

As to the allegation which may be said to constitute the objection, viz., that if we are to except from the exclusion of works, faith, which is a work, we may except other works also, the answer is obvious and conclusive,—viz., that any proposed exception to the apostle's general and unlimited exclusion of works, must be individually warranted and established by scriptural evidence,—that we might possibly admit other exceptions, if good scriptural evidence could be adduced in support of them,—but that, in point of fact, no good reason has been, or can be, adduced in support of any other exception to the exclusion but faith. This is quite a sufficient answer to the objection; and as a mere question of dialectics, nothing more need be said about it. But then, as we have already intimated, it suggests some further considerations of importance as to the way and manner in which faith justifies, and the relation which subsists among the great truths which go to make up the scriptural doctrine of justification.

It is manifest, not only from Paul's particular statements in discussing this subject, but from the general scope of his argument, and the principles on which it is all based, that his exclusion of works or deeds of law was intended to be very full and complete; and that, therefore, the more nearly we can make it absolute, as he *in terminis* represents it, the more nearly we approach to the views which filled his mind. Now, the general doctrine, upon this subject, of those Protestant divines who have maintained the theology of the Reformation, has been this, that though faith cannot be excluded from the justification of a sinner, and though faith is a work,—*i.e.*, an act of obedience rendered by men, and, at the same time, a grace conferred on them, and wrought in them by God,—yet it is not *as a work* that it justifies, or is concerned in the matter of a sinner's justification, but in a different capacity or relation,—*viz.*, simply as the instrument of apprehending or receiving the righteousness of Christ. And it is manifest that, if good evidence can be adduced in support of this view of the place which faith holds, or the influence which it exerts in the justification of sinners, this must be an additional confirmation of the great Protestant doctrine, that men are justified by faith alone, without deeds of law, in its obvious and literal import, while it will also contribute to elucidate the whole subject of justification.

Now, it is admitted that there are no statements contained in

Scripture which professedly and directly explain, in any very formal or categorical manner, *how* it is that faith acts or operates in the justification of a sinner; but it is contended that there are sufficient materials in Scripture to establish satisfactorily the common Protestant doctrine upon this subject. There is not much that is very definite to be learned upon this precise point,—*viz.*, as to the way in which faith justifies,—from the general and fundamental declaration, that men are justified by faith. The forms in which this is expressed in Scripture are these, *πιστει*, *εκ πιστεως*, and *δια πιστεως*; in Latin, *fide*, *ex fide*, and *per fidem*. These expressions all indicate, in general, that some sort of causality, or efficiency, or instrumentality, is ascribed to faith in the matter of justification, without specifying what,—though the fact that men are never said in Scripture to be justified, *δια πιστιν*, *propter fidem*, on account of faith, may, when taken in connection with the assertion that they are justified freely or gratuitously, and that works or deeds of law, mere obedience to requirements, are excluded, be fairly regarded as amply sufficient to disprove the common Popish doctrine that faith justifies on account of its worth, dignity, or excellence,—meriting God's favour *ex congruo* though not *ex condigno*. This may, accordingly, be received as our negative position as to the way and manner in which faith justifies; and some direct and positive light is thrown upon the subject by those scriptural statements which represent faith as a looking to Christ, receiving Him, apprehending Him, laying hold of Him. These scriptural representations naturally and obviously suggest the idea, that the essence of that which men do when they believe in Christ, in so far as the matter of their justification is concerned, is, that they receive or accept of Christ, held out to them, or offered to them; and that the proper, direct, and immediate effect of their faith in Christ, is, that they in this way become possessed of Him, and of the blessings which are in Him,—*i.e.*, the blessings which He purchased, and which are necessary to their salvation. If this, then, be the process,—as the scriptural representations referred to plainly indicate,—by which men individually become possessed of the blessings which Christ purchased and merited for them, including pardon and acceptance, then it plainly follows that faith justifies, as it is put by Turretine,* “*non propriè et per*

* Turret., Locus xvi., Q. vii.

se," sed "tantum relativè et organicè;" or, as the mean or instrument of receiving, or laying hold of, Christ's righteousness.

We are thus led to consider more particularly what we have more than once adverted to,—viz., the relation between the way and manner in which faith justifies, and the other truths taught in Scripture concerning the causes, grounds, or reasons of a sinner's justification. If men are justified freely or gratuitously by God's grace, this implies that neither faith nor anything else can have any meritorious efficacy in procuring justification; as the Council of Trent admits in words, but in words so chosen of purpose, as to leave a liberty to Romanists,—of which, as we have seen, they generally take advantage,—to maintain that faith and half a dozen of other virtues, as they call them, *do merit justification*, of congruity, though not of condignity. If Christ's righteousness imputed be that to which God has direct or immediate respect or regard in each case in which He justifies a sinner, then it follows that faith can justify only as being the cause, or means, or instrument, by or through which God bestows Christ's righteousness upon men, and by or through which they receive or become possessed of it. In short, the whole doctrine of Scripture upon the subject must be taken into account; its different parts must be all embraced in a general declaration; their relations must be brought out; and the necessity of combining and harmonizing the different truths taught regarding it may legitimately modify, *if necessary*, the precise way and manner in which each is to be stated, explained, and applied. Accordingly, we find, in point of fact, that men's views of the place which faith holds, and the influence which it exerts, in the justification of sinners, are usually determined by the views they take of the other departments of this subject, and especially of the grounds or reasons on which God's act in justification is based.

