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IMPUTATION:

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THE IMPUTATION OF THE SIN OF ADAM TO HIS POSTERITY.

"By one man's disobedience, many were made sinners."—Rom. v: 19.

The passage announces a fact, the most melancholy which has occurred in the history of our world, the introduction of sin amongst mankind. It refers to the transaction so graphically sketched in the sublime narrative, Gen. iii, when man partook

"The fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world."

This fact is introduced as the predicate of an argument relating to the efficacy of the righteousness of Christ in the justification of believers. The argument appears to be, that Adam and Christ sustained a similar relation to mankind, and that, as in consequence of their connection with Adam, all men are constituted sinners by his transgression; so in consequence of their relation to Christ, all believers are constituted righteous by his obedience. Our object in calling attention to the subject, is *to establish and illustrate the imputation of the sin of Adam to his posterity.*

I. By *imputation* we mean charging against, or reckoning to, in a *legal sense*. That the sin of Adam, in his *first* violation of the law of God, was by a legal sentence charged

against his posterity. It has been said that this word "has a proper and a figurative meaning"—that properly it means to charge against, or place to the account of one, that which really belongs to him—that its figurative meaning appears when it is used with reference to charging against one that which does not properly belong to him, as though it did. But this is false philology. Words never have a figurative meaning. They are often *used figuratively*, but in all such use the force and beauty of the figure depend upon the retention of the literal signification. When we say, crushed by misfortune, overwhelmed with sorrow, the words retain their literal import, and the force of the expression is derived in the one case from causing the mind to conceive of misfortune as a ponderous weight, in the other, of sorrow as a mighty flood. But in the case before us, there is not even this figurative use of imputation. Whether that of which it is affirmed pertain to the person in his own right or by transfer, the charging or reckoning itself is literal. The proposition which we design to support is, that *the sin of Adam was imputed to, or charged against his posterity, so as that for it they are condemned by the law of God.*

Adam sustained two relations to his descendants. He was their natural progenitor, and their representative head. The existence of the former of these relations is self-evident. And in consequence of it, all mankind come into being depraved in their nature. He was created holy. By transgression he became unholy. In accordance with the law of procreation, those who descend from an unholy being, must be unholy. The acorn always produces an oak, the lion a lion, and man man. The character, as to its essential qualities, is as certainly transmitted, as the form and visage. With the principles in the case we have now no concern.*

*The doctrine of human depravity is not only a part of revealed truth, it is taught by universal experience. Human beings, in every known instance since the fall, (with the exception of Jesus,) manifest unholy dispositions at the earliest possible period at which any manifestation of character can be made; and they continue to exhibit them as long as they live. It is impossible to account for this universal effect, without a correspondent universal cause. And such a cause is supplied by no other hypothesis than that which traces this depravity back through all generations to the original father of mankind; and from him through father to son, by natural generation. We touch not here the question, whether the soul is generated by the parent, or is, in every instance, a direct cre-

And we state the fact to show that the inquiry before us relates, not to man's moral character, but to his legal condition.

1. Our first position in sustaining the doctrine announced is, that *Adam was the representative head of his posterity*—that under the constitution in subjection to which God chose to place man, he, the first of the race acted for them, so as that, in a legal point of view, they are regarded as doing what he did. We use the term *representative* not because *all* the ideas which men are accustomed to attach to it are applicable in this case, but to indicate the *vicarious relation* of Adam as one acting in the place of others.

That Adam thus represented the race is not affirmed, in so many words, in the Bible. But statements are made which clearly imply that he did. In Gen. i: 26, in the consultation which the divine Trinity held regarding the creation of man, God says, "Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." Remark the plural pronoun them, in the second member of this sentence. Man, as created in the image of God is styled *them*, and as such, is to have dominion over the earth, and all animated existence. In the 28th verse, God gives this command unto the pair whom he had made: "Be fruitful and multiply,

and increase." Indeed, we deem speculations of this kind utterly inadmissible in theology. It is sufficient to us that man, in his personality, has a soul as well as a body; and that the proximate cause of his existence stamps the moral character of the person. When God created man, man bore the moral image of God; when the Holy Spirit produced the human nature of the man Christ Jesus, he bore the moral image of the Holy One; and when man procreates man, he bears the moral image of man. This sequence ensues, not from legal representation, but natural relation. Some who have treated of the doctrine of Original Sin, (we may mention President Edwards for example,) appear at times, to have lost sight of this distinction. But it seems to be obvious that *depravity* is transmitted, not by *imputation*, but by *impartation*. It is inherent, not relative. It is a moral quality, not a legal state. It involves a legal condition—that of condemnation. Upon the supposition that men are not legally liable for the sin of Adam, they would still be condemned for the unholy dispositions which they inherit. But then their condemnation would be solely on account of what they are considered in themselves, and not in any way of what they are as represented by another.

and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." That this injunction, to subdue the earth, and to rule "over every living thing that moveth upon the earth," included the posterity of Adam, as well as Adam himself, is too obvious to need proof. Verse 29th: And God said, "Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat." That this grant was made to the descendants of Adam, cannot be controverted. Now these things are addressed to Adam in his own person, and not to him and his posterity. Yet they are included with him in what is said. It may be objected; God says to Adam, that he has "given to every beast of the earth, &c., every green herb for meat;" and that the progeny of these animals were as certainly interested and intended in this bequest, as that of Adam in those made to him. This is readily granted. The object in citing these passages is not to point out any peculiarity of relation, but to show that what was said to Adam, related to his posterity alike with himself. In the 2nd chapter, 16-17 verses, a new fact relating to man is recorded. God gives him a law, and as the penalty of disobedience threatens him with death. What conceivable reason is there why the posterity, who have been included whenever Adam has been before addressed—the *them*, who were created in the image of God, are not here, too, intended? Adam violated the command of his Maker. In the 3d chapter, 16-19 verses, is recorded the sentence pronounced against him. This curse involved his posterity. Still does the ground bring forth thorns and thistles unto man; still in sorrow does he eat of it all the days of his life; and still does the sweat of his face enrich the soil which yields him its reluctant support. The last and most awful part of this sentence, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," evidently corresponds with the threatening, "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." This sentence has been executed upon all of mankind, who have lived before us, and we are tremblingly awaiting the same doom. Let it be remarked, that the execution of this sentence on mankind is not suspended upon their personal transgressions; that, in fact, no mention is

made of them, except so far as the assumption of descendants in the denunciation of the sorrows of parturition. Why, then, are they involved in it? Why do they all continue to suffer its afflictions? With regard to the curse of the earth, whether any one shall suffer from it, depends not at all, and in the nature of the case, cannot depend, upon his own acts. He is subjected to it by the mere circumstance of being born into the world. The sorrows of life, though they may be increased by personal criminality, or mitigated by prudence and piety, often assail us without any connection with our own acts. "Man is born unto trouble." Death is not consequent upon our actual transgressions. The apostle, in the chapter from which the text is selected, places this point in a strong light: "Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." That is, infants, who have committed no *actual* sin died, from Adam to Moses; and from the days of Moses until now, the bud of life has withered, the just opening flower has fallen from its stem. The father's heart has mourned his early loss; the mother's tears have watered her infant's grave.

Death is, emphatically, the penalty of transgression. Under what law did these infants live? and when did they transgress it? Could they possibly have committed personal sin? Yet sin there was, or there could have been no penalty—no death. If we suppose that Adam so represented his posterity that he acted for them, and that they are legally condemned because of the act of their head, the death of infants as the penalty of sin is accounted for. But if each individual be held accountable to law *only* for his own acts, then we cannot consider the death of infants penal. The apostle, however, declares, "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." And this declaration, that death passes upon all men as the penalty of sin, he follows with the statement before quoted relating to the death of infants.*

Thus we have seen that before his creation God spake of

* It has been contended, that, by the expression, "Them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression," infants are not intended. Were this admitted, it would not injure the argument. *Infants die, and death is the penalty of sin.*

Adam as the head of his race; that after he was made, he is addressed in the same character; that in this character a law is given to him, and a penalty annexed to its violation; that this penalty in all its awful fullness has come upon his posterity; that it has come upon some of them under circumstances forbidding the idea that they suffer in consequence of actual transgression; and upon all, in some particulars, without any connection with their personal sins. Why is all this? To us it seems perfectly inexplicable, except upon the ground which we have stated. *Adam was the representative head of his posterity, and his sin is imputed to them.**

2. Our second position is, that Paul, by an implication stronger than direct assertion, teaches the doctrine.

We first invite attention, in proof here, to 1 Cor. xv: 21-22. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." The subject of which the apostle is treating, is the resurrection of the saints. He assumes it as an admitted truth, that all die in Adam. What do these expressions mean? "By man came death."

