

William Eyre {1613-1670}

Introductory Preface to the book by William Eyre

VINDICIA JUSTIFICATIONIS GRATUITAE

Justification Without Conditions or The Free Justification Of A Sinner

John Owen

Reader: The great Work of them who are Ambassadors for Christ, to beseech men in his stead, to be reconciled unto God, is to reveal the Will and Love of the Father, in making him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of God in him. The manifestation of the Excellency, Fullness, Sufficiency, and Absolute Preeminence of that Righteousness, so wrought out, from the Council of the Will of God, dispensed in a Covenant of Grace, is that, which in the pursuit, and discharge of the Trust committed to them, that they chiefly, through the strength of God, do, or ought to lift up themselves unto. In this Labor of the Gospel, hath the Author of the ensuing Treatise, evinced his Fellowship and Communion, by the travel of his mind, {accompanied with those advantages of Abilities, and Learning, which make such undertakings acceptable, and useful} which he hath laid out therein. The persons, occasion, and other circumstances, related unto, in this Discourse, I am utterly unacquainted withal, but only by the light which concerning them, it self holds out unto me; which being not a sufficient bottom for a Judgment of this notoriety, I am not called, no more than desired to deliver my thoughts concerning them. Every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. Of the Matter treated on herein, various are the thoughts of learned Men; those doubtless seem to have the advantage, who walk in a professed compliance with the design of God, to give the Son of his Love, with his Love and Grace in him, the Preeminence in all things. To deliver my Thoughts concerning the severals, argued, and disputed in this Treatise, neither the minute of time, whereunto for this expression of myself I am confined, will admit me, nor doth my present aim require. {Especially considering that I have at large delivered myself to the main Head of the whole, in my Book of the Perseverance of the Saints, and Answer to Mr. John Goodwin on that subject, now almost cleared off the Press.} For the present, I shall only say, that there being too great evidence of very welcome entertainment, and acceptance, given by many to an almost pure Socinian Justification, and Exposition of the Covenant of Grace, even amongst them, into whose hearts God seems to have shined, in some measure, to give the light of the knowledge of his glory, in the face of Jesus Christ, all solid, learned, sober, endeavors, for the Vindication of the Absoluteness, Freedom, Independency, and Preeminence of that Grace in Jesus Christ, whereby we are saved, will doubtless find acceptance with the Children of Gospel-Wisdom, and all that love the glory of Him that bought us. Amongst such Labors and Endeavors {Christian Reader} I commend to thy consideration, the ensuing Treatise, and commit thee to the Lord. John Owen, Westminster, Nov.7, 1653.

Accepted in Christ

I shall add but a word to clear up the difference between the actions of regenerate and unregenerate persons. First, we say that the best actions of unregenerate men are impure and sinful, which though they are pardoned unto all the Elect for the sake of Christ, yet they are not acceptable to God, but in themselves most abominable and loathsome in his sight, Prov.5:8, Tit.1:15, Is.1:13, &c. Secondly; though {as the Orthodox acknowledge} the

best works of the best men, have not in them that inherent purity and holiness, which can stand before God without the mediation of their High Priest; yet they may be said to be acceptable and pleasing unto God - as they are washed and cleansed in the blood of Christ, I Pet.2:5. Our spiritual sacrifices are made acceptable to God in Jesus Christ, or by his taking away the sin and defilement that adheres unto them. {Ex.28:38} Our High Priest doth not procure the acceptance of those works, which in their whole abstract nature, are sinful, such as are all our works before Conversion, and the fruits of the flesh after Conversion, he obtains forgiveness, but not acceptance for them; but now those works which come from the Spirit of God, and are sinful only through the mixture of our corruptions {as sweet water which passeth through a sink} these he makes acceptable to the Father, by taking away the imperfections and defilements that adhere unto them. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions - 1654}

Antinomianism

As for the imputation he hath cast on our Doctrine, {which he calls an Antinomian Error} I doubt not, but it will redound more unto his shame, than unto ours. It hath been an old continued practice of Satan, to blast the truths and ways of God with odious Nick-names, purposely to deter the simple from looking into them; as few men will come near to a house which is marked for the Plague. It were easy to fill a Volume with those opprobrious Terms and Titles, which in all ages have been cast upon the Truth, and the Professors of it. Sure I am, Satan hath gained no small advantage by these Hellish means. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions - 1654}

Antinomianism

Let such as are least in the Church judge, which Opinion gives most glory unto God; Either {1} that which ascribes the whole Work of our Salvation to the Grace of God, and the meritorious purchase of Jesus Christ; or {2} that which makes men Moral causes of their own salvation; which ascribes no more unto Christ, than the purchasing of a new way, whereby we may be saved, if we perform the terms, and conditions required of us. If the former in his Judgment be Antinomianism, I shall freely profess, that by it alone {though he call it Heresy} I have hope of Life and Salvation. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions - 1654}

Antinomianism

With him {Richard Baxter} they are Antinomians, who hold; {1,} that our Evangelical Righteousness is without us in Christ, or performed by Him, and not by ourselves; Or {2,} that Justification is a free act of God, without any condition on our part, for the obtaining of it; Or else {3,} that Justification is an Immanent act, and consequently from eternity, which was the Judgment of Pemble, Twisse, Rutherford, &c; Or {4,} that we must not perform duty for Life and Salvation, but from Life and Salvation; or that we must not make the attaining of Justification or Salvation, the end of our endeavors, but obey in thankfulness, and because we are justified and saved, &c. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions - 1654}

Antinomianism

Antinomianism is such an Error as doth oppose, or is contrary to the Law of God; but surely, our doctrine is not such, as it offers no manner of injury unto the Law; seeing that whensoever the Elect are justified, they are not justified without Righteousness, and such a Righteousness, as doth fully answer the Law of God, in respect both of the satisfaction and obedience, which it doth require. We say that God cannot justify a person without Righteousness, for then he should do that Himself, which he forbids to us, and professeth his detestation of: Exod.23:7, Isa.5:23, Deut.25:1, Prov.17:15. If God could have dispensed with his Law in this behalf, Christ needed not to have died; but the end of his coming was to bring in Everlasting Righteousness. Whomsoever God doth justify, they have justice one way or other; for otherwise, the God of Truth should call darkness light, and evil good; they whom he accounteth just, are just and righteous; but yet we say, that Faith is not that Righteousness, that makes them so, either in whole or in part; but the perfect Righteousness of Christ, which is put upon them. Now to say, that God imputes this Righteousness unto men before they believe, is no ways contrary to the Law, seeing the Law prescribes not the rules of this imputation, for it is altogether besides the cognizance of the Law; so that if it prove an Error, it must be an Anti-Evangelical, and not an Antinomian Error; but I doubt not, but I shall be able to acquit it from this, as well as from that other imputation. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions - 1654}

Assurance of Salvation

Objection - This Assertion of actual reconciliation before Faith, overthrows the comfort of true Believers, and destroys the ground, nature, use, and end of Faith. Assertion - Is it an uncomfortable Doctrine to tell men, that we are not sharers with Christ in effecting of our peace with God, and in procuring the pardon of our sins; and that Christ hath finished this work before we knew of it? Is it not much more comfortable to poor souls, that Christ hath absolutely, and by himself obtained forgiveness for sinners, than that he hath procured this Grace but conditionally, upon condition we perform such and such works, for which we have no strength or ability in ourselves? Whence have the Saints drawn all their comfort? Surely; not from Faith, or any other work of theirs, but by Faith from Christ, and from the perfection and all-sufficiency of his Sacrifice. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions - 1654}

