

justification, by the Apostle Paul when *he* was expounding the way of a sinner's salvation to the Christians at Rome?

But we must at present consider what the modern Church of Rome teaches about this matter of disposing or preparing men for justification,—a subject on which the apostle certainly left the Roman Christians of his day in profound ignorance, though he seems to have intended to open up to them the whole doctrine of justification, so far as he knew it. The Council of Trent gives us scarcely any direct or explicit information as to what they mean by these seven virtues disposing or preparing men for justification, except that it is necessary that they should all exist, and be exercised, before men are forgiven and renewed, and that they exert some influence in bringing about the result. It tells us, however, that none of those things that precede justification, whether faith or works, merit or deserve the grace of justification itself; and this had so far an appearance of deference to plain scriptural principles. It is not, however, by any means certain,—nay, it is very improbable,—that the council, by this declaration, meant to take away from these preliminary and preparatory virtues anything but the strict and proper merit of condignity, which they reserved for the good works of justified men. The council does not, indeed, formally sanction, as I have already mentioned, the distinction which prevailed universally in the Church of Rome at the time when the Reformation commenced, between merit of congruity and merit of condignity. But neither has it formally nor by implication condemned it; and it is certain that most Romish writers *since* the council have continued to retain and to apply this distinction,—have regarded the decision which we are considering, merely as denying to these dispositive or preparatory works merit of condignity, and have not scrupled, notwithstanding this decision, to ascribe to them merit of congruity; or, in other words, to represent them as exerting some meritorious efficacy, though in a subordinate sense, and of an imperfect kind, in procuring for men justification. Bellarmine fully and explicitly asserts all this. He maintains that the decision of the council, that these dispositive and preparatory works do not merit justification, means merely that they do not merit it *ex condigno*,—contends that they *do* merit it *ex congruo*,—and asserts that this is the view taken by most, though not by all, Romish writers, both as to the truth of the case and the real import of the decision of

the council; from all which we are warranted in concluding, that the decision of the council, denying merit to those things which precede justification, *is* equivocal, and *was* intended to be equivocal and deceptive. Bellarmine for one,—and this is true also of the generality of Romish writers,—goes so far as to assert explicitly that these virtues are meritorious causes of justification; and he was fully warranted in doing so, if it be true that the Council of Trent did not deny, or intend to deny, to them merit of congruity; and if it be also the general doctrine of the Church of Rome, as he asserts it is, “*Potius fundari meritum de congruo in aliqua dignitate operis, quam in promissione.*”*

There was also a great deal of controversy between the Reformers and the Romanists on the definition and nature of justifying faith, and the way and manner in which it acted or operated in the matter of justification. The Reformers generally contended that justifying faith was *fiducia*, and had its seat in the will; and the Romanists that it was merely *assensus*, and had its seat in the understanding. This is a subject, however, on which it must be admitted that there has been a considerable difference of opinion, or, at least, of statement, among orthodox Protestant divines in more modern times; and which, at least in the only sense in which it has been controverted among Protestants who were in the main orthodox, does not seem to me to be determined in the standards of our church. While the Reformers unanimously and explicitly taught that faith which alone justified did not justify by any meritorious or inherent efficacy of its own, but only as the instrument of receiving or laying hold of what God had provided,—had freely offered and regarded as the alone ground or basis on which He passed an act of forgiveness with respect to any individual, viz., the righteousness of Christ,—the Council of Trent can scarcely be said to have determined anything positive or explicit as to the office or function of faith in justification, or as to the way and manner in which it can be said to justify, beyond what is contained in the statement formerly quoted, viz., that we are said to be justified by faith for this reason, because faith is the beginning of human salvation, the foundation and the root of all justification. There is little information given us here except this,

* Bellarm., De Justificat., Lib. i., c. xxi. See also Lib. i., c. xvii.; Lib. v., c. xxi.

that the reason why Scripture assigns so much prominence to faith, in the matter of justification, is, because faith is the chief means of originating and producing Christian graces and good works; while, at the same time, it should be remembered that Romanists teach, as we have seen, that it does not necessarily and invariably produce them, as Protestants hold, but that it may exist alone or unaccompanied by them.

But while the Council of Trent does not formally and explicitly teach more than this upon this point, there is nothing in the decree to preclude, and much in the general scope and spirit of its statements to countenance, the doctrine which has unquestionably been held by the great body of the most eminent Romish writers, viz., that faith has in itself some real and even meritorious efficacy,—*i.e.*, *meritum de congruo*, as already explained,—in disposing to, and in procuring or obtaining, justification. This doctrine is thus expressed by Bellarmine, who lays it down as the doctrine of the Church of Rome, “*Fidem etiam a caritate disjunctam, alicujus esse pretii, et vim habere justificandi per modum dispositionis, et impetrationis;*”^{*} and again, “*Fidem impetrare justificationem, . . . ac per hoc justificare per modum dispositionis ac meriti;*” and again, after stating fairly enough the doctrine of the Reformers in this way, “*Fidem non justificare per modum causæ, aut dignitatis, aut meriti, sed solum relativè, quia videlicet credendo accipit, quod Deus promittendo offert,*” he thus states in contrast the doctrine of the Church of Rome, “*Fidem justificare impetrando, ac promerendo . . . justificationem;*” and again, “*Fidem . . . impetrare, atque aliquo modo mereri justificationem;*”[†] while he applies similar statements to the other virtues, which, equally with faith, precede and dispose to justification, describing them expressly as meritorious causes of justification.

We have now only to advert briefly to the differences between the Romanists and the Reformers on some points which may be comprehended under the general head of the *results* or *consequences* of justification; and, first, we may explain the views respectively entertained by them, as to the way in which sins committed subsequently to justification are pardoned. The Reformers taught that these sins were pardoned upon the same ground, and through the same means, as those committed before justification,—*viz.*,

^{*} Bellarm., *De Justificat.*, Lib. i., cap. iii.