This important observation is thus expressed by Dr Owen in the third chapter of his great work on justification: "When men have fixed their apprehensions about the principal matters in controversy, they express what concerneth the use of faith in an accommodation thereunto."* "Thus it is with all who affirm faith to be either the instrument, or the condition, or the *causa sine quâ non*, or the preparation and disposition of the subject, or a meri-

* Owen on Justification, vol. v., p. 107, Goold's edition; xi. 134, Orme's ed.

torious cause by way of condecency or congruity, in and of our justification. For all these notions of the use of faith are suited and accommodated unto the opinions of men, concerning the nature and principal causes of justification." There are five views mentioned here by Dr Owen of the use of faith in justification, or of the way and manner in which it justifies,—viz., first, as an instrument; secondly, as a condition; thirdly, as a *causa sine quâ non*; fourthly, as preparing and disposing men to receive justification; and, fifthly, as meriting it of congruity. The first view, which represents faith as the instrument or instrumental cause of justification,—*i.e.*, as justifying simply as it is the appointed means by or through which men individually receive or lay hold of the righteousness of Christ,—was that which was taken by all the Reformers, and which has been ever since held by almost all Protestants who have honestly and cordially embraced the theology of the Reformation. The fourth, which represents faith as justifying, inasmuch as it prepares and disposes men to justification, is that which is explicitly taught by the Council of Trent; while, *along with this*, the fifth,—viz., that it justifies because it merits justification *ex congruo*,—is also held, as we have seen, by most Romish writers, not indeed with the express sanction, but with the connivance—the intended connivance—of the council, and without contradicting any of its decisions.

As, however, Romanists ascribe this preparatory, dispositive, and meritorious efficacy, with reference to justification, equally to other virtues besides faith, and yet cannot dispute that, in Scripture, faith has a special and peculiar prominence assigned to it in the matter, I may, following out and applying Dr Owen's idea, state that, in accordance with their fundamental principles,—viz., that an inherent personal righteousness, infused into us by God's grace, and not the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, is the formal cause, the proper ground, or reason of our justification,—they explain the special prominence, the peculiar influence, ascribed to faith in the matter, by saying that faith justifies, inasmuch as it "is the beginning of human salvation, the foundation and the root of all justification,"—*i.e.*, the chief source from which all holiness and obedience spring.* The second and third views of the uses of faith, mentioned by Dr Owen,—viz., that it justifies, as being

* Con. Trident., sess. vi., c. viii.

the condition, or the *causa sine quâ non* of justification,—are capable of a variety of explanations, and have been maintained, or at least admitted, by persons who hold different opinions, more or less scriptural, or the reverse, concerning the grounds or reasons of justification, which are explained at some length in the chapter of Dr Owen to which I have referred. Some writers distinguish between a condition and a *causa sine quâ non* in this matter; and others identify them, or explain the one by the other. Different meanings have also been attached to each of these expressions; and according as they are explained more strictly or more loosely, different classes of divines have been disposed, according to the opinions they held upon other departments of the general subject, to admit or reject the use of them, as descriptive of the place or function of faith in this matter.

The substance of the truth upon the point,—speaking historically,—may be embodied in the two following propositions. First, orthodox divines, who have held the imputed righteousness of Christ to be the proper ground or reason of a sinner's justification, have generally,—while greatly preferring the use of the word instrument or instrumental cause, as most correctly and appropriately expressing the substance of what Scripture suggests upon this point,—admitted that there is a sense in which faith may be said to be the condition, or *causa sine quâ non*, of justification. An explanation of the sense in which the employment of these expressions is, and is not, consistent with scriptural views in regard to the ground of justification, will be found in Dr Owen's Treatise,* and in Turretine.† In our Confession of Faith,‡ it is said that "faith, thus receiving and resting upon Christ and His righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification;" and in the Larger Catechism§ it is said that "faith justifies a sinner in the sight of God, . . . only as it is an instrument by which he receiveth and applieth Christ and His righteousness." And yet it is also said,|| that "the grace of God is manifested in the second covenant, in that He freely provideth and offereth to sinners a Mediator, and life and salvation by Him; and requiring faith as the condition to interest them in Him, promiseth and giveth His Holy Spirit to

* Dr Owen on Justification, c. iii.
† Turret., Loc. xvi., Quæ. vii.
‡ West. Conf., c. xi., s. ii.

§ Larger Catechism, Quæ. 73.
|| Ibid., Quæ. 32.

all His elect, to work in them that faith with all other saving graces." Now, this statement, though it does not *directly* represent faith as the condition of justification, plainly implies that there is a sense in which faith, though it justifies only as an instrument, may yet be said to be the condition of an interest in the blessings of the covenant, and, of course, of pardon and acceptance.

Secondly, that those statements in which faith is represented as the condition, or *sine quâ non*, of justification, have been most generally and most freely used by men of unsound views upon the general subject; and that the use of them has been commonly avoided and discountenanced by orthodox divines, as, in their natural and obvious sense, they most readily harmonize with, and therefore tend to encourage, erroneous views of the grounds of justification. If the expressions, condition and *causa sine quâ non*, are understood to mean merely something required by God of men, in order to their being pardoned, invariably existing in all men who are justified, there can be no positive objection to applying them to faith. In this sense, indeed, they err by defect: they ascribe no sort of causality or efficiency to faith in the matter, give no indication or explanation of the special prominence ascribed to it in Scripture, and do not discriminate it from repentance, which is admitted to be required of God in order to our being forgiven, and to exist in all who are pardoned. And, accordingly, those orthodox divines who have approved of calling faith a condition of justification, and of the other blessings of the covenant of grace,—as, for instance, Marckius,*—admit that repentance is equally, and in the same sense, a condition as faith is, and describe them both as, at once and alike, conditions of the covenant of grace, and duties of those who are in the covenant—*conditiones fœderis et officia fœderatorum*. In the only other sense which these words naturally and obviously bear, orthodox divines usually regard them as erring by excess,—as involving positive error,—inasmuch as the application of them to faith, in that sense, would imply that faith justified as a work,—which, with the Apostle

* Marckii Compend. Theol., c. xxii. Vide De Moor, Comment., tom. iv., c. xxii. In opposition to the use of the word *condition*, see Witsius De Econ. Fœd., Lib. iii., c. i., secs. viii.-xvi.; but compare with this his *Irenicum*, c. xii. Hoornbeck's *Summa Controversiarum*, Lib. x.; De Brownistis, pp. 812-831.