Children of Wrath

That which seems to speak most fully to his cause is Eph.2:3, where the Apostle tells the Ephesians {whom God had chosen to Eternal life, chap. 1:4,} that they were "by nature the children of wrath; even as others." To which I answer; that the Text doth not say, that God did condemn them, or that they were under Condemnation before Conversion; for the Emphasis of this Text {as I conceive} lies in this clause - by nature; so then the Apostles meaning is; that by nature, or in reference to their state in the first Adam, from whom by natural propagation they descended, they were children of wrath, for they could expect nothing but wrath and fiery indignation from God; yet this hindered not, but that by Grace, they might be the Children of his Love; for so all the Elect are, whilst they are in their blood and pollution, Ezek.16:4,8. The Lord calls them his Sons and Children before Conversion, Isa.43:6 & 53:11 & 8:18, Heb.2:9, for it is not any Inherent qualification, but the good pleasure of God, that makes them his Children, Eph.1:5, Rom.8:29, John 17:6. Believers considered in themselves, and as they come from the loins of Adam are sinful and cursed Creatures, as vile and wretched as the Devil himself, though in Christ they behold themselves made righteous and blessed. It is granted, that Elect Infants have the Righteousness of Christ imputed to them, though they know it not; and I see no reason that can be given, why it should not be imputed to the rest of the Elect before Conversion. Although the Elect are freed from wrath and condemnation; yet in some sense, they may be said to be under it, in regard that the Law doth terrify and affright their consciences, Rom.4:15. In which respect, it is called a ministration of wrath, and of death, II Cor.3:7,9. The wrath of God hath a threefold acceptation in the Scripture. 1. It signifies the most just, and immutable Will of God to deal with a person or persons according to the tenor of the Law, and to inflict upon them the punishment which their sins shall deserve; and in this sense, none but Reprobates are under wrath; who for this cause are said to be hated of God. (2) It notes the threatenings and comminations of the Law, Rom.1:18, Psal.6:1, Hos.11:9, Jonas 3:9 &c. (3) It notes the execution of those threatenings, or the punishments threatened, Eph.5:6, Luke 21:23, Mat.3:7. Now in the first and third sense, the Elect never were, nor shall be, under wrath; God never intended to deal with them according to the tenor of the Law; nor doth he inflict upon them the least evil, upon that account, Christ having freed and delivered them from the Curse; but as wrath is taken in the second sense, for the comminations and threatenings of the Law, so they are under wrath, till they are able to plead their discharge and release by the Gospel. The threatenings of the Law, do seize upon and arrest their Consciences, no less than others; and therefore the Law is compared to a rigid School-Master, {Gal.3:24,} which never ceaseth to whip and lash them, until they fly unto Christ. For though he hath freed them from the Curse, yet the Lord sees it fit they should for a while be held under the Pedagogy and Ministration of the Law, that they may learn to prize the Redemption which they have by Christ, Gal.3:22. The Lord, when he published the Law in Sinai {as the Apostle observes, Gal.3:17,} did not repent him of his promise, made typically with Abraham and his Seed, but really with Christ, and the Elect in him; but {says he} the Law was added, because of transgression; in order to discover their sinfulness and misery by nature, and to render the Grace of the promise more desirable, vs. 22. As the Saints in the Old Testament were Heirs of the Promise, {Gal.4:1,2,} had a real and actual Interest in all the Blessings of the New Covenant, whilst their Consciences were whipped and scourged by this merciless School-master; so all the rest of the Elect are partakers of the same Grace of Life, though the Law doth terrify and condemn them. The threatenings of the Law do not show what is the state of a person towards God, or how God doth account of him; but what he is by nature, and what he hath deserved, should be inflicted upon him; which a man cannot choose but expect, and fear, till his Conscience be secured by better promises; so that I shall not be afraid to say, that the Consciences of the Elect before Faith, are under wrath, and not their Persons; and though their Consciences do condemn them, yet God doth not. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions - 1654}

Christ the Shepherd of the Sheep

They to whom God is a Father, and a Shepherd, have the Lord for their God; but God was our Father, and Shepherd before we believed. Therefore; all the Elect are the Sheep, and Children of Jesus Christ. They are his Sheep. "I lay down my life for my Sheep," {Jn.10:15,} he laid down his life, not only for them that were then called, but for them that were to be called afterwards, so ver.16; "other sheep I have, which are not of this fold;" the elect Gentiles were his sheep, before they were brought into his Fold - the visible communion of Saints. They are also called his Seed and Children. Isa.53:10 & Heb.2:13. "Behold I, and the children which God hath given me;" he speaks of all those Sons, whom he was to bring unto Glory, ver.10. So Jer.3:19; "thou shalt call me, my Father;" their calling him Father, did not make, but suppose him to be their Father, and in this respect he is called an "Everlasting Father." Isa.9:6. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions - 1654}

Christ the Sin Bearer

God is never said to cover, blot out, or wash away the sins of his people out of his knowledge, but out of his sight, Lev.16:30, Psal.32:2, Rom.4:7, Psal.51:9. God sees their sins, for whom his Law is not satisfied, Neh.4:5, Jer.18:23; in regard that his truth and justice doth oblige him to take notice of, and punish them for their sins. Again, He sees not their sins, for whom he hath received a full compensation; because it is contrary to justice to enter into judgment against a person, who either by himself, or surety, hath made satisfaction for his offence; and in this respect God is said, not to see the sins of his people, which yet he knows to be in them; which doth not detract from his omniscency, but exceedingly magnifies his Justice, and that perfect atonement which Christ hath made in their behalf; so that all that are clothed with the Innocency, Righteousness, and Satisfaction of Christ are justified in the sight of God; Divine Justice cannot charge them with any of their sins, nor inflict upon them the least of those punishments which their sins deserve; but contrariwise he beholds them, as persons perfectly righteous, and accordingly deals with them, as such, who have no sin at all in his sight. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions - 1654}

Conditionalism

The Scripture nowhere ascribes this effect to the death of Christ, that he died to obtain a conditional grant, that we by performing the condition, might be reconciled to God, but to obtain peace and reconciliation itself. Daniel doth not say that Messiah shall be cut off to obtain a promise, but "to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, &c." {9:24} Nor the Apostle, that Christ by the blood of the cross, hath obtained a conditional promise of reconciliation, but that he hath made peace, Col.1:20, broken down the partition wall, Eph.2:14, delivered us from the curse, Gal.3:13. And our Saviour in that of Matt.26:28, {which Mr. W. cites} doth not say, that he shed his blood to procure a conditional promise, whereby all men may obtain remission; but for the remission of the sins of many, i. e. of all the Elect. (2) If Christ by his death obtained only a conditional promise, then was his death no more available to the Elect, than unto Reprobates, no more to Peter, than it was to Judas; whereas the Scripture shows us, that the effects of Christ's death are peculiar only to the Elect. See John 10:15,16,26 & 17:9,20. (3) If Christ by his death obtained but a conditional promise, then do men more for their Salvation, than Christ hath done; for he that performs the condition, doth more to his Salvation, than he that obtained the conditional promise; notwithstanding which, he might have perished. (4) It makes Christ to have died in vain, at least, without any determinate end, in reference unto them, for whom he died; seeing that notwithstanding his death, it was possible, that none at all might be saved. And thus {as Mr. Owen hath noted} he is made a Surety of an uncertain Covenant, a Purchaser of an Inheritance perhaps never to be enjoyed, a Priest sanctifying none by his Sacrifice; a thing we would not ascribe to a wiseman in a far more easy undertaking. If Mr. W. shall say, that Christ is certain, that the Elect will perform the condition required, we shall demand whether this certainty doth arise from their wills, or his will. If he say from their wills, and his fore-sight of their well using of their natural abilities to fulfill the condition required, he shakes hands with Papists and Arminians, who make our Election and Redemption to be but an uncertainty, a conceit that hath been confuted over and over; if from his own will, because he hath purchased Faith for them, then he obtained more by his death, than a conditional promise. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions - 1654}

Conditionalism

If our reconciliation to God did depend upon terms and conditions performed by us, then is it not through the death of Christ that we are reconciled unto God; we should be more the cause, of our reconciliation, than Christ is; for he that performs a condition, to which a benefit is promised, doth more to the procuring of it, than he that makes or obtains that conditional grant; notwithstanding which, he is never a whit the near of the benefit, unless his own act do concur. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions - 1654}

