

**GOSPEL
CONVERSION.**

by

John Cotton

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GOSPEL

CONVERSION:

Discovering,

1. *Whether any gracious conditions, or qualifications, are wrought in the soul before faith in Christ.*
2. *How the assurance of a man's salvation is to be evidenced.*
3. *The manner of the souls closing with Christ.*

Opened

By *John Cotton*, at a Conference in
NEW-ENGLAND.

Together,

**With some Reasons against;
stinted Forms of praising God
in *Psalms, &c.***

Now published for the gene rail good,
by FRANCIS CORNWELL,
Minister of the Gospel.

London, Printed by *J. Dawson*.
1646.

TO THE
HONOURABLE
AND

**True-hearted lover of
his Country, Sir Henry**

VANE *Junior*, Knight, sometimes

Governor of *New-England*;

Treasurer of the Navy Royall,
and a Member of the
House of Commons.

Sir,

The Churches of the Saints
 and the World, may not
 be unfityly compared to
 the Pearl and the Peb-
 ble: though both of one natural
 substance, earth, yet the one of
 rare price, whose beauty is the sun-
 beams inclosed; the other wanting

1 Cor. 14.

it, is cast away as refuse. What
 maketh the Saint more excellent
 then his neighbour, seeing both are
 borne of flesh, both subject to the
 same corruptions, sickness, death,
 but this? The Saint's Excellency is
 nothing else but the Image of Jesus
 Christ the Sun of righteousness
 shining in him: For as the moon
 and stars derive their light from
 the sun; so all the wisdom, righ-
 teousness, holiness a Saint hath,
 he deriveth from Christ. Hence
David the King doth so prize their
 fellowship, *All my delight is in thy
 Saints, thine excellent ones that are in
 the earth, and them that excel in vir-
 tue.* Yea, it is a sure note of a Ci-
 tizen of Sion, that *he honours them
 that fear the Lord:* Whereas world-
 ly men without grace, are rendered
 in his eyes as vile. Hence the Spouse
 acknowledgeth that all her excel-
 lency cometh from plantation; *Let
 my Beloved come into his garden,
 and in his pleasant fruit.* Yea, Christ

Ephes. 4:24; Cor. 1:30. Psal. 16:3; Psal. 15. Cant. 4:16.

declareth to *Nicodemus* that a be-
 lievers holiness cometh from *re-*
generation; that in Christ he may
 only glory. How doth the Lord
 discover this his excellency to a
 believer, by his calling, till that
 time he lieth amongst the refuse
 of the world, as *foolish, disobedient,*
deceived, serving divers lusts and plea-
sures, living in malice and envy, hate-
ful, and hating one another. But then
 the kindness and love of God to
 man appeared, by *delivering him out*
of the kingdom of darkness, and tran-
slating him into the kingdom of his
dear Son. By which it is manifest,
 that he is one of the *chosen genera-*
tion, the royal priesthood, the holy na-
tion, the peculiar people, whom he
hath called out of darkness into his mar-
vellous light. But when doth the
 Lord discover the truth of his cal-
 ling to his confidence? Then when
 he giveth him precious faith; for
 that only distinguisheth him from
 the world that lieth in sin. *Gal. 3:*

Joh. 3:5; Tit. 3:3. Col. 1:13. 1 Pet. 2:9.

22. *The Scripture concludeth* (father,
 mother, son, daughter, nay the
 infant that is borne of the most
 holiest parents) *all under sin, that*
the promise by the faith of Jesus Christ
might he given to them that believe.
 So that in that same house the Lord
 giveth him faith, he giveth him
 in an evidence in himself, that he

loved him in Christ before he was born, before he had done good or evil, that he hath justified him from all those things he could not be justified by the Law, that he hath purged his conscience from all dead works, that his person is accepted, his sin discharged, and he hath a right to the purchased inheritance amongst them which are sanctified. Thus the love of Christ revealed to die for him, to take away his iniquity, and reconcile him to God; the Spirit given to take away his heart of stone, giveth him an heart of flesh, to cause to walk in his statutes; yea, and draw-

Heb. 11:1. Rom. 9:11. Act. 13:39. Heb. 9:14. Act. 26:18. Ezek. 36:25, 26.

