

Romans v. 12-21

by John Owen

The sermon explores the theological implications of Romans 5:12-21, emphasizing the contrast between the sin of Adam and the righteousness offered through Christ.

Scripture: Romans 3:24, Romans 5:18-19, Romans 8:1, Ephesians 2:8

Topics: "Justification By Faith", "Imputed Righteousness"

Description

John Owen preaches on the imputation of the righteousness of Christ for our justification, contrasting the sin of Adam leading to condemnation with the obedience of Christ leading to justification and eternal life. He emphasizes that our justification is solely by the grace of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, with the righteousness of Christ being freely granted and imputed to believers. Owen refutes objections against the imputation of Christ's righteousness, highlighting the necessity of Christ's death and obedience for our reconciliation and pardon of sin. He underscores the preeminence of God's grace and Christ's sacrifice in our justification, exalting the love and grace of God and Christ in the work of salvation.

Transcript

Rom. v. 12-21. Boasting excluded in ourselves, asserted in God -- The design and sum of the apostle's argument -- Objection of Socinus removed -- Comparison between the two Adams, and those that derive from them -- Sin entered into the world -- What sin intended -- Death, what it comprises, what intended by it -- The sense of these words, "inasmuch," or, "in whom all have sinned," cleared and vindicated -- The various oppositions used by the apostle in this discourse: principally between sin or the fall, and the free gift; between the disobedience of the one, and the obedience of another; judgment on the one hand, and justification unto life on the other -- The whole context at large explained, and the argument for justification by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, fully confirmed

Rom. v. 12-21. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (for until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come. But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, has abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which

receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ;) 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. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound: but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin has reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

The apostle, chap. iii. 27, affirms that in this matter of justification all boasting, or "boasting," is excluded; but here, in the verse foregoing, he grants a boasting or a glorying in God, or "boasting" in God, here allowed us, has a peculiar respect unto what the apostle had in prospect farther to discourse of. And he includes what he had principally treated of before concerning our justification, so far as it consists in the pardon of sin; for although he does suppose, yea, and mention, the imputation of righteousness also unto us, yet principally he declares our justification by the pardon of sin and our freedom from condemnation, whereby all boasting in ourselves is excluded. But here he designs a farther progress, as unto that whereon our glorying in God, on a right and title freely given us unto eternal life, does depend. And this is the imputation of the righteousness and obedience of Christ unto the justification of life, or the reign of grace through righteousness unto eternal life.

Great complaints have been made by some concerning the obscurity of the discourse of the apostle in this place, by reason of sundry ellipses, antapodota, hyperbata, and other figures of speech, which either are or are feigned to be therein. Howbeit, I cannot but think, that if men acquainted with the common principles of Christian religion, and sensible in themselves of the nature and guilt of our original apostasy from God, would without prejudice read this place of the Scripture, -- "this place of the Scripture," -- they will grant that the design of the apostle is to prove, that as the sin of Adam was imputed unto all men unto condemnation, so the righteousness or obedience of Christ is imputed unto all that believe unto the justification of life. The sum of it is given by Theodoret, Dial. iii. "Vide, quomodo quæ Christi sunt cum iis quæ sunt Adami conferantur, cum morbo medicina, cum vulnere emplastrum, cum peccato justitia, cum execratione benedictio, cum condemnatione remissio, cum transgressione obedientia, cum morte vita, cum inferis regnum, Christus cum Adam, homo cum homine."

The differences that are among interpreters about the exposition of these words relate unto the use of some particles, prepositions, and the dependence of one passage upon another; on none of which the confirmation of the truth pleaded for does depend. But the plain design of the apostle, and his express propositions, are such as, if men could but acquiesce in them, might put an end unto this controversy.

Socinus acknowledges that this place of Scripture does give, as he speaks, the greatest occasion unto our opinion in this matter; for he cannot deny but at least a great appearance of what we believe is represented in the words of the apostle. He does, therefore, use his utmost endeavour to wrest and deprave them; and yet, although most of his artifices are since traduced into the annotations of others upon the place, he himself produces nothing material but what is taken out of Origen, and the comment of Pelagius on this epistle, which is extant in the works of Jerome, and was urged before him by Erasmus. The substance or what he pleads for is, that the actual transgression of Adam is not imputed unto his posterity, nor a depraved nature from thence communicated unto them; only, whereas he had incurred the penalty of death, all that derive their nature from him in that condition are rendered subject unto death also. And as for that corruption of nature which is in us, or a proneness unto sin, it is not derived from Adam, but is a habit contracted by many continued acts of our own. So also, on the other hand, that the obedience or righteousness of Christ is not imputed unto us; only when we make ourselves to become his children by our obedience unto him, -- he having obtained eternal life for himself by his obedience unto God, -- we are made partakers of the benefits thereof. This is the substance of his long disputation on this subject, *De Servatore*, lib. iv. cap. 6. But this is not to expound the words of the apostle, but expressly to contradict them, as we shall see in the ensuing consideration of them.

I intend not an exposition of the whole discourse of the apostle, but only of those passages in it which evidently declare the way and manner of our justification before God.