Confession of Faith

That Text Rom.10:6,9, is not the tenor of the New Covenant, for that requires Confession as well as Faith, and then the Justification of the New Covenant should be called Justification by Confession, as well as by Faith. The Apostle there describes the persons that shall be saved, they are such as do believe and profess the truth. His scope {as our Divines have noted} is to resolve that grand and important Question; namely, How a man may know that he shall be saved? You need not {says he} to ascend into Heaven, or descend into Hell, &c. to fetch Christ himself to tell you by immediate Revelation, whether you shall be justified and saved; for we have nearer and more certain evidences; He that believes with the heart, &c. In this Scripture he gives us two marks or characters of a true Christian; one Internal, known only to the Christian himself - believing with the heart; the other External, or visible to men - Confession with the mouth. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions - 1654}

Contending for the Faith

Though Peace be a Jewel of great price, yet that Peace is far too dear which costs us the loss of Truth; I mean of any Saving, Necessary, and Fundamental Truth. For though in some lesser points, we may for peace sake have our faith, or persuasions to ourselves, {Rom.14:22,} yet sure in those great and weighty matters of the Gospel, which are either Foundations, or else are adjacent to the Foundation {as these Controversies about Justification are,} we ought not out of love to Peace, to betray the Truth. It is better that Offences should come, than that any vital truth should be lost or embezzled; for it is far more eligible to have truth without peace, than peace without saving truth; the wisdom which is from above, is first pure, and then peaceable. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions - 1654}

Contending for the Faith

Were most of the ancient Fathers now alive, to see what use the Papists and others do make of their unwary sayings, {in regards to a conditional covenant,} to patronize their Errors, I am persuaded, that they would fill the world with their retractions and apologies. Have we not cause then to be careful in this matter, when we see so many profligated Errors, as Free-Will, and Universal Redemption, sheltering themselves under this expression? William Eyre {Justification without Conditions - 1654}

Covenant of Grace

By the Covenant, I mean that engagement which God hath laid upon himself, to bestow on them for whom Christ hath died, all good which is commensurate to their nature, and by virtue whereof all blessings Corporal, Spiritual, and Eternal, do flow down unto them. I call it an Engagement, because God by promising makes himself a debtor, though not to us, yet unto himself; being bound in justice to perform his Word and Promise. - All the mercies we receive, they are the fruits and effects of this engagement, Zech.9:11. It is the only plea we can use to God, both for the things of this life, and that which is to come; and by virtue hereof, we may claim and confidently expect from him all things whatsoever which we stand in need of, and are good for us. Now I say, that Promise or Covenant by virtue whereof, we obtain both Grace and Glory, good things, present and future, is not conditional to us; I say, to us; for to Christ it was conditional, though to us it be free; to him it was a Covenant of Works, though to us it be a Covenant of pure Grace; there is not so much as one blessing doth descend to us, but he hath dearly bought it, even with the price of his own blood; for which cause he is called the Mediator, Witness, and Surety of the Covenant. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions - 1654}

Covenant of Grace

The Covenant made between God and Christ; was, that upon giving up of himself to death, he should purchase a Seed like the Stars of Heaven, i. e. all the Elect of God, Isa.53:10; and our Saviour Christ after that he had tasted death to bring many sons unto glory, boasts and glories in this achievement. "Behold, I and the children, whom God hath given me." {Heb.2:13} Therefore it was the Will of God, that his death should be available for their immediate reconciliation; for they could not be the children of Christ, and the children of wrath at the same time. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Covenant of Grace

We say with the Apostle, that all the Promises of God are yea and amen in him, II Cor.1:20; and with the late Assembly, that the Covenant of Grace was made with Christ and with us in him. With him actively, as the Person that performed all the conditions, upon which the Promises thereof are grounded; with us passively, as the persons to whom the benefit of those Promises doth belong. If one man promise another, that in case he shall bear so many stripes, endure so long imprisonment, or perform any other condition, be it what it will, he will then take care of and provide for his children, doth not this promise which was made with the Father, most properly belonging unto his children? The case is the same between Christ and us; he performed the conditions, and we receive the benefits of the New Covenant. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Covenant of Grace

I would ask, whether the promise of Faith, be not an effect of Christ's death? If it be, then is it an effect of the Covenant already made; for all the effects of his death, are effects of the Covenant, which was confirmed by his death; who, for this cause is called the Covenant, Isa.42:6 & 49:8; implying, that all the benefits of the Covenant, are the fruits and purchases of his death; and that Christ hath not purchased anything for us, but what is promised in the Covenant; the effects of the Covenant, and the effects of Christ's death are of equal latitude. The Scripture nowhere affirms, that Faith is promised as a means to bring us into Covenant, or to invest us with a right and title thereunto. That which gives men interest in the Covenant is the good pleasure of God, willing those blessings to them; and the purchase which Christ hath made in their behalf, who hath performed whatsoever was necessary by Divine constitution, in order to our having of them. We grant that Faith is the means whereby we come to know our interest in the Covenant, and in all the benefits thereof; but their saying, that hereby we have, or do obtain our interest and title to the Covenant, hath not any ground that I find in the Written Word. If any shall infer it from hence, because it is said, 'Believe, and thou shalt be saved;' they may as well make Baptism, Sanctification, Perseverance, &c., {to which the promise of Salvation is sometimes annexed} means to bring us into Covenant, or to invest us with a right and title to the benefits of it, and consequently no man shall have any interest in the Covenant as long as he lives, and till these conditions be performed. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Death of Christ

God's well-pleas'dness with his Elect, is the immediate effect of the death of Christ, for that which raised a partition wall between God and them, was the breach of the Law; now when the Law was satisfied for their sins, this partition was broken down, his favor had as free a current, as if they had not sinned; and therefore the blotting out of our sin, and our reconciliation with God, is ascribed, solely, and immediately to the death of Christ, as in many other Scriptures, so particularly, Eph.1:6,7, & 2:13,14, Col.1:20,21 & 2:13,14, II Cor.5:19. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Death of Christ

The death of Christ was both a price and a ransom, it served both to pay our debts, and to procure our happiness; he did thereby purchase both our deliverance from sin and death, and all those Spiritual Blessings, present and future, which we stand in need of. The discharge of our debts, and deliverance from punishment, must needs be present and immediate upon the payment of the price, though those Spiritual Blessings be not received till a long time after, as God and Christ shall see it fit to bestow them on us. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Effectual Grace

I can see no reason why the act of God, constituting and appointing his Son to be the Head, Surety, and Common Person to all his Elect, should not be as effectual for the communication of his benefits to them, as their own choice and election. We did not choose Adam to be our common person, and yet his sin was imputed to us; so though we did not choose the Lord Jesus to stand in our stead, that is no reason why his Righteousness and Satisfaction should not be accounted ours. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Eternal Decree of God

Election and Reprobation are eternal, immanent Acts in God, yet they are not confounded. Indeed, all different immanent Acts, are but one simple Act in God, in whose Decrees there is no Priority or Posteriority; yet in our consideration they receive sufficient distinction from their various Objects, and our various Application of them. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Eternal Union in Christ

Against this Assertion {proposed Universally,} that there is no manner of union between Christ and the Elect, before they do believe; for though there be not that conjugal union between them which consists in the mutual consent of parties, yet is there such a true and real union, that by means thereof, their sins do become Christ's, and Christ's Righteousness is made theirs. God from everlasting constituted and ordained Christ, and all the Elect to be {as it were} one Heap or Lump, one Vine, one Body or Spiritual Corporation, wherein Christ is the Head, and they the Members; Christ the Root, and they the Branches; Christ the First Fruits, and they the residue of the Heap. In respect of this union it is that they are said to be given unto Christ, and Christ to them; to be in Christ; {Eph. Chapter 1;} that they are called his Sheep, his Seed, his Children, his Brethren, before they are Believers; and by virtue of this union it is, that the obedience and satisfaction of Christ, descends peculiarly to them, and not unto the rest of mankind. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Faith

