

*THE JUSTIFICATION OF GOD'S
ELECT,*

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF
A
SERMON,

Preached LORDS Day Morning,

September 21; 1806,

AT THE

BAPTIST MEETING HOUSE,

BROCKHAM GREEN. SURRY

BY JOHN BAILEY, S. J. C.

S E R M O N,

ROMANS, v. 1.

Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE Apostle having before proved at large, from the state of things before and after the law, and even before God made his covenant with Abraham, that the justification of a sinner is by free grace; he proceeds to speak of the realizing of the blessing of justification in my text.

In speaking from which, I shall,

FIRST, Treat of the justification of God's elect.

SECONDLY, Shew how they are justified by faith.

THIRDLY, Prove, that the justified sinner has peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

FIRST, I will treat of the justification of God's elect.

Justification is a law term, and is never understood to make any one righteous, but is judicially pronouncing a person so, as in Isai. xliii. 25, 26. *I, even I am he, that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. Put me in remembrance, let us plead together, declare thou that thou mayest be justified.* But it may be asked when

God did justify his elect? 1. I answer, from all eternity. For justification is an act of God's grace, an immanent act in the divine mind and eternal, for nothing new can arise in the mind of God: hence faith the apostle, Eph. i. 3, 4. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.* Now the apostle says we were chosen in Christ (that is elected) before the foundation of the world (that is, from all eternity); and as we were elected from all eternity, so likewise justified; for eternal justification must be among all the spiritual blessings the apostle speaks of. Thus we were justified when first elected, though not in our own persons, yet in our dear Lord and Head, as he had our persons then given him, and we came thereby to have a being and interest in him: so that those who object to the glorious doctrine of eternal justification, on the ground that persons cannot be justified before they exist, must also on very same ground object to the soul-supporting doctrine of eternal election, for it may as well be asked how can a person be elected before he exists. Such greatly err not knowing the Scriptures, and the power of God, for known unto God are all his works from the beginning, or from all eternity. Yes, blessed be God from everlasting he knew his people, and from all eternity, they had a representative being in Christ, were chosen in him, and blessed in him with all spiritual blessings; and why not then justified in him? for God's will to elect is election; so, God's will to justify is justification.

2. Justification is a branch of eternal election: and is no other than setting apart the elect alone to be partakers of Christ's glorious righteousness, and a setting apart Christ's righteousness for the elect only. Blessed truth this! which rejoices the heart of every justified sinner, however the poor proud pharisee, blind arminian, and the very moderate calvinist of our day, may oppose and rebel against the sovereign and eternal purposes and decrees of God.

3. I observe justification is one of those spiritual blessings, wherewith the elect are blessed according to election grace (as before noticed): well then, if God's elect are blessed with all (mark) all spiritual blessings, then it is plain that they were blessed with this also. Besides, Christ himself says, Pro. viii. 23. *I was set up from everlasting*; not only as the head of his church, but also as the surety of his people; by virtue of which engagement, the Father decreed never to impute sin to his people: so says the apostle, 2 Cor. v. 19. God was in Christ reconciling the world (that is, the elect world) to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. Thus, God was in Christ from all eternity, as the God and Father of his people: out of Christ he never was, as it refers to the elect; and in Christ he never was, as it refers to the non-elect.

Moreover, the imputation of sin to Christ, is the very essence of justification, because the elect thereby are freed from condemnation, 2 Cor. v. 21. *For he made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* And the imputation of the dear Redeemers righteousness to the elect, gives them a right and title to eternal

glory, Psa. xvii. 15. *As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness.*

Furthermore: It is worthy our particular attention, that the saints under the old as those under the New Testament, were justified, by the same righteousness of Christ, and that before the sacrifice was offered up, satisfaction given, or everlasting righteousness actually wrought out and brought in, for the scriptures say, that Christ died for sins that were past, and for transgressions under the first testament: so speaks the apostle, Rom. iii. 25, 26. *Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at, this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.* Again, says the apostle, Heb. ix. 15. *And for this cause he is the Mediator of the new testament, that by means of death for the redemption of the transgressions (of his elect) that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance;* even the realizing of the blessing of eternal justification. Thus, it appears that God did justify some, nearly four thousand years, before the righteousness of Christ was actually wrought out. Now if God could take Christ's word and bond for these (which is plain from the scriptures he did) why not for all his elect from all eternity? I come,

SECONDLY, To shew how the elect are justified by faith.