[†] Lib. i., cap. xvii.

upon the ground of Christ's righteousness, and through the exercise of faith apprehending, or laying hold of, and appropriating it. As the Church of Rome teaches that baptism is the instrumental cause of justification, so she has invented another sacrament, and established it as the only channel through which post-baptismal sins, as she commonly calls them, can be forgiven; for the Council of Trent anathematizes all who say^{*} that “a man who has fallen after baptism is able to receive the justice which he has lost, by faith alone, without the sacrament of penance.” They do not, however, regard the forgiveness, which the sacrament of penance conveys in regard to post-baptismal sins, as so perfect and complete as that which baptism conveys in regard to the sins which preceded it: for they teach that the sacrament of penance, while it takes away all the guilt of mortal sins, in so far as this would otherwise have exposed men to eternal punishment, leaves men still exposed to temporal punishment, properly so called, for their mortal sins, and to the guilt, such as it is, of their venial sins; and thus needs to be supplemented by satisfactions, rendered either by sinners themselves, or by others in their room, and either in this life or in purgatory. These doctrines are plainly taught in the twenty-ninth and thirtieth canons; and as there is no room for doubt as to what the doctrine of the Church of Rome upon this point is, we need not at present further dwell upon it.

The same observation applies to the second topic, which might be comprehended under the general head of the *results* or *consequences* of justification,—*viz.*, *this*, that the Church of Rome teaches that it is possible for men, when once justified, to keep in this life wholly and perfectly the law of God; nay, even to go beyond this, and to supererogate, and that they can truly and properly merit or deserve, with proper merit of condignity, increase of grace and eternal life. These doctrines, with the exception of that of works of supererogation,—which can be shown to be the doctrine of the church otherwise, though not so directly,—are taught clearly and unequivocally in the eighteenth, twenty-fourth, and thirty-second canons.

The last topic which it is needful to advert to, in order to complete the view of the doctrine of the Church of Rome upon this important subject, is the certainty or assurance which believers

^{*} Canon xxix.

have, or may have, or should have, of their being in a justified state, and of their persevering in it. This topic is explained in canons thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth. The Council of Trent taught that no man can have any certainty or assurance that he will persevere and attain to eternal life, without a special revelation; but this topic was not much discussed at the time of the Reformation, and it belongs more properly to the controversy between the Calvinists and the Arminians. The dispute between the Reformers and the Romanists in connection with this matter turned mainly upon this question, whether men could or should have any certainty or assurance that they were *at present* in a justified state, and would, of course, be saved if they persevered in it. And upon this point many of the most eminent orthodox Protestant divines have been of opinion that both the Reformers and the Council of Trent carried their respective views to an extreme, and that the truth lay somewhere between them. The Romanists, in their anxiety to deprive men of all means of attaining to anything like certainty or assurance that they were in a justified and safe condition, and thus to keep them entirely dependent upon the church, and wholly subject to her control, denied the possibility of certainty or assurance; while the Reformers, in general, maintained its necessity, and, in order, as it were, to secure it in the speediest and most effectual way, usually represented it as necessarily involved in the very nature of the first completed act of saving-faith. The generality of orthodox Protestant divines in more modern times have maintained, in opposition to the Church of Rome, the possibility of attaining to a certainty or assurance of being in a justified and regenerated condition, and the duty of seeking and of having this certainty and assurance, as a privilege which God has provided for His people, and a privilege the possession of which is fitted to contribute greatly not only to their happiness, but to their holiness; while they have commonly so far deviated from the views entertained by many of the Reformers, as to deny its necessity, except in the sense of obligation, and more especially to represent it as not necessarily involved in the exercise of saving faith: and this is the view given of the matter in the standards of our church. But this is a topic of comparatively subordinate importance, as it does not essentially affect men's actual condition in God's sight, their relation to Him, or their everlasting destiny, but rather their present peace and comfort, and the advancement of the divine life in their souls.

There have thus been brought out many most important differences between the doctrines of the Church of Rome and those generally held by orthodox Protestants, on the meaning and nature, the ground and cause, the means and instrument, the results and consequences, of justification; and we must now proceed to give some explanation of the way in which the Reformers established their doctrines upon these subjects, and proved that those of the Church of Rome were inconsistent with the word of God, and dangerous to the souls of men.

Sec. II.—Nature of Justification.

We shall advert briefly to the grounds on which we maintain that justification is properly descriptive only of a change of state in men's judicial relation to God, and to His law, as including forgiveness and acceptance or admission to God's favour, in opposition to the Romish doctrine that it comprehends a change of character, the renovation of men's moral nature, or, as Papists commonly call it, the infusion of an inherent righteousness. Justification is God's act—it is He who justifies; and we must be guided wholly by the statements of His word in determining what the real nature of this act of His is. We must regard justification as just being what the word of God represents it to be; we must understand the word in the sense in which it is employed in the sacred Scriptures. The question then is, In what sense are the words justification and its cognates used in Scripture; and more especially, should any variety in its meaning and application be discovered there, in what sense is it employed in those passages in which it is manifest that the subject ordinarily expressed by it is most fully and formally explained? Now, the truth upon this point is so clear and certain in itself, and has been so generally admitted by all but Romanists, that it is unnecessary to occupy much time with the illustration of it.