A comparison is here proposed and pursued between the first Adam, by whom sin was brought into the world, and the second Adam, by whom it is taken away. And a comparison it is of things contrary; wherein there is a similitude in some things, and a dissimilitude in others, both sorts illustrating the truth declared in it. The general proposition of it is contained in verse 12. "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed on all men, for that all have sinned." The entrance of sin and punishment into the world was by one man; and that by one sin, as he afterwards declares: yet were they not confined unto the person of that one man, but belonged equally unto all. This the apostle expresses, inverting the order of the effect and cause. In the entrance of it he first mentions the cause or sin, and then the effect or punishment: "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin;" but in the application of it unto all men, he expresses first the effect and then the cause: "Death passed on all men, for that all have sinned." Death, on the first entrance of sin, passed on all, -- that is, all men became liable and obnoxious unto it, as the punishment due to sin. All men that ever were, are, or shall be, were not then existent in their own persons; but yet were they all of them then, upon the first entrance of sin, made subject to death, or liable unto punishment. They were so by virtue of divine constitution, upon their federal existence in the one man that sinned. And actually they became obnoxious in their own persons unto the sentence of it upon their first natural existence, being born children of wrath.

It is hence manifest what sin it is that the apostle intends, -- namely, the actual sin of Adam, -- the one sin of that one common person, whilst he was so. For although the corruption and depravation of our nature does necessarily ensue thereon, in every one that is brought forth actually to the world by natural generation; yet is it the guilt of Adam's actual sin alone that rendered them all obnoxious unto death upon the first entrance of sin into the world. So death entered by sin, -- the guilt of it, obnoxiousness unto it; and that with respect unto all men universally.

Death here comprises the whole punishment due unto sin, be it what it will, concerning which we need not here to dispute: "The wages of sin is death," Rom. vi. 23, and nothing else. Whatever sin deserves in the

justice of God, whatever punishment God at any time appointed or threatened unto it, it is comprised in death: "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die the death." This, therefore, the apostle lays down as the foundation of his discourse, and of the comparison which he intends, -- namely, that in and by the actual sin of Adam, all men are made liable unto death, or unto the whole punishment due unto sin; that is, the guilt of that sin is imputed unto them. For nothing is intended by the imputation of sin unto any, but the rendering them justly obnoxious unto the punishment due unto that sin; as the not imputing of sin is the freeing of men from being subject or liable unto punishment. And this sufficiently evidences the vanity of the Pelagian gloss, that death passed upon all merely by virtue of natural propagation from him who had deserved it, without any imputation of the guilt of sin unto them; which is a contradiction unto the plain words of the apostle. For it is the guilt of sin, and not natural propagation, that he affirms to be the cause of death.

Having mentioned sin and death, the one as the only cause of the other, the guilt of sin of the punishment of death, -- sin deserving nothing but death, and death being due unto nothing but sin, -- he declares how all men universally became liable unto this punishment, or guilty of death: Ἐφ' ᾧπάντες ἥμαρτον, -- "In quo omnes peccaverunt," -- "In whom all have sinned." For it relates unto the one man that sinned, in whom all sinned: which is evident from the effect thereof, inasmuch as "in him all died," 1 Cor. xv. 22; or, as it is here, on his sin "death passed on all men." And this is the evident sense of 325the words, ἐπὶ being put for ἐν which is not unusual in the Scripture. See Matt. xv. 5; Rom. iv. 18; v. 2; Phil. i. 3; Heb. ix. 17. And it is often so used by the best writers in the Greek tongue. So Hesiod, Μέτρον δ' ἐπὶπᾶσιν ἄριστον, -- "Modus in omnibus rebus optimus." So, Ἐφ' ὑμῖνἐστιν, -- "In vobis situm est;" Τοῦτοἐπ' ἐμοὶ κεῖται, -- "Hoc in me situm est." And this reading of the words is contended for by Austin against the Pelagians, rejecting their "eo quad" or "propterea." But I shall not contend about the reading of the words. It is the artifice of our adversaries to persuade men, that the force of our argument to prove from hence the imputation of the sin of Adam unto his posterity, does depend solely upon this interpretation of these words, ἐφ' ᾧ, by "in whom." We shall, therefore, grant them their desire, that they are better rendered by "eo quod," "propterea," or "quatenus," -- "inasmuch," "because." Only, we must say that here is a reason given why "death passed on all men," inasmuch as "all have sinned," -- that is, in that sin whereby death entered into the world.

It is true, death, by virtue of the original constitution of the law, is due unto every sin, whenever it is committed. But the present inquiry is, how death passed at once on all men? How they came [to be] liable and obnoxious unto it upon its first entrance by the actual sin of Adam? -- which cannot be by their own actual sin; yea, the apostle, in the next verses, affirms that death passed on them also who never sinned actually, or as Adam did, whose sin was actual. And if the actual sins of men, in imitation of Adam's sin, were intended, then should men be made liable to death before they had sinned; for death, upon its first entrance into the world, passed on all men, before any one man had actually sinned but Adam only. But that men should be liable unto death, which is nothing but the punishment of sin, when they have not sinned, is an open contradiction. For although God, by his sovereign power, might indict death on an innocent creature, yet that an innocent creature should be guilty of death is impossible: for to be guilty of death, is to have sinned. Wherefore this expression, "Inasmuch as all have sinned," expressing the desert

and guilt of death then when sin and death first entered into the world, no sin can be intended in it but the sin of Adam, and our interest therein: "Eramus enim omnes ille unus homo;" and this can be no otherwise but by the imputation of the guilt of that sin unto us. For the act of Adam not being ours inherently and subjectively, we cannot be concerned in its effect but by the imputation of its guilt; for the communication of that unto us which is not inherent in us, is that which we intend by imputation.