Paul's unqualified exclusion of works, is not to be admitted if it can be helped,—and that faith justifies, inasmuch as, by its own proper and inherent efficacy, it has a strict and proper, if not meritorious, causality in procuring or obtaining justification, or enters into the grounds or reasons on account of which God pardons and accepts. Accordingly, most of those who have contended most zealously for faith being the condition or *causa sine qua non* of justification, have supported one or other of the two following views: First, that faith justifies, because it has in itself so much that is valuable and excellent, that for Christ's sake,—as they commonly say, though apparently without attaching any very definite idea to the expression,—God is led to reckon or impute it to men, as if it were perfect righteousness; or, secondly, that faith justifies, because, in addition to the worth or excellence it has of its own, it is the great cause which produces all other graces, and new obedience to God's law. Now, both of these views of the subject exclude, and are intended to exclude, the Scripture doctrine of the righteousness of Christ, as the only ground of a sinner's justification. They ascribe to faith a kind and degree of real efficiency in procuring or obtaining justification, which the word of God does not ascribe to it, and they are both explicitly condemned in the standards of our church.

On all these accounts, the expressions instrument, or instrumental cause, are those which have most generally commended themselves to orthodox divines, as indicating most correctly the place and influence assigned in Scripture to faith in the matter of a sinner's justification; Maestricht being, so far as I remember, almost the only orthodox divine of eminence who positively prefers the word condition to the word instrument.* Since men are said to be justified by faith, faith must be, in some sense or other, more or less full and proper, the cause or means of their justification; and while a conjoint view of the whole doctrine of Scripture upon the subject leaves to faith no other place or influence than that of an instrument or instrumental cause, there is nothing whatever in Scripture that requires us to ascribe to it a higher kind or degree of causality,—a larger amount of real efficiency,—in the production of the result. But the Scripture not only marks out the general place or influence which alone faith can have in the matter; it

* Maestricht, Theol., Lib. vi., c. vi., secs. xiv. and xxviii.

very precisely and exactly indicates what its actual place is. It represents the righteousness of Christ as the sole ground or reason of the justification of a sinner. This righteousness God bestows upon men, and they accept or receive it as a thing held out or offered to them. On their accepting or receiving it, it becomes theirs in full possession, and is imputed to them, or put down to their account, and thus becomes the ground or reason from a regard to which God pardons and accepts them. Now, this accepting or receiving of Christ, and the blessings which are in Him, is identified in Scripture with the exercise of faith. And from all these scriptural truths, viewed conjointly, the conclusion unavoidably follows, that faith justifies, only because, or inasmuch as, it is the instrument or medium by which men are connected with, or united to, Christ, and by which they receive or lay hold of Him and His righteousness. This is really nothing more than expressing and embodying, in a distinct and definite statement, what the Scriptures, when we take a deliberate and combined view of all that they contain bearing upon this subject, plainly indicate as the true state of the case, the real history of the process; and the beautiful consistency and harmony pervading the whole scheme of doctrine which is thus developed, affords a confirmation of the truth and accuracy of each of its component parts. Each has its own appropriate scriptural evidence, embodying a truth obviously suggested by statements contained in Scripture, and necessary, in each instance, as the only way of bringing out distinctly and definitely the substance of what Scripture plainly appears to have been intended to teach; while all, without force or pressure, fit into, and harmonize with, each other, and, when combined together, unfold a great and consistent scheme in entire harmony with all the leading views opened up to us in Scripture with respect to the natural state and condition of men, the character of God, and the principles of His moral government, and the satisfaction and meritorious obedience of Him on whom God has laid our help, and who is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by Him.

Men are justified freely or gratuitously by God's grace, because, from their actual state and condition by nature, they could not possibly be justified in any other way, being utterly unable to do anything either to effect or to merit their own justification. This grace of God in the justification of sinners is developed and

exercised in His giving His only-begotten Son to be their surety and their substitute, to endure the penalty, and to perform the requirements of the law, in their room and stead, and thus to work out for them an everlasting righteousness. Socinus, indeed, laboured to show that the gracious or gratuitous character of God's act in justifying was inconsistent with its being founded on, and having respect to, a vicarious satisfaction. But this misrepresentation is sufficiently exposed in the following statement: "Christ, by His obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified, and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to His Father's justice in their behalf. Yet inasmuch as He was given by the Father for them, and His obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead, and both freely, not for anything in them, their justification is only of free grace; that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners." *

The same character of free grace pervades also the *application* of the scheme or the provision made for imparting to men individually the pardon and acceptance which the grace of God and the vicarious work of Christ have secured for them. Christ and His righteousness,—and in Him, and on the ground of His righteousness, pardon, acceptance, and eternal life,—are freely offered to them in the word of the truth of the Gospel, held out to them, and pressed upon their acceptance. Faith alone, and nothing else in them,—no working or mere obedience to law—nothing which either in itself could be meritorious, or could be easily supposed to have merit,—is the appointed mean by which men individually become united to Christ, interested in his vicarious work, partakers of the blessings which that work secured; and this faith, besides that it is God's gift, wrought in men by His gracious power, is just, in its nature or substance, trust or confidence in Christ,—an act by which men go out of themselves, renounce all confidence in anything they have done or can do, and receive or lay hold, as if with a hand, of that which has been gratuitously provided for them, and is freely offered to them. Here, then, is a great and glorious scheme, complete and harmonious in all its parts, of grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord. Therefore, says the apostle, "it is of