It has been proved innumerable times, by evidence against which it is impossible to produce anything that has even plausibility, that the word justification is *generally* used in Scripture in what is called a forensic or judicial sense, as opposed to condemnation; that it means to reckon, or declare, or pronounce just or righteous, as if by passing a sentence to that effect; and that it does not include in its signification, as the Council of Trent asserts

the making just or righteous, by effecting an actual change on the moral character and principles of men. The Council of Trent says that justification is not only the remission of sins, but also the sanctification and renovation of the inner man. But the inspired writers plainly do not ordinarily employ it to describe an actual change effected upon men's character, but only a change effected upon their legal state or condition by a forensic or judicial act of the Justifier. It implies the pronouncing, more or less formally, of a sentence,—a sentence, not of condemnation, but of acquittal or acceptance. It has been alleged that the original and radical idea of the word *δικαιόω* is to punish; and there are some considerations which favour this notion, though it cannot be said to be established by satisfactory evidence. But even if this were admitted to be the primary or radical idea expressed by the word, there would be no great difficulty in tracing the process by which it came to acquire what seems to be the nearly opposite meaning it bears in the New Testament. When a man has had a sentence of condemnation passed upon him for an offence, and has, in consequence, endured the punishment imposed, he is free from all further charge or liability, and might be said to be now justified in the derived sense of the word, or to have *now* virtually a sentence of acquittal pronounced upon him. A punished person in this way virtually becomes a justified one, and the two notions are thus not so alien or contradictory as they might at first sight appear to be. And it should not be forgotten that, in the matter of the justification of a sinner before God, there has been a punishment inflicted and endured, which is in every instance the ground or basis of the sinner's justification. When the apostle says, as he is represented in our translation,* "He that is dead is free from sin," the literal, real meaning of his statement is, "He that has died has been justified from sin," *δεδικαιώται*; and the import of this declaration (which furnishes, I think, the key to the interpretation of the chapter), is, that a man by dying, and thereby enduring the punishment due to his sin (which sinners of course do in their Surety, whose death is imputed to them), has escaped from all further liability, and has a sentence virtually pronounced upon him, whereby he is justified from sin.

But whatever might be the primary meaning of the word

* Rom. vi. 7.

justify, and whatever the process of thought by which its meaning may have been afterward modified, it can be very easily and conclusively proved, that both in the Old and in the New Testament it is ordinarily employed in a forensic or judicial sense, and means not to make or render righteous by changing the character, but to reckon, declare, or pronounce righteous by a sentence formal or virtual, changing the state or condition in relation to a judge and a law. The Socinian system of justification is, in its general scope and tendency, very much akin to the Popish one; for both tend to assign to men themselves an influential and meritorious share in securing their own ultimate happiness; and yet even the Socinians admit that the word justify is used in the New Testament in a forensic sense, to denote the declaring or pronouncing men righteous. It is true that something else than a love of truth might lead them to concur with Protestants in the interpretation of this word; for the idea of God's *making* men righteous by effecting some change upon their character, or what the Romanists call the infusion of righteousness,—which they allege to be included in justification,—does not harmonize with the Socinian system, according to which men do not need to be *made* righteous, since they have always been so,—do not need to have righteousness infused into them, since they have never existed without it.

Almost the only man of eminence in modern times, beyond the pale of the Church of Rome, who has contended that the proper meaning of the word justify in Scripture is to make righteous,—*i.e.*, to sanctify,—is Grotius, whose inadequate sense of the importance of sound doctrine, and unscriptural and spurious love of peace, made him ever ready to sacrifice or compromise truth, whether it was to please Papists or Socinians.* The course adopted upon this subject in Newman's Lectures on Justification is rather curious and instructive. Newman's general scheme of doctrine upon this subject, though it was published some years before he left the Church of England, and though Dr Pusey issued a pamphlet for the purpose of showing that there was nothing Popish about it, is beyond all reasonable doubt identical, in its fundamental principles and general tendencies, with that of the Council of Trent and the Church of Rome, to which its author has since formally submitted himself. The fact, however, that the articles of the church

* Grotius, Præf. ad Rom.

to which he then belonged (and which, at the time, he does not seem to have had any intention of leaving), had fixed the meaning of the word justify to be, to "account righteous before God," as well as perhaps some sense of the scriptural evidence in support of this view of its meaning, prevented him from openly adopting the definition which the Council of Trent gave of justification; and obliged him to admit that the proper meaning of the word in Scripture is to declare or pronounce, and not to make or render, righteous. He feels, however, that this admission exposes him to some disadvantage and difficulty in the exposition and defence of his Popish system; and he is, besides, greatly distressed at finding himself in the awkward position, to use his own words,* of venturing "to prefer Luther in any matter even of detail to St Austin," the former of whom, he says, was merely the founder of a school, or sect, while the latter was a father in the Holy Apostolic Church; † and on these accounts he is obliged to devise some expedient for practically and in substance withdrawing the concession he had been compelled to make; and it is this: ‡ "To justify, means in itself 'counting righteous,' but includes *under* its meaning 'making righteous:' in other words, the sense of the *term* is 'counting righteous;' and the sense of the *thing* denoted by it is, making righteous. In the abstract, it is a counting righteous; in the concrete, a making righteous." These words may probably be regarded as not very intelligible, but the general object or tendency of them is plain enough; and it is met and exposed simply by recollecting that Scripture, being given by inspiration, and therefore a higher authority than even the unanimous consent of the fathers, just means what it says, and that by the terms which it employs it conveys to us accurate conceptions of the things denoted by them. The course pursued by Newman in this matter is fitted to impress upon us at once the difficulty, and the importance, for *Popish purposes*, of evading the clear scriptural evidence of the forensic sense of the word—justify.

But it is unnecessary to adduce in detail the scriptural evidence in support of the Protestant meaning of the word,—justify. I may briefly advert, however, to the way in which Popish writers have attempted to meet it. They do not deny that the word is

* Newman's Lectures on Justification, p. 70. 2d Edition.

