

# JUST AND A JUSTIFIER;

OR,

## THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

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JUSTICE, or righteousness, is that quality in a person or being which leads him to love and practise what is just or right. "The righteous LORD loveth righteousness." (Ps. xi. 7.) "The righteousness of the perfect shall direct his way." (Prov. xi. 5.)

"The tree is known by its fruit." It is by its manifestations that the presence of the quality of righteousness in the person is known; hence the term is also used in the sense of the exact fulfilment of, or conformity to, that which is just or right.

When the person occupies the place of a ruler or judge, righteousness manifests itself in retributing to every one in exact accordance with his desert or his rights; and this is called the righteousness of the king or judge. (2 Sam. viii. 15.)

When the person occupies the position of a subordinate, righteousness manifests itself in the exact fulfilment of the duties imposed by his superior. (Deut. vi. 25.)

Righteousness among equals manifests itself in the exact fulfilment of mutual duties, and respect of mutual rights. (Prov. xii. 17.)

*The righteousness of any one* is therefore his character or quality of just, righteous, or upright; or his conformity

with a fulfilment of what is just and right in the relationships in which he stands.

When the duties are prescribed by law, their fulfilment is called the righteousness of the law, *i.e.* the righteousness which the law exacts. (Rom. viii. 4.)

*Just* or *righteous* is he who has righteousness, or who is in character and conduct in exact conformity with that which is just and right. He who lacks this, even in the smallest point, is *unjust* or *unrighteous*. For justice, accurately speaking, admits of no gradations ; it is absolute and most exact. (James ii. 10.)

*To justify* is to declare or manifest any one's conformity with the requirements of justice.\* The judge justifies the accused when, in view of the facts of his conduct, he pronounces him in conformity, and gives sentence in his favour. (Deut. xxv. 1 ; Isa. v. 23 ; Prov. xvii. 15 ; 1 Kings viii. 32.) An individual justifies himself when he proves or makes evident that himself or his conduct is in conformity. (Job ix. 20 ; Luke x. 29 ; xvi. 15.)

The first of these is the sense in which Paul employs the word in his epistle to the Romans, when he treats of the justification by God of him who believes. The second is the sense in which James employs it, when he treats of the man's manifesting or giving proof of the reality of his faith, to justify himself in his pretension of being a believer or having faith.

*Justification* is the act of him who justifies, the sentence given in favour of the accused, or the manifestation of his own righteousness by one who undertakes to justify himself.

\* An old Scotch use of "justify" applied it also to the execution of the penalty of the law, as, when a man was hanged for murder, he was said to be justified ; which accords with Paul's use of it in Rom. vi. 7, "He that is dead is *justified* from sin," taken along with Gal. ii. 19, judicially inflicted death.

*To impute righteousness or justice* is to reckon, repute, or account a person just or righteous. It is properly the antecedent of justification. First the person is accounted just; and being so reckoned, is then pronounced so. One is subjective or putative—the way one regards the person in one's own estimation; the other is objective or declarative—the way one treats the individual publicly.

Such is its meaning in the epistle to the Romans, where, in chapter iv., the word *impute* occurs eleven times, but is in verses 3 and 5 translated “count,” and in 4 and 9 “reckon.” The word employed in verse 13 of chapter v., and also translated “imputed,” is a different one, and of different meaning; viz., that of putting something to one's account, as in Philemon 18 (the only other place in which it is found in the New Testament), “If he owe thee anything, put that on mine account.” The confounding of these two things is a principal ground of a form of error we shall have to treat of farther on.

When we come to treat of the *righteousness or justice of God*, no question of fulfilling duties can enter into it; for He owes nothing to any one, but is in Himself the essence, author, and spring of all rights, of all duties, and of all justice. His righteousness is His perfect conformity with Himself—with what He is—and the consequent conformity of His treatment of His creatures with what is worthy of Himself, and for that same reason just and right.