This is the [961](#); [972](#); [963](#); [964](#); [945](#); [963](#); [953](#); [962](#); of the intended collation; which I have insisted the longer on, because the apostle lays in it the foundation of all that [326](#) afterwards infers and asserts in the whole comparison. And here, some say, there is an [7936](#); [957](#); [945](#); [964](#); [945](#); [960](#); [972](#); [948](#); [945](#); [964](#); [959](#); [957](#); in his discourse; that is, he lays down the proposition on the part of Adam, but does not show what answers to it on the contrary in Christ. And Origen gives the reason of the silence of the apostle herein, -- namely, lest what is to be said therein should be abused by any unto sloth and negligence. For whereas he says [8037](#); [963](#); [960](#); [949](#); [961](#);, "as" (which is a note of similitude) "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin;" so the [7936](#); [960](#); [972](#); [948](#); [959](#); [963](#); [953](#); [962](#);, or reddition, should be, "so by one righteousness entered into the world, and life by righteousness."

This he acknowledges to be the genuine filling up of the comparison, but was not expressed by the apostle, lest men should abuse it unto negligence or security, supposing that to be done already which should be done afterwards. But as this plainly contradicts and everts most of what he farther asserts in the exposition of the place, so the apostle concealed not any truth upon such considerations. And as he plainly expresses that which is here intimated, verse 19, so he shows how foolish and wicked any such imaginations are, as suppose that any countenance is given hereby unto any to indulge themselves in their sins.

Some grant, therefore, that the apostle does conceal the expression of what is ascribed unto Christ, in opposition unto what he had affirmed of Adam and his sin, unto verse 19; but the truth is, it is sufficiently included in the close of verse 14, where he affirms of Adam that, in those things whereof he treats, he was "the figure of him that was to come." For the way and manner whereby he introduced righteousness and life, and communicated them unto men, answered the way and manner whereby Adam introduced sin and death, which passed on all the world. Adam being the figure of Christ, look how it was with him, with respect unto his natural posterity, as unto sin and death; so it is with the Lord Christ, the second Adam, and his spiritual posterity, with respect unto righteousness and life. Hence we argue, --

If the actual sin of Adam was so imputed unto all his posterity as to be accounted their own sin unto condemnation, then is the actual obedience of Christ, the second Adam, imputed unto all his spiritual seed (that is, unto all believers) unto justification. I shall not here farther press this argument, because the ground of it will occur unto us afterwards.

The two next verses, containing an objection and an answer returned unto it, wherein we have no immediate concernment, I shall pass by.

Verses 15, 16. The apostle proceeds to explain his comparison in those things wherein there is a dissimilitude between the comparates:--

327"But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many."

The opposition is between the efficacy of the fall, on the one hand, and the efficacy of the grace of God, on the other, -- between which a dissimilitude is asserted, not as unto their opposite effects of death and life, but only as unto the degrees of their efficacy, with respect unto those effects. The offence, the fall, the sin, the transgression, -- that is, the disobedience of one," verse 19. Hence the first sin of Adam is generally called "the fall," -- the fall. That which is opposed hereunto is the grace of God; -- "Donum, donum gratuitum; beneficium, id quod Deus gratificatur;" that is, the free gift by grace, through Jesus Christ. Wherefore, although this word, in the next verse, does precisely signify the righteousness of Christ, yet here it comprehends all the causes of our justification, in opposition unto the fall of Adam, and the entrance of sin thereby.

The consequent and effect of the fall, -- "of the offence," the fall, -- is, that "many be dead." No more is here intended by "many," but only that the effects of that one offence were not confined unto one; and if we inquire who or how many those many are, the apostle tells us that they are all men universally; that is, all the posterity of Adam. By this one offence, because they all sinned, therein they are all dead; that is, rendered obnoxious and liable unto death, as the punishment due unto that one offence. And hence also it appears how vain it is to wrest those words of verse 12, "Inasmuch as all have sinned," unto any other sin but the first sin in Adam, seeing it is given as the reason why death passed on them; it being here plainly affirmed "that they are dead," or that death passed on them by that one offence.

The efficacy of the free gift, -- opposed hereunto, is expressed, as that which abounded much more. Besides the thing itself asserted, which is plain and evident, the apostle seems to me to argue the equity of our justification by grace, through the obedience of Christ, by comparing it with the condemnation that befell us by the sin and disobedience of Adam. For if it were just, meet, and equal, that all men should be made subject unto condemnation for the sin of Adam; it is much more so, that those who believe should be justified by the obedience of Christ, through the grace and free donation of God. But wherein, in particular, the gift by grace abounded unto many, above the efficacy of the fall to condemn, he declares afterwards. And that whereby we are freed from condemnation, more eminently than we are made obnoxious unto it by the fall and sin of Adam, by that alone we are justified before God. But this is by the grace of God, and the gift by grace, through Jesus Christ alone; which we plead for, verse 16. Another difference between the compares is expressed, or rather the instance is given in particular of the dissimilitude asserted in general before:--

"And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification."

