

## ~Other Speakers M-R: John Owen:

Distinction of a first and second justification — The whole doctrine of the Roman church concerning justification grounded on this distinction — The first justification, the nature and causes of it, according unto the Romanists — The second justification, what it is in their sense — Solution of the seeming difference between Paul and James, falsely pretended by this distinction — The same distinction received by the Socinians and others — The latter termed by some the continuation of our justification — The distinction disproved — Justification considered, either as unto its essence or its manifestation — The manifestation of it twofold, initial and final — Initial is either unto ourselves or others — No second justification hence ensues — Justification before God, legal and evangelical — Their distinct natures — The distinction mentioned derogatory to the merit of Christ — More in it ascribed unto ourselves than unto the blood of Christ, in our justification — The vanity of disputations to this purpose — All true justification overthrown by this distinction — No countenance given unto this justification in the Scripture — The second justification not intended by the apostle James — Evil of arbitrary distinctions — Our first justification so described in the Scripture as to leave no room for a second — Of the continuation of our justification; whether it depend on faith alone, or our personal righteousness, inquired — Justification at once completed, in all the causes and effects of it, proved at large — Believers, upon their justification, obliged unto perfect obedience — The commanding power of the law constitutes the nature of sin in them who are not obnoxious unto its curse — Future sins, in what sense remitted at our first justification — The continuation of actual pardon, and thereby of a justified estate; on what it does depend — Continuation of justification, the act of God; whereon it depends in that sense — On our part, it depends on faith alone — Nothing required hereunto but the application of righteousness imputed — The continuation of our justification is before God — That whereon the continuation of our justification depends, pleadable before God — This not our personal obedience, proved: — 1. By the experience of all believers. 2. Testimonies of Scripture. 3. Examples — The distinction mentioned rejected

Before we inquire immediately into the nature and causes of justification, there are some things yet previously to be considered, that we may prevent all ambiguity and misunderstanding about the subject to be treated of. I say, therefore, that the evangelical justification, which alone we plead about, is but one, and is at once completed. About any other justification before God but one, we will not contend with any. Those who can find out another may, as they please, ascribe what they will unto it, or ascribe it unto what they will. Let us, therefore, consider what is offered of this nature.

Those of the Roman church do ground their whole doctrine of justification upon a distinction of a double justification; which they call the first and the second. The first justification, they say, is the infusion or the communication unto us of an inherent principle or habit of grace or charity. Hereby, they say, original sin is extinguished, and all habits of sin are expelled. This justification they say is by faith; the obedience and satisfaction of Christ being the only meritorious cause thereof. Only, they dispute many things about preparations for it, and dispositions unto it. Under those terms the Council of Trent included the doctrine of the schoolmen about “*meritum de congruo*,” as both Hosius and Andradius confess, in the defence of that council. And as they are explained, they come much to one; however, the council warily avoided the name of merit with respect unto this their first justification. And the use of faith herein (which with them is no more but a general assent unto divine revelation) is to bear the principal part in these preparations. So that to be “*justified by faith*,” according unto them, is to have the mind prepared by this kind of believing to receive “*gratiam gratum facientem*,” — a habit of grace, expelling sin and making us acceptable unto God. For upon this believing, with those other duties of contrition and repentance which must accompany it, it is 138meet and congruous unto divine wisdom, goodness, and faithfulness, to give us that grace whereby we are justified. And this, according unto them, is that justification whereof the apostle Paul treats in his epistles, from the procurement whereof he excludes all the works of the law. The second justification is an effect or consequent hereof, and the proper formal cause thereof is good works, proceeding from this principle of grace and love. Hence are they the righteousness wherewith believers are righteous before God, whereby they merit eternal life. The righteousness of works they call it; and suppose it taught by the apostle James. This they constantly affirm to make us “*justos ex injustis*,” wherein they are followed by others. For this is the way that most of them take to salve the seeming repugnancy between the apostles Paul and James. Paul, they say, treats of the first justification only, whence he excludes all works; for it is by faith, in the manner before described: but James treats of the second justification; which is by good works. So Bellar., lib. ii. cap. 16, and lib. iv. cap. 18. And it is the express determination of those at Trent, sess. vi. cap. 10. This distinction was coined unto no other end but to bring in confusion into the whole doctrine of the gospel. Justification through the free grace of God, by faith in the blood of Christ, is evacuated by it. Sanctification is turned into a justification, and corrupted by making the fruits of it meritorious. The whole nature of evangelical justification,

consisting in the gratuitous pardon of sin and the imputation of righteousness, as the apostle expressly affirms, and the declaration of a believing sinner to be righteous thereon, as the word alone signifies, is utterly defeated by it.