† Ibid., p. 67.
‡ Ibid., p. 71.

sometimes, nay often, taken in Scripture in a forensic sense. Its meaning is too clearly and conclusively fixed by the context in some passages, especially in those in which it is formally opposed to the word *condemn*, to admit this position. But they usually contend that this is not the only meaning which the word bears in the Scriptures,—that there are cases in which it means to make righteous,—and that, consequently, they are entitled to regard this idea as contained in its full scriptural import. Now, it is to be observed that the position which Protestants maintain upon this subject is not, that in *every* passage where the word occurs there exists evidence by which it can be proved from that passage alone, taken by itself, that the word there is used in a forensic sense, and cannot admit of any other. They concede that there are passages where the word occurs in which there is nothing in the passage itself, or in the context, to fix down its meaning to the sense of counting righteous, in preference to making righteous. Their position is this,—that there are many passages where it is plain that it *must* be taken in a forensic sense, and cannot admit of any other; *and* that there are none, or at least none in which the justification of a sinner before God is formally and explicitly spoken of, in which it can be proved that the forensic sense is inadmissible or necessarily excluded, and that it must be taken in the sense of making righteous. If these positions are true, then the Protestant view of the Scripture meaning and import of justification is established; for we are of course entitled to apply to those passages in which the sense of the word is not fixed by that particular passage, the meaning which it *must* bear in many passages, and which cannot be shown to be certainly inadmissible in any one. This being the true state of the argument, Romanists, in order to make out their case, are bound to produce passages in which it can be shown that the word *cannot* be taken in a forensic sense, and *must* be regarded as meaning to make righteous. And this, accordingly, they undertake; usually, however, endeavouring in the first place to involve the subject in obscurity, by trying to show that there are various senses,—four at least,—in which the word justify is used in Scripture. The Romanists, of course, in this discussion are fully entitled to choose their own ground, and to select their own texts, in which they think they can prove that the forensic sense is inadmissible or necessarily excluded, and that of making righteous is required; while all that Protestants have

to do is merely to prove that the Romanists have not succeeded in conclusively establishing these positions.

The texts usually selected by Romanists for this purpose are the following : *—"Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called ; and whom He called, them He also *justified* ; and whom He justified, them He also glorified,"—where, as there is no explicit mention of regeneration or sanctification in this description of the leading steps of the process of the salvation of sinners, it is contended that *this* must be comprehended in the word justify, which seems to fill up the whole intermediate space between calling and glorifying. Again : † "And such were some of you : but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God,"—where the general scope of the passage, and the position of the word justified, it is alleged, show that at least it is not taken in a forensic sense. Again, ‡ the apostle speaks of the "renewing of the Holy Ghost ; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour ; that, being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." Again : § "He that is righteous, let him be righteous still,"—the original of which in the "textus receptus," as it is called, is *καὶ ὁ δίκαιος δικαιωθήτω ἔτι*. Now, some Protestant writers have admitted that in these passages, or in some of them, the forensic use of the word *δικαιωω* can be *disproved* ; and Le Blanc, in the work which I formerly referred to, || and described, has produced all the concessions of this kind which he could discover, and has laboured himself to prove, that these concessions could not have been fairly withheld, and cannot be refused without a very forced and unwarrantable construction of the passages. Those Protestant divines who have been disposed to admit that in these passages, or in some of them, it can be shown that the word justify is not used in a forensic sense, usually contend that it is quite sufficient, in order to establish the Protestant doctrine, and to overthrow the Popish one, about the meaning of justification, to show that the forensic sense is that in which it is generally and ordinarily taken in Scripture, and that it is taken in *that* sense, and in no other, in those passages

* Rom. viii. 30.

† 1 Cor. vi. 11.

‡ Titus iii. 5, 6, 7.

§ Rev. xxii. 11.

|| Theses Theologicæ Sedanenses.
De usu et acceptione vocis Justifi-
candi in Scripturis et Scholis, pp.
255-63.

where the subject of the justification of a sinner before God is most fully and formally set forth. There is force in this view of the matter ; and if these positions can be established, as they certainly can, this is sufficient to show that it is unwarrantable to introduce into the scriptural description of what the justification of a sinner is, any other idea than that of a change of state in relation to God and to His law, even though one or two instances may occur in the Scriptures in which the word is used in a somewhat wider and larger sense. This consideration is sufficient to save Protestant commentators from any very strong temptation to pervert these passages from what may seem to be their true meaning, in order to wrest a weapon out of the hands of an opponent ; and I use the word temptation here, because it should never be forgotten that the highest and most imperative duty of all honest investigators of Christian truth, is just to ascertain the true and real meaning of every portion of the inspired word of God. I cannot enter into a minute and detailed examination of those passages, and will make only one or two observations regarding them.

It will scarcely be disputed that, had these been the only passages in the New Testament where the word *justify* occurred, the presumption would have been against it being taken in a forensic sense,—to describe a change of legal relation, the passing of a sentence of acquittal. But, from the explanation we have given of the conditions of the argument, it will be seen that much more than this must be proved in regard to them, in order to their being of any service to the Papists,—even that the forensic sense is clearly and conclusively shut out. Now, I think it has been satisfactorily proved that this cannot be effected, and that, on the contrary, in regard to all the passages quoted,—except, perhaps, the one which occurs in the twenty-second chapter of the Revelation,—it can be shown, and without any violent and unwarrantable straining of the statements, that the ordinary and usual sense of the word in the New Testament is not clearly and necessarily excluded. In regard to the first of them,—that occurring in the eighth of the Romans,—it is contended that we have no right to assume, as the Popish argument does, that the apostle must necessarily have comprehended, in the description he gave, *every* step in the process of a sinner's salvation, every one of the leading blessings which God bestows ; that the train of thought which the apostle was pursuing at the time,—or, what is in substance the

same thing, the context and scope of the passage,—did not require this, as Calvin has shown in his commentary upon it; and that even if we were to assume,—what, however, is not necessary, and is therefore, from the conditions of the argument, unwarrantable,—that all the leading blessings of salvation must have been directly or by implication adverted to, we are under no more necessity of supposing that regeneration, by which men are made righteous, must be included under justification, than under vocation or glorification.