* Some of the advocates of imputation consider the command to Adam not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, as of the nature of a *covenant*; something superadded to the law of his creation, and intended for a limited time, with the promise, if he faithfully observed it during that period, that he and his posterity should be confirmed in a sinless and happy state. However plausible this theory may be, and whatever of importance they may attach to it, there appears to us to be this insuperable objection to it, that it is not revealed in the word of God. We are not told that this law was any thing more than the test to which Jehovah chose to subject the obedience of his creature. We are not told that this test was to continue for a limited time, nor that, at the expiration of such limited period, he continuing obedient, he and his posterity would be confirmed in a sinless state. But we are told that God created Adam holy, placed him under this prohibition, and when he violated it, pronounced upon him a sentence which has taken effect, not only upon him, but upon his descendants, and upon them, to a great extent, irrespective of their actual transgressions. And inasmuch as the sin of Adam is imputed to his posterity, it seems reasonable to infer, that, had he continued obedient, his obedience would have been imputed to them. But as to a limited period of trial, and a promise of confirmation in holiness, we see no necessity for such inferences. We doubt whether men are at liberty to pursue such speculations, at least so as to constitute them the basis of theological doctrines. We prefer to say in such matters, "Secret things belong to God."

"In Adam all die." The apostle cannot mean that when Adam died, all men literally died. This is contrary to facts. Does he mean that, as Adam was the first that sinned, and as death is the consequence of sin, all men, without any such connection with him as to participate in his guilt, sin by the force of circumstances and thus die? But then they would not die in Adam. Does he mean that the connection resulting from natural generation causes them to die, and thus that they may be said to die in Adam? But why not, then, in Noah, from whom, as from Adam, all since the flood are born? Why not from their immediate ancestors? What can he mean, but that the sin of Adam is the cause of their death? And this is the more evident, because of the comparison which he institutes between death in Adam, and resurrection in Christ. The obedience of Christ is the procuring cause of the resurrection of his people. Let us reverse the statement of Paul. As in Christ all shall be made alive, so in Adam all died. As Christ, by his obedience unto resurrection, secured life to his people, so Adam, by his disobedience unto death, secured death to his posterity. As the acts of men have nothing to do with procuring their resurrection, so the acts of men have nothing to do with procuring their death.

We next introduce Rom. v: 12-19. The passage is too long to be repeated entire. Note the expressions, "by one man sin entered into the world—through the offence of one, many be dead—the judgment was by one to condemnation—by one man's offence death reigned by one—by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation—by one man's disobedience many were made sinners." The introduction of sin—the many made sinners—the sentence of condemnation—the infliction of that sentence in the reign of death—these all by the one offence of the one man! What mean these declarations? Can they import less than that the guilt and penalty of his transgression passed upon them? That his sin was imputed to his posterity? Men sinners without guilt? condemned without transgression? punished without condemnation? all because their father by natural generation, sinned?

In the foregoing part of this epistle, the apostle had stated and proved the universality of sin and condemnation. The Jews are condemned, for they have violated revealed law;

the Gentiles, for they have transgressed natural law. The inquiry would arise, Whence this universal guilt and condemnation? The apostle had also adverted to the plan of redemption through Christ. And for the double purpose of answering the anxious inquiry regarding the sinfulness of man, and of illustrating the provision of mercy through the Saviour, we may suppose him to introduce these statements. Thus connected with his previous argument, the meaning becomes clear. He is not making a casual statement. He is pointing out the cause of this universal guiltiness of man. He is not merely saying who of the race first transgressed, but accounting for the universality of transgression. This interpretation is confirmed by the repeated use of the causal particles, *by* and *through*. When we say a man was killed by lightning, we mean that lightning caused his death—when we say he died through exposure, we mean that exposure killed him. It would be impossible for language more strongly to express a causal connection. And the structure of the sentences of which they form a part—the use of verbs indicating executive agency—clearly shows that this causality is not instrumental, but procuring.

But strong as is the proof afforded by these passages considered simply as affirmative, they are, if possible, still more conclusive. The truth which they teach is not stated as a new revelation, but as a well known and admitted doctrine; a doctrine familiar to the minds, and incorporated into the faith of those to whom he wrote;* a doctrine so well understood, and so firmly held, that he could reason from it to

* The Jews held the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity. The late Rev. Joseph Samuel C. F. Frey, in his work entitled *Joseph and Benjamin*, commenting upon this passage, says: "From these words it evidently appears, that the apostle took it for granted, that it was a doctrine well known and believed, that Adam's sin was imputed to the whole human race."—p. p. 85. Having previously quoted Moses, Job, Isaiah, Jeremiah, David and Solomon, he proceeds to adduce the authority of ancient Rabbins: "That Adam was the federal head of the whole human race." Menasse, Ben Israel saith, "Whereas Adam was to be the head and principal of the human nature, it was necessary that God should endow him with all perfection," &c. *De Fragilitate*, p. p. 34. Again, in his discourse *De termine vitæ*, he says, "Aben Ezra saith, that the definite article *Hay*, is not prefixed unto proper names in the scriptures, only it is so unto the word *Adam*, Gen. iii. 22, and the reason is, because in *Adam*, all his posterity, the whole race of mankind, is denoted and signified," etc., etc.

the great mystery of justification through Christ. It was a first principle in their theology. And who were they to whom he wrote? A part of them were Jews, to whom had been "committed the oracles of God;" a part were Gentiles, recently converted to Christianity. It is as if he had said to them, Ye know, brethren of the stock of Israel, how that the scriptures teach, that by the transgression of Adam all men were made sinners, and that judgment unto condemnation came upon them; and ye from among the Gentiles, who have believed, bear witness that they who preached the gospel unto you have constantly affirmed the same doctrine.

More than this:—the apostle has so interwoven these statements with his argument, that, if we are not made sinners in Adam, we are not made righteous in Christ; if we are not condemned in Adam, we are not justified in Christ; if we die not in Adam, we live not in Christ.

We repeat the question, How could these things be affirmed, if mankind are related to Adam only as his descendants? The Jews were the descendants of Abraham. Abraham sinned. Could it be said they were made sinners in Abraham? that by his sin judgment came upon them to condemnation? Can these declarations be made regarding any parent? Are they in the word of God, made concerning any one except Adam? Here, then, we have the express teachings of the apostle, corroborating the induction from the records of the creation and fall of man, and establishing the doctrine for which we plead. The conclusion would seem to be irresistible, that Adam was the representative head of his posterity, and that his sin is imputed to them.

3, It may serve to confirm our conviction of the truth of the doctrine, to remark the frequent introduction of the same principle into the dealings of God with mankind.

After the flood had subsided, and Noah, at the command of God, came forth from the ark, he "builded an altar unto the Lord, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar. And the Lord smelled a sweet savor; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth: neither will I again smite every thing living as I have done. While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, cold and

heat, summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease." * And in consequence of this determination, God made a covenant with Noah and his sons, and placed the token thereof in the clouds. † In this covenant all mankind are interested equally with them. And the token of the covenant still spans the heavens to inspire our hearts with confidence in the divine protection. Yet the occasion of its being made, is the well pleasedness of God with the piety of Noah.

Abraham was the covenant head of the Jewish nation. Promises were made to him, and renewed to Isaac and Jacob, which could only be fulfilled to his posterity. They were blessed for his sake. The Jews gloried in this. They boasted of their descent from Abraham, and considered themselves as chosen in him to be the people of God.

Men frequently suffered severe inflictions on account of the sins of those with whom they were connected. The destruction of the family of Achan is an awful illustration. The curse pronounced upon Canaan, and the blessing of Shem and Japheth, by Noah, are in point. ‡ He spake by inspiration, and the curse and the blessing are still receiving fulfillment under the providence of God.