1. Faith is not before justification (as before proved) in as

much as that is a sentence which passed in the mind of God from all eternity, which passed on Christ, and all the elect considered in him, when he rose from the dead, as saith the apostle, Rom, iv. 25. *who was delivered, for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.*

2. Faith is not the efficient cause of justification. No, the efficient is God, as the scripture saith, *it is God that justifies,* Rom. viii. 33, and not faith.

3. Faith is not the moving cause of the justification of God's elect, for that is the sovereign, rich and free grace of God, Rom. iii. 24. Being justified freely by his grace, before works either good or bad were done, that it might appear, as it really is, alone of free and sovereign grace.

4. Faith is not the meritorious cause, or matter of justification. No; that is the obedience, and blood of Christ, or in other words, the righteousness of Christ. The apostle in the 9th Verse of the Chapter in which my text stands says, *Being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him: and again in the 19th Verse, For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous: and Paul says, God has declared his righteousness (that is the righteousness of Christ) that he might be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.*—Moreover, says Paul, Rom. i. 16, 17. *I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation. For therein is the righteousness of God, revealed from forth to faith.* Again, says the apostle, Rom. v. 17. *They which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one,*

Jesus Christ. ,

5. The elect are not justified by faith, as God's work in them, for that would make a part of their sanctification. Justification as before proved, is the receiving and approving of the elect as righteous only in the righteousness of Christ; whereas sanctification is the operation of the Holy Spirit in the soul, forming it into a spiritual meetness for heaven and the enjoyment of God for ever, 2 Cor. iii. 18. *For we beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord.* And as they are not justified by faith as God's work in them, so neither are they justified by faith as their work or act and deed, for then they would be justified by works and have whereof to glory, Tit. iii. 3—8. *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, that being justified by grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

But you will say, then how are they justified by faith? I will endeavor to shew you in a few words. It is true we are justified by faith, not as the object of justification, but objectively and relatively: that is, Christ is the object of faith, and whatever we receive from God, is received by the hand of faith, and among the many inestimable and glorious blessings which we receive by the hand of faith is the blessing of righteousness, therefore we are justified by faith manifestatively in our own consciences: or in other words, by faith as an act of believing

in opposition to works. Thus, you see that faith, as an eye, apprehends our justification, and as an hand receives it, which enables the justified sinner to rejoice greatly in the Lord his God. Isai. lxi. 10. *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God, for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness;* and not only does he thus rejoice in his God, but ascribes all to his sovereign grace. Rom. iv. 16. *Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace, to the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed.* I come,

THIRDLY. TO prove that the justified sinner has peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Observe, no unjustified person has peace, *There is no peace saith my God to the wicked.* Though they may have outward peace and prosperity, yet they are altogether strangers to inward peace: though they are not in trouble as other men, in bodily and soul trouble, but are easy in circumstances and have all that heart can wish, yet the way of peace they know not: and when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them.

2. I observe, that the self-righteous pharisee who trusts in himself, makes his trust his righteousness, and fetches his peace from thence, shall not know true peace, for God says, Isai. lix. 6, 7, 8. *Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works; their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands; their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity, wasting and destruction are*

in their paths, the way of peace they know not. And as for the free-willed arminian, and his broad-bottomed brother the universalist, God says in Isai. lvii. 12. *I will declare thy righteousness* (what a poor, vain and useless thing it is in the work of justification before me; the eternal God, and as) *for thy works* (which you make such a terrible noise about) *they shall not profit thee*, in point of salvation, neither shall they afford thee any peace or comfort in a dying hour.

But I will now describe the subjects of true peace.