There is no serious difficulty in the passage quoted from the sixth of First Corinthians. Justify cannot here mean to make righteous,—*i.e.*, it cannot be identical with, or comprehensive of, regeneration and sanctification; for it is distinguished from them, while they are expressly mentioned. And as to the allegation that it cannot be here understood in a forensic sense, because it is introduced after “washed and sanctified,” and is ascribed to the operation of the Holy Spirit, it is answered, that the inspired writers do not always, in other cases, restrict themselves to what may be called the natural order of time,—that the apostle’s train of thought in the preceding context naturally led him to give prominence and precedency to washing and sanctification; while he was also naturally led on, in magnifying their deliverance and in enforcing their obligations, to introduce, as completing the description of what had been done for them, their justification, or deliverance from guilt and condemnation; and that justification as well as sanctification may be, and is, ascribed to the Holy Spirit as well as to Christ, since it is He who works faith in them and thereby unites them to Christ, which union is the origin and the ground of all the blessings they enjoy.

The argument which the Romanists found on the third chapter of Titus amounts in substance to this: that the statement seems to imply that men are renewed by the Holy Ghost, in order that they may be justified by grace; but it has been proved, first, that neither the connection of the particular clauses of the sentence, nor the general scope of the passage, requires us to admit that the apostle intended to convey this idea; and, secondly, that, independently of all questions as to the exact philological meaning of the word justify, this doctrine is inconsistent with the plain teaching of the word of God in regard to the whole subject. I think it has been established, by such considerations as these,

that in none of these three passages is there any necessity for regarding the word—justify—as meaning or including to make righteous, or for departing in the interpretation of them from its ordinary forensic sense.

The only one remaining, is that in the twenty-second chapter of Revelation, “He that is righteous, let him be righteous still.” Now there does seem to be greater difficulty about this one; for the only senses which, in accordance with the context, and without considerable straining, the word *δικαιωθήτω* seems here to admit, are either, “Let him be made righteous,”—*i.e.*, more righteous,—or, “Let him do righteousness,”—*i.e.*, more righteousness. But, by a remarkable coincidence, it so happens that there is good and conclusive ground, on the soundest and most universally recognised principles of criticism, for believing that the reading in the “textus receptus” is erroneous; that the word *δικαίωω* was not here used by the apostle; that *δικαιωθήτω* ought to be removed from the text, and the words *δικαιοσύνην ποιησατω*, literally expressing the second of the two meanings above mentioned, as apparently required by the context, substituted in its room. Griesbach, Scholz, Lachmann, and Tischendorf,—*i.e.*, all the most recent and most eminent investigators into the sacred text,—have done this without any hesitation; and the purely critical grounds on which this change is based, have commended themselves to the minds of all competent judges. I cannot prosecute this subject further; but what appear to me to be satisfactory discussions of these texts, as adduced by Le Blanc and the Romanists, may be found in Dr Owen’s great work on Justification,* in Witsius’ Economy of the Covenants,† and De Moor’s Commentary on Marckius.‡ Witsius, in reference to the concessions which some Protestant divines had made to Romanists about the meaning of the word justify in some of these passages, says: “Et sane non exagitanda hæc maximorum virorum ingenuitas est, qui licet tantum adversariis dederint, feliciter tamen de iis in summâ rei triumpharunt. Verum enimvero nos rationes sufficientes non videmus, quæ ipsos tam liberales esse coegerint. Nulla vis allegatis inferretur locis, si ibi quoque justificandi verbum, sensu, qui Paulo ordinarius est, acciperetur; neque minus commode omnia tunc fluere videntur.”§

* C. iv.

† Lib. iii., c. viii.

‡ C. xxiv., tom. iv.

§ Wits., *Econom. Fœd.*, Lib. iii., cap. viii., sec. vii.

The word *justify*, then, in its scriptural use, means to reckon, or pronounce, or declare righteous, or to resolve on treating as righteous; and the justification of a sinner, therefore, is descriptive of a change effected by an act of God, not upon his moral character, but upon his state or condition in relation to the law under which he was placed, and to God, the author and the guardian of that law,—a change whereby he who is the object of it ceases to be held or reckoned and treated as guilty, and liable to punishment,—has a sentence of acquittal and approbation pronounced upon him,—is forgiven all his past offences, and is admitted into the enjoyment of God's favour and friendship. God has, indeed,—as is clearly set forth in His word, and as the Reformers fully admitted,—made complete and effectual provision that every sinner whom He pardons and accepts shall also be born again, and renewed in the whole man after His own image; but He does not describe to us this change upon men's moral character by the name of justification. He assigns to this other equally indispensable change a different name or designation; and although,—according to the fundamental principles of the scheme which He has devised for the salvation of sinners, which He has fully revealed to us in His word, and which He is executing by His Spirit and in His providence,—there has been established and secured an invariable connection in fact between these two great blessings which He bestows,—these two great changes which He effects,—yet, by the representations which He has given us of them in His word, He has imposed upon us an obligation to distinguish between them, to beware of confounding them, and to investigate distinctly and separately all that we find revealed regarding them in the sacred Scriptures. If this be so, the first and most obvious inference to be deduced from it is, that the Council of Trent and the Church of Rome have erred, have corrupted and perverted the truth of God, in defining justification to be not only the remission of sin, but also the renovation of the inner man; and thus confounding it with, or unwarrantably extending it so as to include, regeneration and sanctification, or the infusion of an inherent personal righteousness. Every error in the things of God is sinful and dangerous, and tends to extend and propagate itself; and while thus darkening men's understandings, it tends also to endanger, or to affect injuriously, their spiritual welfare. An error as to the scriptural meaning and

import of justification,—and especially an error which thus confounds, or mixes up together, the two great blessings of the gospel,—must tend to introduce obscurity and confusion into men's whole conceptions of the method of salvation.