Faith essentially includes an assent of the understanding to the truth of the Scriptures, revealing the sole-sufficiency of Christ for the reconciliation of sinners, and the non-imputation of sin; as also the will and command of God, that all men should believe in Him alone for life and salvation; and a fiducial adherence and reliance of the will upon the same Christ, the understanding being made effectually to assent and subscribe to the fore-mentioned propositions, the will also powerfully drawn to accept, embrace, and adhere unto Christ. Our Divines do include both these acts in the definition of Faith making it to be such an assent unto the truths of the Gospel, as that withal, the soul tastes an ineffable sweetness in the same; and thereupon resteth, and relieth upon Christ for all the benefits of his death. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Faith

By Faith we have the knowledge and comfort of that reconciliation which Christ hath made between God and us, though we cannot say, that we obtain a right and interest therein by Faith; through Faith we come to know, that God is our God, though our believing doth not make him to be our God. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Faith & Justification

Justification as considered internally, at their effectual Vocation, when the Lord by the Preaching of the Gospel, doth powerfully persuade their hearts to believe in Christ; for the Elect themselves, before Faith, have no knowledge or comfort, either of God's gracious volitions towards them, or of Christ's undertakings and purchases in their behalf; in which respect, they are said to be without Christ, and without God in the world, Eph.2:12, Gal.4:1. They are compared to an heir under age, who differs nothing from a Servant, though he be the lord of all. By Faith we come to see that everlasting love, wherewith we were loved; and that plenteous Redemption which Christ hath wrought for us; for which cause, Faith is called the evidence of things not seen, Heb.11:1; and God is said thereby to reveal his Righteousness from Heaven to us, Rom.1:17; and to reveal his Son in us, Gal.1:16. Now in this sense

men are said to be justified by the act of Faith, in regard Faith is the medium or Instrument, whereby the Sentence of Forgiveness is terminated in their Consciences; which is daily made more plain, and legible, by the operation of the Spirit, sealing, and witnessing unto them their peace and reconciliation with God. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Faith & Justification

Faith ascribes all unto Christ, it being an act of self-derelection, a kind of holy despair, a denying and renouncing of all fitness, and worthiness in ourselves; a going unto Christ, looking towards him, and a rolling of ourselves upon his All Sufficiency; so that in the Apostolic sense, we deny not, that Faith justifieth in the sight of God; Faith {I say} taken objectively; namely, for Christ and his Righteousness; it is for his Merits and Satisfaction alone, that we are accounted Just and Righteous at God's Tribunal. But if Faith be taken properly for the Act of Believing, we say indeed, that it only evidenceth that Justification which we have in Christ; nor is this any contradiction to the Holy Ghost, who ascribes our Justification in the sight of God to Christ alone. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Faith & Justification

The nature of Faith receives not the least prejudice by our Doctrine; for if we define it as most of our old Protestant Divines {Melanchthon, P. Martyr, Calvin, Perkins, &c.} have done; as a firm and certain persuasion of the favor of God, and the pardon of our sins, it confirms our Tenant; for men's sins must be pardoned before they can believe it, or else of necessity they must believe a lie. All men know that the object doth precede the act, unless it be when the act gives a being to the object; or if we make it to be the trust or reliance of the soul upon Jesus Christ, it receives no small encouragement from this consideration, that Christ hath finished whatsoever was necessary by Divine appointment for the Justification of sinners, not expecting the least condition to be performed by us for that end. Our Faith is never so impregnable, as when it rests entirely upon Jesus Christ. And as for the ends and uses of Faith {which are chiefly to give us boldness, and confidence towards God; to purify our hearts, and to work by love, &c.} they are all of them promoted and furthered by the Doctrine we teach; for what is it, that gives us boldness towards God, but the merit and perfection of Christ's sacrifice? Whereby the mouth of the Law is stopped, the accusations of Satan are all answered, and the justice of God is fully satisfied. Again, what other means is there so effectual to purify our hearts, to constrain us to love Him, &c., as the freeness, absoluteness and immutability of his love to us; who whilst we were sinners, and enemies, reconciled us to himself by the Blood of the Cross, and blotted out our sins, as if they had never been committed? William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Faith & Justification

The Scripture which he made his theme is Romans 5:1. "Therefore being justified by Faith, we have peace with God, &c," concludes nothing at all against Justification before Faith; for we may without any violence to the Text, place the Comma after justified, {as thus,} "being justified, by Faith we have peace with God." This reading is agreeable both to the Apostles scope, and to the Context. His scope here was not to show the efficacy of Faith in our Justification, but what benefits we have by the death of Christ; the first of which is Justification, and the consequent thereof is peace with God. Again, the Illative Particle {'therefore'} shows, that this place is a Corollary, or Deduction from the words immediately foregoing, which ascribed our Justification wholly to the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.{Chap.4} The Apostle thence infers, being justified - seeing we are justified freely, without works, by the death of Christ, by Faith we have peace with God; the Lord powerfully drawing our hearts to believe this, we have boldness and confidence towards God, the cause of fear being taken away; or as the Syriac and vulgar Latin read it, Let us have peace with God; let us by Faith improve this Grace, for the establishing of our hearts in perfect peace. Now according to this reading, his own text will give in evidence against him, that Faith is not the cause or antecedent, but an effect and consequent of our Justification, procured and obtained by the death of Christ. But; if we take the words, as commonly they are read, the sense comes all to one; that being justified by Christ {who is the sole object of our Faith} we have peace with God; who by the Faith which he creates in us, causeth us to enjoy this reconciliation; by virtue whereof, our Conscience is so firmly grounded, that we are not moved by any temptation, or beaten down by any terror. The Work of Faith is not to procure our Justification, but to beget peace in our Consciences. So then, the words being rightly understood, they neither deny Justification before Faith, nor assert Justification by the act or habit of Faith, which Mr. W. would conclude from thence. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Faith & Justification

I freely grant that Faith is the Instrument by which we receive and apply the Righteousness of Christ unto ourselves, whereby the gracious sentence of God, acquitting us from our sins, is conveyed and terminated in our Consciences. We say indeed, that Faith doth not concur to our Justification, as a proper Physical Instrument {which is a less principal efficient cause.} Mr. Rutherford saith well, "That Faith is not the Organical or Instrumental cause, either of Christ's satisfaction, or of God's acceptation thereof on our behalf." By believing we do not cause, either our Saviour to satisfy for our sins, or God to accept of his satisfaction. Every true Believer is persuaded, that God hath laid aside his wrath and displeasure towards him for his sins, having received a sufficient ransom and satisfaction for them in the death of his Son. Faith is a Receptive, not an Effective Instrument, an Instrument not to procure, but to receive Justification and Salvation, which is freely given us in Jesus Christ. It is called an Instrumental cause of our Justification, taking Justification passively, not actively; or in reference to that passive Application, whereby a man applies the Righteousness of Christ to himself, but not to that active Application, whereby God applies it to a man, which is only in the mind of God. Therefore Calvin calls Faith, 'Opus Passivum' - a passive work. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions - 1654}

Faith & Repentance

Are not Faith and Repentance the fruits of our Reconciliation by the blood of Christ? God having given us his Son, and hath with Him given us all things else. Rom.8:32. Mr. Calvin calls this blessing, of God's being our God; the cause and fountain of all other blessings; and particularly, of the renewing of our hearts, and our returning unto God. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions - 1654}

