

FREE JUSTIFICATION IN CHRIST

A Very short and brief account of the Free Justification of God's elect, from the condemning power of the Law, by that law change of persons, {flowing from an eternal act of Grace; by way of Covenant transaction between the Father and Son;} which brought Christ as Mediator, under the Curse and Condemnation of the broken Law, in the very room and place of elect sinners.

Whereunto are added, some questions concerning this point; proposed to be answered by those that do so confidently affirm, that the elect of God are equally with others, under the same condemning power of the Law, before Faith.

**By a Member of the Church of Christ,
in the County of Essex.**

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Rom.8:32-34.

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TO THE READER.

That which hath occasioned the publication of this short treatise {concerning Justification} to the world, is this. A poor member of the church of Christ in the country, having affirmed, that God's elect were never under the condemning power of the Law, being chosen in Christ as the elect Head and Mediator of a Free and Absolute Covenant of Grace to them; thereupon some arguments arising, this being by some condemned as not agreeable to Holy Scripture, these following lines were offered, to clear up the point, desiring an answer again in writing; that the truth might appear, by an attentive and loving answer to some objections; which being refused, made it seem {at least to me} as though the refusers of so Scriptural a proposition, were conscious themselves, that affirming the contrary was more grounded upon authors, than upon any clear Scripture proof; which made them so shy of coming to the light of God's Word, to clear up their so often affirmed assertions, that the very persons of God's chosen ones were under Curse and Wrath, and the condemning Power of the Law, before believing equally with the non-elect; and the refusing to give clear Scripture proof for this opinion hath occasioned the publication of these following lines, humbly desiring that it might please Almighty God to vindicate and defend his own Truth, on which side soever it be found, and plainly discover and bring to light all mistakes of this nature. Therefore, read and examine every sentence by the unerring

Word of God, and the Lord the Spirit, vouchsafe to give out his light and special teachings, in the diligent search of the Holy Scriptures.



To our loving Brethren in the Lord, Grace and Truth be with you. As I doubt not but that we shall meet another day, with exceeding Joy at the right Hand of Christ, so I desire we may contend as Brethren, in a holy and reverential fear of God our Father, and for his Truth only; therefore I only desire you to prove your assertion, that Justification, in the sight of God's satisfied Justice before Faith, is not according to Scripture. And in order thereto, shall propose some Questions, to be answered distinctly, that so we may come to a right understanding of each other, and see wherein we do really agree, or disagree; and not continue to contend about words to no purpose, if we do mean the same thing, but if not let it come to Light, without any under-hand dealing. And I pray God Almighty confound what is not of God, let it lay on which side it is; and I hope I shall trample under-foot with abhorrence, whatever I could be convinced of to be contrary to the mind of Christ; and do sincerely desire to use all the means I can, to attain the clearest discoveries thereof. Therefore, I shall first explain my meaning, concerning God's eternal Justifying Act in his own Breast, acting in a way of Justice and Grace jointly in God, yet pure Grace with respect to elect Sinners; preventing them in a way of Grace, from the dreadful effects, that other ways would most necessarily attend their fall in Adam.

And that the LORD might clear them from the Curse of the Law in a way of Justice, Grace puts the Law into a Mediator's Hand; and though Grace intended not to prevent the elect from falling in Adam into Sin equally with others, yet that Grace might superabound where Sin abounded; for there was a Lamb provided, who by Divine Appointment, should bear the whole Curse due to Sin, with all the dreadful effects thereof. This I shall explain in as few, but in as plain words as I can express myself; my meaning is this, there was from all Eternity a fixed immutable will in God, never to punish Sin, nor to inflict the penalty of the Law upon his Elect; his will was not, to prosecute his right against them in a way of Justice, I Thes.5.9¹, but to deal with them as righteous, in a Mediator, {a pure act of Grace,} by free Imputation. II Cor.5:21, Rom.5:21, Eph.1:4². God from all Eternity, did Immutably will and bequeath eternal Life to his chosen in Christ, through the Blood of the everlasting Covenant.

¹ "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." I Thes.5:9. "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." II Tim.2:10. "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." Rom.11:7.

² "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." I Cor.5:21. "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom.5:21. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." Eph.1:4.

Matt.26:28, Heb.10:10³. It plainly appears in this 10th Chapter to the Hebrews, that it was the will of God, that Christ should be offered up a Sacrifice to Justice, by the which will of God, them that he died for were set apart to Life, which I take to be meant by sanctified, because the Apostle is treating of Justification, and Pardon of Sin, by Christ's own offering, as our High Priest; besides it would look strange, to say the will or decree of God, that Christ should die for Sinners, should sanctify us inherently; when it can hardly be granted, that the Decree should make that Law change of persons, that frees the Elect from Curse and Condemnation, and sets Christ under it in their room; but I think, sanctified by God's will or Decree, is set apart to Life, and through Christ's own offering, as it respects the thing willed, the purging away of Sin, with respect to its Guilt and Condemning Power in the sight of Justice. Now God's will, as a Testament of Grace to Elect Sinners, was an eternal going forth, Micah 5:2⁴, by way of Covenant Transaction, between the

³ "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Matt.26:28. "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Heb.10:10.