It is true that even Augustine, notwithstanding all his profound knowledge of divine truth, and the invaluable services which he was made the instrument of rendering to the cause of sound doctrine and of pure Christian theology, does not seem to have ever attained to distinct apprehensions of the forensic meaning of justification, and usually speaks of it as including or comprehending regeneration; and this was probably owing, in some measure, to his want of familiarity with the Greek language, to his reading the New Testament in Latin, and being thus somewhat led astray by the etymological meaning of the word *justification*. The subject of justification, in the scriptural and Protestant sense of it, had not been discussed in the church, or occupied much of its attention, since the time of the Apostle Paul. The whole tendency of the course of sentiment which had prevailed in the church from the apostolic age to that of Augustine, was to lead men to throw the doctrine of justification into the background, and to regard it as of inferior importance. When Pelagius, and his immediate followers, assailed the doctrines of grace, it was exclusively in the way of ascribing to men themselves the power or capacity to do God's will and to obey His law, and to effect whatever changes might be necessary in order to enable them to accomplish this. And to this point, accordingly, the attention of Augustine was chiefly directed; while the subject of justification remained in a great measure neglected. But from the general soundness of his views and feelings in regard to divine things, and his profound sense of the necessity of referring everything bearing upon the salvation of sinners to the grace of God and the work of Christ, his defective and erroneous views about the meaning and import of the word *justification* did not exert so injurious an influence as might have been expected, either upon his theological system or upon his character; and assumed practically very much the aspect of a mere philological blunder, or of an error in phraseology, rather than in real sentiment or conviction. And Calvin, accordingly, refers to it in the following terms: "*Ac ne Augustini quidem sententia vel saltem loquendi ratio per omnia recipienda est. Tametsi enim egregie hominem omni justitiæ laude spoliât, ac*

totam Dei gratiæ transcribit: gratiam tamen ad sanctificationem refert, quâ in vitæ novitatem per Spiritum regeneramur."* The whole tendency on the part of the great body of the church for about a thousand years after Augustine, notwithstanding all the respect that was professedly entertained for him, was to throw all that was sacred and scriptural in his system of doctrine into the background, and to bring all that was defective and erroneous in his opinions into prominence and influence; and hence there is this singular aspect presented by the decrees of the Council of Trent, that while it might probably be difficult to prove that they contain much, if anything, which formally, and *in terminis*, contradicts any of the leading doctrines of Augustine, they yet exhibit to us a system of theology which, in its whole bearing, spirit, and tendency, is opposed to that which pervaded the mind and the writings of that great man, and which much more nearly approximates in these respects to that of his opponents in the Pelagian controversy.

But while this much may be justly said in defence of by far the greatest and most useful man whom God gave to the church from the apostolic age till the Reformation, it should not be forgotten that his defective and erroneous views upon the subject of justification were at once the effect and the cause of the attention of the church being withdrawn, through the artifices of Satan, from a careful study of what Scripture teaches as to the nature and necessity of forgiveness and acceptance, and the way and manner in which men individually receive and become possessed of them; and of men being thus led to form most inadequate impressions of what is implied in their being all guilty and under the curse of the law as transgressors, and of the indispensable necessity of their being washed from their sins in the blood of Christ. The natural tendency of men is to consider the guilt incurred by the violation of God's law as a trivial matter, which may be adjusted without any great difficulty; and this tendency is strengthened by vague and erroneous impressions about the character of God, and the principles that regulate His government of the world. And where something about Christianity is known,

* Calv. Inst., Lib. iii., c. xi., sec. 15. Bellarmine, in quoting this passage, as a concession of Calvin, that all the fathers, even Augustine, were opposed to him on this point, omits

all the words that are in italics, and gives the first and the last clauses as the whole passage. De Justificat. Lib. ii., cap. viii.

this universal and most dangerous tendency appears in the form of leading men to cherish, and to act upon, a vague impression that, because Christ came into the world to save us from our sins, men need have no great anxiety about any guilt that may attach to them, even while they have not a single distinct and definite conception about the way in which Christ's mediatorial work bears upon the deliverance and salvation of the human race, or of the way in which men individually become possessed of forgiveness and acceptance.

I have no doubt that it is to be regarded as an indication and result of this state of mind and feeling, that there has been so strong and general a tendency to extend, beyond what Scripture warrants, the meaning of justification, and to mix it up with regeneration and sanctification. Romish writers, in defending the doctrine of their church upon this subject, sometimes talk as if they thought that deliverance from guilt and condemnation,—mere forgiveness and acceptance,—were scarcely important enough to exhaust the meaning of the scriptural statements about justification, or to be held up as constituting a great and distinct blessing, which ought to be by itself a subject of diligent investigation to the understanding, and of deep anxiety to the heart. All false conceptions of the system of Christian doctrine assume, or are based upon, inadequate and erroneous views and impressions of the nature and effects of the fall,—of the sinfulness of the state into which man fell; producing, of course, equally inadequate and erroneous views and impressions of the difficulty of effecting their deliverance, and of the magnitude, value, and efficacy of the provision made for accomplishing it. Forgiveness and regeneration, even when admitted to be in some sense necessary, are represented as comparatively trivial matters, which may be easily procured or effected,—the precise grounds of which need not be very carefully or anxiously investigated, since there is no difficulty in regarding them as, in a manner, the natural results of the mercy of God, or, as is often added, though without any definite meaning being attached to it, of the work of Christ. This appears most fully and palpably in the Socinian system, which is just a plain denial of all that is most peculiar and important in the Christian revelation, and in the scheme there unfolded for the salvation of sinners. But it appears to a considerable extent also in the Popish system, where, though the bearing of the vicarious work of Christ upon the forgiveness and renovation of men is not denied, it is thrown very much into

the background, and left in a state of great indefiniteness and obscurity; and in which the importance of forgiveness and admission into God's favour, as a great and indispensable blessing, is overlooked and underrated, by being mixed up with renovation and sanctification,—men's thoughts being thus withdrawn from the due contemplation of the great truth that they need forgiveness and acceptance, and from the investigation, under a due sense of responsibility, of the way and manner in which they are to receive or obtain it.