* West. Conf., c. xi., sec. iii. See Larger Catechism, Qu. 71.

faith, that it might be of grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed." *

The doctrine of gratuitous justification, based solely upon the vicarious righteousness of Christ, imputed to men and received by faith alone, was the great truth which the Reformers were honoured by God to bring out from the obscurity and error in which it had been involved in the Church of Rome,—which they established from the word of God, and proclaimed openly to the world,—and by which mainly God gave them victory over the Church of Rome and the prince of darkness. This was what Luther called the article of a standing or a falling church; and the history of the church, both before and since his time, has fully justified the propriety of the description. There has, perhaps, been no department of divine truth against which the assaults of Satan have been more assiduously directed ever since the origin of the Christian church, than the Scripture doctrine of justification; and there has probably been no doctrine, the profession and preaching of which have more generally indicated with correctness the state of vital religion in the church in all ages. Scriptural views upon this subject, and the general prevalence of true practical godliness, have acted and reacted upon each other with palpable and invariable efficacy;—God, whenever He was pleased to pour out His Spirit abundantly, promoting both, each by means of the other; and Satan constantly labouring, more openly or more insidiously, to corrupt the scriptural doctrine of free justification, on the ground of Christ's righteousness imputed to men and received by faith alone, as the surest means of effecting his great object of ruining men's souls, by leading them to reject the counsel of God against themselves, and to put away from them eternal life.

Sec. VI.—*Objections to the Scriptural Doctrine.*

The scriptural doctrine of justification is substantially exhausted, so far as concerns its leading principles, by those truths which we have already explained; at least when we add to them this, that as men receive entire immunity from all their past sins, when they first lay hold of Christ's righteousness through faith, so

* Rom. iv. 16.

God doth continue to forgive the subsequent sins of those who are justified, on the same grounds, and through the same process. As we have now explained the whole of the Protestant doctrine upon this subject, this may be a suitable opportunity to advert to the objections which have been adduced against it, on the ground of its alleged immoral tendency.

This great doctrine of the Reformation was assailed by Romanists at the time, and has been always assailed by them and other opponents of the truth, as unfavourable to the interests of morality, as relaxing or overturning the obligations incumbent upon men to obey the law of God, and to discharge the duties which His word imposes upon them. This is just the objection which, as the Apostle Paul intimates to us, naturally and obviously enough suggested itself against the doctrine which he taught upon the subject of justification. The objection *then* was, that he made void the law through faith; and of course the fact that the same objection, in substance, is so often urged, and with some plausibility, against the Protestant doctrine, is a presumption that it is the same which Paul taught.

It is certainly true, that those who have been most zealous in urging this objection, have not, in general, exhibited in their own character and history a very high standard of holiness, or any very deep sense of the obligations to practise it; but still the objection ought to be examined and answered upon the ground of its own merits. The common allegation of Romish writers, that the Reformers, and those who have adopted their principles, deny the necessity of an inherent righteousness, or a renovation of man's moral nature, and contend only for the necessity of an extrinsic, imputed righteousness, is an entire misrepresentation of their doctrine. Protestants, indeed, deny the necessity of an inherent righteousness or a moral renovation, as that which is the ground or basis of God's act in pardoning and accepting; but they do not deny—nay, they strenuously contend for—the necessity of its presence in all justified persons. They maintain that faith alone justifies, but not a faith which is alone—only a faith which is ever accompanied with, and produces, all other saving graces; and Bellarmine, as we have seen, admits explicitly that it is one of the characteristic differences between Protestants and Papists, that Protestants hold, “*Fidem quam dicunt solum justificare nunquam esse posse solam,*” while the Church of Rome maintains, “*Fidem*

non justificare solam sed tamen posse esse solam,”—an admission which at once overturns the ordinary Popish misrepresentations of Protestant doctrine upon this subject; misrepresentations, however, which Bellarmine himself, notwithstanding this admission, has not abstained from countenancing. Protestants have always contended that, in order that we may escape the wrath and curse of God due to us for sin, God requireth of us repentance unto life, as well as faith; and that repentance unto life implies a renovation of the moral nature, and consists in an actual turning from all sin unto God, with a purpose of new obedience; although they do not regard repentance as standing in the same relation to justification as faith does,—unless as it is inclusive of faith,—or as exerting any sort of causality or efficiency, even the lowest, in the matter of a sinner's justification, just because we are never said in Scripture, directly or by implication, to be justified by repentance, while we are frequently and expressly said to be justified by faith. When these considerations are kept in view, and when they are brought to bear, in their true and legitimate import, upon the state of the question, it becomes quite plain that we are fully entitled to put the objection adduced by Papists and others against the moral tendency of the doctrine of free justification by faith alone on the ground of Christ's imputed righteousness, in this form, and to discuss this as the only real point in dispute,—viz., that there can be no adequate and effectual reason to persuade and induce men to turn from sin unto God, and to submit themselves practically to Christ's authority, unless we can assure them that by doing so they will exert some causality or efficiency in procuring or obtaining for themselves the pardon of their sins, the enjoyment of God's favour, and a right to eternal life. The doctrine of the Reformers precluded them from urging this precise consideration upon men in order to persuade them to turn from sin unto God, and to submit themselves to Christ as their Lord and Master; but it left them at full liberty to employ every *other* motive or consideration that could be adduced by those who taught a different doctrine of justification.