⁴ "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Mic.5:2. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." Jn.1:1-2. "And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." Col.1:17. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we

Father and the Son, as distinct parties {though one in Essence} and eternal Grace; as it respected the fall and breach of the Law, so likewise it acted from Eternity, in a way of Justice by a Mediator, to stand in the Sinners Law place; so that Justice, as well as Grace, was eternally pleased, that elect Sinners should go unpunished, and hereby stand complete, in the unchangeable favour of God, Mal.3:6⁵; that when the Law was broken by Adam, as a Covenant Head, it should be completely answered by a second Man, or Adam, as Mediator, as the elect Head, and Surety of a free Testament by Grace; this Decree or imminent Act of God's will, made that Law change of persons, which set Christ as Mediator under the Curse, and Condemning power of the Law; {which otherwise could not have touched him,} and turns the Curse of the Law from the Law-breaking Sinner; {which otherwise would take hold on all Sinners, as such,} and so sets him under the sentence of Life, in the Court of Grace, by absolute promise, Tit.1:2⁶, which free and absolute sentence of Life, takes hold on the persons of God's chosen, Jer.31:3⁷, as early

have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life." I Jn.1:1.

⁵ "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Mal.3:6. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." Heb.13:8.

⁶ "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." Tit.1:2.

⁷ "The LORD hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness have I drawn thee." Jer.31:3. "But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear

as the law sentence can take hold on the persons of those that have no Mediator. Rom.9:11-13⁸. This is the immediate effects of Christ's Mediatorship for the Elect, and the pronounced or declared sentence of God's eternal will; thus with respect to this eternal Transaction in a Covenant way, we may understand these following Scriptures. Prov.8:23, Micah 5:2, Zech.6:13, Eph.3:11, II Tim.1:9, I Pet.1:20⁹. Now whither you will please to call this imminent and

him, and his righteousness unto children's children." Psal.103:17. "But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation; ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end." Isa.45:17. "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." II Thes.2:13-14.

⁸ "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Rom.9:11-13.

⁹ "I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." Prov.8:23. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." Mic.5:2. "Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." Zech.6:13. "According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Eph.3:11. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." II Tim.1:9. "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." I Pet.1:20.

internal Act of God's will, Justification or not, yet let the thing itself be granted, and so far we shall agree; I desire not to differ about words, if we mean the same thing; I suppose, you take only the pronounced sentence into Justification; that I own, as it declares the fundamental act, according to which they stand just, {if we differ not about the sentence itself,} for I reckon, that all sentences of Court that are according to Justice, are grounded upon some preceding Act, which makes the sentence just. Therefore I shall take in both, because the righteous Judge of the whole Earth, will never pronounce any Law-breaking Sinner just; but those which he makes righteous in a Mediator, according to this Sovereign Act of his Grace, based upon the substitutionary death of the Redeemer; but I take it for granted, that our difference {I mean amongst those that are sound and orthodox} is not about the matter of our Justifying Righteousness, nor whither it is God only that Justifies through Christ; nor whether it be by Grace, excluding all manner of works of the Law wrought in us, or performed by us; even, the Act of believing itself as it is a work of the Law, {though I could wish that were some times better cleared, as well as owned in words.} Therefore I shall pass these things, and come to the very point, and that is, what Act of God it is, that makes over the Righteousness of Christ, as Mediator to an elect person; or gives him a right to that Righteousness in the sight of God. This I take to be fundamentally, in the Sovereign Will of God, in that Covenant Transaction, between the Father and

the Son, there was a Grant unto our great Covenant-Head, the Lord Jesus; though he were purely God, and had not then assumed our Nature, yet he did personally exist, and was a distinct Person from the Father, from Eternity {though of the same Nature and Essence;} and by Virtue of Eternal Covenant Transaction, he was under an Obligation, from all Eternity, to take our Nature upon him, as Abraham's Seed, with a special eye to the Elect, for he passed by the nature of Angels; and though it is true, that he took Flesh, Human Nature; yet he passed by the non-elect, and on the seed of Abraham he took hold, that is, of all Abraham's spiritual seed, as he saith, I and the Children thou hast given me. Heb.2:13¹⁰. The Apostle in that Second Chapter to the Hebrews, quotes that out of Isaiah, and brings it to prove the Covenant Relation that was between Christ and the Elect; and forasmuch as the Children were partakers of Flesh and Blood, he likewise himself took part of