Now, in these and similar instances, which might be indefinitely multiplied, the same principle is developed. "God," to adopt the language of Andrew Fuller, "God, for wise and holy ends blessed one, or many, in reward of the obedience of another, to whom they are related, in a manner as though it were performed by themselves," and upon the same principle he inflicted judgments. The extent of application is far more limited in these cases, than in the imputation of Adam's sin. But if the principle be acted upon at all in the divine government, who shall object to its application here?

II. Waiving other evidences of the truth of the doctrine, which might be drawn from the statements of scripture in relation to the natural condition of man, we come to offer some explanations, and to notice some objections.

1. We have called Adam the Representative Head of his race. As already stated, the term is used, not because all the ideas which men attach to representation are applicable

* Gen. viii: 20-22.

† Gen. ix: 1-17.

‡ Gen. ix: 25-27.

in this relation. We are accustomed to *choose* our representatives. We may, therefore, hastily conclude that there can be no representation where there has not been such choice.

But so far as the legal force of acts is concerned, this is manifestly untrue. A county elects its delegate to the State Legislature. We have voted against him. Are we therefore not bound by the laws which he enacts? The majority have not voted, because they have no right to vote. Are women and minors free from the laws, because they have no vote in the election of the law-makers? Are we not bound by laws which were enacted before we were born? And why? not because they were made by our fathers, for our fathers were then perhaps the subjects of another government; but because the community which enacted them represented, by precedence, that to which we belong. It is no argument against the representative relation of the father of the human race, that they had no choice in the premises.

And here we anticipate an objection against the justice of the procedure. If it pleased the divine Wisdom to create one man as the representative of the race, to place him in circumstances most favorable to the preservation of his virtue, and to consider his obedience or disobedience, as to legal consequences, as the obedience or disobedience of the whole, where is the injury to them? Were it not thus ordered, the result, practically, would be the same, unless each were created separately—that is, unless man were not man. The first of the race becoming depraved by transgression, the whole race would be depraved, and by a moral necessity, sinners by actual transgression as soon as they acted at all. Such they now are, and such they would have been, independently of any other than a natural relation to Adam. Their condition is not, therefore, injured by the representative relation.

But it may be that it is infinitely advantaged. It may be that the existence of this relation was necessary to the introduction of that remedial system, through which "life and immortality are brought to light." Angels have sinned. For them, so far as we know, or can infer, no salvation has been provided. We pretend not to know the reason. We can, however, easily perceive that a scheme of redemption for a number of beings, each existing separately and independently, must proceed upon a very different plan from

that relating to a race all one, and in one. In the one case, if an atonement be made, it must be for every one individually. Each offender stands by himself. In the other, the individual offenders are united in a common head, and may be dealt with in him. Suppose one hundred men, not organized into a society, not having any common head, to rebel against the sovereign power. Though ninety-nine of them should make their peace, the hundredth is in no sense relieved. If, however, these men are associated under a common leader, and he make peace for them, they are all freed from the doom of the traitor. Thus, in the introduction, at creation, of the representative feature into the government of the world, we may perceive a foundation laid for the salvation of man.

2. It may be objected, that *guilt* is not transferable; that the *effects of sin may be transferred, but that guilt cannot be*. *Guilt*, in the objection, is used to signify *desert of punishment*. Now this is either moral or legal, or it consists of both combined. If it be intended only to affirm that the moral desert of punishment, or character, is not transferable, we fully assent. But the necessity for such transfer is not involved, it is expressly disclaimed, in the statement of the doctrine. If it is designed to affirm that desert of punishment in a *legal sense* is not transferable, then the proposition demands proof. To assert it without proof, is a begging of the question. If our arguments have proved any thing, they have established the converse of this proposition. And it would not affect their validity, though nothing analogous had ever taken place under human governments. It certainly is competent to Jehovah to administer his government upon such principles as it may please him to introduce, whether these principles are adopted in human jurisprudence or not. And it is not difficult to conceive that it may be right for Him "who knoweth the end from the beginning," to establish regulations which could not be safely copied into human legislation. But this principle has been acted upon amongst men. Not to mention the often repeated instance of Zaleucus, who gave his own eye to save his son's, we may refer to laws of attainder, as exemplifying this remark. In all such laws a man's family were regarded as one with him, and were punished for his crime. In former times, it was not uncommon for cities to deliver themselves from ut-

ter destruction, by surrendering some of their most distinguished citizens to the vengeance of the conquerors. Hostages, or securities for their quiet submission, were, not unfrequently, taken of subdued towns, and these hostages were to be put to death if their countrymen failed to comply with the conditions of surrender. With the equity of these proceedings, we have nothing to do. They serve to show that men, in their dealings with men, recognize the vicarious principle in the imputation of legal guilt.

3. It has been said, no man is sensible of blameworthiness on account of the sin of Adam. No one repents of it. But if it were imputed to them, they must needs repent of it, as they do of their personal transgressions.

We have again to notice a want of just discrimination. The objection proceeds upon the supposition, that the doctrine requires an acknowledgment of personal moral turpitude on account of Adam's sin. And it is in thus confounding of character, with legal amenability, that the whole force of the objection lies. A man may recognize himself as accountable for that for which he feels no self-reproach. You are security for an administrator. He has been negligent, or criminal, and the estate is lost. Are you not bound to make good the loss? but do you blame yourself? We are justified by reason of our union with Christ. We rejoice in the grace thus conferred. But do we, therefore, arrogate to ourselves any personal desert of praise? The language of our hearts is,

"Jesus, thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress."

This, after all, however, is a matter of personal consciousness. That those who think they have no more concern in the sin of Adam than in that of Noah, should feel no emotions of grief and shame, no sense of condemnation on account of it, is to be expected. A man's feelings upon such subjects—upon all subjects—must correspond with his belief. Nor will it surprise any one accustomed to watch the operations of the human mind, that such persons should bring forward the objection we are noticing; so apt are we to make our own consciousness the standard of what others feel. But the consciousness of such a man is no proof that those who believe in the imputation of the sin of Adam, do

not lament and acknowledge their just condemnation on account of it before God. On the contrary, the very fact that his feelings correspond with his belief, should teach him that theirs also, correspond with their belief.

4. But it may be objected, you present a strange anomaly. A sinner not personally unholy. It cannot be.

No, it cannot be. The government of God is perfect. Part is adapted to part, and every part to the whole. There can neither be a sinner not unholy, nor a justified person, not as to his essential character, holy, though the sinner be such by the imputation of Adam's sin, the justified, by the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Men are as certainly naturally depraved, as they are sinners by Adam's transgression. Christians are as certainly spiritually renewed, as they are righteous by the obedience of Christ.

So intimate, in fact, is the connection between depravity imparted and sin imputed, that, while it is necessary for perspicuity of statement and clearness of perception to distinguish them, they go together in the consciousness of the penitent and in the confessions of the contrite. Together they make up the ruin brought upon us by the fall. As in Adam it was the wickedness of heart that gave malignity to the act of rebellion, so in his posterity it is the corruption of nature, ensuring consent to his sin, that gives that sin its personal hold upon them. It is because we are one with him in nature, that we are accounted one with him in act. At the same time, we are one with him in nature by natural descent, and one with him in act by the federative bond. But enough of objections. To what may not objections be made?

What an awful truth! The whole race of man condemned, and hastening one after another to execution! Dost thou doubt? Why, then, that pain that racks thy head? The anguish that rends thy heart? Why art thou mournfully bending at thy tomb, as the willow that throws its weeping branches around the dead? And wouldst thou be saved? Vain thy repentance! vain thy penances and tears! Can these atone for the sin which six thousand years past drew forth the sword of justice against thy race and thee, and threw the darkness of death over thine onward pathway? Thy own transgressions, the prolific fruit of the forbidden tree, rise against thee. Canst thou blot them out?

No; thy only hope is in the "second man, the Lord from heaven." He has interposed; that "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, many may be made righteous." O, flee to him! Secure him as thy friend. Accept him as thy Lord. Here is hope. All else is black despair. Amen.

THE IMPUTATION OF SIN TO CHRIST:

A Sermon, by Rev. A. M. Poindexter, of Halifax county, Virginia.

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."—2 Cor. v: 21.