Δι' ἑνὸς
ἁμαρτήσαντος, "By one that sinned," is the same with δι' ἑνὸς παραπτώματος, "by one sin," one offence, the one sin of that man. Κρῖμα, we render "judgment." Most interpreters do it by "reatus," "guilt," or "crimen," which is derived from it. So מִשְׁפָּת, "judicium," is used in the Hebrew for guilt: מִשְׁפַּט־מָוֶת לָאִישׁהַזֶּה, Jer. xxvi. 11, "The judgment of death is to this man, this man is guilty of death, has deserved to die."

First, therefore, there was παράπρτωμα, the sin, the fall, τοῦ ἑνος ἁμαρτήσαντος, of one man that sinned; it was his actual sin alone. Thence followed κρῖμα, "reatus," "guilt;" this was common unto all. In and by that one sin, guilt came upon all. And the end hereof, that which it rendered men obnoxious unto, is κατάκριμα, -- "condemnation," guilt unto condemnation.

And this guilt unto condemnation which came upon all, was ἐξ ἑνός, -- of one person, or sin. This is the order of things on the part of Adam:-- (1.) Παράπτωμα, the one sin; (2.) Κρῖμα, the guilt that thereon ensued unto all; (3.) Κατάκριμα, the condemnation which that guilt deserved. And their "antitheta," or opposites, in the second Adam are:-- (1.) Χάρισμα, the free donation of God; (2.) Δώρημα, the gift of grace itself, or the righteousness of Christ; (3.) Δικαίωμα, or δικαίωσις ζωῆς, "justification of life."

But yet though the apostle does thus distinguish these things, to illustrate his comparison and opposition, that which he intends by them all is the righteousness and obedience of Christ, as he declares, verses 18, 19. This, in the matter of our justification, he calls, -- (1.) Χάρισμα, with respect unto the free, gratuitous grant of it by the grace of God, Δωρεὰ τῆς χάριτος, and (2.) Δώρημα, with respect unto us who receive it, -- a free gift it is unto us; and (3.) Δικαίωμα, with respect unto its effect of making us righteous.

Whereas, therefore, by the sin of Adam imputed unto them, guilt came on all men unto condemnation, we must inquire wherein the free gift was otherwise: "Not as by one that sinned, so was the gift." And it was

so in two things: for, -- 1. Condemnation came upon all by one offence; but being under the guilt of that one offence, we contract the guilt of many more innumerable. Wherefore, if the free gift had respect only unto that one offence, and intended itself no farther, we could not be delivered; wherefore it is said to be "of many 329offences," -- that is, of all our sins and trespasses whatever. 2. Adam, and all his posterity in him, were in a state of acceptation with God, and placed in a way of obtaining eternal life and blessedness, wherein God himself would have been their reward. In this estate, by the entrance of sin, they lost the favour of God, and incurred the guilt of death or condemnation, for they are the same. But they lost not an immediate right and title unto life and blessedness; for this they had not, nor could have before the course of obedience prescribed unto them was accomplished. That, therefore, which came upon all by the one offence, was the loss of God's favour in the approbation of their present state, and the judgment or guilt of death and condemnation. But an immediate right unto eternal life, by that one sin was not lost. The free gift is not so: for as by it we are freed, not only from one sin, but from all our sins, so also by it we have a right and title unto eternal life; for therein, "grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life," verse 21.

The same truth is farther explained and confirmed, verse 17, "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." The design of the apostle having been sufficiently manifested in our observations on the former verses, I shall from this only observe those things which more immediately concern our present subject. And, --

1. It is worth observation with what variety of expressions the apostle sets forth the grace of God in the justification of believers: [16](#); [17](#); [18](#); [19](#); [20](#); [21](#); [22](#); [23](#); [24](#); [25](#); [26](#); [27](#); [28](#); [29](#); [30](#); [31](#); [32](#); [33](#); [34](#); [35](#); [36](#); [37](#); [38](#); [39](#); [40](#); [41](#); [42](#); [43](#); [44](#); [45](#); [46](#); [47](#); [48](#); [49](#); [50](#); [51](#); [52](#); [53](#); [54](#); [55](#); [56](#); [57](#); [58](#); [59](#); [60](#); [61](#); [62](#); [63](#); [64](#); [65](#); [66](#); [67](#); [68](#); [69](#); [70](#); [71](#); [72](#); [73](#); [74](#); [75](#); [76](#); [77](#); [78](#); [79](#); [80](#); [81](#); [82](#); [83](#); [84](#); [85](#); [86](#); [87](#); [88](#); [89](#); [90](#); [91](#); [92](#); [93](#); [94](#); [95](#); [96](#); [97](#); [98](#); [99](#); [100](#); [101](#); [102](#); [103](#); [104](#); [105](#); [106](#); [107](#); [108](#); [109](#); [110](#); [111](#); 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speak of these divine mysteries from this blessed apostle, who knew them better than we all, and, besides, wrote by divine inspiration.

And it is marvellous unto me how men can break through the fence that he has made about the grace of God and obedience of Christ, in the work of our justification before God, to introduce their own works of obedience, and to find a place for them therein. But the design of Paul and some men, in declaring this point of our justification before God, seems to be very opposite and contrary. His whole discourse is concerning the grace of God, the death, blood, and obedience of Christ, as if he could never sufficiently satisfy himself in the setting out and declaration of them, without the least mention of any works or duties of our own, or the least intimation of any use that they are of herein. But all their pleas are for their own works and duties; and they have invented as many terms to set them out by as the Holy Ghost has used for the expression and declaration of the grace of God. Instead of the words of wisdom before mentioned, which the Holy Ghost has taught, wherewith he fills up his discourse, theirs are filled with conditions, preparatory dispositions, merits, causes, and I know not what trappings for our own works. For my part I shall choose rather to learn of him, and accommodate my conceptions and expressions of gospel mysteries, and of this in especial concerning our justification, unto his who cannot deceive me, than trust to any other conduct, how specious soever its pretences may be.