¹⁰ "And the LORD appeared unto Abram, and said, unto thy seed will I give this land; and there builded he an altar unto the LORD, who appeared unto him." Gen.12:7. "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him." Gen.18:19. "And he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and the children; and said, who are those with thee? And he said, the children which God hath graciously given thy servant." Gen.33:5. "Behold, I and the children whom the LORD hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth in mount Zion." Isa.8:18. "And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, behold I and the children which God hath given me." Heb.2:13. "A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation." Psal.22:30.

the same, Heb.2:14¹¹, by this Covenant Relation we became bone of his Bone, and flesh of his Flesh; as there is one Body, as well as one Spirit; by virtue of this Covenant Relation, the elect only receive Life and Quickening from Christ, as Head of the Covenant of Grace; as the Father gave him to be Head to the Catholic or Universal Church, the whole Body of election, Eph.1:22-23¹², and then it follows, and "you hath he quickened." Eph.2:1¹³. Thus I have spoken in a few words, something of that Union, from whence flows Communion, which doth not only precede Faith in order of Nature, but in order of Time also; and by virtue of which, we have the Spirit that works Faith {in God's time} from Christ as our anointed Head. But to return, by virtue of this Covenant Transaction, he was likewise under an Obligation to bare all the Sins {by way of charge and imputation} of all the elect, in his own Body on the Tree, as their Covenant Head and Mediator, so he stood engaged, by Covenant Contract, from Eternity, to answer for them, to all the demands of Law and Justice. "This commandment have I

¹¹ "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." Heb.2:14.

¹² "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." Eph.1:22-23.

¹³ "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." Eph.2:1)

received of my Father," Jn.10:18¹⁴, "and I know that his commandment is life everlasting." Jn.12:50¹⁵. The same Act of God's Grace, that made our Sins to meet on Christ, {to Death as the wages of Sin,} brought his Mediatorial Righteousness upon the Elect to Life everlasting. Rom.5:21, 6:23¹⁶. By virtue of this Covenant Transaction, it is made over to God's chosen, by a free Testament of Grace, in the Blood of the New Testament, and comes upon them as a free gift of Righteousness, Rom.5:18¹⁷, and we have Right to that Justifying Righteousness, as held forth in the free and absolute promise, as elect persons, being chosen in Christ, as the elect Head of this his free Testament; and the Testament itself gives right, and the elect are heirs of promise, as soon as they have a being, {not natural heirs by descent, but heirs by Grace, for what is freer than Gift.} God made his will in Eternity, and bequeathed Eternal Life to his adopted Children, that were

¹⁴ "No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father." Jn.10:18.

¹⁵ "And I know that his commandment is life everlasting; whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak." Jn.12:50)

¹⁶ "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom.5:21. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Rom.6:23.

¹⁷ "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." Rom.5:18.

predestinated to sonship in their Mediatorial Representative, according to the good pleasure of his will. Eph.1:5¹⁸. Now this Testament of Grace in the Blood of Christ, made known and revealed by an absolute promise of Life, Tit.1:2¹⁹, as taken from Gen.3:15²⁰, gives them right, and makes them heirs of the promise of Life; and though the blessings given in this Testament be in the Hands of the Surety, until the time appointed of the Father, to be giving out successively, at the several times appointed; first the Spirit of Faith in Divine Quickening, and then the outworking of Salvation effectually and gradually carried on, and at last consummated in Glory; therefore to make one Blessing thereof to be either Cause or Condition of the rest, would be very improper, when all are but parts of the same free gift; and that which gave them right to one, gave them right to all; that which gave them a right to Faith, before they did receive it, gave them right to Justifying Righteousness before they received Faith; and that was the Free Testament itself, in the Blood of Christ; then here lieth the right of elect Persons, as such, to Justifying Righteousness in the eternal will itself, as being by

¹⁸ "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." Eph.1:5.

¹⁹ "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." Tit.1:2.

²⁰ "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Gen.3:15.

that absolutely settled upon all the heirs of promise, by two immutable things, Heb.6:18²¹, God's Promise and Oath; and add to this the Testator's Blood, which shows all is firm, the elect have an Indefeasible Right, and are heirs by Grace, though Children of Wrath by Nature, as coming from fallen Adam's Loins; and thus considered in Adam, their State is a State of Wrath, being liable and obnoxious to God's eternal Wrath and Displeasure, in that state strictly considered; but the Persons of the elect, in this sinful fallen Estate are not objects of God's Wrath, but objects of his great Immense Love, even when they are dead in sins, Eph.2:4²²; and Faith makes not their Persons accepted, {though it doth their services;} for the acceptance of their persons is exclusively in {Christ} the Beloved, Eph.1:6²³, as a pure Act of God's Sovereign Will, that will because he will, and will on whom he will. Thus it appears, that the Elect are heirs by Grace; and the Testament itself, gives them right to Eternal Life, as the free gift of God by absolute promise, and to have right to

²¹ "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus." Heb.6:17-20.