Howbeit others have embraced this distinction also, though not absolutely in their sense. So do the Socinians. Yea, it must be allowed, in some sense, by all that hold our inherent righteousness to be the cause of, or to have any influence into, our justification before God. For they do allow of a justification which in order of nature is antecedent unto works truly gracious and evangelical: but consequential unto such works there is a justification differing at least in degree, if not in nature and kind, upon the difference of its formal cause; which is our new obedience from the former. But they mostly say it is only the continuation of our justification, and the increase of it as to degrees, that they intend by it. And if they may be allowed to turn sanctification into justification, and to make a progress therein, or an increase thereof, either in the root or fruit, to be a new justification, they may make twenty justifications as well as two, for aught I know: for therein the “inward man is renewed day by day,” 2 Cor. iv. 16; and believers go “from strength to strength,” are “changed from glory to glory,” 2 Cor. iii. 18, by the addition of one grace unto another in their exercise, 2 Pet. i. 5–8, 139 and “increasing with the increase of God,” Col. ii. 19, do in all things “grow up into him who is the head,” Eph. iv. 15. And if their justification consist herein, they are justified anew every day. I shall therefore do these two things:— 1. Show that this distinction is both unscriptural and irrational. 2. Declare what is the continuation of our justification, and whereon it does depend.

1. Justification by faith in the blood of Christ may be considered either as to the nature and essence of it, or as unto its manifestation and declaration. The manifestation of it is twofold:— First, Initial, in this life. Second, Solemn and complete, at the day of judgment; whereof we shall treat afterwards. The manifestation of it in this life respects either the souls and consciences of them that are justified, or others; that is, the church or the world. And each of these have the name of justification assigned unto them, though our real justification before God be always one and the same. But a man may be really justified before God, and yet not have the evidence or assurance of it in his own mind; wherefore that evidence or assurance is not of the nature or essence of that faith whereby we are justified, nor does necessarily accompany our justification. But this manifestation of a man’s own justification unto himself, although it depend on many especial causes, which are not necessary unto his justification absolutely before God, is not a second justification when it is attained; but only the application of the former unto his conscience by the Holy Ghost. There is also a manifestation of it with respect unto others, which in like manner depends on other causes then does our justification before God absolutely; yet is it not a second justification: for it depends wholly on the visible effects of that faith whereby we are justified, as the apostle James instructs us; yet is it only one single justification before God, evidenced and declared, unto his glory, the benefit of others, and increase of our own reward.

There is also a twofold justification before God mentioned in the Scripture. First, “By the works of the law,” Rom. ii. 13; x. 5; Matt. xix. 16–19. Hereunto is required an absolute conformity unto the whole law of God, in our natures, all the faculties of our souls, all the principles of our moral operations, with perfect actual obedience unto all its commands, in all instances of duty, both for matter and manner: for he is cursed who continues not in all things that are written in the law, to do them; and he that breaks any one commandment is guilty of the breach of the whole law. Hence the apostle concludes that none can be justified by the law, because all have sinned. Second, There is a justification by grace, through faith in the blood of Christ; whereof we treat. And these ways of justification are contrary, proceeding on terms directly contradictory, and cannot be made consistent with or subservient one to the other. But, as we shall manifest afterwards, the confounding of them both, by mixing them together, is that which is aimed at in this distinction of a first and second justification. But whatever respects it may have, that justification which we have before God, in his sight through Jesus Christ, is but one, and at once full and complete; and this distinction is a vain and fond invention. For,—