Man *ought* to be just; that is, he ought in character and conduct to be in exact conformity with that which God has imposed on him as duty, in the circumstances and relationships in which He has set him.

The law announced on mount Sinai to the Israelitish nation is the exact expression of the duty of man in his natural state, or “in the flesh;” that is, as a child of Adam. To say, as some do, that the law is the full expression of

the character of God is quite a mistake. Has God any neighbour whom He may love as Himself?

Man, however, is not up to the standard of his duties, and, measured by the scale of the law, is demonstrated lacking; for which reason God, in Psalms xiv. and liii., quoted in Rom. iii. 10, declares, "There is none righteous, no, not one;" and in the same chapter (v. 20) farther declares, as a consequence of this, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." In other words, there is no man who so fulfils his duties as to satisfy the righteousness of the law, and therefore there is none who can put forward works capable of manifesting conformity so as to obtain at the hands of God's justice a sentence in his favour, declaring him just or righteous. Not being able to justify himself, it follows that man is unjust, and as such guilty before the divine righteousness.

In such circumstances the man, apart from grace, has all to fear on the part of the righteousness of God; for if he has to do only with that, he must needs be condemned. God's justice or righteousness is therefore the greatest enemy of the natural man. "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." (Heb. x. 31.) Alas that the only hope which so many of the hapless ones nourish should be, that God may at last prove to be somewhat less than righteous, and exercise mercy in their favour at the cost of righteousness; *i.e.* that He may prove false to Himself, and deny His own character and nature in order to favour them! Sad fact, that such a delusion should have power in the hands of the devil to cradle so many souls in a vain and fatal security! Sinners ought rather to account it as certain, that if there be no way of calling God's justice to their side, so that it may itself justify them, they are infallibly lost. God's mercy never acts save hand in hand with His righteousness.

Here, then, is that which renders it of the utmost im-

portance to find a reply to the question proposed so many centuries since by Job : "How should a man be just with God?" The epistle to the Romans supplies it. The Spirit of God sets forth and develops in that epistle the truth concerning the natural state of fallen man as entirely destitute of righteousness or justice before God, and demonstrates how, even so, the justice of God can intervene to justify instead of condemning him, or, in the language of the Spirit Himself, "To declare at this time His righteousness: that He may be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus." (Rom. iii. 26.)

Just and a justifier! Nothing easier or more natural, in case of having to do with a righteous person; no nobler employment of the justifying power than to exonerate maligned innocence. The case, however, is otherwise. It is a question of justifying the guilty. God "justifies the ungodly;" there is the marvel! The just Judge gives sentence in favour of the ungodly man, the guilty sinner! How can this be, without tarnishing His righteousness by the act, and showing Himself unjust?

The solution of the problem is supplied by the Holy Ghost in Rom. iii.: "Justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood."

If it is "freely," it cannot be in view of some supposed merit they have, nor of any other consideration presented by them. Be the motive which influences God to this what it may, it originates with Himself, not with or in them; for a thing done freely or gratuitously is a thing done without exchange or equivalent.

In conformity with this, therefore, it is added that it is "by His grace," or unmerited favour, as that precious word "grace" signifies.

The justification of the sinner is therefore a spontaneous act of divine grace, which originates in that notable quality

of the divine Being—His disposition to show favour to the unworthy.

It is not however with disregard of all other considerations that divine grace operates for the justification of the guilty. It is not by treading justice underfoot, or despising its claims. The grace of God, like His mercy, never moves save in concert with justice; for He is as prone to righteousness as to grace, and cannot deny Himself by exercising one attribute at the cost of another; for which reason the Spirit yet adds, to complete the chain of truth, “through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” The redeeming work effected by Jesus Christ is that which enables God to exercise His grace towards sinners without prejudice of His justice; to understand how is to understand the gospel. Its explanation is given in the words which follow: “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood.”

Redemption, in the sense of the Hebrew word (גאולה) so translated, signifies the liberation of any person or thing from a vitiated or abnormal position. It may be effected either by payment of a price (Lev. xxv. 25–31, xxvii.; Ruth iv., &c.), or else by the strong hand of power. (Psalm lix. 19; lxxvii. 15; Neh. i. 10, &c.)