Christian ministers are ambassadors for Christ. He is their sovereign, and their theme. Their business is to beseech men to be reconciled to God; and their argument, that "he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." This passage is frequently rendered, "he hath made him to be a sin-offering." The word in the original is used to denote both sin and sin-offering. We prefer the common translation. There is in the passage a double antithesis, to the preservation of which it is requisite. The *sin* which Christ was made for us, is contrasted with the *sin* which he knew not. It is not designed to say that Christ knew, or needed no sin-offering, but that he had committed no sin. Again: what Christ was made for us, is placed in apposition with what we are to be made in him. But the apostle does not say, we are made a righteous offering unto God in him, but the righteousness of God in him.

Adhering, then, to the common translation, we inquire, What is meant by Christ's being made sin, and our being made the righteousness of God? The language is elliptical. Sin and righteousness are not persons, but something pertaining to persons—their acts as regarded by law. Sin is the transgression of law; righteousness as opposed to it, obedience to law. It cannot be affirmed that Christ, in his own personal character, was made a sinner. He *knew* no

sin. "He did no sin." It is not true that any of mankind, considered in themselves, have obeyed the law—"they have all gone out of the way—all have sinned." Nor can it be said that any obedience which believers have rendered is *the righteousness of God*. "God justifieth the ungodly." We understand the apostle to assert, that God made Jesus to bear our sins, that we might bear his righteousness. Thus construed, the passage teaches the *imputation of sin to Christ, and of righteousness to Christians*. To the first of these topics, we now invite your attention.

I. The imputation of sin to Christ.

To impute sin or righteousness, as we use the term, is by a legal sentence, to condemn or to acquit. When we speak of the imputation of sin to Christ, we mean the charging it against him by a sentence of divine law. And this is done with a view to punishment: that is, to a punishment to be inflicted on account of it. The sufferings of Christ were penal. As such, he bore them. They were not, however, a punishment of him, but of others in him.

To the proof of this doctrine, we now proceed; and appeal,

1. To the representative character and relations of the Redeemer. In the former discourse, we have established the representative relation of Adam to mankind. It is now pertinent to notice, that, in Rom. v, where Paul introduces this subject, he says that Adam was the figure, or type of Christ. The scope of his reasoning indicates that it is in this relation that he is such. The apostle declares, that "as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." The comparison here made is several times repeated, in different forms, in the paragraph. What is the point of resemblance thus adverted to? Not, evidently, either the extent or the nature of the effects. For these are the subject of contrast, not of comparison. The blessing is not as the offence, but *much more*. If the curse abounds through Adam, grace super-abounds through Christ. The resemblance is found in the fact, that both Adam and Christ were public characters, sustaining a similar relation to men. That this it is which constitutes Adam a type of Christ is seen in the fact, that, as sin and death are ascribed to the *one* offence of the

one man, so righteousness and life are through the *one* obedience of the *one* man. This thought is not so apparent in the translation as in the original. But it is sufficiently evident for our purpose. It is by *one* man sin enters—it is by *one* offence, as contrasted with the *many* offences to be forgiven, that judgment is to condemnation.* Now, as has already been shown, the language used in this chapter in regard to Adam, proves that he was a representative head; and the use of similar language can do no less in regard to Christ. But if Christ sustained this relation, then the sufferings which came upon him were in consequence of the sins of those whom he represented, or, in other words, their sins were imputed to him.

To the same conclusion, we should be led by an examination of those passages in which Christ is spoken of as the *second Adam—the second man*. The federative relation supplies the only explanation of these expressions. Literally, Christ was not the second man. Millions had lived and died before him. It is only as in him, as a public head, mankind have a representative being, that he is thus styled. Not, however, farther to press this point here, we remark,

2. In all that Jesus did and suffered, he acted, *not for himself, but for others*.

The conception, the birth, the whole life of Jesus, was a miracle. With reference to his incarnation and reign, Isaiah says, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." And concerning this child thus born *to us*, in Isaiah liii: 3-5, we have this remarkable language: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him: he was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken,

* The following is Macknight's translation of the 16th and 18th verses of the v Rom. 16 verse: "Also, not as the sentence through one who sinned, so is the gift: for verily the sentence was for one offence to condemnation; but the gracious gift is of many offences to righteousness."

18 verse: "Well then, as through one offence sentence came upon all men to condemnation; even so through one righteousness, sentence came upon all men to justification of life."

smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." It were easy to multiply quotations, but it is unnecessary. In this chapter the Prophet commences with the first budding life of Jesus as "a tender plant," traces him through all those circumstances of lowliness which made him as "a root out of a dry ground, having no form nor comeliness, no beauty" in the estimation of men, refers to his sufferings as "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," points to the manifestations of his divine benevolence in bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows, and follows him to the awful hour in which he "was wounded for our transgressions—bruised for our iniquities." And it was all for us! He lived, and acted, and suffered, not for himself, but for others. Upon what principle did Jesus thus act for us? Unless in the divine economy he so represented us as to be substituted for us in the great transaction of Calvary, how could it be said "he was wounded for our transgressions?"

3. We notice the confirmation of the doctrine afforded by all those portions of the scriptures in which Christ is spoken of as a sacrifice—his sufferings as expiatory. These are numerous. Blot them out, and you efface nearly the whole Bible—you have a Bible no longer. "He is led as a lamb to the slaughter." "His soul" was made "an offering for sin." When he came into the world, he was proclaimed as "The Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world;" and in reference to his death it is said, "he offered up himself." According to the divinely instituted order of sacrifice, a suitable offering having been provided, the offerer, or the priest when he represented the congregation, was to lay his hand upon the head of the victim,* thus confessing, or laying their sins upon it, and then it was to be slain and burned upon the altar. In the institution of the scape goat, the confession of sins in connection with the laying on of hands upon the head of the live goat, is particularly mentioned;† and he is said to "bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited," when let go into the wilderness. It is obvious to remark two steps in this process: 1. The confessing or laying of sin upon the victim. 2. The

* Ex. xxix: 10, 15, 19. Lev. i: 4; iii: 2, 8; iv: 4, 15; viii: 14, 22.

† Lev. xvi: 21.

offering up of the sacrifice. Correspondent to this arrangement are the statements concerning the "Lamb of God." "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all." Who can fail to perceive that the divine nature is here represented as a priest, laying hands upon the Christ, and thus charging our sins upon him, so that upon Calvary Jesus bore "our sins in his own body upon the tree?"

It may possibly be said, These and similar expressions refer to the *treatment* which Messiah received. He was treated as though he were the guilty one. It was, however, as preparatory to the infliction of death—to the offering up of the victim, that sin was confessed and put upon it. But waiving this consideration, why, we ask, was he thus treated? There must, in every case, be adequate ground of treatment, or it is unjust. Suffering inflicted by any government without sufficient cause, is odious oppression. Here is an innocent being subjected to overwhelming suffering. There must be a reason for this. Will it be said that Christ voluntarily consented to suffer. However voluntary his sufferings, (and we know they were entirely voluntary,) yet there must be that of which law can take hold, or he could never suffer under law. Thus was it with the lamb of the old dispensation. Itself incapable of sin, it could never bleed upon Jehovah's altar, until sin was "laid upon it." So, too, with the spotless "Lamb of God." Our sins imputed to him, brought down the sword of justice, unsheathed upon his heart!

4. You will permit us to present the argument from this last consideration in another form. Jesus suffered under the law of God. "He was made of a woman, made under the law." He lived and died under the law of God. True, he was "crucified and slain" by the wicked hands of his enemies. And his sufferings, so far as men are concerned as the perpetrators of the dark deeds of Calvary, were in violation of all law, human and divine. But he was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." They, in their ignorant malice, were but executing a sentence pronounced by a tribunal more august than the Sanhedrim, and enforced by an authority higher than that of Pilate. God said, "Awake, O sword, against the man that is my fellow!" and the death groan of Calvary shook creation. Why was this? Under the government of God,

righteousness and life, sin and death are inseparably connected. But the man of Calvary was without sin. Perfect love to God and man had ever breathed in his spirit, and lived in his life. Why, then, does he die? "He was wounded for our transgressions." Our sins were imputed to him, and for them he died.