2. It is plain in this verse that no more is required of any one unto justification, but that he receive the "abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness;" for this is the description that the apostle gives of those that are justified, as unto any thing that on their part is required. And as this excludes all works of righteousness which we do, -- for by none of them do we receive the abundance of grace, and the gift of righteousness, -- so it does also the imputation of faith itself unto our justification, as it is an act and duty of our own: for faith is that whereby we receive the gift of righteousness by which we are justified. For it will not be denied but that we are justified by the gift of righteousness, or the righteousness which is given unto us; for by it have we right and title unto life. But our faith is not this gift; for that which receives, and that which is received, are not the same.

3. Where there is [abounding grace](#); [superabounding grace](#); and [the gift of righteousness](#); and [the abundance of grace](#); and [the gift of righteousness](#); and [the righteousness which is given unto us](#); and [the right and title unto life](#); and [the pardon of sin](#); and [the forgiveness of sins](#); and [the remission of sins](#); and [the washing of sins](#); and [the cleansing of sins](#); and [the purging of sins](#); and [the blotting out of sins](#); and [the putting away of sins](#); and [the destroying of sins](#); and [the abolishing of sins](#); and [the annulling of sins](#); and [the cancelling of sins](#); and [the wiping out of sins](#); and [the erasing of sins](#); and [the deleting of sins](#); and [the blotting out of sins](#); and [the putting away of sins](#); and [the destroying of sins](#); and [the abolishing of sins](#); and [the annulling of sins](#); and [the cancelling of sins](#); and [the wiping out of sins](#); and [the erasing of sins](#); and [the deleting of sins](#); -- "abounding grace," "superabounding grace," -- exerted in our justification, no more is required thereunto; for how can it be said to abound, yea, to superabound, not only to the freeing of us from condemnation, but the giving of us a title unto life, if in any thing it is to be supplied and eked out by works and duties of our own? The things intended do fill up these expressions, although to some they are but an empty noise.

4. There is a gift of righteousness required unto our justification, which all must receive who are to be justified, and all are justified who do receive it; for they that receive it shall "reign in life by Jesus Christ." And hence it follows, -- (1.) That the righteousness whereby we are justified before God can be nothing of our own, nothing inherent in us, nothing performed by us. For it is that which is freely given us, and this donation is by imputation: "Blessed is the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness," chap. iv. 6. And by faith we receive what is so given and imputed; and otherwise we contribute nothing unto our participation of it. This it is to be justified in the sense of the apostle. (2.) It is such a righteousness as gives right and title unto eternal life; for they that receive it shall "reign in life." Wherefore, it cannot consist in the pardon of sin alone; for, -- [1.] The pardon of sin can in no tolerable sense be called "the gift of righteousness." Pardon of sin is one thing, and righteousness another. [2.] Pardon of sin does not give

right and title unto eternal life. It is true, he whose sins are pardoned shall inherit eternal life; but not merely by virtue of that pardon, but through the imputation of righteousness which does inseparably accompany it, and is the ground of it.

The description which is here given of our justification by grace, in opposition unto the condemnation that we were made liable unto by the sin of Adam, and in exaltation above it, as to the efficacy of grace above that of the first sin, in that thereby not one but all sins are forgiven, and not only so, but a right unto life eternal is communicated unto us, is this: "That we receive the grace of God, and the gift of righteousness;" which gives us a right unto life by Jesus Christ. But this is to be justified by the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, received by faith alone.

The conclusion of what has been evinced, in the management of the comparison insisted on, is fully expressed and farther confirmed, chap. v. 18, 19.

Verse 18. "Therefore, as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men unto condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." So we read the words. "By the offence of one:" the Greek copies vary here. Some read, ἡ ἁμαρτία ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου, ἧς διὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἕνα ἄνθρωπος ἐπέπεσε ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐκ κατακρίσεως, whom Beza follows, and our translation in the margin, -- "By one offence," most by ἡ ἁμαρτία ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου, ἧς διὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἕνα ἄνθρωπος ἐπέπεσε ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐκ κατακρίσεως, -- "By the offence of one;" and so afterwards as unto righteousness: but both are unto the same purpose. For the one offence intended is the offence of one, -- that is, of Adam; and the one righteousness is the righteousness of one, -- Jesus Christ.

The introduction of this assertion by ἡ ἁμαρτία ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου, ἧς διὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἕνα ἄνθρωπος ἐπέπεσε ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐκ κατακρίσεως, the note of a syllogistical inference, declares what is here asserted to be the substance of the truth pleaded for. And the comparison is continued, ὡς καὶ ἐν ἑνὶ ἄνθρωπῳ, ὡς ἐν ἁμαρτίᾳ ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου, ἧς διὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἕνα ἄνθρωπος ἐπέπεσε ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐκ κατακρίσεως, -- these things have themselves after the same manner.