(1.) As it is explained by the Papists, it is exceedingly derogatory to the merit of Christ; for it leaves it no effect towards us, but only the infusion of a habit of charity. When that is done, all that remains, with respect unto our salvation, is to be wrought by ourselves. Christ has only merited the first grace for us, that we therewith and thereby may merit life eternal. The merit of Christ being confined in its effect unto the first justification, it has no immediate influence into any grace, privilege, mercy, or glory that follows thereon; but they are all effects of that second justification which is purely by works. But this is openly contrary unto the whole tenor of the Scripture: for although there be an order of God’s appointment, wherein we are to be made partakers of evangelical privileges in grace and glory, one before another, yet are they all of them the immediate effects of the death and obedience of Christ; who has “obtained for us eternal redemption,” Heb. ix. 12; and is “the author of eternal salvation unto all that do obey him,” chap. v. 9; “having by one offering forever perfected them that are sanctified.” And those who allow of a secondary, if not of a second, justification, by our own

inherent, personal righteousnesses, are also guilty hereof, though not in the same degree with them; for whereas they ascribe unto it our acquitment from all charge of sin after the first justification, and a righteousness accepted in judgment, in the judgment of God, as if it were complete and perfect, whereon depends our final absolution and reward, it is evident that the immediate efficacy of the satisfaction and merit of Christ has its bounds assigned unto it in the first justification; which, whether it be taught in the Scripture or no, we shall afterward inquire.

(2.) More, by this distinction, is ascribed unto ourselves, working by virtue of inherent grace, as unto the merit and procurement of spiritual and eternal good, than unto the blood of Christ; for that only procures the first grace and justification for us. Thereof alone it is the meritorious cause; or, as others express it, we are made partakers of the effects of it in the pardon of sins past: but, by virtue of this grace, we do ourselves obtain, procure, or merit, another, a second, a complete justification, the continuance of the favour of God, and all the fruits of it, with life eternal and glory. So do our works, at least, perfect and complete the merit of Christ, without which it is imperfect. And those who assign the continuance of our justification, wherein all the effects of divine favour and grace are contained, unto our own personal righteousness, as also final justification before God as the pleadable cause of it, do follow their steps, unto the best of my understanding. But such things as these may be disputed; in debates of which kind it is incredible almost what influence on the minds of men, traditions, prejudices, subtlety of invention and arguing, do obtain, to divert them from real thoughts of the things about which they contend, with respect unto themselves and their own condition. If by any means such persons can be called home unto themselves, and find leisure to think how and by what means they shall come to appear before the high God, to be freed from the sentence of the law, and the curse due to sin, — to have a pleadable righteousness at the judgment-seat of God before which they stand, — especially if a real sense of these things be implanted on their minds by the convincing power of the Holy Ghost, — all their subtle arguments and pleas for the mighty efficacy of their own personal righteousness will sink in their minds like water at the return of the tide, and leave nothing but mud and defilement behind them.

(3.) This distinction of two justifications, as used and improved by those of the Roman church, leaves us, indeed, no justification at all. Something there is, in the branches of it, of sanctification; but of justification nothing at all. Their first justification, in the infusion of a habit or principle of grace, unto the expulsion of all habits of sin, is sanctification, and nothing else. And we never did contend that our justification in such a sense, if any will take it in such a sense, does consist in the imputation of the righteousness of Christ. And this justification, if any will needs call it so, is capable of degrees, both of increase in itself and of exercise in its fruits; as was newly declared. But, not only to call this our justification, with a general respect unto the notion of the word, as a making of us personally and inherently righteous, but to plead that this is the justification through faith in the blood of Christ declared in the Scripture, is to exclude the only true, evangelical justification from any place in religion. The second branch of the distinction has much in it like unto justification by the law, but nothing of that which is declared in the gospel. So that this distinction, instead of coining us two justifications, according to the gospel, has left us none at all. For, —

(4.) There is no countenance given unto this distinction in the Scripture. There is, indeed, mention therein, as we observed before, of a double justification, — the one by the law, the other according unto the gospel; but that either of these should, on any account, be sub-distinguished into a first and second of the same kind, — that is, either according unto the law or the gospel, — there is nothing in the Scripture to intimate. For this second justification is no way applicable unto what the apostle James discourses on that subject. He treats of justification; but speaks not one word of an increase of it, or addition unto it, of a first or second. Besides, he speaks expressly of him that boasts of faith; which being without works, is a dead faith. But he who has the first justification, by the confession of our adversaries, has a true, living faith, formed and enlivened by charity. And he uses the same testimony concerning the justification of Abraham that Paul does; and therefore does not intend another, but the same, though in a diverse respect. Nor does any believer learn the least of it in his own experience; nor, without a design to serve a farther turn, would it ever have entered the minds of sober men on the reading of the Scripture. And it is the bane of spiritual truth, for men, in the pretended declaration of it, to coin arbitrary distinctions, without Scripture ground for them, and obtrude them as belonging unto the doctrine they treat of. They serve unto no other end or purpose but only to lead the minds of men from the substance of what they ought to attend unto, and to engage all sorts of persons in endless strifes and contentions. If the authors of this distinction would but go over the places in the Scripture where mention is made of our justification before God, and make a distribution of them into the respective parts of their distinction, they would quickly find themselves at an unbelievable loss.