The manner in which “the redemption which is in Christ Jesus” effects the aim of facilitating to God the exercise of grace in accordance with righteousness, or of making it possible for Him to be just and a justifier, is Christ’s being made a propitiatory, or medium of propitiation, through faith in His blood.

Propitiation in common usage means that which conciliates, renders favourable, or appeases. There is much of caution as to the sense in which it is admitted to apply to God. All human speech, framed as it is on human and earthly circumstances and relationships, which but feebly correspond with divine and heavenly things, is but an



imperfect medium at the best for the communication of divine truths.

Anger or wrath in man is a passion, a fruit of his fallen nature, in which self-love plays a foremost part; so that when men are angered one with another, the selfish passion needs to be appeased by the presentation of some motive which, addressing itself to the same self-love, may induce it to vibrate in the opposite direction. There is nothing of this in God. Wrath in Him is not a passion, nor has it its root in selfishness; but is a principle—His inflexible abhorrence of evil—and is rooted in justice, and in that alone.

The wrath of God being then His inflexible hatred of sin, and His firm purpose of always treating it according to righteousness, what is needful in order to propitiate it is that which may secure the ends of justice with due manifestation of the divine abhorrence of the sin.

Justice demands that sin be punished, and that in such form as may demonstrate God's horror of it, which being executed on the sinner is his ruin, his perdition. The problem is, *whether there be any means of attaining the ends of justice, and sustaining the authority of the divine throne, without the sinner's perishing.* The cross—the effusion of the blood of Jesus Christ thereon—is this means; a means set forth or supplied by God Himself; a means which Scripture declares and conscience recognizes as sufficient and efficacious. Jesus Christ is the propitiation of the divine justice, in view of which God is just in the act of justifying him who is of the faith of Jesus, *i. e.* who plants himself on that ground. This propitiation He effected by “bearing their sins in His own body on the tree;” being “made sin” for them; “made a curse” for them; dying for them, “the just for the unjust, that He might bring them unto God;” dying for their sins. (1 Peter ii. 24; 2 Cor. v. 21; 1 Cor. xv. 3; 1 Peter iii. 18.)

The question of all this is one of substitution in punishment—substitution in bearing the righteous wrath of God against sin ; and the righteousness of the transaction is simple and easy to understand.

There are cases—classes of circumstances—in which the sentiment of justice in man admits the propriety of substitution, or that one person pay, suffer, or work for another, as there are other cases in which it would be deemed inadmissible. Happily for us divine justice also admits this important principle. The ultimate end of justice is the maintenance of right, and when this can be upheld and established apart from the suffering of the guilty, it can consent ; and the mode of this naturally varies according to circumstances. A monetary obligation, for instance, could only with justice be liquidated by an equivalent of exact value ; but exact payment being made to the creditor, so that he suffers nothing in his right, justice can consent without difficulty that the payment be made by another (both parties consenting) in substitution of him who contracted the debt.

The question there, being material, is of a *quid pro quo*—current coin, or its equivalent in kind, which the creditor may recognize and admit as having equal value for him, so that with it he is satisfied.

The question of sin is not material, but moral. It imparts an outrage against God in His character of Lord of all and Governor of His universe. It is a blow struck at His authority, in some cases at His person ; and justice demands that the criminal be treated in such wise as shall manifest God's hatred of such attempts, His purpose to maintain His authority, and which shall guarantee that authority against its repetition.

God alone is capable of deciding what is the atrocity of sin, what the penalty it merits at His hands as an adequate expression of His hatred of it, and what the effective means

of disarming it of the power of perpetuating evil. This He has done, both by the penalty He has affixed—hell, and by the remedy He has supplied—the cross.