Faith & Repentance

It seems to me an undeniable truth, that the promises of Sanctification, as well as of Justification are parts of the Covenant, considering; {1} that they have the same ground and foundation; namely, the merit and purchase of Jesus Christ; Christ hath merited Faith and Repentance, no less than remission of sins. Now whatsoever Christ hath purchased, the Covenant promiseth for all the effects of his death, are equally parts of the Covenant. {2} Both these promises have the same end and design; namely, the glory of God. Faith and Repentance, are not promised only subserviently for our benefit, but ultimately for the praise of his glory, Tit.2:14, I Thes.4:3. {3} They are promised in the same manner, as distinct, and not as subordinate benefits; he doth not say, I will write my Laws in their hearts, that I may pardon their sins and iniquities; but, I will write my Laws, &c., and their sins and iniquities, I will remember no more. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions - 1654}

Gospel

The Gospel properly and strictly taken, consists neither in the precepts, nor promises of the New Testament, but in the declaration of these glad tidings, that the promises which God made unto his people in the Old Testament are now fulfilled {Acts 13:32,33, Luke 1:54,55,69,70, Acts 26:22,23, Luke 4:18,21;} namely, the promises concerning the coming of the Messiah, and the clear exhibition of all the fruits and effects of his Mediatorship. So that the sum of the Gospel is rather comprised in this {I Tim.1:15, Heb.10:14,} that Jesus Christ is come into the world to save sinners; yea, the chief of sinners. That by his one offering, he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions - 1654}

Gospel

The Gospel or New Covenant is a published or declared discharge of all the Elect; the sum of which is, that God hath transacted all their sins upon Jesus Christ, and that Christ by that offering of his hath made a full and perfect atonement for them; whereby the whole spiritual Israel are really made clean from all their sins in the sight of God; as of old, carnal Israel were Typically clean, upon the atonement made by the High Priest, Lev.16:30. Now though they cannot plead it before they believe; yet is it a real discharge, because it frees them from condemnation; as a Pardon granted by a Prince, is a legal discharge, though the Malefactor doth not know of it. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions - 1654}

Gospel of the Grace of God

What is the Gospel, but the glad tidings that Christ is come into the world to save sinners; that by his subjecting of himself to the curse of the Law, he hath freed them from the curse, who were given him by the Father? How is this truth obscured, by our saying, that God did everlastingly will not to punish his Elect; and that in Christ he beholds them just and righteous, even whilst they are sinful, and wicked in themselves? Do not they much more obscure the Grace of the Gospel, who make it depending upon terms and conditions, performed by us, than we, that affirm it to be free and absolute? They that assign no certain and actual effect, to the death of Christ; or we, that say {according to the Scripture} that all the Elect were thereby freed from the Law, delivered from the Curse, reconciled unto God, made perfect and complete in the sight of God? William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Immutability of God

Objection: "Before the consideration of the death of Christ, God {saith he} is at enmity with the sinner, though not averse from all ways and means of reconciliation. 2. After the consideration of the death of Christ; and now is the Lord not only appeasable, but doth also promise that he will be reconciled with sinners; upon such terms as he himself shall propose. 3. After Intercession on Christ's part, and Faith on the sinners part; and now is God actually reconciled, and in friendship with the sinner." Assertion: This Grotian and Vorstian Divinity is monstrously gross, which renders God as changeable as a fickle Creature, and palpably denies his God-like nature; as, His Simplicity, Eternity, Omniscency, Immutability, &c. Arminius himself was more modest than to affirm a change in the Will of God; nay, Plato was a more Orthodox Divine in this point, who said, "that the first mover can be moved of none, but by Himself." The Will of God is not inclined or moved by anything without him, unto any of his acts, whether Immanent or Transient; for that which is the cause of his Will, is the cause of Himself; seeing that his Will, is his Essence. The death of Christ doth not cause any alteration in the Will of God; his Merits are not the cause, why God doth love us, or will to us the blessings of his Covenant, they did not change God; and the Reasons are, {1} Because God is unchangeable, he neither ceaseth to will what at any time he intended, nor doth he begin to will what he did not always purpose. {2} Because no reason can be given of the Will of God. Nothing that hath its being in time, can be the cause of that which is eternal, for then the effect should be before the cause. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Imputation

There is the same proportion, between Adam's conveying sin to his seed, and Christ's conveying Righteousness to his Seed. Rom.5:16. The imputation of Adam's sin did not depend upon the personal sinful acts of his posterity, so neither doth the imputation of Christ's Righteousness depend upon the good works and actions of God's Elect; but as by Adam's sin, all his posterity became actually sinners, even they that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression; namely, actually in their own persons; even so by Christ's Righteousness all the Elect to the end of the world, are constituted righteous, before they have performed any works, or conditions in their own persons. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Imputation

Though the imputation of our sins to Christ, and of his Righteousness to us, do differ; yet the imputation of sin to him, and non-imputation of it unto us, is but one and the same act of God; which was, when God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, before the word of Reconciliation was given; and therefore before they believed. {II Cor.5:19} Though the imputation of our sin to Christ, and so the non-imputation thereof to us, have an antecedency in respect of imputation of Righteousness to us, yet it is of nature only, and not of time. For though it be objected, that we were not then, and therefore Righteousness could not be imputed unto us, yet it follows not; they might as well object, our sins were not then. Therefore, they could not be imputed unto Christ; whereas in this business of Justification, God calleth things that are not, as though they were. {Rom.4:17} William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Imputation

If it were the Will of God, that the sin of Adam should immediately over-spread his posterity, then it was his Will that the Satisfaction and Righteousness of Christ, should immediately redound to the benefit of Gods Elect; for there is the same reason for the immediate transmission of both, to their respective subjects; for {as the Apostle shows, Rom.5:14} both of them were heads and roots of mankind. Now the sin of Adam did immediately over-spread his posterity; for all men sinned in him, before ever they committed any actual sin, Rom.5:12,14; and in like manner the Righteousness of Christ descended immediately upon all the Elect for their Justification, Rom.5:17,18. - If it be the Will of God that the death of Christ should be available, for the immediate reconciliation of some of the Elect, without any condition performed by them, then it was his Will, that it should be so for all of them; the reason is, because the Scripture makes no difference between persons in the communication of this Grace. The free gift {saith the Apostle} came upon all men to Justification of life; {Rom.5:18;} namely, by the gracious imputation of God. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions - 1654}

Imputation

If the Righteousness of Christ doth come upon all the Elect unto Justification, in the same manner as Adams sin came upon all men to condemnation, as the Apostle shows it doth, Rom.5; then it must follow, that the Righteousness of Christ was reckoned or imputed to the Elect, before they had a Being, and then much more before they do believe in Him; for it is evident that Adams sin came upon all men to condemnation, before they had a Being; for by that first transgression {says the Apostle, vers.12,} sin entered into the world; and more plainly, "death passed upon all men;" the Reason follows, because in him, or in his loins, all have sinned. Now as in Adam, the non-elect; that is, all that shall perish, were constituted sinners, before they had a Being, by reason of the imputation of his disobedience to them; so in Christ the elect; that is, all that shall be saved, were constituted righteous; his obedience being imputed unto them by God, before they had any Being, otherwise than in him as their Head and common Person. - Now the Apostle hath observed, That God in justifying, and imputing Righteousness, calleth things that are not, as if they were, {Rom.4:17,} as the Righteousness of Christ was actually imputed to the Patriarchs before it was wrought; and our sins were actually imputed to Christ before they were committed; so I see no inconvenience in saying, that Christ's Righteousness is by God imputed to the Elect, before they have a Being. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions - 1654}