(5.) There is that in the Scripture ascribed unto our first justification, if they will needs call it so, as leaves no room for their second feigned justification; for the sole foundation and pretence of this distinction is a denial of those things to belong unto our justification by the blood of Christ which the Scripture expressly assigns unto

it. Let us take out some instances of what belongs unto the first, and we shall quickly see how little it is, yea, that there is nothing left for the pretended second justification. For, — [1.] Therein do we receive the complete “pardon and forgiveness of our sins,” Rom. iv. 6, 7; Eph. i. 7; iv. 32; Acts xxvi. 18. [2.] Thereby are we “made righteous,” Rom. v. 19; x. 4; and, [3.] Are freed from condemnation, judgment, and death, John iii. 16, 19; v. 25; Rom. viii. 1; [4.] Are reconciled unto God, Rom. v. 9, 10; 2 Cor. v. 21; and, [5.] Have peace unto him, and access into the favour wherein we stand by grace, with the advantages and consolations that depend thereon in a sense of his love, Rom. v. 1—5. And, [6.] We have adoption therewithal, and all its privileges, John i. 12; and, in particular, [7.] A right and title unto the whole inheritance of glory, Acts xxvi. 18; Rom. viii. 17. And, [8.] Hereon eternal life does follow, Rom. viii. 30; vi. 23. Which things will be again immediately spoken unto upon another occasion. And if there be anything now left for their second justification to do, as such, let them take it as their own; these things are all of them ours, or do belong unto that one justification which we do assert. Wherefore it is evident, that either the first justification overthrows the second, rendering it needless; or the second destroys the first, by taking away what essentially belongs unto it: we must therefore part with the one or the other, for consistent they are not. But that which gives countenance unto the fiction and artifice of this distinction, and a great many more, is a dislike of the doctrine of the grace of God, and justification from thence, by faith in the blood of Christ; which some endeavour hereby to send out of the way upon a pretended sleeveless errand, whilst they dress up their own righteousness in its robes, and exalt it into the room and dignity thereof.

2. But there seems to be more of reality and difficulty in what is pleaded concerning the continuation of our justification; for those that are freely justified are continued in that state until they are glorified. By justification they are really changed into a new spiritual state and condition, and have a new relation given them unto God and Christ, unto the law and the gospel. And it is inquired what it is whereon their continuation in this state does on their part depend; or what is required of them that they may be justified unto the end. And this, as some say, is not faith alone, but also the works of sincere obedience. And none can deny but that they are required of all them that are justified, whilst they continue in a state of justification on this side glory, which next and immediately ensues thereunto; but whether, upon our justification at first before God, faith be immediately dismissed from its place and office, and its work be given over unto works, so as that the continuation of our justification should depend on our own personal obedience, and not on the renewed application of faith unto Christ and his righteousness, is worth our inquiry. Only, I desire the reader to observe, that whereas the necessity of owning a personal obedience in justified persons is on all hands absolutely agreed, the seeming difference that is herein concerns not the substance of the doctrine of justification, but the manner of expressing our conceptions concerning the order of the disposition of God’s grace, and our own duty unto edification; wherein I shall use my own liberty, as it is meet others should do theirs. And I shall offer my thoughts hereunto in the ensuing observations:—