If God has declared that the penalty deserved by all and every sin at the hands of His justice is His curse, implying eternal exclusion from His presence, and deliverance to the “worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched,” who is the hardy sinner that, seeking to be judge in his own cause, shall have the boldness to question His right, or the justice of the award? And if the same God has also announced the terms of a substitution with which He is pleased to account His outraged honour satisfied, and the ends of His justice met, who shall be the madman—alas that there should be so many!—who instead of gratefully consenting shall set himself to criticise and cavil?

The question is not, as in cases of debt, that of a *quid pro quo*, that can be materially weighed; it is moral, and therefore susceptible of other modifications than in the matter of debts.

Let us suppose a case.

Let us suppose that there should be a riot in London, and that, for some motive the fury of the populace directing itself against the Emperor of Germany, they should violate the sacredness of the embassy, insult the ambassador, pull down the German arms from his dwelling, and trail them, along with the German flag, through the streets.

Let us suppose farther, that when the question came up between the two nations of satisfying the outraged German honour for the insult, complicity in the crime being brought home to ten thousand individuals of the city, it should be agreed that the imprisonment of these for three years be accounted a just retribution, with which Germany should declare itself satisfied. In such a case the penalty would

be borne by the guilty ones themselves, and it is little likely that any should seek to relieve them from it. Let us however suppose that the heart of the Queen were so touched by the thought of ten thousand of her subjects laying uselessly in prison for three long years, with ruin to their affairs and their families, that she should propose to the German Emperor an act of substitution, according to which she, the Queen and head of the British nation, should consent to a three days' imprisonment in the common prison, in place of the three years' duration of the others. Would any one doubt that such an offer would be promptly owned, not only by Germany, but by the whole world, as an act which, while it greatly ennobled the character of the Queen, would impart an *amende* whose moral value was far beyond that of the punishment of the actual culprits. The dignity of the person, entering into the account of the satisfaction given, would be more than a counterpoise to both the number of the criminals and the severity or duration of the imprisonment. The question in such cases is one of moral value. The German national honour being outraged, the nation would account itself degraded and demoralised before the world, did it not exact satisfaction for the affront ; and the thing needful would be that which should satisfy the *morale* of the position, and the national dignity.

The question of sin is also of this class, though exempt from the mixture of unworthy passions met with in international as in all other worldly affairs. It is God in His quality of a divine being, creator and governor of His universe, whose dignity and that of His government are outraged by sin, and in risk of contempt in case He should not show Himself capable and resolved on maintaining them at their due and proper height. Alas ! the facts of human history furnish sad proofs of the need, and of the readiness on the part of men (disbelieving the firmness

of His purpose, Eccles. viii. 11) to give rein to hardihood and live in revolt !

Eternal punishment being therefore that which divine justice demands, how can there be a substitution, amounting to a moral reverence of the divine person and government, equivalent to the execution of the penalty on the race ? It is clear that no mere man, however innocent or just, could be in a position to offer it. Life for life, one man is of the same value as another ; and yet, the culprits being men, the substitution had needs be made by a member of the human family. Where then could a man be found invested with the requisite dignity and worth ? To find one were impossible. God had Himself to prepare one on purpose (Heb. x. 5), and sending Him into the world, to charge Him with the task ; a man who, while really such, should not be either an accomplice in the sin nor a partaker in the moral effects of the fate of the race, and who should moreover possess in other respects the competent dignity of person. Only a divine person was adequate to the undertaking. The Son of God, taking humanity in the womb of the virgin, offered Himself. God and man—man exempt by His miraculous birth from all taint of sin—He and only He was in a position to meet the case. His humanity (sinless and impeccable) rendered Him a legitimate and true representative of the race, while the union with it of His divinity clothed His person with a dignity and worth which gave competent value to the substitution. This person of *infinite* worth and dignity offered Himself voluntarily to receive and exhaust the penalty of the divine wrath and curse against sin, subjecting Himself to death under it to redeem sinners. The transaction was realised, the sacrifice was offered, and God declared Himself satisfied by raising Him from among the dead and elevating Him to His own right hand in glory. Here is the import of that language, “ Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiatory.”