²² "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us." Eph.2:4.

²³ "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved." Eph.1:6.

Eternal Life; and all the Blessings of the Testament of Grace, by Blood; and to be under the condemning Power of the Law, are plain contradictions, as being opposite one to the other. Jn.1:17²⁴. But if any say, they have nothing in present possession; I answer, if they have right to Justifying Righteousness, that is enough to free them from Curse, and Wrath, in the sight of God's Satisfied Justice. For there can be no right, except God counts it so; and if he counts it so, that is enough to justify us in his sight; for this Righteousness is without us, and is not communicated, but imputed; and Christ as Mediator is the Sum and Substance of this Righteousness; but however, the Elect have a proper Right to Sanctification, and Glorification before Faith. For there was a Grant to Christ, in the Eternal Compact, he performing all Covenant Obligations and Conditions, as Mediatorial Head and Covenant Representative; which when he had performed, he entered into Heaven by his own Blood, having obtained Eternal Redemption, Heb.9:12²⁵, and what he obtained as our great Executor and Surety of the Testament, was before granted; and he obtained it on the behalf of them for whom it was granted. It pleased the Father to entrust him with all fulness of Grace for the Elect, as their Covenant Head, that so it might be sure to all the Heirs of Promise. The

²⁴ "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Jn.1:17.

²⁵ "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Heb.9:12.

Father hath made it as sure in Christ, the Surety of this Testament, as the Eternal God could make it, to speak with reverence. Thus I have been showing which way Sinners are made Righteous in a Mediator; and though the Decree produced no immediate effect, yet it produced its timely effects at that moment of time, Gal.1:15²⁶, the Law was broken, a Mediator stood ready, as fore-ordained to step in, and stand in the breach to keep off the flood of wrath from breaking out upon the Elect; for always remember, the Law was put in the hands of the Mediator, or else we make strange work, and set the Law and Promise together by the ears; when the Law could not give life, it must march off as a Covenant of Life or Death to God's chosen. Christ takes it in his own hand, and makes it give way to the Promise. Now I shall come to speak something of the Justifying Sentence, which pronounced the Elect Righteous in their Covenant Head and Mediator, as grounded upon this preceding Act of Grace, by way of Covenant Transaction between the Father and the Son, which brought our Sins upon Christ, and his Mediatorial Righteousness upon us; and we are wholly passive, both in our being made righteous by Imputation, {which is an Act of pure Grace in God to Sinners,} and likewise in our being pronounced justified, in that Imputed

²⁶ "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace." Gal.1:15. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Gal.4:4-5.

Righteousness, which is a sentence of Grace, and passeth in the Court of Grace, Life by the free promise. Now in pronouncing the Sentence of Life upon ungodly Law-breaking Sinners, God sits Judge of his own Law, as well as the Elect Sinners Cause; and instead of pronouncing the Sentence of the Law upon the Poor Sinner to Condemnation, God sits Enthroned upon a Mercy Seat, in the Court of Grace reconciled in a Mediator; in whom Grace and Justice most sweetly agree to pass the sentence of Eternal Life upon the Elect Sinner by absolute promise. Gen.3:15, Tit.1:2, I Jn.2:25²⁷. This Sentence declares God's Eternal Will, that Christ as Mediator was to die in the place of elect sinners; and they to live by an Act of Sovereign Grace. Thus God, as a righteous Judge, Justifieth the Righteous only; that is, pronounced none but such justified, as are so, Deut.25:1²⁸, and yet he Justifies the ungodly, not by dispensing with his Holy Law, or making that void; but in a way of Justice, Magnifying and Honoring his Law, by an act of Eternal Grace, as consummated in Christ; by virtue of which Act his Elect do stand Righteous in his sight, by Imputation of one Man's Obedience, to answer the Law in their place, as a

²⁷ "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Gen.3:15. "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." Tit.1:2. "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life." I Jn.2:25.

²⁸ "If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them; then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked." Deut.25:1.