(1.) Justification is such a work as is at once completed in all the causes and the whole effect of it, though not as unto the full possession of all that it gives right and title unto. For, — [1.] All our sins, past, present, and to come, were at once imputed unto and laid upon Jesus Christ; in what sense we shall afterwards inquire. — “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes are we healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way: and the Lord has made to meet on him the iniquities of us all,” Isa. liii. 5, 6. — “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree,” 1 Pet. ii. 24. The assertions being indefinite, without exception or limitation, are equivalent unto universals. All our sins were on him, he bare them all at once; and therefore, once died for all. [2.] He did, therefore, at once “finish transgression, make an end of sin, make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness,” Dan. ix. 24. At once he expiated all our sins; for “by himself he purged our sins,” and then “sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,” Heb. i. 3. And “we are sanctified,” or dedicated unto God, “through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all; for by one offering he hath perfected” (consummated, completed, as unto their spiritual state) “them that are sanctified,” Heb. x. 10, 14. He never will do more than he has actually done already, for the expiation of all our sins from first to last; “for there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin.” I do not say that hereupon our justification is complete, but only, that the meritorious procuring cause of it was at once completed, and is never to be renewed or repeated any more; all the inquiry is concerning the renewed application of it unto our souls and consciences, whether that be by faith alone, or by the works of righteousness which we do. [3.] By our actual believing with justifying faith, believing on Christ, or his name, we do receive him; and thereby, on our first justification, become the “sons of God,” John i. 12; that is, “heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ,” Rom. viii. 17. Hereby we have a right unto, and an interest in, all the benefits of his mediation; which is to be at once completely justified. For “in him we are complete,” Col. ii. 10; for by the faith that is in him we do “receive the forgiveness of sins,” and a lot or “inheritance among all them that are sanctified,” Acts xxvi. 18; being immediately “justified from all things, from which we could not be justified by the law,” Acts xiii. 39; yea, God thereon “blesseth us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ,” Eph. i. 3.



All these things are absolutely inseparable from our first believing in him; and therefore our justification is at once complete. In particular, — [4.] On our believing, all our sins are forgiven. — “He hath quickened you together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses,” Col. ii. 13–15. For — “in him we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according unto the riches of his grace,” Eph. i. 7; which one place obviates all the petulant exceptions of some against the consistency of the free grace of God in the pardon of sins, and the satisfaction of Christ in the procurement thereof. [5.] There is hereon nothing to be laid unto the charge of them that are so justified; for — “he that believeth has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life,” John v. 24. And — “who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth; it is Christ that died,” Rom. viii. 33, 34. And — “there is no condemnation unto them that are in Christ Jesus,” verse 1; for, — “being justified by faith, we have peace with God,” chap. v. 1. And, [6.] We have that blessedness hereon whereof in this life we are capable, chap. iv. 5, 6. From all which it appears that our justification is at once complete. And, [7.] It must be so, or no man can be justified in this world. For no time can be assigned, nor measure of obedience be limited, whereon it may be supposed that any one comes to be justified before God, who is not so on his first believing; for the Scripture does nowhere assign any such time or measure. And to say that no man is completely justified in the sight of God in this life, is at once to overthrow all that is taught in the Scriptures concerning justification, and wherewithal all peace with God and comfort of believers. But a man acquitted upon his legal trial is at once discharged of all that the law has against him.

(2.) Upon this complete justifications, believers are obliged unto universal obedience unto God. The law is not abolished, but established, by faith. It is neither abrogated nor dispensed withal by such an interpretation as should take off its obligation in any thing that it requires, nor as to the degree and manner wherein it requires it. Nor is it possible it should be so; for it is nothing but the rule of that obedience which the nature of God and man makes necessary from the one to the other. And that is an Antinomianism of the worst sort, and most derogatory unto the law of God, which affirms it to be divested of its power to oblige unto perfect obedience, so as that what is not so shall (as it were in despite of the law) be accepted as if it were so, unto the end for which the law requires it. There is no medium, but that either the law is utterly abolished, and so there is no sin, for where there is no law there is no transgression, or it must be allowed to require the same obedience that it did at its first institution, and unto the same degree. Neither is it in the power of any man living to keep his conscience from judging and condemning that, whatever it be, wherein he is convinced that he comes short of the perfection of the law. Wherefore, —

(3.) The commanding power of the law in positive precepts and prohibitions, which justified persons are subject unto, does make and constitute all their unconformities unto it to be no less truly and properly sins in their own nature, than they would be if their persons were obnoxious unto the curse of it. This they are not, nor can be; for to be obnoxious unto the curse of the law, and to be justified, are contradictory; but to be subject to the commands of the law, and to be justified, are not so. But it is a subjection to the commanding power of the law, and not an obnoxiousness unto the curse of the law, that constitutes the nature of sin in its transgression. Wherefore, that complete justification which is at once, though it dissolve the obligation on the sinner unto punishment by the curse of the law, yet does it not annihilate the commanding authority of the law unto them that are justified, that, what is sin in others should not be so in them. See Rom. viii. 1, 33, 34.