That which is affirmed on the one side is, ἡ ἁμαρτία ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου, ἧς διὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἕνα ἄνθρωπος ἐπέπεσε ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐκ κατακρίσεως; ἡ δικαιοσύνη ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου, ἧς διὰ τὴν δικαιοσύνην ἕνα ἄνθρωπος ἐπέπεσε ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐκ κατακρίσεως; ἡ ἁμαρτία ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου, ἧς διὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἕνα ἄνθρωπος ἐπέπεσε ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐκ κατακρίσεως; ἡ δικαιοσύνη ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου, ἧς διὰ τὴν δικαιοσύνην ἕνα ἄνθρωπος ἐπέπεσε ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐκ κατακρίσεως; -- "By the sin or fall of one, on all men unto condemnation," -- that is, judgment, say we, repeating ἡ ἁμαρτία ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου, ἧς διὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἕνα ἄνθρωπος ἐπέπεσε ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐκ κατακρίσεως; ἡ δικαιοσύνη ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου, ἧς διὰ τὴν δικαιοσύνην ἕνα ἄνθρωπος ἐπέπεσε ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐκ κατακρίσεως; -- "By the sin or fall of one, on all men unto condemnation," -- that is, judgment, say we, repeating ἡ ἁμαρτία ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου, ἧς διὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἕνα ἄνθρωπος ἐπέπεσε ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐκ κατακρίσεως; ἡ δικαιοσύνη ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου, ἧς διὰ τὴν δικαιοσύνην ἕνα ἄνθρωπος ἐπέπεσε ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐκ κατακρίσεως; is guilt, and that only. By the sin of one, all men became guilty, and were made obnoxious unto condemnation. The guilt of it is imputed unto all men; for no otherwise can it come upon them unto condemnation, no otherwise can they be rendered obnoxious unto death and judgment on the account thereof. For we have evinced, that by death and condemnation, in this disputation of the apostle, the whole punishment due unto sin is intended. This, therefore, is plain and evident on that hand.

In answer hereunto, the ἡ ἁμαρτία ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου, ἧς διὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἕνα ἄνθρωπος ἐπέπεσε ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐκ κατακρίσεως; of one, as to the causality of justification, is opposed unto the ἡ δικαιοσύνη ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου, ἧς διὰ τὴν δικαιοσύνην ἕνα ἄνθρωπος ἐπέπεσε ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐκ κατακρίσεως; of the other, as unto its causality unto or of condemnation: ἡ ἁμαρτία ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου, ἧς διὰ τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἕνα ἄνθρωπος ἐπέπεσε ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐκ κατακρίσεως;

"By the righteousness of one:" that is, the righteousness that is pleadable unto justification; for that is a righteousness pleaded for justification. By this, say our translators, "the free gift came upon all," repeating from the foregoing verse, as they had done before on the other hand. The Syriac translation renders the words without the aid of any supplement: "Therefore, as by the sin of one, condemnation was unto all men, so by the righteousness of one, justification unto life shall be unto all men;" and the sense of the words is so made plain without the supply of any other word into the text. But whereas in the original the words are not

but

and so in the latter clause, somewhat from his own foregoing words, is to be supplied to answer the intention of the apostle. And this is "gratiosa donatio," "the free grant" of righteousness; or "the free gift" of righteousness unto justification. The righteousness of one, Christ Jesus, is freely granted unto all believers, to the justification of life; for the "all men" here mentioned are described by, and limited unto, them that "receive the abundance of grace, and the gift of righteousness by Christ," verse 17.

Some vainly pretend from hence a general grant of righteousness and life unto all men, whereof the greatest part are never made partakers; than which nothing can be more opposite nor contradictory unto the apostle's design. Men are not made guilty of condemnation from the sin of Adam, by such a divine constitution, as that they may, or on some conditions may not, be obnoxious thereunto. Every one, so soon as he actually exists, and by virtue thereof is a descendant from the first Adam, is actually in his own person liable thereunto, and the wrath of God abides on him. And no more are intended on the other side, but those only who, by their relation through faith unto the Lord Christ, the second Adam, are actually interested in the justification of life. Neither is the controversy about the universality of redemption by the death of Christ herein concerned. For those by whom it is asserted do not affirm that it is thence necessary that the free gift unto the justification of life should come on all; for that they know it does not do. And of a provision of righteousness and life for men in case they do believe, although it be true, yet nothing is spoken in this place. Only the certain justification of them that believe, and the way of it, are declared. Nor will the analogy of the comparison here insisted on admit of any such interpretation; for the "all," on the one hand, are all and only those who derive their being from Adam by natural propagation. If any man might be supposed not to do so, he would not be concerned in his sin or fall. And so really it was with the man Christ Jesus. And those on the other hand, are only those who derive a spiritual life from Christ. Suppose a man not to do so, and he is no way interested in the righteousness of the "one" unto the justification of life. Our argument from the words is this:-- As the sin of one that came on all unto condemnation, was the sin of the first Adam imputed unto them; so the righteousness of the one unto the justification of life that comes on all believers, is the righteousness of Christ imputed unto them. And what can be more clearly affirmed or more evidently confirmed than this is by the apostle, I know not.