In order to the due appreciation of this fact, it should be held in memory that it by no means implies God having laid hands on an innocent person and obliged Him to suffer for others, as some have cavilled ; but not only was the sacrifice voluntary, but itself an act of God. If it was God who received the propitiation, it was also God, in one of the persons of the Godhead, who offered and made it—a fact which only the Trinity of the persons in the Godhead could explain or render possible.

The link which attaches individuals to this salvation, and places them under shelter of the substitution, is that expressed in the last clause of the verse we are considering—“through faith in His blood”—and is thus the conclusive demonstration of the ground on which the divine justice rests the justification of the sinner. Faith in the *blood* of Jesus Christ—His life laid down—is the one only thing here declared by the Holy Ghost as needed in order that God may with righteousness justify, or be “just and a Justifier.” If aught beside were needful, it were here it should show itself ; but, as is seen, the blood, and the blood alone, enters into the case. The justifying sentence of God is pronounced in view of the propitiation made by Jesus Christ, and through faith in this—neither more nor less.

The effect and result of this mode of God’s dealing with sinners is the demonstration of His justice in the remission of sins, whether in the past, whether in the present time ; that is, the demonstration of the fact that the death of Jesus brings justice to the side of all who believe ; so that on this ground it becomes as much God’s righteousness to justify the believer as to execute justice on the unbeliever. Such, then, is “the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe.”

Between righteousness and unrighteousness—the being

just or the being unjust—there is no middle term. The import of justification may be expressed with equal exactness either positively or negatively. It may be said to import a declaration that the person is just, or has righteousness; or that it imports a declaration that the person is not unjust or lacking of righteousness. The demonstration of this we have from the Holy Ghost in Romans iv. The apostle there introduces a quotation from Psalm xxxii. in this wise: “David also describeth the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works, *saying*, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed the man to whom the Lord shall in no wise reckon sin.” According to this, to impute righteousness and not to impute sin are equivalent or identical propositions; for it is well seen that David says nothing in the psalm about the imputation of righteousness, but only of the non-imputation of sin; and yet Paul, by the Spirit, cites this as a declaration by David of the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness.

We may, then, lay it down as a fundamental principle in this matter, that to impute righteousness and not to impute sin are interchangeable terms, and consequently that to absolve from the guilt of sin and to impute righteousness are the same thing—the same fact contemplated from the positive or negative sides; so that if we know the grounds of the forgiveness or putting away of sin, we know therein the grounds of the imputation of righteousness. Now the sentence of justification imputes justice or righteousness to the justified one, declaring him just; and this sentence we have already seen proceeds on the basis of the propitiation made by means of the blood of Christ, and is thus the exact equivalent of what John affirms of the blood in another form, when he says that it “cleanseth us from all sin” (1 John i. 7); and so Paul, in Romans v. 9, “justified by His blood.”

Here is, then, what the word of God means by "imputing righteousness:" it is God, in view of the value of the blood of Christ, absolving from sin, *or* accounting and treating as righteous, him that believes; and "the righteousness of God" in favour of sinners is His dealing with them on this ground, justifying them in righteousness.

Magnificent truth! Most precious to the sinner who believes, to know on the testimony of God Himself that his appeal lies not alone to the mercy and the grace of God, but to His very justice, which, through the blood of Jesus Christ, from being against him has taken side with him, from being his avenging Judge has become his justifier. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." (Rom. viii. 33.) Who shall attain, as lacking in righteousness, whom God counts and declares righteous, justifying him? Triumph of the divine wisdom and love over all the powers of evil! God is "just, and the justifier of him that is of the faith of Jesus Christ."

In contrast with the truth just examined, two forms of error are current, which, though diverging widely from each other, and operating very differently, both contravene the scriptural teaching before us.

On the one hand the justification of the sinner is attributed to a righteousness wrought in him by the Spirit, and accounted his, or imputed to him, which amounts to justification by the man's own works, though it be works done, as they teach, by the operation of the Holy Ghost. This is the doctrine of Rome and Romanisers in its least repugnant form.