1. Observe, sin upon conviction, is made exceeding sinful, and peculiarly distressing, which is done through the law of God, under the management of the Holy Spirit, *by the law is the knowledge of sin*, not only of the outward acts of sin, but also of the inward lusts of sin in the heart, *I had not known sin, except the law had said thou shalt not covet.* The guilt of sin upon the conscience is a heavy burden, too heavy for a poor guilty sinner to bear; so David found it, Psa. xxxviii. 3, &c. *There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger, neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sin, for mine iniquities have gone over my head as an heavy burden, they are too heavy for me.* Now when the mind of a poor sinner is opened by conviction, under the work of the law, wrath is let into the conscience, *the law worketh wrath* with the knowledge of sin by it, for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and sin, which the poor sinner sensibly feels, and it leaves a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation. This fills him with wrath and bitterness; he now kicks like a wild bull in the net against God, his

sovereignty, purposes, and decrees. Yet the more he kicks and rebels, the more he is entangled in the net, the more his spirits are depressed, his mind distressed, and his soul filled with terror and distraction, which makes him cry out with the palmist, Psa. lxxxviii. 7, 15-17. *Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou has afflicted me with all thy waves; I am afflicted and ready to die, while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted, thy fierce wrath goeth over me, thy terrors have cut me off, they came round about me like water, they compassed me about together.* Thus you see he feels wrath work within, the arrows of God stick fast in him, and the hand of God presses him sore; his wounds are grievous .and intolerable, for *a wounded spirit who can bear!* this makes him cry out, *woe is me for I am undone!* and *God be merciful to me a sinner.* Now spiritual peace is a deliverance from this great distress of soul, which, is wrought by the Spirit of God. He first convinces of sin, of righteousness, and judgment, and then comforts the poor distressed and heavy laden sinner, by taking of the things of Christ, showing, and applying them with power to his soul, therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. We sensibly enjoy peace with God, in a view of interest in the blood of Jesus Christ, *by his stripes we are healed,* which healing is no other than the pardon of sin, and the application of it, the effect of which is joy and peace: *son be of good cheer, thy sins which are many and great are forgiven thee.* Now what can make a poor sensible sinner more happy, and give him more peace than a glorious view of pardon by the blood of his dear Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ? and blessed be the dear Redeemer, that this he himself gives to every elect soul.

Moreover, it is through an application of pardon, that guilt is removed from the conscience, and the burden taken off the shoulders; the blood of Christ applied cleanses from all sin, takes away all guilt, and purges the conscience from dead works to serve the living God in newness of spirit: well then may the Psalmist say, Psa. xxxii. 1, 2, *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered, blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity.* No; but says to the poor sinner, Isai. xliv. 22. *I have blotted out, as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.* Thus, you see that it is in this way, that peace and pardon is spoken to a poor trembling, guilty sinner. Hence the blood of Jesus, speaks better things than the blood of Abel; for that cried for vengeance on the murderer, but blessed be God, the precious blood of Christ speaks peace and pardon to poor outcast and condemned criminals, John xiv. 27. *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

Furthermore, all the peace of mind and tranquility of soul that is enjoyed by the elect vessel of mercy, flows from the blood of Christ: his expectation for heaven is fixed here, Rev. v, 9. “For thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.” His hope for happiness rests in the infinite merit of Christ’s death, and in the infinite dignity of his person, as essentially and eternally God over all, blessed for evermore. Here he rests with joy, here he conquers sin, triumphs over death, and rejoices in the view of an endless eternity.

2. We have peace with God, in a view of interest in the Saviour's righteousness. A man's own righteousness will never yield him any solid peace, for there is no justification, nor salvation by it; and it is only while he thinks he is doing something good, that he has any peace; but when there is any interruption in doing, or he ceases from it, his peace is broken. But the glorious righteousness of Christ, which is perfect, pure, and spotless, by which a poor sinner is justified from all his sins, lays a solid foundation for joy and peace. The effect of righteousness shall be peace." Thus the righteousness of Christ being revealed and applied to the sinner, faith wrought in his heart to receive it, as his justifying righteousness before God, and the sentence of justification by it being pronounced in his conscience by the Spirit of God, it produces sweet peace in his soul. Hence righteousness and peace are mentioned together, the one as the fruit or effect of the other.