Hence, in the first justification of believing sinners, all future sins are remitted as unto any actual obligation unto the curse of the law, unless they should fall into such sins as should, ipso facto, forfeit their justified estate, and transfer them from the covenant of grace into the covenant of works; which we believe that God, in his faithfulness, will preserve them from. And although sin cannot be actually pardoned before it be actually committed, yet may the obligation unto the curse of the law be virtually taken away from such sins in justified persons as are consistent with a justified estate, or the terms of the covenant of grace, antecedently unto their actual commission. God at once in this sense — “forgiveth all their iniquities, and healeth all their diseases, redeemeth their life from destruction, and crowneth them with loving-kindness and tender mercies,” Ps. ciii. 3, 4. Future sins are not so pardoned as that, when they are committed, they should be no sins; which cannot be, unless the commanding power of the law be abrogated: but their respect unto the curse of the law, or their power to oblige the justified person thereunto, is taken away.

Still there abides the true nature of sin in every unconformity unto or transgression of the law in justified persons, which stands in need of daily actual pardon. For there is — “no man that liveth and sinneth not;” and — “if we say that we have no sin, we do but deceive ourselves.” None are more sensible of the guilt of sin, none are more troubled for it, none are more earnest in supplications for the pardon of it, than justified persons. For this is the effect of the sacrifice of Christ applied unto the souls of believers, as the apostle declares Heb. x. 1–4, 10, 14, that it does take away conscience condemning the sinner for sin, with respect unto the curse of the law; but it does not take away conscience condemning sin in the sinner, which, on all considerations of God

and themselves, of the law and the gospel, requires repentance on the part of the sinner, and actual pardon on the part of God.

Whereas, therefore, one essential part of justification consists in the pardon of our sins, and sins cannot be actually pardoned before they are actually committed, our present inquiry is, whereon the continuation of our justification does depend, notwithstanding the interveniency of sin after we are justified, whereby such sins are actually pardoned, and our persons are continued in a state of acceptation with God, and have their right unto life and glory uninterrupted? Justification is at once complete in the imputation of a perfect righteousness, the grant of a right and title unto the heavenly inheritance, the actual pardon of all past sins, and the virtual pardon of future sin; but how or by what means, on what terms and conditions, this state is continued unto those who are once justified, whereby their righteousness is everlasting, their title to life and glory indefeasible, and all their sins are actually pardoned, is to be inquired.

For answer unto this inquiry I say, — (1.) “It is God that justifieth;” and, therefore, the continuation of our justification is his act also. And this, on his part, depends on the immutability of his counsel; the unchangeableness of the everlasting covenant, which is “ordered in all things, and sure;” the faithfulness of his promises; the efficacy of his grace; his complacency in the propitiation of Christ; with the power of his intercession, and the irrevocable grant of the Holy Ghost unto them that do believe: which things are not of our present inquiry.

(2.) Some say that, on our part, the continuation of this state of our justification depends on the condition of good works; that is, that they are of the same consideration and use with faith itself herein. In our justification itself there is, they will grant, somewhat peculiar unto faith; but as unto the continuation of our justification, faith and works have the same influence into it; yea, some seem to ascribe it distinctly unto works in an especial manner, with this only proviso, that they be done in faith. For my part I cannot understand that the continuation of our justification has any other dependencies than has our justification itself. As faith alone is required unto the one, so faith alone is required unto the other, although its operations and effects in the discharge of its duty and office in justification, and the continuation of it, are diverse; nor can it otherwise be. To clear this assertion two things are to be observed:—

[1.] That the continuation of our justification is the continuation of the imputation of righteousness and the pardon of sins. I do still suppose the imputation of righteousness to concur unto our justification, although we have not yet examined what righteousness it is that is imputed. But that God in our justification imputes righteousness unto us, is so expressly affirmed by the apostle as that it must not be called in question. Now the first act of God in the imputation of righteousness cannot be repeated; and the actual pardon of sin after justification is an effect and consequent of that imputation of righteousness. If any man sin, there is a propitiation: “Deliver him, I have found a ransom.” Wherefore, unto this actual pardon there is nothing required but the application of that righteousness which is the cause of it; and this is done by faith only.