Covenant Head, opposed to Adam's one disobedience, who was a figure of this second Adam, which was immediately to take the first Adam's place, {with respect to God's chosen in him,} upon his failure. And it is remarkable, that with respect to Christ's Mediatorship, God comes in the cool of the Day, reconciled in him, and sounds the Jubilee Trumpet from Heaven; and pronounced the sentence of Life, in the free Promise, upon Adam and all the Woman's Seed, {in a better Covenant Head than poor Adam was,} when he was reeking hot in rebellion, and had no Faith. For until the sentence was past, there was no Grace, no Christ, no promise revealed for fallen man to lay hold upon; and the case must be the same still, for the object must precede the Act, that is conversant about that object; and if Life were not revealed in an absolute promise, there were no footing for Faith; for a conditional promise is most properly a Law, for only he that doth the thing required shall live. Thus Faith is made void, and the free promise of none effect; for the first thing looked to, must be the condition annexed to the promise, and then the promise claimed upon that condition. Now suppose Faith be annexed to the Justifying sentence of Life; then Justifying Righteousness, and eternal Life in the free promise, is not the object of Faith; but Faith itself must first be looked to, and then the promise pleaded upon Faith, as the condition of Life; but this is not the Nature of Abraham's Faith, that took God upon his word, and staggered not at the promise, nor considered the unlikeliness, or seeming

impossibilities, but believed God upon his Word, and the Object of his Faith was counted to him for Righteousness. Thus it is by Faith, as an empty hand, or passive instrument, that receives all in the free promise, as pure Grace, and in no sense, upon Faith, as a condition annexed to the sentence of Life. Yet I own, that this or that individual Person, is not declared to be a justified Person, and free from Condemnation, but upon believing; just as no individual Person is declared to be elected, nor Redeemed, by the Death of Christ, but upon believing. Yet the Scriptures do plainly declare, that some are elected, and them are redeemed, and what are the consequences that follow? I say, that Justice, doth not charge these Redeemed ones, {but that God is completely reconciled to them by the Death of Christ,} any more than the former. Will it not amount to the same, to say some are ordained to Eternal Life, and Redeemed with the Blood of Christ, as to say, God doth not charge these Redeemed ones; seeing we likewise affirm, that none know, that they are not under Condemnation, before believing, and that whoever dies an unbeliever, shall be Damned; except any suppose, that terrifying souls with Curse and Condemnation, be the most effectual way to bring them to Faith in Christ; and if so, I am not in their mind; and I am sure the Gospel ought to be Preached and Grace proclaimed. And I think it is the most effectual to propose the Truth of Christ, as the object of Faith, which the Gospel doth reveal for Salvation; God's pardoning Grace, in the Blood of Christ, and so declare the Gospel message

to sinners, redemption by blood, sinners as reconciled in the bleeding Sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This it is that offends some that have made the greatest noise, {and have influenced others, which in other words say the same things,} about words; and because they cannot so directly strike at this free proclamation of Grace to Sinners, to come directly to Christ, without their Previous Qualifications, {which strikes so directly at their idol self-righteousness,} therefore they are pleased to brand the Doctrine of God's Free Justifying Grace with nick names at their pleasure. And I wish that some, which see other ways, be not frightened from owning the Truths they believed, and received in the light of God's Holy Spirit, for fear of being laden with calumnies and reproaches; for it is a trying time, and I do believe, that those that are kept close to Christ, in owning the simplicity of the Gospel, shall meet with as great Trials as those that have gone before us; for Christ will shake the Earth and the Heavens, and remove those things that are made, and burn up the hay, wood and stubble. Therefore, let every man take heed what he builds, though upon the foundation of Christ. I Cor.3:12²⁹. But to return to the Point in Hand, there be various sentences, and in various Courts, where and by which God declares the non-Imputation of Sin to his Elect; and all sentences of Court whatsoever, do but declare God's Act of Grace in that Court where the sentence is

²⁹ "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble." I Cor.3:12.

pronounced; and the last and final sentence will be at the Great Assizes, when Christ will publicly, before Men and Angels, pronounce them blessed. Yet to conclude with some, that they were not completely Justified till then, would be great darkness; so though God in his Word, doth pronounce Believers Justified, yet it will no more follow, that they were not Justified before, than the former; if things be rightly weighed; for to affirm otherwise makes Faith a moral Condition of Justification, as hath been shown already, and also denies Justification, to be by the New Covenant, or makes the Covenant of Grace conditional, {and that in a strict sense, denies Faith to be a part of the Covenant Blessings.} But that Justification is by the Covenant of Grace in Christ, few do directly deny, and I am as certain, as I am certain that the Scriptures are true, that the first pronounced sentence of Life to Sinners is by that Covenant, Gen.3:15³⁰, and it is according to the Tenor of that Covenant, for there are but two Covenants {or Courts} where the pronounced sentence of Life can be supposed to pass; but by the works of the Law, no Flesh shall be Justified, Rom.3:20³¹, then it must be according to the Tenor of the Covenant of Grace; if that be an absolute promise of Life, then the sentence is an absolute

³⁰ "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Gen.3:15.