There are few things more important, either with reference to the production of a right state of mind and feeling in regard to our religious interests, or to the formation of a right system of theology, than that men should be duly impressed with the conviction that they are by nature guilty, subject to the curse of a broken law, condemned by a sentence of God, and standing as already condemned criminals at this tribunal. If this be indeed the real condition of men by nature, it is of the last importance, both as to the formation of their opinions and the regulation of their feelings and conduct, that they should be aware of it; and that they should realize distinctly and definitely all that is involved in it. When this is understood and realized, men can scarcely fail to be impressed with the conviction, that the first and most essential thing in order to their deliverance and welfare is, that this sentence which hangs over them be cancelled, and that a sentence of an opposite import be either formally or virtually pronounced upon them,—a sentence whereby God forgives their sins and admits them into the enjoyment of His favour, or in which He intimates His purpose and intention no longer to hold them liable for their transgressions, or to treat them as transgressors, but to regard and treat them as if they had not transgressed; and not only to abstain from punishing them, but to admit them into the enjoyment of His favour. The passing of such an act, or the pronouncing of such a sentence, on God's part, is evidently the first and most indispensable thing for men's deliverance and welfare. Men can be expected to form a right estimate of the grounds on which such an act can be passed,—such a change can be effected upon their condition and prospects,—only when they begin with realizing their actual state by nature, as guilty and condemned criminals, standing at God's tribunal, and utterly unable to render any satisfaction for their offences, or to merit anything whatever at God's hand.

Sec. III.—Imputation of Christ's Righteousness.

Whatever meaning might be attached to the word *justification* in Scripture, and even though it could be proved that, as used there, it comprehended or described both a change in men's state and in men's character, it would still be an important question, deserving of a separate and very careful investigation, What are the grounds or reasons on account of which God forgives any man's sins, and admits him into the enjoyment of His favour? And it would still be an imperative duty, incumbent upon all men, to examine with the utmost care into everything which Scripture contains, fitted to throw any light upon this infinitely important subject. Now, I have already shown that, while the Council of Trent ascribes, in general, the forgiveness and acceptance of sinners to the vicarious work of Christ as its meritorious cause, in the first place it gives no explanation of the way and manner in which the work of Christ bears upon the accomplishment of this result in the case of individuals; and then, in the second place, it represents the only formal cause of our forgiveness to be an inherent personal righteousness, infused into men by God's Spirit,—thus teaching that *that* to which God has a respect or regard in passing an act of forgiveness in the case of any individual, is a personal righteousness, previously bestowed upon him, and wrought in him; while the only place or share assigned, or rather left, to the work of Christ in the matter, is to merit, procure, or purchase the grace, or gracious exercise of power, by which this inherent personal righteousness is infused.

The Reformers and the Reformed confessions, on the other hand, asserted that *that* to which God has directly and immediately a respect in forgiving any man's sins, or that which is the proper cause or ground of the act of forgiveness and acceptance, is not an inherent personal righteousness infused into him, but the righteousness of Christ imputed to him. By the righteousness of Christ, the Reformers understood the whole vicarious work of Christ, including both His sufferings as satisfactory to the divine justice and law, which required that men's sins should be punished, and His whole obedience to the law, as meritorious of the life that was promised to obedience; the former being usually called by later divines, when these subjects came to be discussed with greater minuteness and detail, His *passive*, and the latter His *active*,

righteousness. By this righteousness being imputed to any man, they meant that it was reckoned to him, or put down to his account, so that God, from a regard to it thus imputed, virtually agreed or resolved to deal with him, or to treat him, as if he himself had suffered what Christ suffered, and had done what Christ did; and had thus fully satisfied for his offences, and fully earned the rewards promised to perfect obedience. The Reformers taught that, when God pardoned and accepted any sinner, the ground or basis of the divine act,—*that* to which God had directly and immediately a respect or regard in performing it, or in passing a virtual sentence cancelling that man's sins, and admitting him into the enjoyment of His favour,—was this, that the righteousness of Christ was his, *through his union to Christ*; that being his in this way, it was in consequence imputed to him, or put down to his account, just as if it were truly and properly his own; and that this righteousness, being in itself fully satisfactory and meritorious, formed an adequate ground on which his sins might be forgiven and his person accepted. Now, the Papists deny that, in this sense, the righteousness of Christ, as satisfactory and meritorious, is imputed to men as the ground or basis of God's act in forgiving and accepting them; and set up in opposition to it, as occupying this place, and serving this purpose, an inherent personal righteousness infused into them. And in this way the state of the question, as usually discussed between Protestant and Romish writers, is, as we formerly explained and proved, clearly defined and marked out, although the decisions of the Council of Trent upon this subject are involved in some obscurity.

The main grounds on which the Reformers contended that the righteousness of Christ, imputed to a man, or given to him in virtue of his union to Christ, and then held and reckoned as his, was that to which God had respect in forgiving him, and admitting him to the enjoyment of His favour, were these: First, that, according to the general principles indicated in the sacred Scriptures as regulating God's dealings with fallen man, *a full satisfaction and a perfect righteousness* were necessary as the ground or basis of an act of forgiveness and acceptance; and that there is no adequate satisfaction and no perfect righteousness which can avail for this result except the sacrifice and righteousness of Christ; and, secondly, that the statements contained in Scripture as to the place which Christ and His vicarious work, including His obedience

as well as His sufferings, hold in their bearing upon the forgiveness and acceptance of sinners, necessarily imply this doctrine; and that, indeed, the substance of these statements cannot be correctly, fully, and definitely brought out, or embodied in distinct and explicit propositions, *except just by asserting* that Christ's righteousness is given and imputed to men, and is *thus* the ground or basis on which God's act in forgiving and accepting them rests.