A single sentence of the word serves for its refutation, even were there nothing beyond, and that in the immediate context of the words already examined. In verse 20 of the same (Rom. iii.) the apostle says, "By the deeds of



the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight." So it stands in the Authorised Version, and even so the truth comes out clearly enough, but still more so when closely translated "by deeds of law," which is a more general proposition, though in the same sense. The deeds of the law are deeds done in fulfilment of the law, as given by Moses. "Deeds of law" are deeds of that class—works in fulfilment of law of any kind. By works of this species, (or, in other words, by fulfilment of duties) no one shall be justified; and of this class are certainly any such works a man practises, whether of his own natural ability, whether by operation of the Holy Ghost. A righteousness wrought in a man imparts necessarily a righteousness founded on, or manifested by, the fulfilment of acts of obedience—deeds of law—and cannot therefore be the justification of a sinner.

The other form of error in this point is the doctrine known as "evangelical," which, denying with reason the Romish doctrine of a righteousness in the person—an imparted righteousness—as the basis of justification, teaches that the righteousness in which the believer stands before God, and in which therefore he is justified, is "the righteousness of Christ," meaning thereby the obedience yielded to the law by the Saviour in His holy human life in the world, whose acts of obedience or fulfilment of law they say were done as the substitute of the believer, and are put to his account, or imputed to him.

Now, in the first place, this doctrine finds its complete refutation in the very same text in which we have seen the overthrow of the other. Works of obedience to the law done by Jesus Christ are "deeds of law" as much as those of any other; and if it be through the imputation to them of the "deeds of law" done by the Lord that believers are justified, it is still "by deeds of law" they are justified, in the face of what we have seen—that "by

deeds of law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight."

In the next place this doctrine is founded on an erroneous sense of the word "impute." As I have already observed, there are two words employed by the Spirit whose distinction ought not to be confounded. That used in Rom. v. 13 and in Phil. 18 (ἐλλογέω) has the sense of placing a thing (a sum of money, or other) to one's account exactly in the manner in which the doctrine teaches that the obedient acts of Jesus in His life are placed to the account of the believer; and if the word in Rom. iv. were the same it would give colour to the doctrine; but the Spirit has selected another word when expounding the doctrine of the imputation of righteousness to the believer, which word (λογίζομαι) has not the sense of placing a thing to one's account, but of accounting the person to be this or that, or attributing to him a certain character or quality; as, for example, in the case of having two pretenders to a throne, those of either party account as the legitimate king their own pretendent, and treat him accordingly—they impute to him the royal quality. In the same manner God, through faith in Jesus Christ, imputes to the sinner the quality of just or righteous, and treats him accordingly, as we have already seen, which is quite a different matter from placing to his account the deeds of another. The Greek word δικαιοσύνη (translated righteousness or justice), in common with other words of similar termination, like words in our own language ending in "ness," signifies character or quality—the character or quality of just or righteous, as darkness the quality of being dark; meekness, the quality of being meek; uprightness, the character of being upright; holiness, the quality or character of being holy, &c. To say of a man that he is meek is to impute meekness to him, and to say that he is just or righteous is to impute righteousness to him.

The word employed in Rom. v. 18 in contrast with "offence" is another which signifies an act of justice, and hence "justification." The correct rendering of that verse is: "As by one offence towards all men for condemnation, so by one act of justice" (or one justification) "towards all men for justification of life:" a very different matter from "the righteousness of one," as given in the Authorized text, but happily corrected in the margin.