[2.] The continuation of our justification is before God, or in the sight of God, no less than our absolute justification is. We speak not of the sense and evidence of it unto our own souls unto peace with God, nor of the evidencing and manifestation of it unto others by its effects, but of the continuance of it in the sight of God. Whatever, therefore, is the means, condition, or cause hereof, is pleadable before God, and ought to be pleaded unto that purpose. So, then, the inquiry is, —

What it is that, when a justified person is guilty of sin (as guilty he is more or less every day), and his conscience is pressed with a sense thereof, as that only thing which can endanger or intercept his justified estate, his favour with God, and title unto glory, he betakes himself unto, or ought so to do, for the continuance of his state and pardon of his sins, what he pleads unto that purpose, and what is available thereunto? That this is not his own obedience, his personal righteousness, or fulfilling the condition of the new covenant, is evident, from, — 1st. The experience of believers themselves; 2dly. The testimony of Scripture; and, 3dly. The example of them whose cases are recorded therein:—

1st. Let the experience of them that do believe be inquired into; for their consciences are continually exercised herein. What is it that they betake themselves unto, what is it that they plead with God for the continuance of the pardon of their sins, and the acceptance of their persons before him? Is it any thing but sovereign grace and mercy, through the blood of Christ? Are not all the arguments which they plead unto this end taken from the topics of the name of God, his mercy, grace, faithfulness, tender compassion, covenant, and promises, — all manifested and exercised in and through the Lord Christ and his mediation alone? Do they not herein place their only trust and confidence, for this end, that their sins may be pardoned, and their persons, though every way unworthy in themselves, be accepted with God? Does any other thought enter into their hearts? Do they

plead their own righteousness, obedience, and duties to this purpose? Do they leave the prayer of the publican, and betake themselves unto that of the Pharisee? And is it not of faith alone? which is that grace whereby they apply themselves unto the mercy or grace of God through the mediation of Christ. It is true that faith herein works and acts itself in and by godly sorrow, repentance, humiliation, self-judging and abhorrence, fervency in prayer and supplications, with a humble waiting for an answer of peace from God, with engagements unto renewed obedience: but it is faith alone that makes applications unto grace in the blood of Christ for the continuation of our justified estate, expressing itself in those other ways and effects mentioned; from none of which a believing soul does expect the mercy aimed at.

2dly. The Scripture expressly does declare this to be the only way of the continuation of our justification, 1 John iii. 1, 2, "These things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins." It is required of those that are justified that they sin not, — it is their duty not to sin; but yet it is not so required of them, as that if in any thing they fail of their duty, they should immediately lose the privilege of their justification. Wherefore, on a supposition of sin, if any man sin (as there is no man that lives and sins not), what way is prescribed for such persons to take, what are they to apply themselves unto that their sin may be pardoned, and their acceptance with God continued; that is, for the continuation of their justification? The course in this case directed unto by the apostle is none other but the application of our souls by faith unto the Lord Christ, as our advocate with the Father, on the account of the propitiation that he has made for our sins. Under the consideration of this double act of his sacerdotal office, his oblation and intercession, he is the object of our faith in our absolute justification; and so he is as unto the continuation of it. So our whole progress in our justified estate, in all the degrees of it, is ascribed unto faith alone.

It is no part of our inquiry, what God requires of them that are justified. There is no grace, no duty, for the substance of them, nor for the manner of their performance, that are required, either by the law or the gospel, but they are obliged unto them. Where they are omitted, we acknowledge that the guilt of sin is contracted, and that attended with such aggravations as some will not own or allow to be confessed unto God himself. Hence, in particular, the faith and grace of believers, [who] do constantly and deeply exercise themselves in godly sorrow, repentance, humiliation for sin, and confession of it before God, upon their apprehensions of its guilt. And these duties are so far necessary unto the continuation at our justification, as that a justified estate cannot consist with the sins and vices that are opposite unto them; so the apostle affirms that "if we live after the flesh, we shall die," Rom. viii. 13. He that does not carefully avoid falling into the fire or water, or other things immediately destructive of life natural, cannot live. But these are not the things whereon life does depend. Nor have the best of our duties any other respect unto the continuation of our justification, but only as in them we are preserved from those things which are contrary unto it, and destructive of it. But the sole question is, upon what the continuation of our justification does depend, not concerning what duties are required of us in the way of our obedience. If this be that which is intended in this position, that the continuation of our justification depends on our own obedience and good works, or that our own obedience and good works are the condition of the continuation of our justification, — namely, that God does indispensably require good works and obedience in all that are justified, so that a justified estate is inconsistent with the neglect of them, — it is readily granted, and I shall never contend with any about the way whereby they choose to express the conceptions of their minds. But if it be inquired what it is whereby we immediately concur in a way of duty unto the continuation of our justified estate, — that is, the pardon of our sins and acceptance with God, — we say it is faith alone; for "The just shall live by faith," Rom. i. 17. And as the apostle applies this divine testimony to prove our first or absolute justification to be by faith alone; so does he also apply it unto the continuation of our justification, as that which is by the same means only, Heb. x. 38, 39, "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them that draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." The drawing back to perdition includes the loss of a justified estate, really so or in profession. In opposition whereunto the apostle places "believing unto the saving of the soul;" that is, unto the continuation of justification unto the end. And herein it is that the "just live by faith;" and the loss of this life can only be by unbelief: so the "life which we now live in the flesh we live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave himself for us," Gal. ii. 20. The life which we now lead in the flesh is the continuation of our justification, a life of righteousness and acceptation with God; in opposition unto a life by the works of the law, as the next words declare, verse 21, "I do not frustrate the grace of God; for if righteousness come by the law, then is Christ dead in vain." And this life is by faith in Christ, as "he loved us, and gave himself for us;" that is, as he was a propitiation for our sins. This, then, is the only way, means, and cause, on our part, of the preservation of this life, of the continuance of our justification; and herein are we "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." Again; if the continuation of our justification depends on our own works of obedience, then is the righteousness of Christ imputed unto us only with respect unto our justification at first, or our first justification, as some speak. And this, indeed, is the doctrine of the Roman school. They teach that the righteousness of Christ is so far imputed unto us, that on the