Yet is it more plainly expressed, verse 19. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

This is well explained by Cyrillus Alexandrinus in Joan. lib. xi. cap. 25: "Quemadmodum prævaricatione primi hominis ut in primitiis generis nostri, morti addicti fuimus; eodem modo per obedientiam et justitiam Christi, in quantum seipsum legi subiecit, quamvis legis author esset, benedictio et vivificatio quæ per Spiritum est, ad totam nostram penetravit naturam." And by Leo, Epist. xii. ad Juvenalem: "Ut autem repararet omnium vitam, recepit omnium causam; at sicut per unius reatum omnes facti fuerunt peccatores, ita per unius innocentiam omnes fierent innocentes; inde in homines manaret justitia, ubi est humana suscepta natura."

That which he before called "disobedience" and "obedience," he now expresses by "disobedience" and "obedience." The disobedience of Adam, or his disobedience, was his actual transgression of the law of God. Hereby, says the apostle, "many were made sinners," -- sinners in such a sense as to be obnoxious unto death and condemnation; for liable unto death they could not be made, unless they were first made sinners or guilty. And this they could not be, but that they are esteemed to have sinned in him, whereon the guilt of his sin was imputed unto them. This, therefore, he affirms, -- namely, that the actual sin of Adam was so the sin of all men, as that they were made sinners thereby, obnoxious unto death and condemnation.

That which he opposes hereunto is "the obedience of one;" that is, of Jesus Christ. And this was the actual obedience that he yielded unto the whole law of God. For as the disobedience of Adam was his actual transgression of the whole law, so the obedience of Christ was his actual accomplishment or fulfilling of the whole law. This the antithesis does require.

Hereby many are made righteous. How? By the imputation of that obedience unto them. For so, and no otherwise, are men made sinners by the imputation of the disobedience of Adam. And this is that which gives us a right and title unto eternal life, as the apostle declares, verse 21, "That as sin reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life." This righteousness is no other but the "obedience of one," -- that is, of Christ, -- as it is called, verse 19. And it is said to "come" upon us, -- that is, to be imputed unto us; for "Blessed is the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness." And hereby we have not only deliverance from that death and condemnation whereunto we were liable by the sin of Adam, but the pardon of many offences, -- that is, of all our personal sins, -- and a right unto life eternal through the grace of God; for we are "justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."

And these things are thus plainly and fully delivered by the apostle; unto whose sense and expressions also (so far as may be) it is our duty to accommodate ours. What is offered in opposition hereunto is so made up of exceptions, evasions, and perplexed disputes, and leads us so far off from the plain words of the Scripture, that the conscience of a convinced sinner knows not what to fix upon to give it rest and satisfaction, nor what it is that is to be believed unto justification.

Piscator, in his scholia on this chapter and elsewhere, insists much on a specious argument against the imputation of the obedience of Christ unto our justification; but it proceeds evidently on an open mistake

and false supposition, as well as it is contradictory unto the plain words of the text. It is true, which he observes and proves, that our redemption, reconciliation, pardon of sin, and justification, are often ascribed unto the death and blood of Christ in a signal 335manner. The reasons of it have partly been intimated before; and a farther account of them shall be given immediately. But it does not thence follow that the obedience of his life, wherein he fulfilled the whole law, being made under it for us, is excluded from any causality therein, or is not imputed unto us. But in opposition hereunto he thus argues:--

"Si obedientia vitæ Christi nobis ad justitiam imputaretur, non fuit opus Christum pro nobis mori; mori enim necesse fuit pro nobis injustus," 1 Pet. iii. 18. "Quod si ergo justi effecti sumus per vitam illius, causa nulla relicta fuit cur pro nobis moreretur; quia justitia Dei non patitur ut puniat justos. At punivit nos in Christo, seu quod idem valet punivit Christum pro nobis, et loco nostri, posteaquam ille sancte vixisset, ut certum est e Scriptura. Ergo non sumus justi effecti per sanctam vitam Christi. Item, Christus mortuus est ut justitiam illam Dei nobis acquireret," 2 Cor. v. 21. "Non igitur illam acquisiverat ante mortem."

But this whole argument, I say, proceeds upon an evident mistake; for it supposes such an order of things as that the obedience of Christ, or his righteousness in fulfilling the law, is first imputed unto us, and then the righteousness of his death is afterwards to take place, or to be imputed unto us; which, on that supposition, he says, would be of no use. But no such order or divine constitution is pleaded or pretended in our justification. It is true, the life of Christ and his obedience unto the law did precede his sufferings, and undergoing the curse thereof, -- neither could it otherwise be, for this order of these things between themselves was made necessary from the law of nature, -- but it does not thence follow that it must be observed in the imputation or application of them unto us. For this is an effect of sovereign wisdom and grace, not respecting the natural order of Christ's obedience and suffering, but the moral order of the things whereunto they are appointed. And although we need not assert, nor do I so do, different acts of the imputation of the obedience of Christ unto the justification of life, or a right and title unto life eternal, and of the suffering of Christ unto the pardon of our sins and freedom from condemnation, -- but by both we have both, according unto the ordinance of God, that Christ may be all in all, -- yet as unto the effects themselves, in the method of God's bringing sinners unto the justification of life, the application of the death of Christ unto them, unto the pardon of sin and freedom from condemnation, is, in order of nature, and in the exercise of faith, antecedent unto the application of his obedience unto us for a right and title unto life eternal.