eth his heart to yield obedience to every commandment of Jesus the Christ. The truth of this grace given, Right Worshipful, you can give a true testimonial; for you were once in your natural condition as well as others, till it pleased God who separated you from the womb, to call you by his grace, a to reveal his Son in you; you consulted not with flesh and blood, but left your native soil, (in the persecuting times of the Prelates) *choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God* (according to the light they had received) then to remain in *England* and *enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season*. Yet there the Lord exalted your Worship to

be the Governor: And in that dawning light, coming forth out of mystical *Babylon*, the Lord discovered much spiritual knowledge, of the riches of his free-grace in Jesus Christ, amongst you; you being freed from the yoke of the Task-

Gal. 1:15, 16. Heb. 11:26.

Masters here, the Bishops, that kept you in bondage; you had liberty there to debate those Questions; which the naming only of them here, would have rendered a man odious. But Satan that envieth the peace of the Saints; stirred up a spirit of contention amongst you; especially when these Queries came to be debated.

1. *Whether there are any gracious conditions, or qualifications wrought in the soul before faith?*
2. *Whether any man can gather his evidence of the assurance of his justification from his Sanctification?*
3. *Whether there be an active power of Faith, and other gifts of grace in a Christian conversation?*

The one side would not believe themselves justified, no farther than they could see themselves work; making their Marks, Signs, and

Qualifications, the causes of their Justification.

The other side, laid the Evidence of their Justification, only by Faith

in the free Promise: for there are four things that makes remission of sins perpetual to a believer.

First, The cause of Remission, the sacrificed Body of *Christ* on the Cross, or accursed Tree; *Heb.* 10: 4. *By one offering, he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.*

Secondly, The ground is a free promise tendered to us from God; as to *Adam, The Seed of the Woman shall break the Serpent's head,* *Gen.* 3: 15. *John* 3:16. I *John* 4:10.

Thirdly, The mean is, *Faith apprehending it,* *Phil.* 3:9.

Fourthly, The *Spirit of Christ sealing of it,* *Ephes.* 1:13.

This truth revealed for the comfort of poor drooping Saints found great opposition; But the good Lord, stirred up your gracious spirit, to countenance, and defend

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them in the midst of strong opposition; and though you were slighted, and set light by at the end of your Government, as not worthy to be an assistant, with many other Instruments more; yet the good Lord stood by you, and strengthened you, and delivered you from the hands of your opposers, preserved you from the dangers of the Sea; and though at your return to your Native Soil, you lived like *Joseph*, a while, in a despised condition, yet the Lord raised you up to sit amongst Princes. So that though you were willing to lose

life, friends, preferment, for Christ; found you not then, life, peace, joy, in the Lord Jesus, which was better to you, than all worldly amity; according to his own promise, In the World you found affliction, but in him you found peace: And when you were called to be a Member of the high Court of Parliament, in our distressed and distra-

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cted times; the Lord made you an instrument to detect the Trecherous plot of those two brethren in evil? *Thomas Lord Strafford*; and *William Lord Archbishop of Canterbury*, that contrived the destruction of our fundamental Laws, ratified by the Statute of *Magna Charta*, by labouring to setup an *Arbitrary Government*, and keeping on foot a *Po-pish Army*, consisting of *Irish Rebels*, and others, to compel the faithful, and true-hearted Nobility, and loyal Commons of *England*, to subject themselves to their illegal Taxations: hazarding the loss of the favours of the King, Nobility, Parents, Friends, and Allies, together with those places of Honour and Maintenance, the King of clemency had freely bestowed; rather than his Country should be ruined, and enthralled, by such accursed Incendiaries. Shall this thy love (most noble Senator) who art

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a branch of that goodly Cædar, under whose shade, the Innocent,

and oppressed, tender Consciences,
 that stand for a thorough Reformation,
 agreeable to the Word of God,
 find rest) ever be forgotten, and
 left unrewarded; God forbid: It
 is worthy to be written on a Pillar
 of Marble; and recorded in the
 Chronicle: that after-ages may never
 forget to shew kindness, and
 mercy to your Noble Posterity;
 that did not think your life (together
 with your nearest relations)
 dear unto you, so as to part with
 them, that you might purchase your
 Countries Liberty; I cannot judge
 him *England's* Friend, that envieth
 your honoured promotion; *Seeing you are*
 (for the love you have shewed to
 Christ his Truth, and poor Members,
 together with your Native Country)
worthy of double honour. Now (worthy Sir)
 seeing all your excellency is nothing else, but