5. The *agony* which the Saviour endured demonstrates the truth of this doctrine. It was extreme, overwhelming! Go with us to Gethsemane. Hear that agonized prayer! See that bloody sweat! And from whom bursts that wail that startles the ear of night? Whence this *amazement of sorrow*? Men have often endured the prospect of the most cruel tortures with calm disdain, or firm composure. Females have braved misfortune's heaviest surges; have smiled at death in his most horrid forms. Why is Jesus, who has ever manifested such firmness and constancy, such superiority to all earthly things, such contempt of suffering, now making these heart-laments at the prospect of crucifixion? See that group upon the cross! One of them, undismayed by his tortures, undaunted by the near approach of death, rails upon his fellow-sufferer. Another, in this dread hour, heeds not the pain of crushed and quivering nerves, but the interests of his soul engage his thoughts, and from his heart breaks forth the prayer, "Lord, remember me." The other—Ah! hear that cry!—"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Why does Jesus thus suffer? It was, in the language of Calvin, because "He was stricken of his Father for our sins, and bruised for our iniquities—he was put in stead of wicked doers, as a security and a pledge—to abide and suffer all the punishment that should have been laid upon them—and did feel all the tokens of God when he is angry and punisheth."

"'Twas you my sins, my cruel sins,
His chief tormenters were."

No, we can account for the sufferings of Jesus only upon the supposition that they were penal and expiatory. But in the light of the doctrine of imputation, we can see how such sufferings must come, even upon the Son of God when he bears the guilt of a ruined world. It was a heavy load. All creative power must have sunk beneath it broken and blasted in everlasting death. But Christ endured it. And

though bruised, and wounded, and slain, he triumphed in the struggle. A conqueror, and more than a conqueror he reigns! Here, O, my soul, are thy hope and thy salvation. Christ crucified is the world's redemption!

11. There are ~~some~~ points relating to this subject which demand explanation.

1. The doctrine of imputation has been so stated as to imply that Christ was himself made a sinner. He has been called "the greatest of sinners," as having the sins of the elect so imputed to him as to become his own; that their transgressions become actually the sins of Christ. Such language we deem irreverent, shocking; and the idea of imputation upon which it proceeds seems to us contrary, both to reason and the word of God. It supposes a transfer, not only of legal, but of both legal and moral desert of punishment. But it is self-evident, that the moral desert of punishment or character, cannot be transferred. It is personal and inseparable from the subject of it. Nay, we may say, it is the person himself—his very nature. Guilt in this sense can attach only to the transgressor. We would be far from charging upon any who advocate this theory the consequences which attach to it. But the theory itself seems to us to be impious. What, the Saviour of sinners morally a transgressor! O immaculate Redeemer, who shall thus think of thee! It is contrary to the word of God. The Holy Spirit, as if with especial caution to prevent such a perversion, has guarded against the supposition of the least moral taint, either personal or by imputation, in the Messiah. It is as one who knew no sin, that he was made sin. It is as the just for the unjust he gave himself for us.

2. It has been contended that the sins of the elect only were imputed to Christ; that for their sins, and for the sins of no others, he died.

That God has an elect people, and that for their salvation especial provision has been made in the economy of redemption, we doubt not. But not at this point in the scheme, as we suppose, is this peculiarity introduced. Christ is said to be the "Saviour of all men," as well as "especially of them that believe." We are aware that such expressions are explained as indicating the general provisions of the gospel as including both Jews and Gentiles—men of every nation and class. And it may well be granted that in some

puadate the act of the representative, he is no longer bound thereby. Sinners who refuse to believe in Christ, in the exercise of their own moral agency, reject him. They thus shut themselves out from all the benefits of his atonement. In accordance with this view, unbelievers are spoken of as *counting themselves unworthy of eternal life, rejecting the counsel of God against themselves, and refusing to come to Christ.* The scriptures present no obstacle arising from the design of the atonement to the salvation of sinners. The language of invitation is, "All things are now ready, whosoever will, let him come;" the language of command is to "all men every where to repent;" the language of direction is, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel unto every creature;" the language of entreaty is, "Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is unto the sons of men. Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die."

To illustrate what we have said, let it be supposed that the Province of Canada were to revolt. After a time the constituted authorities enter into terms with the British government by which that power in consideration of submissions made, agrees to pardon every citizen who has been engaged in the rebellion, upon the condition that he lay down his arms and return to his peaceful avocations. Here would be the offer of a full, free, and general pardon. But the benefit of this offer could be enjoyed only by those who complied with the prescribed condition. If one-half of those to whom the offer related should refuse to submit, would that limit the offer itself? But let us suppose this general offer to be made, while at the same time it is stated that the submissions of the authorities related to only a part of the rebels, and were accepted for them alone. True, they were of sufficient intrinsic value to have secured the pardon of all, but they were not designed to effect it. With what propriety, with what truth, could all be invited to submit with the promise of pardon upon compliance? Now, the system we are opposing asserts, as a truth of God's word, a part of the gospel—that the sins of the elect only were imputed to Christ—that for them, and them alone, he died—that his atonement was designed to save them, and only them. How, then, though its intrinsic value be infinite, can salvation be offered to any other than the elect? Be it remembered, the question does not relate to the duty of

man as the subject of God's moral government, but to the truthfulness and propriety of an offer of pardon grounded upon an atonement which was never designed to secure that pardon. Will it be said, We know not who are the elect—no man can know. We are commanded to preach to all men salvation through Christ. This course is necessary, upon the plan of the divine administration, to the salvation of the elect. And after all, we say nothing but what is true. All who repent and believe will be saved, for none but the elect will repent and believe. It is replied, the question relates not to your duty, but to your theory. It concerns not your propriety, but the aspect in which that theory presents the character of Jehovah. God, who does know the elect, and who knows the designed extent of the atonement, is represented as offering pardon to *all men*, when for the forgiveness of *some no provision has been made*; and when, therefore, upon the supposition that these were to repent, they could not be pardoned.*

* To present this subject in, what we conceive to be, the scriptural light, we remark, that God proposed to accomplish two objects by the intervention of Messiah. For the sake of distinction, we call the first the design of the Father, the second, the design of the Son: premising, that, while different parts in the great scheme of redemption are assigned to the different persons of the Trinity, and each has his appropriate sphere of action, God in purpose, as in being, is One. In view of the determination to create man, and of the fact that he would fall, and with the design to glorify his name, God the father desires to offer pardon to the offender. This he may not do except upon some plan which shall glorify his justice while it magnifies his grace. To secure his object he proposes to his Son that he assume human nature "in the fullness of the time," become the second representative of the race, and by having their sins imputed to him, and by obeying the law, and suffering in his human form the penalty due to them, magnify the law and illustrate the justice of God, on their behalf. That in consideration of his doing this he would give to him, in his own right as Redeemer, a certain portion of mankind, exalt him to the throne of the universe as Mediatorial King, and place at his disposal the third person of the God-head as his agent to carry out the purposes of his mission and reign. The Son consented to, and the Holy Spirit ratifies, the covenant. Jesus comes, and dies on Calvary. The design of the Father is secured. The legal obstacle to the salvation of sinners is removed. The offer of pardon is proclaimed to man. The design of the Son is secured. *He purchases his people with his blood.* He ascends the throne of his glory. He sends forth the Holy Ghost to renew and sanctify their hearts, and thus ensures their salvation.

But, it may be said, what is gained by this representation? So far as

III. We conclude with a few practical remarks.

1. The subject claims the earnest attention of the unconverted. Jesus Christ has "suffered for sins the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; that, as by one man's

the *design of salvation* is concerned it is limited to the elect, and as to the actual result they only are saved. All that was desired is, to represent *truth* in the relations in which it is presented in the Word of God. It is obvious, in reading the Scriptures, that the work of Christ is represented as having a *relation to man, as man*; and at the same time as having a *special reference to the elect*: that God is represented as dealing with men as moral agents, capable of receiving or rejecting the gospel, and yet, as exerting a special power over some, to overcome the moral obstacle, the depravity of their hearts, and bring them to receive the Saviour. Now both these courses of procedure are provided for in the statement submitted. The work of atonement is represented as co-extensive with the invitations of the gospel. A foundation is laid for the salvation of every man. If any be not saved, it results, not from any deficiency either inherent or relative, in the plan of redemption, but from the fact, that they perversely reject salvation. The doctrine of election is maintained. The specialty of design, indicated in the expressions which speak of Christians as the purchase of the blood of Christ—the Saviour as giving himself for his people, his church—is sustained. And at the same time the doctrine of election is so presented as to relieve it from the appearance of *partiality to men*. Men are elected, but it is for Christ's sake, as a reward to him. Infinite wisdom and discriminating love directed the choice; but that there is a choice at all, is to reward the suffering Son of God.