The state of the person to be justified is a state of sin and wrath, wherein he is liable unto death and condemnation. This is that 336which a convinced sinner is sensible of, and which alone, in the first place, he seeks for deliverance from: "What shall we do to be saved?" This, in the first place, is represented unto him in the doctrine and promise of the gospel; which is the rule and instrument of its application. And this is [by] the death of Christ. Without this no actual righteousness imputed unto him, not the obedience of Christ himself, will give him relief; for he is sensible that he has sinned, and thereby come short of the glory of God, and under the sentence condemnatory of the law. Until he receives a deliverance from hence, it is to no purpose to propose that unto him which should give him right unto life eternal. But upon a supposition hereof, he is no less concerned in what shall yet farther give him title whereunto, that he may reign in life through righteousness. Herein, I say, in its order, conscience is no less concerned than in deliverance from condemnation. And this order is expressed in the declaration of the fruit and effects of the mediation of Christ, Dan. ix. 24, "To make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." Neither is there any force in the objection against it, that actually the obedience of Christ did precede his suffering: for the method of their application is not prescribed thereby; and the state of

sinner to be justified, with the nature of their justification, requires it should be otherwise, as God also has ordained. But because the obedience and sufferings of Christ were concomitant from first to last, both equally belonging unto his state of exinanition, and cannot in any act or instance be separated, but only in notion or imagination, seeing he suffered in all his obedience and obeyed in all his sufferings, Heb. v. 8; and neither part of our justification, in freedom from condemnation and right unto life eternal, can be supposed to be or exist without the other, according unto the ordinance and constitution of God; the whole effect is jointly to be ascribed unto the whole mediation of Christ, so far as he acted towards God in our behalf, wherein he fulfilled the whole law, both as to the penalty exacted of sinners and the righteousness it requires unto life as an eternal reward. And there are many reasons why our justification is, in the Scripture, by way of eminency, ascribed unto the death and blood-shedding of Christ.

For, -- 1. The grace and love of God, the principal, efficient cause of our justification, are therein made most eminent and conspicuous; for this is most frequently in the Scripture proposed unto us as the highest instance and undeniable demonstration of divine love and grace. And this is that which principally we are to consider in our justification, the glory of them being the end of God therein. He "made us accepted in the Beloved, to the praise of the glory of his grace," Eph. i. 6. Wherefore, this being the fountain, spring, and sole cause, both of the obedience of Christ and of the imputation thereof unto us, with the pardon of sin and righteousness thereby, it is everywhere in the Scripture proposed as the prime object of our faith in our justification, and opposed directly unto all our own works whatever. The whole of God's design herein is, that "grace may reign through righteousness unto eternal life." Whereas, therefore, this is made most evident and conspicuous in the death of Christ, our justification is in a peculiar manner assigned thereunto.

2. The love of Christ himself and his grace are peculiarly exalted in our justification: "That all men may honour the Son even as they honour the Father." Frequently are they expressed unto this purpose, 2 Cor. viii. 9; Gal. ii. 20; Phil. ii. 6, 7; Rev. i. 5, 6. And those also are most eminently exalted in his death, so as that all the effects and fruits of them are ascribed thereunto in a peculiar manner; as nothing is more ordinary than, among many things that concur to the same effect, to ascribe it unto that which is most eminent among them, especially if it cannot be conceived as separated from the rest.

3. This is the clearest testimony that what the Lord Christ did and suffered was for us, and not for himself; for without the consideration hereof, all the obedience which he yielded unto the law might be looked on as due only on his own account, and himself to have been such a Saviour as the Socinians imagine, who should do all with us from God, and nothing with God for us. But the suffering of the curse of the law by him who was not only an innocent man, but also the Son of God, openly testifies that what he did and suffered was for us, and not for himself. It is no wonder, therefore, if our faith as unto justification be in the first place, and principally, directed unto his death and blood-shedding.

4. All the obedience of Christ had still respect unto the sacrifice of himself which was to ensue, wherein it received its accomplishment, and whereon its efficacy unto our justification did depend: for as no imputation of actual obedience would justify sinners from the condemnation that was passed on them for the sin of Adam; so, although the obedience of Christ was not a mere preparation or qualification of his person for his suffering, yet its efficacy unto our justification did depend on his suffering that was to ensue, when his soul was made an offering for sin.

5. As was before observed, reconciliation and the pardon of sin through the blood of Christ do directly, in the first place, respect our relief from the state and condition whereinto we were cast by the sin of Adam, --

in the loss of the favour of God, and liableness unto death. This, therefore, is that which principally, and in the first place, a lost convinced sinner, such as Christ calls unto himself, does look after. And therefore justification is eminently and frequently proposed as the effect of the blood-shedding and death of Christ, which are the direct cause of our reconciliation and pardon of sin. But yet from none of these considerations does it follow that the obedience of the one man, Christ Jesus, is not imputed unto us, whereby grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life.

The same truth is fully asserted and confirmed, Rom. viii. 1-4. But this place has been of late so explained and so vindicated by another, in his learned and judicious exposition of it (namely, Dr Jacomb), as that nothing remains of weight to be added unto what has been pleaded and argued by him, part i. verse 4, p. 587, and onwards. And indeed the answers which he subjoins (to the arguments whereby he confirms the truth) to the most usual and important objections against the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, are sufficient to give just satisfaction unto the minds of unprejudiced, unengaged persons. I shall therefore pass over this testimony, as that which has been so lately pleaded and vindicated, and not press the same things, it may be (as is not unusual) unto their disadvantage.

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