It is manifest that the doctrine of Christ being the surety and substitute of sinners, and performing in that capacity a vicarious work, implies that it was necessary that something should be suffered and done by Him which might stand in the room and stead of what should have been suffered and done by them; and that *in this way* they, for whose salvation it was designed, have the benefit of what He suffered and did in their room imparted to them. This, accordingly, is admitted to be in substance what the Scripture states as to the ground or basis of *forgiveness* by all, even Arminians, who admit a proper vicarious atonement or satisfaction; and they thus admit, though some of them make great difficulties about the language or phraseology, the whole substance of what is contended for under the name of the imputation of our sins to Christ as the ground of His sufferings, and of the imputation of Christ's sufferings to us as the ground or basis of our pardon. Now, the Reformers, and Calvinistic divines in general, have extended the same general principle to merit and acceptance, which is admitted by all but Socinians to apply to the two other correlatives, viz., satisfaction and forgiveness. The proper grounds on which a criminal, who had violated a law, and had had a sentence of condemnation pronounced upon him, is exempted from liability to punishment, are either his having already endured in his own person the full punishment appointed, or his having imputed to him, and so getting the benefit of, a full satisfaction made by another in his room; for I assume, at present, the necessity of a satisfaction or atonement,—a principle which, of course, precludes any other supposition than the two now stated. But a man might, on one or other of these two grounds, be pardoned or forgiven, so as to be no longer liable to any further punishment, while yet there was no ground or reason whatever why he should be admitted into the favour or friendship of the judge or law-giver,—receive from him any token of kindness, or be placed by him in a position of honour and comfort. We find, however, in

Scripture, that, in the case of all justified men, these two things are, in point of fact, invariably and inseparably combined; and that when God justifies a man, He not only pardons all his sins, but admits him into the enjoyment of His favour, and virtually pronounces upon him a sentence whereby He gives him a right or title to happiness and heaven, and to everything necessary for the full and permanent enjoyment of them.

The two things, however, though invariably combined, in fact, in the gospel method of salvation, and in all on whom it takes practical effect, are quite distinct in themselves, and easily separable in idea; nay, they are so entirely distinct in their own nature, that we cannot but conceive that each must have its own suitable and appropriate ground to rest upon. As the proper ground of an act of forgiveness or of immunity from further punishment, extended to a condemned criminal, in a case where there are principles that preclude a mere discretionary pardon by a sovereign act of clemency, must be the endurance of the penalty prescribed, either personal or by a vicarious satisfaction, so the proper ground of a sentence of approbation and reward must, from the nature of the case, be obedience to the law, personal or vicarious, *i.e.*, imputed. If a regard to the honour of the law demanded, in the case of sinners, that there should be satisfaction as the ground of forgiveness, because it had threatened transgression with death, so it equally demanded that there should be perfect obedience as the ground or basis of admission to life. Perfect obedience to the law,—or, what is virtually the same thing, merit the result of perfect obedience,—seems just as necessary as the ground or basis of a virtual sentence of approbation and reward, as satisfaction is as the ground or basis of a sentence of forgiveness and immunity from further punishment. And as there is no perfect righteousness in men themselves to be the ground or basis of their being accepted or admitted to favour and happiness,—as they can no more render perfect obedience than they can satisfy for their sins,—Christ's perfect obedience must become theirs, and be made available for their benefit, as well as His suffering,—His merit as well as His satisfaction.

Papists unites with Arminians in denying the necessity of a perfect righteousness, as the ground or basis of God's act in accepting men's persons, and giving them a right and title to heaven; and in maintaining that all that is implied in the justifi-

cation of a sinner, so far as it is descriptive of a mere change of state, consists only in forgiveness, based upon Christ's vicarious sufferings or penal satisfaction. The Arminians hold the doctrine of the imputation of faith for, or instead of, righteousness or perfect obedience; and the chief scriptural ground on which they defend this doctrine is the statement of the apostle,* that "faith is counted or reckoned for righteousness,"—*πίστις λογίζεται εἰς δικαιοσύνην*. Their interpretation of this statement certainly could not be easily rejected, if the preposition *εἰς* could be shown to convey anything like the idea of substitution, as the word *for*, by which it is rendered in our version, often does. But no such idea can be legitimately extracted from it. The prepositions used in Scripture in reference to Christ's vicarious atonement or satisfaction in our room and stead, for us,—for our sins,—are, *αυτι* and *ὑπερ*, and never *εἰς*, which means towards, in order to, with a view to,—ideas which, in some connections, may be correctly enough expressed by the English word *for*, but which cannot convey the idea of substitution. Faith being counted *εἰς δικαιοσύνην*, means merely,—and cannot, according to the established *usus loquendi*, mean anything else than,—faith being counted in order to righteousness, or with a view to justification; so that this statement of the apostle does not directly inform us how, or in what way, it is that the imputation of faith bears upon the result of justification,—this we must learn from other scriptural statements,—and most certainly does not indicate that it bears upon this result by being, or by being regarded and accepted as, a substitute for righteousness or perfect obedience.

The Arminians commonly teach that faith,—and the sincere though imperfect obedience, or personal righteousness, as they call it, which faith produces,—is counted or accepted by God as if it were perfect obedience, and in this way avails to our justification, and more especially, of course, from the nature of the case, to our acceptance and title to heaven. Now, with respect to this doctrine, I think it is no very difficult matter to show,—though I cannot at present enter upon the proof,—first, that it is not supported by any scriptural evidence; secondly, that it has been devised as an interpretation of certain scriptural statements which have some appearance of countenancing it,—an interpretation

* Rom. iv. 5, 9.