And does any child of Adam complain that the doctrine of election, and of the necessity of a special divine influence, renders the general offer of pardon a nugatory provision? If it be so with regard to him, it will not result from these, but from the perversity of his own heart; and let it be borne in mind, that it is no part of the purpose of the divine administration to meet the cavils, and adapt itself to the lusts of depraved human nature; that an object, higher than the salvation of men, and to which that is subservient, *the glory of God*, is to be secured through the gospel. And if men reject it, this object will be attained in their destruction. They will then see that they perish because they would not be saved.

Does any opponent of the grace of God, charge that the doctrine of election, and of the necessity of a special divine influence, encourage antinomian indifference and tend to licentiousness? On the contrary, they afford the strongest encouragements to repentance and holiness. These doctrines are so interwoven with the promises, and so connected with the precepts of the gospel, that they are a strong moral power in the conversion and sanctification of men. They no more stand in the way of a sinner's salvation; they no more tend to encourage indifference, than the doctrine of providence hinders the preservation of natural life, or promotes idleness and profligacy. To deny the sovereignty of Jehovah, and the dependence upon him of all his creatures, is to forsake, not only the

disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many *might* be made righteous." Men died in the *first man*; they may live in the *second man*. In their position as sinners under the law of God, they were without hope, shut up in eternal despair. Under the mediatorial reign of Christ, hope sheds her heavenly light upon them. They need not die. Pardon, free and full, is offered to them. The assurance of salvation is given to all who believe and are baptized. They are commanded, exhorted, urged to accept the offered mercy. What is their duty? What their highest interest? Is it not their duty at once to submit to Christ? He is their sovereign God. He has purchased the right to rule over them by his "obedience unto death, even the death of the cross." He sits upon a throne of grace, dispensing pardon, and justification, and eternal life, to all who submit to him. Is it not their duty to submit? Their highest interests are involved. The deathless spirit, under the misery of unpardoned sins, writhes in unutterable agony and eternal despair. But sin can never be forgiven to the unbelieving, the rebellious sinner. The pardon of sins is suspended upon "repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." The unbeliever must be damned! The rebel rejector of divine mercy must expiate his double guilt, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." But, O, free grace proclaims salvation! Pardon, justification, life—life eternal with God! Duty and interest combine to urge you to the Saviour; and will you come? What await ye for? Are the pleasures of sin so enticing, wealth's treasures so precious, the engage-

doctrine of the Bible, but the teachings of common sense. We cannot secure ourselves from danger, or preserve our lives, without his blessing. And yet, who would not be regarded as insane who should fail to seek to avert danger and death? Not a blade of grass can grow, not a flower bloom or wither, but as God wills. All the labor and skill of man cannot make one grain of corn, more or less, without his blessing. But who may sit down in idleness, or riot in unreflecting profligacy? Why, then, regarding spiritual interests, should men be discouraged by the sovereignty of God? Why indulge in supineness from a professed reliance upon the execution of his purposes? After all, however, if they will, they must. Facts bend not to suit the feelings, and subserve the purposes of the wicked. "The Lord reigneth;" and "the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal: The Lord knoweth them that are his, and let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity."

ments of the world so pressing, that ye cannot come? Soon will those pleasures pall—soon those treasures perish—soon life itself shall fail thee.

"Be wise to-day, 'tis madness to defer."

2. Christian brethren, come drop a tear on Jesus' tomb. He wept for you. He bled and died for you. Stand near his cross. Hear his death struggle. Your sins have wrung his heart. He bore them there "in his own body on the tree." He was despised, insulted, crucified, all for you!

"O, for this love, let rocks and hills
Their lasting silence break,
And all harmonious human tongues
The Saviour's praises speak."

And are we saved? Saved by his death? O, what return of love shall equal the gratitude of our hearts! Poor are our best offerings.

"Were all the realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all."

And, Lord, we give ourselves to thee.—To live, to labor, to die for thee. Graciously accept us for thy mercy's sake.—Amen.

THE IMPUTATION OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST TO BELIEVERS;

A Sermon, by Rev. A. M. Poindexter, of Halifax county, Virginia.

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."—Rom. x: 4.

We understand the apostle to refer, in this passage, to the law of the Jews. They, ignorant of God's righteousness, were expending their religious zeal in vain attempts to reconstruct the dilapidated fabric of their own righteousness. Like one attempting to repair a house, the very foundations of which are utterly decayed, unmindful of the truth, that "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified," they were seeking for justification by obedience to the precepts, and the observance of the rites of their institutions. But the righteousness or justification of God, (*dikaïosune Theou*,) is upon a plan entirely different; that is, through Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. By his obedience to the moral precepts, and his sufferings as the anti-type of the ceremonial of the law, he has fulfilled it, and perfected that to which its sacrifice pointed, an atonement for sin. And this righteousness of God is unto (*eis*) every one that believeth on him. The righteousness of law is by obedience—the righteousness of God is by faith. "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness."

The word translated *end* (*telos*,) has the signification of *fulfilling*. It has been variously rendered in this place. Some translate it *object* or *final cause*, that at which the law aimed, that is, justification. But justification through Christ is by his fulfilling the law in his obedience unto death. Others render it in the sense of *abolished*—*Christ has put an end to the law*. If this rendering were adopted, still, as it is by fulfilling the moral law and dying as a sacrifice, thus perfecting that to which the ceremonial law pointed, that Christ has abolished the law as to its penal power over Christians, and displaced the Jewish institute, the idea is that

which we have given. Christ has abolished the law only as he has fulfilled it. "I came not to destroy, but to fulfill the law." This fulfilling the law for righteousness is, as has been remarked, unto every one that believeth on Christ. The apostle here teaches *the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to believers*. To the consideration of this doctrine we invite you.

I. By the *righteousness of Christ* is meant, *that which he possesses as the representative or substitute of man*; by the *imputation* of this righteousness to believers, that *it is reckoned or accounted to them by God*, in a legal way, so as that *on account of it they are considered as righteous, and are justified by a sentence of the divine law*.

1. We have, in a former discourse, proved that Christ was the representative of mankind. In Rom. v, of which we have so often availed ourselves in this discussion, the object for which he assumed this relation, and the ends accomplished by it, are distinctly stated. The object is, that by his "obedience many might be made righteous." And this object was attained: for "grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." And as the disobedience of Adam imputed to his posterity (as has been shown,) constituted them sinners, so the obedience of Christ imputed to his people, constitutes them righteous. We restrict this imputation of Christ's obedience to *his people*, (or believers,) because it is required by the context. While the statements relating to his substitution embrace all men, thus as we conceive indicating the universality of his representation, those as to its saving benefits are restricted. The chapter begins with the declaration of the justification of believers, and ends with the reign of grace unto eternal life. But none except believers obtain eternal life.* The restriction is made throughout this epistle and the other sacred writings. It results from the nature of the case. Unbelievers reject Christ. They are not in him. Whatever be the value of Christ's obedience, it cannot therefore benefit them. But of those who are in Christ, it is said that they are made righteous by his obedience; that his obedience justifies them.

* It will, of course, be understood that in this and similar expressions, we have no reference to those who die infants. They, we believe, are saved through Christ, but not by faith—not by the gospel.

2. The same result follows from the fact, that sin was imputed to Christ. 2 Cor. v: 21: "He hath made him to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." The *object* for which sin was imputed to him, was that righteousness might be imputed to us; the righteousness of God, that of which the Jews are ignorant—that to secure which to believers, Christ is the end of, or has fulfilled the law.