Now, it is manifestly absurd to say that no sufficient reason can be adduced to persuade men to turn from sin, and to submit themselves to Christ's authority, unless we can assure them that, by doing so, they will exert some influence or efficiency in *procuring* or *obtaining* for themselves pardon and acceptance, so long as

we can urge upon them that God requires them to do all this,—that by refusing to do it they are provoking His righteous displeasure, and hardening themselves in a condition of guilt and misery,—and that, unless they do all this, they will not be, in point of fact, pardoned and saved, but must perish for ever. All this can be said and urged upon men in entire consistency with the Protestant doctrine of free justification through Christ's imputed righteousness; and if so, the Popish objection falls to the ground.

But this topic is important chiefly from its connection with the great general subject of the provision made in the gospel scheme for changing men's moral natures, for making them holy, and restoring them to a conformity to God's moral image; or, what is virtually the same thing, the connection between justification and sanctification, in the Protestant acceptance of these words. The Church of Rome, as we have seen, confounds justification and sanctification, using this latter word in its widest sense as including regeneration, and thus comprehending the whole process by which men are made holy. They regard justification as including both the forgiveness of sin and the renovation of man's moral nature, or, as they commonly call it, the infusing of righteousness; but then they represent the latter as, in the order of nature at least, if not of time, antecedent to the former, and as indeed the ground or reason on account of which the pardon of sin is bestowed. Protestants, in accordance with Scripture usage, regard justification and regeneration, or renovation, as distinct in themselves, and as not standing to each other in any sense in the relation of cause and effect, but only as invariably connected in point of fact, and as both traceable, as their proximate cause, to that faith by which men are united to Christ. They regard regeneration, not indeed in its more restricted and limited sense, as describing merely the first implantation of spiritual life by the Holy Ghost,—for that must be antecedent in the order of nature even to faith,—but in its more enlarged sense, as comprehending the implantation in the heart of love instead of enmity to God, and of holy principles and tendencies in place of depraved ones,—as posterior in the order of nature, though not of time, to justification, or the bestowal of pardon and acceptance.

In considering the provision made in the gospel scheme—according to the Protestant view of its nature and arrangements—for producing holiness, as including conformity to God's image

and actual obedience to His law, it is of importance to keep in mind that there are two different aspects in which holiness, in its widest sense, is presented to us in Scripture: first, as a gift bestowed on men by God,—a change effected upon them by the gracious agency of the Holy Spirit; and, secondly, as a duty or matter of obligation which God requires of them. That holiness in all its extent, as including repentance, conversion, progressive sanctification, and actual conformity of life to God's law, is represented in Scripture in both these aspects, is very manifest, and is not denied by Romanists, but only by Socinians and the grosser Pelagians. And if this be so, then both these views of it ought to be remembered and applied, as well in our speculations concerning it, as in the feelings we cherish, and the course we pursue, in regard to any matter involved in it,—each aspect of it being allowed to occupy its proper place, and to exert its appropriate influence. I have no doubt that unfavourable impressions of the moral tendency of the scriptural doctrine of justification have been encouraged by overlooking this twofold aspect of holiness, or conformity of heart and life to God's law, and regarding it chiefly, if not exclusively, as a duty which God requires of us. When it is viewed as a grace or gift bestowed upon and wrought in us, then we have just to consider what provision God has made for imparting it, and what the way and manner in which He communicates it to men individually. Now, in *this* aspect of the matter, the scriptural representation of the case is this,—that, from men's natural state and condition, it is indispensably necessary, in order to their final happiness, that a change be effected both upon their state and condition judicially in relation to God and His law, and upon their moral nature, principles, and tendencies; that God has provided for effecting both these changes, by giving His own Son to be the surety and substitute of His people; and that He communicates to men individually both these gifts by uniting them to Christ through the agency or instrumentality of faith on their part, which He works in them. It was necessary that both these changes should be effected, that both these gifts should be bestowed. God has made effectual provision for imparting and securing both. They are both found in Christ, when men are united to Him. They are both effected or conferred, as to their immediate or proximate cause, through that faith by which this union to Christ is brought about. The two

things cannot be separated, because God has made equally certain provision for effecting and bestowing both, and has clearly revealed it to us in His word as a fundamental principle of His unchangeable arrangements, that wherever He confers the one He always confers the other. They are both equally God's gifts; and, according to the arrangements which He has established in the covenant of grace, and which He has revealed in His word, they both flow with an equal certainty or necessity from union to Christ, and from faith in Him.

Now, in this aspect of the case, there can be no possible ground for entertaining any suspicion whatever of the moral tendency of the scriptural doctrine of justification; for the substance of the truth we hold upon the point is this,—that God made equally certain and effectual provision for changing men's state, and for changing their character; for securing that every one who is pardoned and accepted, shall also, at the same time, be born again, be renewed in the spirit of his mind, be created again in Christ Jesus unto good works. The differences between the Protestant and the Popish doctrine upon the subject are these,—that the Papists regard both changes as comprehended under the one word justification, and represent the change of state as posterior, and standing in a relation of causal dependence, in some sense, to the change of character; while the Protestants reject these views. Now, even conceding, for the sake of argument, that these Popish representations of the matter were in accordance with Scripture, or that there was equal ground for regarding them as scriptural as the Protestant doctrine, what we wish to observe is, that there is no appearance of their possessing any advantage or superiority, in point of moral tendency, in the aspect of the case we are at present considering; and for this plain reason, that they do not appear to contribute in the least to increase the certainty, necessity, and invariableness of the connection between the two changes or gifts. God has resolved to bestow both, He has made effectual provision for bestowing both, on all on whom He bestows either; and He will just as certainly and as invariably carry this arrangement into effect, whatever may be the name or names under which He has classed them, and whatever may be the order, either of time or of causal dependence, in which He has fixed them with reference to each other. No suspicion can legitimately attach to the moral tendency

of any system of doctrine upon this subject, and with reference to the aspect in which we are at present considering it, unless it deny, directly or by implication, either that God has established an invariable connection between His two gifts of a change of state and a change of character, or that He has made certain and effectual provision for bestowing both on all on whom He bestows either; and as the Protestant doctrine is just as far from denying either of these positions as the Popish one, it is at least equally safe and wholesome in its moral tendency.