In the third place it is noteworthy that no such expression as "the righteousness of Christ" is met with in the word. The phrase invariably employed there is "the righteousness of God," which would be strange were the doctrine they teach true; for places are not lacking wherein the phrase would not only have been more clear and intelligible (in their sense), but even more natural. If, for example, the idea in the mind of the apostle, when penning Rom. iii. 21, 22, was that of the imputation of Christ's righteousness, how easy to have put the question beyond controversy by saying, "But now the righteousness of God without law is manifested . . . even the righteousness of Christ, which is by faith unto all and upon all them that believe;" or again in Philip. iii. 9, "Not having my own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness of Christ." Can any one doubt but he had so written had the doctrine in which his heart rested been that of the imputation to him of the righteousness of Christ?

In the fourth place, the doctrine upsets other scriptures, such as 1 John i. 7, Rom. v. 9, where all is attributed to the blood of Christ.

Sin is, by the confession of some of the staunchest advocates of the doctrine, defined to include "want of conformity," so that the lack of righteousness is sin. If therefore the justification of the sinner does not proceed simply on the ground of the blood, but needs, over and above, the imputation of "the righteousness of Christ," it

ceases to be true that "the blood of Jesus Christ purifieth from *all* sin," for it does not, according to that, supply or meet the lack of conformity; and so in Rom. iii. 25, already examined. In order that this text should fit in with the doctrine, it ought to read, "through faith in His blood *and righteousness*;" but then it stands, in the wisdom of God, simply, "through faith in His blood," for the establishment of truth and confounding of error.

The main props of the error are the mistranslation already dealt with in Rom. v. 18, "the righteousness of one," and a mistaken view of verse 19, where it is said, "As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." There, it is said, there is a distinct affirmation that it is by the obedience of Christ they are made righteous, which is quite true; but is it necessary therefore to understand, by that "obedience," all the obedient acts of His holy life placed to their account? Hardly. Is that, perchance, the case with the other side of the parallel, "one man's disobedience"? Does this mean all the disobedient acts of Adam's life? or does it refer to that one act of disobedience in which he fell, as head of the race? No one will dispute the meaning here. "Disobedience" in the verse means but one act, though doubtless there were many more in Adam's long life. Why then must a so much wider scope be given to the other side, with destruction of the force of the contrast? Was not the death of Jesus "obedience," as the participation of the forbidden fruit was "disobedience"? He at least says so. "This commandment have I received of my Father." He obeyed, laying down His life that He might take it again. Such is the "obedience" which, in contrast with the "disobedience" of Adam that brought in ruin, saves them that are His.

The support of these two texts failing, the doctrine falls, and it is well it should; for it brings with it most painful

consequences, which, if the pious men who advocate it perceived, they would shrink from.

Firstly, it implies a depreciation of the great work of the cross; for it denies its sufficiency alone and of itself for salvation; it overturns completely, for example, the teaching of Hebrews x., where it is maintained that "by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

Secondly, it renders that death logically unnecessary; for if it be true that Christ was accepted as my substitute in the fulfilment of the law, and that He, in fact, substituted me in this during His life, He did in my behalf and stead *all* that the law could require; for it does not claim fulfilment AND death, but only fulfilment OR death. And the substitution being accepted and carried out in His life, it were palpable injustice to exact of Him that He should also die. The law in that case exacted more at the hand of my Surety than I owed it.

Thirdly, it implies thus the imputation to God of cruel injustice to His holy Son in causing Him needlessly to suffer—a thought one almost shrinks from penning, and would be loath to dwell on.

Fourthly, it involves the hideous idea that God can admit of substitution in morality, or that duties in the matter of morals can be fulfilled by substitute. The law enjoins on me not to profane God's name, not to kill, commit adultery, or steal. I may have profaned the name, killed, committed adultery, stole; but I present a substitute who never did any of these things, and His not having done them is accepted in place of mine, and I, the immoral practiser of evil deeds, am accounted a moral man, a righteous man, because, though in fact the contrary, the morality of another is placed as a counterpoise to my immorality! It is dreadful!

A widely-different thing from the truth of my guilt

having brought me under condemnation as a sentenced criminal, from which condemnation I only escape by bowing to it, and so owning the justice of the sentence as to gladly avail myself of the offer of another to bear the judgment in my stead. The one case is a making light of evil ; the other its most solemn judgment.