3. The work of Christ, considered in connection with his character and relations, confirms this conclusion.

Christ was "Emanuel, God with us." He was very God and very man. It will not be expected that we shall exhibit the proofs of these positions. To do so, would lead from the subject before us. It is sufficient to remark, that to Christ Jesus the names, attributes, works and honors of Deity are ascribed. He is "the everlasting Father, the mighty God." Eternity, omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, are predicated of him. Infinite justice, truth and holiness, are his. Creation, providence, redemption, judgment are his works. He is worshiped by angels in heaven, and saints upon earth. Still, he is a man. He was tempted and oppressed as a man. Hunger and thirst, labor and weariness, pain and death, proclaim his human nature.

Connected with this double nature in the Saviour, is a fourfold relation. 1. It unites him to God. He is his Son—his beloved Son. And thus is invested with infinite dignity and worth whatever he did. His acts and his sufferings are not those of a man simply, but of "God manifested in the flesh." God may safely commit into his hands his glory and the honor of law. 2. It identifies him with man. Exalted as he is by reason of his divine nature, by his human nature he is "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh,"—our brother, our friend. He is, therefore, fitted to be our substitute in the great work of making peace through the blood of his cross. And if God need not fear to entrust him with his honor and the integrity of his government, neither need we distrust his love and sympathy. 3. Thus by nature united to both God and man, he, as we have seen, becomes, by official position, the representative of man. All that he does, and all that he suffers, is for man. And as growing out of this relation, the Lord Redeemer is, 4. the Mediator between God and man. The friend of both

parties, he steps forward to make peace between them.—Can he effect it?

It is material, in answering this question, to ascertain whether what Christ has done as our substitute is competent to the ends of justice. God, as the moral Governor of the universe, must enforce the laws which he has established. The holiness of his own character, and the interests of righteous government, require it. The only possible way of enforcing violated law is by the infliction of its penalty upon the offender, or upon some substitute of whom the sovereign power may admit. If human science could devise a plan of substitution, by which, without injury to the substitute, the authority of law could be maintained, the offender reclaimed, and the good of society promoted, it would present to our admiration a system of government having higher claims than any which human legislation has established; and every exhibition of its wonderful adaptations would but increase our grateful devotion to such a constitution. With these suggestions before our minds, let us survey the work of Christ. He was "made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." He perfectly obeyed its every precept, both in the letter and in the spirit. Thus, by a practical exhibition of its excellence, he demonstrated that the "law is holy." He submitted himself to its penalty. Thus acknowledging the justice of its sentence against man, and affording a most awful exhibition of God's retributive justice. He magnified the law, and made it honorable. He, the Son of God, did this. He did it as man for man. The law of compensation under which he suffered, secured, by reason of his Divine nature, his resurrection from the dead; his exaltation to "the glory which he had before the world was," and the possession of universal dominion as Mediatorial King; and that those, and those only, who become spiritually united to him, shall receive the benefit of his work of propitiation. Who does not perceive that by such an arrangement, the justice of God is as signally honored as is his mercy displayed?

There are two methods of acquittal under a just government. One is by establishing innocence; the other by showing that the penalty of the transgression has been already endured. That is to say, an individual arraigned for a crime, and proved innocent, is acquitted; and one ar-

raigned, and proving that he has been previously condemned and suffered the penalty of the crime now charged against him, is freed from further prosecution. A suffering of penalty as certainly frees from law as does innocence. But by neither of these methods can man free himself from the law of God. He cannot plead innocence, for he is a sinner. To come under the penalty is to suffer forever, for that penalty is death. We do not know the full import of this term. When used to indicate the penalty of sin, it includes the soul as well as the body. Now death brings the body into a state from which it can never recover. And such is the analogy of this condition of the body, and that of the condemned soul, that *death* is properly predicated of the whole man. Death, in its own nature, is eternal. We, for the sake of distinction, sometimes speak of death temporal, death spiritual, death eternal. The scriptures use not this distinction. They speak of each of the states to which we refer as death, but never of *eternal* death. *Eternal* life they discourse concerning. They, when other forms of expression are used to indicate the punishment of the wicked, add the idea of *endless duration*. But when this is used, it is *death*. And this for the very obvious reason that death, in its own nature, is eternal. Now the Lord Jesus Christ suffered this penalty. That his animal life became extinct, is beyond question. But this extinction of animal life was consequent, not so much upon the scourge and the cross, as upon the *inner crucifixion* which he endured. "I have a baptism to be baptized in, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished?" "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin." By reason of his divine nature, it was not possible that he should be holden of death. The eternal, essential life of God, enabled him to part with the life which he had as the Lamb of God, and to take it again. "I have power to lay down my life, and I have power to take it again." According to the command of his Father, he did lay it down, and take it again. This he did as the *second man*. Thus, in him, all who believe have suffered the penalty of the law, and are freed from the law "by the body of Christ." As the law has no further claim upon Christ as the substitute of man, so it has no further claim upon believers considered in him. "He was delivered for

our offences, and raised again for our justification." But this is not all. Christ not only suffered the penalty of transgression, he obeyed the law. This obedience went, it is true, to make up his fitness to be a sacrifice. The Lamb must be without spot or blemish. The necessity for rendering it was not, however, personal, but relative. The very existence of Christ was vicarious. His obedience was as much so as his crucifixion. It was a part of the great whole. Jesus, as our surety, stands before the law of God as having obeyed as well as suffered. When his work is spoken of as a whole, it is *his obedience unto death*.—The whole of what he did, as well as of what he suffered. And here we perceive how believers may not only be delivered from death because Christ has died, but be accounted righteous in him because he obeyed. As their sin was punished in him, so his obedience is rewarded in them.

4. And these statements correspond with the remarkable language of Jer. xxiii: 6: and this is the name whereby he shall be called, *THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS*; compared with xxxiii: 16: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, *THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS*. That the first of these passages relates to Messiah, is beyond doubt. And it might be sufficient to prove his work to be our justifying righteousness, that such a name is given to him. Names are added to Jehovah to indicate what he is to his people. But not only is Christ called *THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS*, or, as it is expressed in the 15th verse of the 33d chapter, *The Branch of Righteousness*, this name is given to the church, *she* shall be called *THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS*. "The name in the Hebrew is *Jehovah-tsidkenu*; and, if I am not mistaken, the use of several other of these compound terms in the Old Testament will determine the meaning of this passage. Abraham called the place where God provided an offering in the stead of Isaac, *Jehovah-jireh*—the Lord will see or provide. Moses called the altar by which he commemorated the victory over Amalek, *Jehovah-nissi*—the Lord is my banner. Gideon called the altar which he built upon the occasion of God's comforting him with the declaration 'Peace be unto thee, fear not,' *Jehovah-shalom*—the Lord send peace. The church in the latter day is described by Ezekiel as a city, and its name is to be called *Jehovah-shammah*—the Lord is

there. "Now the *place* where Abraham received the lamb was not Jehovah, nor either of the *altars* erected by Moses and Gideon. They were only memorials of what Jehovah had wrought. Neither will the city described by Ezekiel be Jehovah; but the presence of Jehovah shall be so sensibly and manifestly with it, that this shall be its *name* or *distinguishing character*. Thus it is that the church, under the gospel dispensation, shall be called *Jehovah-tsidkenu*—the Lord our righteousness; not because she is Jehovah, but because her justification by the righteousness of Jehovah forms a kind of prominent feature in her character."*

We cannot fail to remark the correspondence of these terms with those used in the verse preceding our text, and in other passages of the divine record, to designate the righteousness by which believers are justified: *the righteousness of God—the Lord our Righteousness*. The Messiah is thus called, because he is the righteousness of his people; the church, because she is justified by the righteousness of God. And for this reason it is that we are said to be "accepted in the beloved, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." The obedience unto death of our Lord Jesus Christ, procured the forgiveness of sins and acceptance with God to all who believe on him.

5. To the same purpose is that numerous class of passages in which Christ is spoken of as a sacrifice and his work as expiatory.