³¹ "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Rom.3:20.

sentence, but that is an absolute promise of Life, Gen.3:15, Tit.1:2, I Jn.2:25³², therefore the sentence is an absolute sentence, past in the Court of Grace, upon all the Woman's Seed in their Covenant Head, {in direct opposition to the serpent's seed, upon the serpent and his seed the curse takes place, having no Mediator to make up the breach,} and the promise in Christ takes hold of the Elect as soon as they have a being. Rom.9:13³³. Then except it can be proved, that the sentence that passeth upon believing, be according to the Tenor of the Covenant of Grace; it will be in vain for to contend for that to be the first sentence of Life that is past upon an elect Person. But I deny, that believe in the Lord Jesus and thou shalt have life, or be saved, is the tenor of the Covenant of Grace; it is a part of the New Testament Ministry, but not the Tenor of the New Covenant. Then seeing there is no Law given that can give Life, Gal.3:21³⁴, then prove that the Covenant of Grace is conditional, or grant that the sentence of Life is absolute; or deny that the Justifying Sentence of Life, passed according to

³² "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Gen.3:15. "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." Tit.1:2. "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life." I Jn.2:25.

³³ "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Rom.9:13.

³⁴ "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid; for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." Gal.3:21.

the Tenor of that Covenant; and then it will lay upon you to prove, by what Covenant we are Justified. But leaving this, that which I desire your answer to, is these following Questions, which I desire you would answer to each particular distinctly, as you tender the Truth, and the Glory of Christ; and respect my good, and the good of others, by clearing up the Truth, that the simplicity of the Gospel may be preserved by God's Special help and protection.

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QUESTIONS CONCERNING THIS POINT.

Question I.

Did the Chosen of God, which were loved with an everlasting and unchangeable Love, when they fell in Adam into Sin, by the breach of the Law, equally with others; did they then come under the same condemning Power of the Law, and under the same Curse and Wrath of God, equally with the non-elect whilst on Earth? If not the very same, show where it differs, and then, it may be, we agree in the main, though differ in expressions. But if the very same, then, &c.

Question II.

How can the elect be under the Curse and Wrath of God, and suffer whilst here on Earth, in that state, {as the effects of Sin, and consequently of the Curse, whilst under it,} and not penal, as part of the punishment due to Sin? Though not Hell itself, yet something of the same Nature, {though not the same degree,} because not under the Justifying sentence of Life, past in the New Covenant. Therefore, the Curse of Afflictions, not taken away, they are no corrections in a Covenant way; but properly punishment, in Wrath, as taken in a strict Sense; then, &c.

Question III.

How can this stand with that perfect atonement made by our High Priest's own Oblation; or doth it not exceedingly derogate from that perfect satisfaction he made to Justice, and his complete filling up the Law, by Mediatorial Obedience? Heb.10:10-14, 9:12,26³⁵. Again, &c.

Question IV.

Doth not this imply a change in God, for there is a mighty change somewhere, that one that stands condemned in God's sight, and under his Curse and Wrath, having all his Sins charged upon and imputed to him by God himself, should be the very next moment, upon believing, not charged with one Sin, but received into the Favour of God, as perfectly and completely Righteous in God's sight? Now the change is not in the voice of the Law, for that neither respects believers nor unbelievers, elect or non-

³⁵ "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God; from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Heb.10:10-14. "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Heb.9:12. "For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Heb.9:26.

elect, but equally curses all that continue not in all things, that are written to perfection, Deut.7:26³⁶, then it is not that imperfect change, wrought in believers, that can turn the sentence of the Law, that it could not Curse and Condemn them, that are in themselves sinful and imperfect. Therefore, I see not, but that thou must make the change to be in God, that counts the Mediatorial Obedience of Christ, answered the Law in our place, now and not before; except you can find a milder Law, that pronounces the sentence of Life, upon this imperfect change wrought in us, as the condition annexed to the sentence of Life. And if so, then, &c.

Question V.

How will you deny, that conditionality of the Covenant of Grace, and that Faith is the Condition thereof; for if Justification be by the New Covenant, then the sentence of Life must be according to the Tenor of that Covenant. Then if that be an absolute promise of Life, as Tit.1:2, compared with I Jn.2:25³⁷, then the Justifying sentence of Life, must be absolute, as past upon all God's chosen in Christ their Covenant-Head, Gen.3:15, 22:18, compared

³⁶ "Neither shalt thou bring an abomination into thine house, lest thou be a cursed thing like it; but thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it; for it is a cursed thing." Deut.7:26.

³⁷ "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." Tit.1:2. "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life." I Jn.2:25.

with Gal.3:16-18³⁸, otherwise the Covenant must be Conditional, and Faith must be the Condition thereof, and consequently no part of the Covenant of Grace, because not promised therein. For if the first Grace be promised then the promise must be absolute to Sinners, as such, as the price of the Blood of the great Testator. Again, &c.