Justification

Though our Adversaries are grown more subtle to distinguish, yet they are as wide from the true Doctrine of Justification by Christ alone, as the perverters of the Faith in Luther's days. It is not easy to number up all the wiles and methods wherewith Satan hath assaulted this Foundation-Truth; for he knew it was too gross to tell men that they must be justified by Works, seeing the Scriptures are so express against it; and therefore men's wits must be set on work to find out some plausible distinctions and extenuations, a little to qualify and sweeten this Popish leaven, to take off the odium of the phrase, and to rebate the edge of those Scriptures which usually are brought against it. It is true {say they} we are not Justified by Works of Nature, but we are Justified by Works of Grace; and though we are not Justified by Legal, or old Covenant Works, yet we are Justified by Evangelical or New Covenant Works performed by ourselves; and again, works though they are not Physical Causes {which no man ever affirmed} yet they are moral Causes, or Conditions of our Justification; though they do not merit in a strict sense, by their innate worth and dignity; yet in a large sense, and by virtue of God's Promise and Covenant, they may be said to merit our Justification and Salvation. Or if these will not do it, the matter is dispatched, if Faith may be but taken in a 'proper' sense, its credit fetches in all other works within its circumference. But that delusion which is least apt to be suspected by well-meaning Christians is the calling Works or Inherent Holiness, by the name of Christ, the success of this bait, we have seen of late in too many, who have dallied so long with the notion of a Christ within them, {grounded on Col.1:27, "Christ in you the hope of glory;" whereas 'Christ in you' is no more than Christ preached among you, and is rendered 'among' in the same verse,} that they have quite forgotten; nay, some have utterly denied, the Christ without them, that God-man, who is the only Propitiation for our sins. How much cause then, my Brethren, have we, of continual thankfulness unto our God, who in so general a defection hath been pleased to keep us, that we are not led aside with the deceivableness of this unrighteousness, and to lead us to that Rock which is above us? For how ever the world doth account of Pharisaism, yet they that have any acquaintance with the mind of God, know there can be hardly named a greater sin than the establishing our own righteousness. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions - 1654}

Justification

Objection: Others have objected that hereby we make void the death of Christ; for if Justification be an immanent act in God, it is Antecedent, not only to Faith, but to the merits of Christ; which is contrary to many Scriptures, that do ascribe our Justification unto his blood, as the meritorious cause. Assertion: Although God's will not to punish, be Antecedent to the death of Christ; yet for all, we may be said to be justified in Him, because the whole effect of that will, is by, and for the sake of Christ. As electing Love precede the consideration of Christ, John 3:16, yet are we said to be chosen in Him, Eph.1:4, because all the effects of that love, are given by, and through, and for Him. God's non-punishing of us is the fruit of his death, yet his will, not to punish, is Antecedent thereunto. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Justification

Justification is taken for the declared sentence of absolution and forgiveness; and thus God is said to justify men, when he reveals, and makes known to them his Grace and Kindness within himself. And in this sense do most of our Divines take Justification, defining it as the declared sense of absolution, and not improperly; for in Scripture phrase, {as was noted before} things are then said to be, when they are declared, and manifested; the declaring of things, is expressed in such wise, as if it made them to be. So God is said to justify his people, when he manifests and reveals to them that mercy and forgiveness, which before was hidden in his own heart, to wit, that he doth not impute their sins, but contrariwise, doth impute Righteousness unto them. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Justification

If there were no Justification till God had made some conditional promise, which men upon performing the condition, might plead as their legal discharge, I marvel into what Limbos Mr. Woodbridge will thrust the Fathers of the Old Testament; for they that were not justified, were not saved. But the Scripture gives us more hope, showing that they were saved by the same grace, as we are, Acts 15:11, God accepting them as righteous in Jesus Christ; who in respect of the virtue and efficacy of his death, is called The Lamb slain from the foundations of the world, Rev.13:8. For though this rich Grace were not revealed to them so clearly, as unto us, Eph.3:5, I Pet.1:12, yet the Effects and Benefits thereof descended upon them unto Justification of life, no less than to the Faithful in the New Testament. The Argument in short is this. If the Fathers of the Old Testament were justified, who yet had not any such declared discharge; then Justification is not by a declared discharge; but the Fathers of the Old Testament were justified. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Justification

If Justification were by a Conditional Promise, as a declared discharge, then it would not be God's act, but our own; God should not be our Justifier, but we must be said to justify ourselves; for a Conditional Promise doth not declare one man justified more than another, but the performance of the condition; so that a man should be more beholding to himself than to God, for his Justification. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Justification

For the Question depending between us, is not so much about the time, as the terms, and matter of our Justification; namely, how and by what means we are made Just and Righteous in the sight of God? Which we affirm to be, by the perfect Righteousness of Christ alone, which God doth impute unto us freely, without Works and Conditions performed by us; though we have not the sense and comfort of it, any otherwise than by Faith. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Justification Truth

Mr. Fox hath well observed; "It is so strange to carnal Reason, so dark to the World; it hath so many enemies that except the Spirit of God from above do reveal it, learning cannot reach it. Wisdom is offended, nature is astonished; devils do not know it, men do persecute it." Satan labors for nothing more, than that he may either quite bereave men of the knowledge of this truth, or else corrupt the simplicity of it. It is not unknown what

batteries were raised against it, in the very infancy of the Church, how the Wits and Passions of men conspired to hinder it; what monstrous consequences, were charged upon the Doctrine; and what odious practices, were fathered upon them, that did profess it; for never was any truth opposed with so much malice and bitterness as this hath been, and by them especially that were most devout and zealous; but when it could not be withstood and stifled, Satan endeavored then to deprave and adulterate it, by mixing of the Law with the Gospel, and our own Righteousness with Christ's; which corruption the Apostle hath strenuously opposed in all his Epistles, and more especially in that to the Romans and Galatians; where he excludes all and singular works of ours, from sharing in the matter of our Justification; for the eluding of whose Authority, carnal Reason hath found out sundry shifts and distinctions; as that the Apostle excludes only works of Nature, but not of Grace; Legal, but not Evangelical works; and that our works though they are not Physical, yet they may come in as Moral causes of our Justification. It is certain, that the most dangerous attempts against this Doctrine, have been within the Church, and by such as Mr. Cr. calls Professed Friends, who have done so much the more mischief, in regard they were least apt to be suspected. Justification by works was generally exploded amongst us, whilst it appeared under the names of Popery and Arminianism, which since hath found an easy admittance, being vented by some of better note, such as would be accounted Pleaders for Free-grace. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Law & Gospel

We hold it necessary that the Law should be preached to unbelievers in its strictness, rigor, and inexorable severity; that they may see there is no hope for them at all, by the works of the Law; yet we would have it preached as an Appendant to the Gospel, not to drive men to despair, but to believe, and to flee to that Sanctuary which is opened in the Gospel; whereas if it be published alone, and as an absolute sentence, it is a bar to Faith; for if God doth condemn men, who shall justify them? William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Law & Gospel

The Law and the Gospel are, as it were, two several Courts and Judicatories; they that are condemned in the one, may be justified in the other; they that are sinners in the first Adam, may be looked upon as just and righteous in the Second. There is nothing more ordinary, than for Christians, at the same time, to consider themselves under this twofold relation; namely, their state by Nature, and their state by Grace. In reference to the former it was that Paul cried out, "O wretched man that I am;" and yet in the same breath, he breaks forth into thankful Expressions for his escape and deliverance. Rom.7:24,25. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Mediatorial Work of Christ