It is only when this view of justification and sanctification, or forgiveness and renovation, as equally God's gifts,—which He has made effectual provision for bestowing upon all for whom they were intended,—is kept out of view, and when man's attention is turned solely to the other aspect of regeneration and sanctification, as being simply duties which God requires of us, that the common allegations about the moral tendency of the Protestant doctrine of justification can be invested with anything like plausibility. It is certain that repentance, conversion, growing holiness of nature, and practical obedience to God's law, are all duties which God requires of us, as well as gifts which He bestows. And when we regard them as duties, and are called upon to vindicate the Protestant doctrine of justification from the charge of being unfavourable or injurious to the interests of morality, we may be expected to show that that doctrine leaves *the obligation* of these duties untouched, and leaves also full scope for our addressing to men such considerations as ought, in right reason, to persuade and constrain them to perform them. We might, indeed, take our stand upon the former view of the matter,—to the effect, at least, of throwing the *onus probandi* upon our opponents,—and maintain that, since we hold that God has established a certain and invariable connection between justification and renovation, it is incumbent upon them to show that our doctrine in regard to the one relaxes the obligation of the other, and deprives us of the capacity of addressing to men considerations which, in right reason, should, as motives, persuade and constrain them to repent and be converted, to enter into and to continue in Christ's service, and to persevere ever thereafter in walking as He walked, and in obeying His law. But there is no occasion to contest this preliminary point, or to confine ourselves so rigidly within the range of what is logically imperative; for there is really no diffi-

culty in proving that the Protestant doctrine of justification leaves the obligations of men to holiness of heart and life in all its extent, at least, untouched, and leaves us quite sufficiently strong and powerful considerations—nay, affords us the strongest and most powerful of all considerations—to persuade men, on the fullest and most rational grounds, to do all that God requires of them, and to perform all the duties which He has imposed upon them.

In briefly illustrating this position, we may first advert to what are the motives and considerations which the Romanists can bring to bear upon men, but from the use of which Protestants, by their doctrine, are precluded. We cannot, and we dare not, tell men, as the Church of Rome does, that fear, hope, penitence, and love must exist in men, as well as faith, before justification, and that all these virtues existing in men prepare and dispose them to receive justification; and still less can we tell them, as most Romish writers do, and without contradicting the Council of Trent, that these virtues merit justification *ex congruo*. And neither can we tell them, as the Council of Trent and all Romish writers do, that the good works which men perform after they are justified, merit or deserve increase of grace and eternal life *ex condigno*. We cannot bring *these* considerations to bear upon men, because we believe them to be false, and are assured upon this ground that they are not fitted to serve any good and useful purpose. Nay, we are persuaded that they contradict or pervert the provision which God has made and revealed for promoting the holiness and happiness of men, and therefore tend, in so far as they are believed and acted on, to injure men's spiritual welfare. But, while we cannot employ these considerations, we have motives enough of the most powerful and constraining kind to persuade them to enter upon, and to persevere and abound in, all holiness and new obedience.

In considering this subject, we are entitled to assume that men believe in the divine authority of the whole word of God, and admit their obligation to be guided in all things by its statements and requirements; and that they believe and honestly apply, according to their true nature and tendency, the Protestant doctrines with respect to the causes and means of justification, and the position and circumstances in which justified men are placed. We are entitled to assume this, because really the question at

issue is just this,—How will a man who, receiving the Bible as the word of God, believes, on its authority as he supposes, the Protestant doctrine of justification, be in right reason affected, as to his sense of obligation with respect to obedience to God's law, and the strength of the motives that should constrain him to discharge this obligation? And upon this assumption, it is plain that, in reason and consistency, the man will just receive and submit to all that Scripture sets forth concerning the perfection and unchangeableness of the divine law, the obligations of holiness, and the hatefulness and danger of sin. Men may receive the Protestant doctrine of justification, and yet hold all that Romanists or any others believe to be taught in Scripture upon these points. There is nothing in that doctrine that, either directly or by implication, tends to affect injuriously men's views as to their relation to God, their obligations to comply with all His requirements, and the connection which He has established between holiness and happiness. Romanists allege, that while Protestants may speculatively admit all this upon the authority of Scripture, yet that the tendency of their doctrine of justification is to weaken their sense of the truth and reality of this principle, and thus to lead them practically to disregard it. But this is a mere random assertion, which has no definite or satisfactory foundation to rest upon. The Protestant doctrine not only accords with all that Scripture says with respect to the perfection and unchangeableness of the law, God's determination to maintain its honour inviolate, and to manifest fully His love of righteousness and His hatred of sin; but it is fitted to bring out all these views in the clearest and most impressive light, to bring them home most powerfully both to the understanding and the hearts of men. The obligation of faith, fear, hope, love, and penitence, remain unaffected by the denial of their preparative, dispositive, meritorious efficacy in the matter of justification. It continues true, that these are all duties which God imperatively requires of all men who have sinned, and who desire to escape from the consequences of their sins,—duties which He has placed them under an absolute and indefeasible obligation to perform,—duties which they are all bound to discharge, at once from a regard to God's authority and to their own best interests.

