question, *What shall we do that we might work the works of God?* said, *This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent,* He did not use either of the terms, work and faith, precisely in their later sense, but prepared the way for it. He did not mean that faith in Himself was the all-comprehending virtue required by God, but that they must believe in Him before they could speak of any works at all as acceptable.

Rom. iv.  
6, 22, 24

John vi.  
28, 29.

(3) Imputation or reckoning—λογίζεσθαι, ἐλλογείν—has two meanings: the ascribing to one his own and the reckoning to him what is not his own. The latter sense predominates in the three great theological imputations: that of the sin of Adam to the race, that of the sin of the race to Christ, and that of the benefit of Christ's righteousness to the believer. As through the imputation of *one man's disobedience many were made sinners*, that disobedience being reckoned not in the act but in the consequence; and as *the Lamb of God bore the sin of the world*, not its sins, *being made sin for us* by imputation as a sin offering *Who knew no sin* Himself, so the ungodly who in penitence believes has the virtue or efficacy of Christ's obedience reckoned to him without having that obedience itself imputed: he is *made the righteousness of God in Him*, which is different from having the righteousness of Christ set to his account.

Imputation.

Rom. v.  
19.

John i.  
29.  
2 Cor.  
v. 21.

(4.) This faith as a negative condition is of the operation of the Holy Ghost. He enables the soul to renounce every other trust. He convinces the mind of guilt and impotence; awakens in the heart the feeling of emptiness and longing desire; and so moves the will to reject every other confidence than Christ. But,

The Holy  
Ghost.

though the influence of the Spirit produces it, it is so far only negative: a preparation for good rather than itself good.

**Instru-  
ment.** 2. Faith is the active Instrument as well as the passive Co-  
dition of justification. As such it apprehends Christ; justifies  
because of the virtue of its object as it unites the soul with Him;  
is blessed with the privilege of an attendant assurance; and all  
once more under the influence of the Holy Spirit.

**Cause.** (1.) Faith is the instrumental cause of justification. The ori-  
ginating cause is the love of God; the meritorious, Christ's  
atoning obedience, active and passive in one, the former rendering  
the latter possible; the efficient cause, the Holy Ghost, working  
faith through word and sacrament as the secondary instruments  
of justification or its means. There is scarcely any room here  
for another so-called formal cause, which is, really, notwithstand-  
ing every argument of sophistry, the faith which makes the soul  
one with Christ; and that is the cause instrumental blended with  
the cause meritorious. To ask for the formal cause—formal being  
logically that which immediately constitutes a thing what it is—  
is simply to ask for a definition of the act and state of justifica-  
tion. It is and must be the imputative estimate of God.

**Object.** (2.) The object of justifying faith is God in Christ. In this as  
**John x.** in all *I and My Father are one*. Yet the specific object of justifying  
**30.** faith is not God absolutely, nor Christ and His revelation  
generally, but Christ as the mediatorial representative of sinners,  
and God as accepting the Atonement for man. *Believe on the Lord*  
**Acts xvi.** *Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. We have believed in Jesus*  
**31.** *Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ*. In two ways  
**Gal. ii. 16.** St. Paul to the Romans describes God as the object. *But believeth*  
**Rom. iv.** *on Him that justifieth the ungodly*: this implies what had preceded,  
**5.** *the Justifier of him which believeth [in Jesus] and through faith, in His*  
**Rom. iii.** *blood, or the DEATH of Christ*. And, in relation to His RESUR-  
**25, 26.** *RECTION: If we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord*. But  
**Rom. iv.** the God of our whole redemption in Christ is the object of faith:  
**24.** the God Who *so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son,*  
**John iii.** *Who delivered Him up for us all, and Who raised up Christ from the*  
**16.** *dead*. He is the One God of the One Christ.

**Rom. viii.** (3.) It is never said that we are justified *διὰ πίστεως*, on account  
**32.** of faith, but *διὰ πίστεως* or *ἐκ πίστεως*. Faith, as the act of the  
**Rom. viii.** **11.** **Virtue of** **Christ.**



soul by which it unites itself with the Lord, makes the virtue of His merit its own. It apprehends Christ and His atonement: ascribing all to Him, it receives all from Him. This is its transcendent privilege, surpassing all recorded in the eleventh of Hebrews, or rather underlying all. It is the appropriating knowledge of Christ: *that I may win Christ is that I may know Him.*

Phil. iii.  
8—10.  
Assurance.

(4.) Faith is not assurance: but assurance is its reflex act. The same Spirit who inspires the faith—which is alone, and without assurance, the instrument of salvation—ordinarily and always, sooner or later, enables the believer to say: *He loved me and gave Himself for me.* The objective and the subjective confessions of personal experience have become one; but St. Paul here speaks out of the treasure of an internal assurance which followed his first act of faith. So he writes to the Ephesians: *In Whom also, after that ye believed—or, on your believing—ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise.*

Gal. ii. 20.

Eph. i. 13

(5.) Faith, whether receptive or active, is an exercise of the human heart under the influence of the Holy Spirit: not merely under that general agency by which all preliminary grace is wrought, but through His actual revelation of Christ to the soul, the eyes of which are at the same moment opened: the unveiling of the Saviour to the penitent seeker, and the unveiling of the sight to behold the Lamb of God, in one and the same critical moment is the mystical but true and sufficing definition of saving trust. It must be remembered, further, that the active energy and the passive renunciation of saving faith are brought to the perfection of their unity at that moment. St. Paul puts this strikingly when he speaks of the Jews as not *submitting themselves unto the righteousness of God.* *Submitting* marks the negative, *themselves* the positive side: οὐκ ὑπατάσσοντες.

The Spirit.

John i. 36.

Rom. x. 3

#### FAITH AND WORKS.

Faith, with works, justifies instrumentally the person believing: inasmuch as its works give evidence of its genuineness as a permanent living principle. It retains the soul in a state of justification, and is the power of a Divine life by which the righteousness of the law is fulfilled.

With Works