account thereof God 151 gives unto us justifying grace, and thereby the remission of sin, in their sense; whence they allow it [to be] the meritorious cause of our justification. But on a supposition thereof, or the reception of that grace, we are continued to be justified before God by the works we perform by virtue of that grace received. And though some of them rise so high as to affirm that this grace and the works of it need no farther respect unto the righteousness of Christ, to deserve our second justification and life eternal, as does Vasquez expressly, in 1, 2, q. 114, disp. 222, cap. 3; yet many of them affirm that it is still from the consideration of the merit of Christ that they are so meritorious. And the same, for the substance of it, is the judgment of some of them who affirm the continuation of our justification to depend on our own works, setting aside that ambiguous term of merit; for it is on the account of the righteousness of Christ, they say, that our own works, or imperfect obedience, is so accepted with God, that the continuation of our justification depends thereon. But the apostle gives us another account hereof, Rom. v. 1—3; for he distinguishes three things:— 1. Our access into the grace of God. 2. Our standing in that grace. 3. Our glorying in that station against all opposition. By the first he expresses our absolute justification; by the second, our continuation in the state whereinto we are admitted thereby; and by the third, the assurance of that continuation, notwithstanding all the oppositions we meet withal. And all these he ascribes equally unto faith, without the intermixture of any other cause or condition; and other places express to the same purpose might be pleaded.

3dly. The examples of them that did believe, and were justified, which are recorded in the Scripture, do all bear witness unto the same truth. The continuation of the justification of Abraham before God is declared to have been by faith only, Rom. iv. 3; for the instance of his justification, given by the apostle from Gen. xv. 6, was long after he was justified absolutely. And if our first justification, and the continuation of it, did not depend absolutely on the same cause, the instance of the one could not be produced for a proof of the way and means of the other, as here they are. And David, when a justified believer, not only places the blessedness of man in the free remission of sins, in opposition unto his own works in general, Rom. iv. 6, 7, but, in his own particular case, ascribes the continuation of his justification and acceptation before God unto grace, mercy, and forgiveness alone; which are no otherwise received but by faith, Ps. cxxx. 3—5; cxliii. 2. All other works and duties of obedience do accompany faith in the continuation of our justified estate, as necessary effects and fruits of it, but not as causes, means, or conditions, whereon that effect is suspended. It is patient waiting by 152 faith that brings in the full accomplishment of the promises, Heb. vi. 12, 15. Wherefore, there is but one justification, and that of one kind only, wherein we are concerned in this disputation, — the Scripture makes mention of no more; and that is the justification of an ungodly person by faith. Nor shall we admit of the consideration of any other. For if there be a second justification, it must be of the same kind with the first, or of another; — if it be of the same kind, then the same person is often justified with the same kind of justification, or at least more than once; and so on just reason ought to be often baptized; — if it be not of the same kind, then the same person is justified before God with two sorts of justification; of both which the Scripture is utterly silent. And [so] the continuation of our justification depends solely on the same causes with our justification itself.