In this clause {"this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Mt.3:17} he gives us to understand, that his love is so great to Christ, that from him, it overflows upon us all. And Beza more expressly notes, "The Father did hereby signify, that Christ is he alone, whom when the Father beholds, he lays aside all his wrath and indignation, which we deserved; and that he is the only Mediator and Reconciler; which {says he} will be better understood by comparing this Text with Exod.28:38, where we read, that Israel was made accepted to God by the High Priests appearing for them in the presence of God; which High Priest was undeniably a type of Christ." - This voice doth comprise the whole mystery of our Reconciliation with God, by, and for the sake of Christ. To these we might add the suffrage of one of our own Countrymen: Ward on Mt.3:17 - "this voice was uttered in respect of us, because of old, God was angry with us for our sins, but now he is reconciled to us by Christ." - It is against the scope of the words {of Mt.3:17} to limit them to the Person of Christ, they being a solemn declaration of Christ's investiture in the glorious office of a Mediator; in which respect he is said to be a Son given, and born to us, Isa.9:6; and therefore this declaration of God to men, was at his birth proclaimed by the holy Angels, Luke 2. All that grace or favor which at any time was manifested to Christ, as a Mediator, was for their sakes whom he represented, and to whom the benefits of his Mediatorship were intended. See John 12:30. That Text, Eph.5:2, which Mr. W. alledgeth for confining of this voice to the Person of Christ, proves nothing less, where the Apostle shows the effect of Christ's sacrifice towards us; thus, as when Noah offered up his burnt-offerings to God, the Lord smelled a sweet savor, &c. Gen.8:21. So when Christ offered up himself a sacrifice of atonement, the Lord smelled a savor of rest, and was fully satisfied for the sins of his people. Therefore there is no reason that can be given, why those words should be terminated to the Person of Christ, {Jn.17:24,26,} seeing that God was never displeased with him, nor had our Saviour any doubt, or suspicion of it; and therefore it was altogether needless that God should declare his well-pleas'dness to Him in his own person. The well-pleas'dness of God is to be extended unto them, for whom

Christ offered up his sacrifice; but Christ did not offer up his sacrifice for himself, but only for sinners. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Pre-Eminence of Christ

Since it hath pleased the Lord to reveal the riches of his Son unto me, and to make me a Steward and Dispenser of this Grace unto his People; the chief design of my Ministry hath been to bottom my hearers upon Christ alone; that they might have no confidence in the flesh but in that perfect and everlasting Righteousness which he hath wrought; for which end it hath been my care frequently and clearly to demonstrate to them, both the sole-sufficiency, and efficiency of Christ in the work of man's Redemption; that he is able to save unto the utmost, and that no work of ours, either before or after our Conversion, doth share with him in the glory of this achievement. In a word, that there is no cause without God concurring with the precious and invaluable merit of his Blood, to present us holy, unblameable, and unreprieveable in the sight of God. Which truth, as it shines clearer than the Sun, throughout the Scripture, so it appears unto me to be of greatest moment, when I consider the concernment thereof, both to God, and Christ, and to the precious souls of God's Elect. I know nothing that gives so much glory unto God and Christ, as to proclaim him the only Saviour; and that besides him there is none other, that we owe the whole work of our Salvation from the beginning to the end unto Christ alone; and surely, there is no point in the whole Doctrine of Godliness, which contributes so much to the Peace, Security, and Fruitfulness of the Saints, as this doth. It affords the greatest encouragement to sinners to believe, to believers to hold fast their confidence firm unto the end, and to serve God with a willing mind, in Righteousness and true Holiness all the days of their life. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Reconciliation in Christ

To these Arguments from Scripture, I might add many plain Texts, which do declare that our reconciliation is the actual and immediate effect of Christ's death, as Col.1:14, Eph.1:7. We have redemption {not, we shall have} the forgiveness {or non-imputation} of sins according to the riches of his grace; {not according to any condition performed by us;} he having obtained eternal redemption for us, Heb.9:12, II Cor.5:18,19. A place which we have often mentioned, the Apostle shows that Christ by his death made such a reconciliation for us, as that God thereupon did not impute our sins unto us, which was long before any condition could be performed by us. Elsewhere, that Christ by himself purged and expiated our sins, Heb.1:3, and afterwards set down, as having finished that work, chap.10:12. Now sin that is fully purged, and expiated, is not imputable to the sinner. The same Apostle adds, that Christ by his sacrifice hath forever perfected all them for whom it was offered, Heb.10:14; and in another place, that he hath made them complete, as to the forgiveness of their sins, Col.2:10,13,14. In Rom.8:33,34, he argues from the death of Christ to the non-imputation of our sins "who can lay anything to the charge of God's Elect, it is God that justifieth, it is Christ that died;" whereas notwithstanding sin would have been chargeable upon them, and they, condemnable if the death of Christ had not procured their discharge, without the intervention of any condition performed by them. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Reconciliation in Christ

If God willed this blessing to his Elect by the death of Christ, but conditionally; then he willed their Reconciliation and Justification, no more than their non-Reconciliation and Condemnation; and stood as it were indifferent to either event; but doubtless his heart was more set upon it then so. {see John 6:38,39, 17:21,22,24.} The consequence is clear, for if he willed their Justification only in case they should believe, and repent; then he willed their Damnation in case they do not believe, and repent; and then it will follow that he willed their Justification, no more than their Damnation; nay, most probably; he willed it less, because we are more prone to Infidelity, than we are to Faith; and to hardness of heart, than we are to repentance. I add to this; if God willed unto men the benefits of Christ's death upon any condition to be performed by them, it will follow that God foresaw in them an ability to perform some good, which Christ hath not merited. Conditional reconciliation necessarily supposeth Free-will. For either God willed it unto men upon a possible, or impossible condition; not upon an impossible condition, for that is inconsistent with the Wisdom of God; if upon a possible condition, the possibility thereof ariseth either from God's will, or from man's will; it is possible, either because God will bestow it, or because man can perform it. Our adversaries cannot mean it in the former sense, for God will bestow upon us nothing, but what Christ hath purchased; and Christ hath purchased nothing, save what God hath promised in his Covenant. Now Mr. W. denies that the promise of Faith is any part of the Covenant, or any effect of it, and others that are for this conditional reconciliation look upon it as a ridiculous conceit, that God should promise men Salvation upon a condition, and

that he should work this condition in them, and for them; so that in the upshot, we shall be beholding chiefly to Free Will, an opinion so absurd that in all ages it hath been exploded by humble and sober minded Christians, it being palpably contrary to the Scriptures which show that every man by nature is without strength, dead in trespasses and sins, that we cannot so much as think a good thought, that it is God who worketh in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Reconciliation in Christ

If nothing hindered the reconciliation of the Elect with God, but the breach of the Law, then the Law being satisfied, it was the Will of God that they should be immediately reconciled; but nothing hindered their reconciliation with God, but the breach of the Law. Therefore; it was sin alone that made a distance, or separation between God and them, {Isa.59:2;} for which cause it is compared to a cloud or mist, {Isa.44:22,} and to a partition wall. {Eph.2:14} It lay as a block in the way, that God could not {in accords with Divine Justice} bestow upon them those good things intended towards them in his Eternal Election. The cause of Christ's death was to satisfy the Law; for he did not die to procure a new Will or Affection in the heart of God towards his Elect, nor yet to add any new thing in God, which doth perfect and complete the act of Election. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Resurrection of Christ

In that public discharge or acquaintance, which he gave unto Christ at his Resurrection; the Lord by raising him from the dead, and {as it were} setting him free out of prison, openly declared that He had received full satisfaction, for all those sins which Christ as a Surety had taken upon him; namely, for all the sins of all the Elect. And for this reason the Lord sent an Angel to remove the stone from the mouth of the Sepulcher, not to supply any want of power in Christ, who could himself have rolled it away with one of his fingers; but as a Judge, when the Law is satisfied, sendeth an Officer to set open the prison unto him, who hath made that satisfaction. So the Father to testify that his Justice was fully satisfied, with the price which his Son had paid, sent an Officer of Heaven to open the prison doors, and to set him free. Christ's Resurrection was a solemn judicial act, whereby God the Supreme Judge justified both him and us. {1} Him, from all those sins which he had undertaken, whereunto our Divines do apply these following Scriptures. Is.50:8,9, I Tim.3:16, Acts 13:35, Heb.9:21. {2} Us, from our own sins. The Resurrection of Christ was an actual Justification of all them for whom he became a Surety; for he was not justified from any sins of his own, being in himself just and innocent, but from those sins which were charged upon him in his death, which {saith the Prophet} were the iniquities of us all, Isa.53:6. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Righteousness of Christ