Question VI.

Why do you set the Seal of the Covenant of Grace upon the infinite seed of Believers, seeing before Faith, they are in no sense under the sentence of Life, past in that Covenant promise {though I grant that God is at liberty to show his Sovereignty, as in Abraham's Family} if the promise be not real and absolute, {at least to some,} as to the internal part thereof, that God is their God by Covenant promise? Then the Seal of the Covenant is vain, {or only holds forth external privileges,} and consequently believing Parents have no grounds for their Faith,

³⁸ "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Gen.3:15. "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." Gen.22:18. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise, but God gave it to Abraham by promise." Gal.3:16-18.

that God is the God of their seed by Covenant promise. Again, &c.

Question VII.

Doth God pronounce any justified, but such as are so in his sight, by Imputation? If not, then making over a Righteousness to elect Sinners in a Mediator, must be taken in to God's Justifying Act, as well as the pronounced sentence, which is grounded upon this Act of Grace, in a way of perfect Justice; because God, as Righteous Judge, justifies ungodly Law-breaking Sinners, and clears them from the voice of the Law, as to the condemning power thereof, by a righteousness without them, by Imputation. Then that Act of God's Grace, that turns the sentence of the Law upon Christ, the spotless Lamb, by imputing our Sins to him; and turns the sentence of Law, as to its Condemning power, from Guilty Law-breaking Sinners, by imputing his Mediatorial obedience to them; comes into Justification, as well as the pronounced sentence, that declares this Act of Grace, by which the Sinner stands clear in a way of Justice. For all sentences of Court, according to Justice, are grounded upon some preceding Act; according to which Act the sentence is Just, and the sentence Justifies, as it declares the Act by which they stand clear. Again, &c.

Question VIII.

What is God's Act of Imputation, by which he makes that Law Change of Persons, which sets Christ, as

Mediator, under the Curse and Condemning power of the Law, Gal.4:4 compared with 3:13³⁹, though in himself spotless; and sets elect Sinners under the Blessings of the New Covenant, Gal.3:14⁴⁰, as the immediate effects of his Mediatorial obedience, though in themselves, and with respect to the Law, ungodly Sinners? The Apostle speaking of this Sovereign Act of God, Rom.4:5⁴¹, saith, that God "justifieth the ungodly," and then brings in David, describing it, by imputing Righteousness without works {which is the grounds of his not imputing sin; and consequently the Grounds of his pronouncing them just;} and this he brings in, as the Quintessence of God's Justifying Act. Now if this Sovereign Act, that makes this Law change of Persons, and turns the Condemning sentence of the Law, from the guilty Lawbreaking Sinner, to the spotless Lamb, be not an Act of God's Sovereign will, as Imminent and Internal, then I desire you would undeceive me, and show plainly, what manner of Act it is; for I take God's will to be the Rule of all Justice, and things are therefore just, because he wills them;

³⁹ "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law." Gal.4:4. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." Gal.3:13.

⁴⁰ "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Gal.3:14.

⁴¹ "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Rom.4:5.

and as it was his will, that the breach of his Law should be punished with Eternal Death, and that he would by no means clear the guilty, Exod.34:7⁴², so it was his will, that this spotless Lamb should stand guilty, as Mediator, by way of Imputation, and should mediate between a broken Law and his chosen ones; and stand between all harms and them. And I humbly conceive that in this Act of imputing our Sins to Christ, and his obedience, as Mediatorial Representative to us, God respects no manner of inherent change in us. Again, &c.

Question IX.

When doth the Mediatory undertakement of Christ, first take place for an Elect Person? If when we believe, and not before, then Christ intercedes not for the Elect uncalled, which is contrary to the Scripture. Jn.17:20⁴³. Christ's Mediatorship is figured out in the type, "I stood between the Lord and you," saith Moses, Deut.5:5⁴⁴, when the Law

⁴² "Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation." Exod.34:7.

⁴³ "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." Jn.17:20.

⁴⁴ "I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to shew you the word of the LORD; for ye were afraid of reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount; saying, I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage; thou shalt have none other gods before me." Deut.5:5-7.

was given upon Mount Sinai; and "I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the Tables in the Ark," Deut.10:5⁴⁵, "and there they be, as the Lord commanded me." Compare this with Galatians 3:19-21⁴⁶, for there he shows that the Law, in the Mediator's hand, made the promise take place upon the seed of Abraham, Jews, and Gentiles; which was the Gospel that God preached to Abraham, and to Adam too; as Law and Promise meet in Christ, and thus sweetly agree, Christ being delivered up to Justice, for all the Elect, in their Law-place. Who can charge them, saith Paul, God Justifies them, Christ died and is risen again, and received to God's Right Hand, Rom.8:33-34⁴⁷, and there pleads his plea, as an Advocate, which is mighty and prevailing; as he pleads his propitiatory Sacrifice, as the propitiation of the Elect World, Jew and Gentle. I Jn.2:2⁴⁸. Thus

⁴⁵ "And I turned myself and came down from the mount, and put the tables in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the LORD commanded me." Deut.10:5.