So far as concerns the whole process of turning from sin unto God, of embracing Christ as our Saviour, and submitting to Him

as our Lord and Master, any consideration that goes to establish its *obligation and necessity*, and that is fitted to persuade and constrain men to do what is incumbent upon them in the matter, remains in full force, unaffected by any particular views as to the precise way in which God deals with us when we come to Him through Christ, or as to the precise grounds or causes of the treatment which, in these circumstances, He bestows upon us. It still continues equally true, upon the Protestant as upon the Romish doctrine of justification, that God requires of us faith and repentance, and requires them of us as indispensably necessary to our escaping His wrath and curse due to us for our sins, though not as exerting any causality or efficiency in procuring or obtaining for us pardon and acceptance, except instrumentally in the case of faith; and it is a part of the Protestant, though not of the Romish doctrine, that the faith which justifies necessarily and invariably produces graces and good works. And after men have been once justified and regenerated, the case continues very much the same as to obligation in persevering and abounding in all holy obedience. As the obligation of the law continues unchanged with respect to men in their natural condition, though it was impossible for them to procure or obtain justification by deeds of law, so, as our Confession says,* "it doth for ever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof," though they "be not under the law, as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned."

With respect to progressive holiness and the performance of good works, the only consideration competent to Papists, from the use of which Protestants by their doctrine are excluded, is, that justified men, by the good works which they perform, do truly and properly *merit* increase of grace and eternal life. Now, this is a consideration which does not properly affect men's *obligation* to perform good works, in the stricter and higher sense of the word,—their obligation, as determined by their relation to God and a sense of duty; it can operate merely as a motive, and a motive addressed to the lower and more selfish principles of men's nature. And even with reference to this lower class of motives, Protestants are not precluded, as we may afterwards have occasion to explain, from holding the good works of justified men to be re-

* West. Conf., c. xix., sect. v. vi.

wardable, though not meritorious. The loss of this motive, then, independently altogether of the question as to the truth or falsehood of the doctrine on which it is founded, is a matter of no real moment; and it is far more than compensated by the great additional force and impressiveness which the Protestant doctrine of justification gives to any consideration that can either enforce an *obligation*, or afford a constraining *motive* to persevere and abound in all holy obedience. A man who has been brought into a justified state, and who, in realizing his present position,—in looking back upon the process by which he has been brought into it,—contemplates the whole matter in the light which is shed upon it by the great Protestant doctrine which we have been endeavouring to explain, must have a deeper sense of his obligations to love God, to honour and serve Christ, and to run in the way of His commandments, than could be produced in any other way; and must be brought under the influence of motives which alone are fitted to constrain him to live, not unto himself, but unto Him that died for him, and that rose again, and to adorn the doctrine of his God and Saviour in all things. The exposition and enforcement of these obligations and motives, and of the grounds on which they rest, constitutes the preaching of the truth as it is in Jesus, in so far as it is directed to the object of building up God's people in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation. And the efficacy of Protestant views of the present condition of justified men, and of the whole process by which they have been brought into it, in deepening their sense of these obligations, and in impressing these motives upon their minds, must surely be abundantly evident to every one who, whether he believes the Protestant doctrine or not, will just realize what that doctrine is, and what are the history and condition of a justified man when contemplated in the light in which that doctrine represents them.

This is indeed so evident, that the fairer and more candid Romanists have usually founded their allegations as to the immoral tendency of Protestant doctrine, not so much upon our views as to the grounds or causes of justification, and the way and manner in which men are brought into a justified state, as upon the views held by the Reformers and by Calvinists on what is commonly called by us the perseverance of the saints, but what Romish divines usually call the inamissibility of justice or righteousness. We do not mean to discuss this doctrine at pre-

sent, as it more properly belongs to the controversy between the Calvinists and the Arminians, and can be rightly explained and defended only in connection with the doctrine of predestination, or election to life. I would only remark, that even this doctrine of the inamissibility of justice, or the certainty of final perseverance in a state of grace, when men have once been admitted into it, does not, in right reason, either affect the obligations under which justified men lie, or impair the motives which operate upon them to abound and to persevere in all holy obedience; that *the very thing* in which they persevere is just righteousness and holiness; and that all legitimate tendency to abuse or pervert the doctrine is checked by the principle which Scripture so fully sanctions,—viz., that, if men continue for a length of time habitually careless or indifferent about growing in holiness and abounding in good works, the only fair inference from this state of things is—not, indeed, that they have lost righteousness, or fallen from a state of grace, but that they have never yet been brought into a state of grace,—that they are still subject to God's wrath and curse, and should still inquire what they must do to be saved.

These brief hints may afford some assistance not only in dealing with the leading objection against the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith alone, on the ground of Christ's righteousness imputed, based upon its alleged moral tendency, but also in explaining the connection between the doctrines of justification and sanctification; and in practically applying the scriptural doctrine of justification to the purpose of promoting the interests of practical godliness, of leading justified men to be ever growing in righteousness and holiness, and to be increasingly showing forth the praises of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light.

Sec. VII.—The Forgiveness of Post-baptismal Sins.