The error springs from the want of observing well the limits within which substitution is admissible.

Substitution in the matter of penalties no Christian contests the propriety of, so that one must not delay over that.

Substitution in service or work is equally recognized ; but as it approaches closely to the matter in hand, it may be well to analyze a little its conditions. Military service offers one of the most simple and familiar examples. The law in some countries appoints a certain term of military service to every male citizen. What it requires is service rendered to the state, whether in the field, the barrack-yard, mounting guard, or any other. Such are the things to be done ; and so long as they are accomplished, it matters little by what hand, only the burden is distributed equally over all by the requirement of an equal term of service from each. In order not to render it over burdensome, however, in certain cases the principle of substitution is admitted, according to which any citizen whom it does not suit to serve in person, on finding another (whose name is not on the roll for his own account) disposed to take his place, the services of the latter are accepted in exchange.

The substitute having entered on the duties, renders in fact the *identical services* the other would have been called to render, not merely some services similar to them. He handles the same musket, mounts guard on the same days and hours, and in the same places the other would have done ; his name fills the same blank on the muster roll,

and his person the same place in the rank, which the other would have filled ; and it may be that he falls on the field struck by the very ball that would have dropped the man he substituted, had not the arrangement been entered on. Thus the substitution is a reality ; the service due to the state is actually done.

Another example. I hire my services to a master to do a certain work. Circumstances arise which require my absence. I propose to hand over the task to another ; the master agrees, and my substitute completes the service. *My service, my work is done*—the very same work my hands would have accomplished. The substitution is real.

Another still. I contract with a person to build him a house, and one of the conditions of the contract is that the house be ready by a certain day, under penalty of an abatement in the price. Circumstances interrupt, and seeing myself unable to discharge the contract, I hand it over to another, with consent. The substitute does the work well, and up to time. *The work is done*, which is the essential thing in the case—the very work I was under obligation to do, and not merely a work like it. But how would it be if, on presenting the bill for settlement, my substitute were told he must still submit to the abatement of the fine, because, though he had done the work, and completed the contract, as well or better than I could have done it, yet *I* had failed, and he must pay for me, as well as work for me !

There is exactly what the said doctrine implies that God has done in the matter of salvation by Jesus Christ !

In all admissible cases of substitution in the matter of services, it has for its aim the prevention of the injuries which would result from the failure on the part of the principal, which is the essential of the arrangement.

The truth is, however, that my blessed Saviour neither has nor could fulfil my duties. I ought to honour my

parents, and have failed. Jesus honoured His parents perfectly, which is a thing exactly similar to the duty in which I failed; but *it is not the fulfilment of my duty*. If my lack of respect wounded my father's heart, the respect of Jesus for His reputed father, Joseph, has neither prevented nor remedied the consequence of my fault: my father sorrowed, and no substitution could undo it.

It is my duty to abstain from stealing; but supposing I have stolen, how could the not having ever stolen of the Lord Jesus Christ substitute me in this? In short, the very idea of substitution in morals is of itself immoral.

The holy and immaculate life of our blessed Lord was assuredly the indispensable prelude to His infinitely glorious sacrifice, the thing prefigured in all the types by the requirement that every animal offered should be "without blemish." It does not need the idea of substitution to invest it with value to a Christian's heart; it is just what constitutes Him the manna of his earthly pilgrimage, as it contributed to make Him before God "a sacrifice of a sweet savour." We would not in anywise lose sight of it: it is of inappreciable worth to our soul; but we would wish, with God's help, to give it the place in our thoughts that belongs to it, according to the Word, and not to put it in a place that vitiates other truths. We would have our spirit subject to the Word, stripped of all preoccupations, and ready to be led by the Spirit into all truth. Blessed, for ever blessed be God! "He hath *made Him to be SIN for us*, who knew no sin, that we might be made *the righteousness of God in Him*," not made Him to be "righteousness" for that purpose, as error would have it.