⁴⁶ "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one. Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid; for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law." Gal.3:19-21.

⁴⁷ "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Rom.8:33-34.

⁴⁸ "And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." I Jn.2:2.

he pleads out all bills of Indictment whatsoever out of Court; for his atoning Blood was Efficacious from the very moment Adam fell. He is called a Lamb slain from the foundation of the World, Rev.13:8⁴⁹, and though he was not actually slain; neither do I understand it in the Decree only, but by virtue of the Decree, his Blood was Efficacious, from the first moment Adam fell. Had it not been for this, fallen man had never had a free promise of Life, nor yet of Faith; but had remained under the Curse, and there must have lain; which were the case now, if Christ did not mediate by Blood, for those that were unconverted; which makes the promise absolute. For if the Elect uncalled, be not under the promise in Christ, as Mediator of this better Covenant to them; then they must be strictly under the Law, {as some affirm,} as a Covenant of Works, and have no promise, but what that Covenant affords them, until Faith, and where they shall have that, if not under the absolute promise in Christ as Mediator, I see not but they are under the Curse, and there must lie. Again, &c.

Question X.

What is the Gospel promise to Sinners, if all Sinners are under God's Curse and Wrath whilst

⁴⁹ "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Rev.13:8. "But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." I Pet.1:19-20.

unconverted? Who durst then to proclaim Peace, in the King's Name, to a Company of Law-breaking Sinners and Rebels? Who durst then to proclaim Liberty to Captives, and the opening the Prison to them that are bound, or cause the Jubilee Trumpet to sound, if the atonement be not completely made by our High Priest's atoning Blood, in the Day of atonement, causing the Trumpet of the Jubilee to sound, and proclaim Liberty. Lev.25:9⁵⁰. This argues that the Blood of Christ was Efficacious from the fall of Adam, when the Law was broken; this Blood pleaded in the eye of Justice, in the sight of God there being an atonement by virtue of the Covenant Contract; and God himself sounding the Jubilee Trumpet from Heaven, and Preaching Peace and Pardon in the free promise by a Mediator; who by God's appointment, was to stand in the Gap, and make up the breach of a broken Covenant, which was all along held forth in the Sacrifices. Now, if reconciliation be not completely made by our High Priest's own offering; then the type held forth more than was in the Antitype. Lev.16:30⁵¹. If Wrath be

⁵⁰ "Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land." Lev.25:9.

⁵¹ "For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the LORD." Lev.16:30. "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most Holy." Dan.9:24.

not appeased, and God reconciled, in a bleeding Sacrifice to Sinners, as such, how then can the Gospel be a Message of Peace, by Jesus Christ, to Jews and Gentiles? Acts 10:36⁵². If God be not Reconciled in the atoning Blood of Jesus to elect Sinners, as such; then they are under no absolute promise of Faith, and a new Heart, and the Spirit, Sanctification and Glorification, as the price of his Blood, to confirm this free Testament, whereof he is the Surety. Heb.7:22⁵³. If not, then Christ hath only purchased a remote Reconcilability in God, and God will be Reconciled to Sinners, when they believe, which I suppose would be never if the case were so. Then it follows, that Sinners are called to believe in Christ, that so God's Curse and Wrath might be done away, and God become reconciled, and at Peace with them, and Pardon their Sins, and accept their Persons. This looks like a new Law, but I think no milder than the old Law, for who will believe in an Angry God, or can, for Pardon; for if God Reconciled in the Blood of Christ, be not that which Faith takes hold on, then I mistake; but I am well satisfied, that those that are orthodox and sound in the main, say the same in other words, which amounts to this, that the Elect are under the absolute promise of a new Heart, of the Spirit, Sanctification, and the like, Ezek.36:26⁵⁴, as the purchase of Christ's Blood, and

⁵² "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ; he is Lord of all." Acts 10:36.

⁵³ "By so much was Jesus made a Surety of a better testament." Heb.7:22.

why not Justification? For you will own, that God's pardoning Grace, and the Justifying Righteousness of Christ, is the object of Faith, and not Wrath and Condemnation directly.

FINIS.

⁵⁴ "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Ezek.36:26-27. "And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." Deut.30:6. "And I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them; and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me." Jer.32:39-40. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph.2:10.