The general view of the subject of justification taught by the Council of Trent, in so far as we have hitherto explained it, is applied by Romanists only to the justification of persons who have not been baptized in infancy, but who have been brought to the knowledge of Christ and Christianity after they have grown up to years of understanding. According to the doctrine of the

Church of Rome, every infant in baptism is justified,—*i.e.*, is forgiven and regenerated, or freed wholly both from the guilt and the power of original sin,—a doctrine opposed to the word of God, most injurious in its practical bearing upon the spiritual welfare of men, but well fitted to enhance the importance of the outward ordinance, and of its official administrators. With respect to those who are not baptized till after they are grown up, the Church of Rome requires in them the possession of the seven virtues, so often referred to as existing *before* they are pardoned and regenerated, and as *at least* preparing and disposing them for justification. The deliverance from the guilt and the power of all their past sins, original and actual, in the case of all adults so prepared and disposed, is as full and complete as the deliverance from the guilt and the power of original sin granted to all infants, without any preparation in baptism. But then the Church of Rome puts the forgiveness of all the *subsequent* sins of both these classes, or of all post-baptismal sin, as they call it, upon a different footing, and introduces into this department some new principles and arrangements, which are opposed to the word of God, but admirably adapted to promote the general designs of Popery, and the interests of the priesthood.

It is the doctrine of the Church of Rome, that no mortal sin, committed after baptism, is forgiven to any man, except in and through the sacrament of penance,—*i.e.*, without confession, absolution, and satisfaction,—or *unless* it be confessed to a priest,—unless he pronounce the words of absolution,—and unless the penitent perform the satisfaction imposed by him; though, as to the necessity of this last condition, there is no formal decision of the church, and it is a subject of controversy among Romish writers. The sacrament of penance, both in its general complex character, and with reference to the particular parts of which it is composed, is evidently a mere fabrication, having no appearance of foundation in Scripture; but it belongs to the head of sacramental justification, to which I shall afterwards advert as a general topic of discussion. My present subject leads me to advert only to one feature of the Romish doctrine upon this point,—viz., that the forgiveness of post-baptismal sin, conveyed by the absolution of the priest in the sacrament of penance, is not so full and complete as that conveyed in baptism. The absolution of the sacrament of penance conveys, indeed, full

immunity from any liability to the *eternal* punishment which the sin deserved, but leaves the penitent exposed to a temporal punishment, which God must still inflict, and the penitent must still bear, on account of that sin. There is no doubt, or room for discussion, as to what the doctrine of the Church of Rome upon this point is, and therefore we need not adduce quotations.* Let us briefly consider what this doctrine really involves, as it is usually drawn out and applied; for Romanists have certainly made the most of it, and turned it to very good account.

The first point is, that when the guilt of post-baptismal sin is remitted in the sacrament of penance, so that men are exempted from liability to the eternal punishment which the sin deserved, they still remain liable to a temporal punishment to be inflicted by God on account of it. Now, this doctrine naturally suggests the question, How, or in what way, is this temporal punishment inflicted by God and endured by them; or how is it otherwise disposed of, so that those to whom it attached are no longer subject to any liability to suffer, but are admissible into the enjoyment of perfect happiness? If the general doctrine, that a temporal punishment remains due, after the proper guilt and liability to eternal punishment are taken away, be admitted, the most natural answer to the question suggested would be, that God inflicted, and that men endured, this temporal punishment, in the providential trials and afflictions of this life. Accordingly, the Church of Rome teaches,—as her general doctrine upon this subject plainly required of her,—that the trials and afflictions of justified men—for, of course, it is to them only that the whole subject applies—are strictly and properly penal; and that they thus constitute, at least partly, the infliction and the endurance of this temporal punishment.

This, however, was leaving the matter far too much in the hands of God in His providence, without the intervention of the church and the priest, and was not much fitted to work upon men's fears. Accordingly, the Church of Rome has invented purgatory, in the fire of which men may, and of course many must, endure after death what may *remain* of the temporal punishment due to their mortal sins; and of the whole punishment—for it is only

* The most direct and explicit authorities on the point are: Con. Trident., sess. vi., cap. xiv., can. 30; and sess. xiv., cap. viii., can. 12 and 13.

temporal—due to their venial sins. This is rather alarming, and does not seem to comport very well with the representations given us in Scripture of the conditions, obligations, and prospects of justified men. But Popery is very skilful in its provisions for affording comfort, as well as for inspiring terror. Accordingly, the church teaches that there is a way in which this temporal punishment, remaining due by men, may be disposed of, or got quit of, without their actually enduring it,—that they may satisfy the claims of God's justice and law in the matter by a different process; and this brings in their doctrine of human satisfaction. It is this, that men, by various works which they can perform,—especially prayers, fastings, and almsgivings,—can and do make *satisfaction or compensation to God for the temporal punishment remaining due to them*, and thus escape the necessity of enduring it. Praying, fasting, and almsgiving, are thus invested with a penal character; they are represented as the endurance of punishment for sin; in short, as standing in the same relation, and effecting the same result, with reference to the temporal punishment due to sin, as the sufferings and death of Christ do with reference to its eternal punishment. Men can render satisfaction to God for the temporal punishment due to their sins, by *voluntarily* undertaking and performing extraordinary acts of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving; but it is much safer, at least for the mass of men, just to perform exactly the penances, or penal endurances,—*i.e.*, the prayers, fastings, and almsdeeds *enjoined* by the priest at absolution, as he of course is the best judge of the amount of suffering or endurance in these ways that may be necessary to make satisfaction to the divine law.

This doctrine of human satisfaction is a very important addition to the general scheme of Popish teaching, as to the way in which men are to be exempted from the consequences of their sins. But we have not yet attained to a full view of it. As a man, by his prayers, fastings, and almsdeeds, may make satisfaction or compensation to God for the temporal punishment due to his own sins, so, by the same means, he can make satisfaction to God for the temporal punishment due to the *sins of others*,—"ut unus posset pro altero satisfacere,"—"alterius nomine possunt quod Deo debetur persolvere."* As the Church of Rome, while

* Catech. Trident., P. ii., cap. v., Quæst. lxxii.