When God judgeth according to mercy, he judgeth according to truth; his merciful judgment is a just, and a righteous judgment; the mercy of God is shown, not in accounting a sinner perfectly righteous, for that Righteousness which is imperfect; but in accounting to him that Righteousness, which is not his own, the perfect Righteousness of the Mediator in this judgment of God. Justice and Mercy do both meet; Justice, in that he will not justify a sinner without a perfect Righteousness; Mercy, in that he will accept him for such a Righteousness, which is neither in him, nor performed by him, but by his Surety the Lord Jesus Christ. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Righteousness of Christ

The blood by which we are redeemed is called the blood of God, Acts 20:28; or which is all one, the blood of the Son of God, I John 1:7. The life which was laid down for us was the life of God, 1 John 3:16. The death by which we are reconciled to God is the death of his Son, Rom.5:10. The Obedience by which we are constituted just, {Rom.5:19,} is the Obedience of the same Son of God. {Gal.4:4,5} Christ's Mediatorial Righteousness is called the Righteousness of God to show the dignity and perfection of it, it being the Righteousness of so great a Person, who is not only Man, but God; and that we should not think it to be anything in us from God, it is sometimes called his blood, Rom.5:9, sometimes his obedience, vs.19; by the imputation whereof we are made the Righteousness of God in him, as he by the imputation of our sins, was made sin for us. {II Cor.5:21} - The assertion that the Righteousness whereby we are justified is the Righteousness of God is undeniably proved from Rom.1:17, 3:21 &

10:3; in which last place, the Apostle shows that there is such an opposition betwixt God's Righteousness, and ours, in the point of Justification, that whosoever seeks to be justified by his own Righteousness, cannot be justified by the Righteousness of God; and therefore he himself professeth, that in the Question of Justification he utterly renounceth his own righteousness, desiring to be found in Christ's Righteousness alone, Phil.3:9. This Righteousness of Christ which is out of us in Him, and is properly called Evangelical Righteousness, because it is the matter, or substance of the whole Gospel. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Salvation by Grace

From the very beginning, to the end of our Salvation, nothing is primarily or causally Active, but Free-grace; all that we receive from God is gift, and not debt. Glory itself is not wages, but Grace. - Under the New Covenant, Blessedness is not to him that worketh, but to him that worketh not, Rom.4:5. We are saved by grace, and not by works, Tit.3:5, Eph.2:5,8; and saith the Apostle, if by grace, then it is no more of works, Rom.11:6; but when Glory is called a Reward, we are to understand it improperly, as when a thing is called a Reward only by way of Analogy and Resemblance, because it comes after, and in the place of the work; as the nights rest may be called the Reward of the days labor, because it succeeds it. And thus the Heir inheriting his Father's Lands, hath a Recompense or Reward of all the labor and service he hath done for his Father; although he did not his service to that end, neither doth the enjoyment of that inheritance hang upon that condition. In this sense, Eternal Life and Glory may be called the Reward of our Works, because it is a consequent of them; not that our works have any influence, either Physical or Moral to obtain it; for all things being given us, in, and for Christ alone, Rom.8:32, Eph.1:3; and therefore it is called by the Apostle a reward of Inheritance, Col.3:24, which comes to us not by working, but by inheritance, as we are the heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. If Glory were a Reward in a proper sense, we might properly be said to save and glorify ourselves, because we concurred to the Production of this effect. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Salvation by Grace

The Apostle doth not say, {Gal.5:2-4,} without Faith Christ shall profit us nothing, but if we join anything with Christ as necessary to attain Salvation, we are not Believers, or true Christians, our profession of Christ shall profit us nothing; and the reason hereof is because these two principles cannot be mixed. A man's righteousness before God is either all by Works, or all by Christ; and therefore, whosoever attributes any part thereof to Works, he wholly renounceth Christ. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Satisfaction of Christ

Had not prejudice cast a mist before his eyes, the Scriptures which have been brought already, would be proof sufficient. What clearer Testimony can be desired of the Will of God, and of Christ in this point, than those Sacred Oracles which show us. First; that Christ by the Will of God, gave himself a Ransom and Sacrifice of a sweet smelling savor unto God, in behalf of all the Elect, Jn.6:27, Heb.5:10 & 10:9,10. Secondly; that this Ransom was alone, and by itself, a full adequate and perfect satisfaction to Divine Justice, for all their sins, Heb.1:3 & 10:10,12,14, I Jn.1:7. Thirdly; that God accepted it, and declared himself well pleased and satisfied therewith, Matt.3:17, Isa.42:1; insomuch, that God hath thereupon covenanted and sworn, that he will never remember their sins, nor be wrath with them anymore, Isa.43:25 & 54:9,10. Fourthly; that by this Ransom of his, they are freed and delivered from the curse of the Law, Gal.4:4 & 3:13. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Satisfaction of Christ

That God might save us in a way agreeable to his own Justice, that he might confer upon us all those Blessings he intended, without wrong and violation to his holy Law; for God having made a Law, that the soul which sinneth, should die, the Justice and Truth of God required that satisfaction should be made for the sins of the Elect; which, they being unable to perform, the Son of God became their Surety, to bear the Curse, and fulfill the Law in their stead. God might will unto us sundry benefits, which he cannot actually bestow upon us without wrong to his Justice. As a King may will and purpose the deliverance of his Favorite, who is imprisoned for debt, yet he cannot actually free him, till he hath paid and satisfied his Creditor. So though God had an irrevocable, peremptory Will to save his Elect; yet he could not actually save them, till satisfaction was made unto his Justice; which being made, there is no let or impediment to stop the current of his Blessings. As when the Cloud is dissolved, the Sun shines

forth; when the partition wall is broken down, they that were separated are again united. So the cloud of our sins being blotted out, the beams of God's love have as free a passage towards us, as if we had not sinned. Now that Christ by his death removed this let and hindrance, the Scripture is as express as can be desired, as that he made an end of sin, Dan.9:24. Blotted it out, &c. Col.2:14. Took it quite away, {as the Scape-goat, Lev.16:22} John 1:29. And slew the enmity between God and us. Eph.2:16. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Satisfaction of Christ

Though the word Satisfaction be not used in Scripture, yet the thing itself is plainly signified in those phrases of Redemption, Atonement, Reconciliation; and in like manner, all those places which declare that Christ died for us, and for our sins, and offences, do imply the same; namely, that the death of Christ was the payment of our debts, and the punishment of our sins; that thereby he satisfied the Law for all those wrongs and injuries we have done unto it. Now the sequel is evident; if God willed, that the death of Christ should be a full and satisfactory payment of our demerits, then he willed that the discharge procured thereby, should be immediate and present; for it is contrary to Justice and Equity, that a debt when it is paid, should be charged either upon the Surety or Principal; and therefore though God did will, that the other effects of Christ's death, as it is the meritorious price of Faith, Holiness, Glory, &c, should not present but future; yet he willed, that this effect of it; namely, our discharge from sin, and the curse, should be present and immediate; because it implies a contradiction, that the same debt should be paid, and not paid; that it should be discharged, and yet justly chargeable. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}

Work of the Holy Spirit

When we say; that the Spirit which works Faith is given us before we believe; none can well imagine that we meant it of God's purpose, or decree to give the Spirit, but of the actual sending, or bestowing of him; nor yet of an Essential, or Personal giving of the Spirit, so as to be Hypostatically united to us as the God-head of the Son is to the Human nature; though some godly men, have affirmed, that the person of the Spirit dwells in the Saints from those Texts: John 14:16,17,26, 15:26, II Tim.1:14, Rom.8:11, I Cor.6:19, 3:16; yet none {that are sober} ever affirmed, that the Person of the Spirit dwelleth in us in such a manner as to make us one person with himself, or to communicate his personal Properties to us. I see not how a man could imagine any other sense than this; that God according to his gracious Covenant doth in his appointed time, give, or send his Spirit, in the preaching of the Gospel, to work Faith in all those that are ordained to life; so that the Spirit is the cause, and Faith the effect. William Eyre {Justification without Conditions – 1654}