Moreover, the righteousness of Christ is the souls only plea with God, Psa. lxxi. 16, *I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.* The righteousness of Christ is the elect's covering, "He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness." It is the elect's joy, triumph, and exaltation, Psa. cxlv. 7. *They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness.* And in Psa. lxxxix. 15, 16. *Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance, in thy name shall they rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.* It is the soul's desire and strength, Isai. xiv. 34. *In the Lord have I righteousness and strength: Phil. iii. 9. That I may be found in him, not having mine*

own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

Furthermore, it is the righteousness of Christ imputed to the poor sinner, which enables him to sing.

Jesus, thy blood and righteousness,
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
Midst flaming worlds in these arrayed,
With joy shall I lift up my head,

Bold shall I stand in that great day.
For who ought to my charge shall lay,
While, through thy blood, absolved I am
From sins tremendous curse and shame.

Yes, it is this that fills the believer with holy boldness, and divine magnanimity of soul, even in the face of death; Job xix. 25. *I know that my redeemer liveth.* Psa. xvii. 15. *I will behold his face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake in his likeness.*

3. We have peace with God in the enjoyment of a sense of interest in the covenant, its blessings, and promises; which, as it is a covenant of life, so also of peace; it is a glorious covenant of peace that cannot be broken: and a knowledge of this, produces sweet peace and comfort, for the Lord has declared, that he will never break his covenant, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his lips, Psa. lxxxix. 34—36 *My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have*

I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David, (Christ) his seed shall endure for ever.

The blessings of the covenant are the sure mercies of David, which are sure to all the seed. They are spiritual, solid, and substantial mercies which last forever, being founded in the free, rich, and sovereign grace of God. Well may the apostle say, Eph. i. 4. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus*, such as spiritual life, spiritual light, spiritual knowledge, spiritual joy, spiritual love, and spiritual peace.

The Promises of it are exceeding great and precious, 2 Pet. i. 4. *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises*. Great in themselves, their origin, significancy and use; and precious, yea, very precious to them that believe and see their interest in them. For instance, suppose I am a mourner in Zion, the promise is, that my sorrow shall be turned into joy;—am I hungering and thirsting after God, the promise is that I shall be filled;—am I in darkness, heaviness, and distress, the promise is, though heaviness may endure for a night, joy shall come in the morning; for light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart:—am I sorely tempted by the devil, the promise is, Isai. lix. 19. *When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him*. Thus the promises of God are like apples of gold in pictures of silver; and when opened and applied by the Spirit of God, O! what joy and peace there is in believing. Yet, except the blessed Spirit is pleased to apply the promise or promises I need with power to my heart, I never shall or can

take the comfort of them.

4. We have peace with God in the enjoyment of the blessed truths of the gospel, which is the Spirit's work; and in doing which he acts the part of a comforter, John xvi. 13. *When he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth.* It is not by the law that peace is to be had; no, that was delivered in a storm, in the midst of darkness and tempest; and they that heard it were terrified, and intreated that it might not be spoken to them anymore;—surely then, they that desire to be under the law, never heard it, so as to understand the voice of it, for it pronounces the whole world guilty before God; it is a killing letter, and the ministration of condemnation and death. But it is by the glorious gospel and the truths of it, as revealed and applied to the heart by the Spirit of God, that peace is enjoyed: hence the gospel is called the word of peace; and O! what sweet peace does the believer enjoy, when the Holy Spirit, the blessed comforter is pleased to instruct and lead him into all truth: the truth makes him free, sets him at liberty, and fills him with all joy and peace in believing.

5. Lastly, We have sweet peace in the enjoyment of the love of God. O! what a mercy it is for a poor sinner to know, he is interested in the love of the Father, Son, and Spirit. The love of the Father appears, in putting us into Christ from everlasting; the love of Christ appears, dying for us; and the love of the Holy Spirit, in revealing and applying the blessings arising from Christ's death to the soul, and shedding abroad his love in the heart; which enables the believer to glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience

experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.—To conclude, What an inestimable blessing the peace of God is, a peace that *passeth* all understanding! Family peace is a great blessing, so is national peace; but what is family peace, or what is national peace, when compared with the peace of God, enjoyed in the soul by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will—working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen.

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