In noticing these portions of the word of God in the discourse upon the imputation of sin to Christ, we have remarked the vicarious nature of Messiah's sufferings. It now remains to observe, that these sufferings constituted a real atonement for sin. Under the theocracy of the Jews, sacrifices subserved two purposes. They related to sins committed against God as the political head of the nation, and they prefigured the One great Sacrifice who was to expiate sin as against the moral government of God over man. For the former of these, they actually atoned. Nothing less than this can be implied by the positive and oft repeated declarations to this effect in the law of their institution. They did sanctify "to the purifying of the flesh." "How much more, *then*, shall the blood of Christ, who, through

* Fuller's Works, vol ii, p. 818.

the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot unto God, purge *our* consciences from dead works to serve the living God?" Yes, "by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Paul informs us how this is done, Rom. iii: 24-26, "Being justified freely through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation for sin, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins—that he might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Here our justification is expressly said to be through the redemption which is in Christ; and for this purpose it was that he became a propitiation for sin, that in justifying us God might be just. The exhibition of his righteousness through the sacrifice of Christ enabled him to justify sinners—those in themselves ungodly. But God will not justify the wicked. They who are thus justified, must, therefore, be righteous in him who is their redemption.

6. In addition, then, to the class of scriptures which speak of Christ as a sacrifice, we may insist upon all those which relate to the justification of believers, as sustaining the doctrine.

Justification is a forensic term. It means acquittal—a declaration of *not guilty according to law*. The subject of justification is declared to be innocent. But as has already been remarked, the subjects of justification are in themselves considered sinners, ungodly. How, then, shall they be pronounced innocent by that God whose judgment is according to truth? It has been contended that the law has been superseded by the sacrifice of Christ, and a new, milder, remedial system introduced, under which faith and sincere obedience are accepted in the stead of perfect righteousness. But under such a system, there can be no place for the term justification. The setting aside of law is not the justification of the guilty. There is in such a case no sentence at all. There is in fact no moral character in acts; no guilt or innocence, no condemnation or justification. These terms all have respect to law, and are applicable to the conduct only, as we are regarded as subject to law. Besides, this theory is in opposition to the repeated declarations that Christ came *not to destroy*, but to *fulfill* the law; that justification by faith instead of *making void*, *establishes* the law. It places the law and the gospel in opposition to each other,

and makes the latter to destroy the former. It represents, too, the law as unsuited to the character of man. For if adapted to him, why abrogate or set it aside? The transgression of man, while it alters his standing under law, cannot change the nature of the law itself. It either required *more* than his duty of man before he sinned, or it requires *no more* than is his duty now. But will it be said that infinite Wisdom and Goodness gave man a law too stringent? requiring too much of him? or, that infinite Purity will relax the bonds of moral obligation, and require of him less than his duty? What need, then, of an atonement? If God could thus depart from the requirements of justice and the demands of his holiness, why need Christ to suffer?

Will it be said that justification is by the *law of the gospel*? Then it is opposed to the free justification, the salvation, not of works, but of faith, that it might be by grace, taught us in the word of God. In this scheme, faith is a work, sincere obedience is a course of works, required by the law by which we are said to be justified. It is a righteousness of works which justifies. Nor does it meet this objection to say that it is not by works of law, but by evangelical obedience. It matters not that there is a change of law. It is still by obedience to the new law that justification is obtained. Take away from the system the character of law, and there can be no justification; retain this feature, and it is by obedience to law that justification is obtained. How mistaken was Paul when he said, "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness!" How much to be pitied the delusion which caused him so earnestly to desire to be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness which was of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith in Christ! Such a notion of justification is self-destructive. The faith of Christians is of different degrees of strength, their obedience more or less perfect. Under this remedial law, then, some are justified by a more, others by a less, perfect righteousness; that is, by a righteousness which is not righteousness; for all righteousness is perfect conformity to law. Degrees of sin there may be, but degrees of righteousness is an absurdity. Will it be said, to escape this difficulty that all that is required in order to justification is the smallest degree of sincere faith and obedi-

ence? But then those who have more than this smallest degree, have a surplus of virtue beyond what is required, in order to their justification.

It may be said, the scriptures state that faith is imputed for righteousness, but not that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to believers; it is, therefore, the reasonable conclusion, that faith itself is the righteousness which justifies.

We trust it has been made evident, that while the doctrine is not in so many words affirmed in the sacred oracles, they do abundantly teach the imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers. But waiving for the present this consideration, we remark that the doctrine of the objection is involved in the same difficulties with that just disposed of. Justification is by law. But faith is not that which the law requires. This is perfect love to God and man, continued throughout the whole of our moral being. For God to pronounce faith, considered in itself, righteousness, is then impossible. He cannot call that righteousness which is not so. He cannot justify without righteousness. But if it be said that it is not because of what faith is in itself, but because of its relation to Christ, that it justifies us, then, unless terms are employed without meaning, the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's righteousness is yielded. If it is because of its relation to Christ that faith has its power to justify, it must be because it finds in him that which is necessary to justification. This is righteousness—a righteousness which may avail to us. And that this is the true interpretation of such expressions, is seen in the fact that faith is a *receiving* of Christ, a *coming* to him, a *trusting* in him. That the righteousness which justifies is not faith, but that to which faith has respect, is further evident, because it is said to be *revealed to faith* and to be *unto* and *upon* all them that believe. The phraseology in the passages in which it is said faith is imputed for righteousness, that we are justified by faith, indicates that faith is *not* that *on account of which* we are justified. It expresses *instrumentality*. Faith is that which unites us to Christ; and by it, we become righteous in him. Similar is the language employed to show the connection of faith with the miraculous cures performed by the Saviour—"Thy faith hath made thee whole. If thou believest, all things are possible to him that believeth." Now faith did not *work* the miracles of Christ. It had no effica-

cy to procure even the exertion of his power. But he chose to require it, perhaps, for the very purpose of illustrating the importance of faith in the economy of redemption. As faith made these persons whole because it was that upon which Jesus conditioned the exertion of his power, so faith justifies us, because it is that which he requires in order to the bestowment of his righteousness. Thus "it is of faith, that it might be by grace."

The impossibility of justification by any other method, then, connected with the fact that justification is so constantly and variously affirmed of belief, ^{Acts} establishes the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the sinner, at this conclusion is enforced by the consideration that ¹⁸⁴⁹, by Rev. W. ¹⁸⁴⁹, on is declared to be of grace and by the blood of ^{Who} of God is made unto us—righteousness."

* COR. iv

II. 1. We have now exhibited some of the evidence of the truth of the doctrine. More, much more might be brought forward. But we think we may fairly claim that what has been adduced, establishes it beyond the power of successful contradiction. And how much of the wisdom, and holiness, and grace of God, is seen in this wonderful plan of redemption! It rises beyond all our thoughts, and we can but exclaim in grateful adoration, "O, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" But while the subject far transcends our utmost power of thought, we can see enough of the love and grace of the Father, and of the unspeakable condescension and love of the Son, to inspire our largest gratitude and devotion. Here, too, we rest with confidence. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? God that justifieth? Christ that died?" No, poor sinners, as we are, all guilty before God; we are justified freely through his grace, we are made righteous in our Saviour. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ. "Thanks be unto God, for his unspeakable gift!" 'Thanks, unbounded thanks, to Jesus, for his dying love! Here, then, at thy cross, O Saviour, we renew our dedication to thee. Thou hast redeemed us—thou hast justified—thou hast saved us: What can we do for thee? To speak thy love, to plead thy cause, to suffer

and to die for thee, were a small return for all that thou hast done for us.

"O gracious Lord, we own thy right
To every service we can pay,
And call it our supreme delight
To hear thy dictates and obey."

2. We behold here a salvation suited to sinners. Guilty and condemned, there is no hope for them by their own efforts. Their moral and religious observances, their prayers and tears, their repentance and reformatations, are all of no avail. Filthy rags are all their righteousness. But the righteousness of Christ can cover every stain of sin. God can be the justifier of every one that believeth in Jesus. When does the heart of the awakened sinner sink in the sense of the magnitude of his guilt, his utterly hopeless condemnation! But let him not despair, but look to the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world." In him is righteousness and strength. Faith in Christ is all that is necessary to the justification of the vilest sinner. No effort to propitiate the favor of God, no attempt to blot out the sentence of condemnation, no righteousness of our own, is required of us. Faith in Christ, a simple, hearty, loving reliance upon his finished work. Come, then, ye guilty, ye helpless, ye sin-hardened souls. As the dying Israelite raised his trusting eye to the brazen serpent, so look ye to Christ crucified and live. Amen.