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the Image of Jesus Christ, the Son
 of righteousness shining in you. Dis-
 dain not to receive from the hand of
 a poor despised Instrument that pre-
 sents this Treatise, *The Learned Con-
 ference of Master John Cotton, that
 he had with the Elders, at the Bay of
 Boston in New England.* Though I
 am the least of all Saints, not worthy
 to be called a Saint; because in the
 time of the Prelates reign; I sided
 with them, in perfecting the Faith
 of Jesus Christ, and imprisoning of
 his Members; But did it ignorantly,
 through unbelief, and

when the Lord pierced my heart for it; *I trembling, cried, What shall I do?* The holy Spirit and the Bride said, *Repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus, for the remission of sins, and I should receive the gifts of the Spirit, &c.* Then Noble Sir, though I procrastinated it for a season, at last, I was not disobedient to the heavenly voice, but arose, and

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was Baptized; For this cause, I have been much opposed by my old Friends, and Country-men: But yet remain a Loyal Covenanter, that standeth for a Reformation in *England, and Ireland,* agreeable to the Word of God, and the best Reformed Churches: Seeing it is not the voice of the Churches, but Christ in the Churches, we Covenanted to hearken unto; as Master *Case* his Sermon yet testifieth.

First, *To extirpate Popery;* (which I apprehended at the taking of the National Covenant) was that Doctrine of Antichrist, which doth universally oppose the doctrine of Jesus the Christ. Affirming what *Christ* denieth; and denying what *Christ* affirmeth.

Secondly, *Prelacy, viz.* The Government of Arch-bishops, and Bishops, and all Ecclesiastical Officers depending on that Hierarchy,

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Root and Branch: as a Plant the heavenly Father hath not planted.

Thirdly, *Superstition: viz.* Whatsoever is *supra Statutum*, that hath not the word of God to warrant it.

Fourthly, *Schism:* Namely, from all those that teach, and consent not to the wholesome words, *even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; from such I must withdraw*, 1 Tim. 6:3, 5.

Fifthly, *Heresy:* Even from all them that deny that Jesus is the Christ; *They are Antichrist that deny the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father*; 1 Joh. 2:22, 23.

Sixthly, *That the Lord may be one: viz.* Even the Lord Jesus the Christ, whom God raised from the dead, and sit him at his own right hand in the heavenly places; *Far above all principality, and power, and might, and*

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dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but that which is to come: And hath put as things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the Church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all, Ephes. 1:20, 21, 22, 23.

Seventhly, *And his Name to be one in the three Kingdoms:* (that is, as I conceive it) his power, authority, and royal Commission must be exalted in all his Offices, to be the eternal King, eternal Prophet, and eternal Priest, in all things

appertaining to the conscience: seeing the loyal Spouse of Christ hath no Head, no Husband, no Lord, no Law-giver, but royal King Jesus.

That we, and our posterity after us, may live in faith, and love; and the Lord may delight to dwell amongst us.

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For the keeping of which Covenant, I had rather choose to die, then to deny the faith of Jesus the Christ: Knowing, that he which confesseth him before men, him he will confess before his Father. But he which is *ashamed of Christ, and his words, in this sinful and adulterous generation, of him also shalt the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy Angels,* Mar. 8:38. Thus I desire, in the first place, to *give to God the things that are God's;* and, in the next place, reader to the high and honourable Court of Parliament, whereof your Honour is a Member, and to your King, when the Lord shall put it into his heart to return unto his Parliament, and to join with you, all your dues, tributes, customs, fear, honour; and subject my self to obey all your just, legal, and civil commandments: Knowing, that

Mat. 23:21. Rom. 13:7.

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you set not up the Sword for
nought: but to be a terror to them
that do evil, and a praise, a guard
and defence, for them that do well.

1 Pet. 2:14

Your poor Orator at the throne
of grace, that earnestly prayeth,
that the Lord will give you, and
the great Council of the King-
dom, wisdom and prudence,
to bear with tender Conscien-
ces, that desire to exalt Jesus the
Christ in all his Royal Offices,

Orpington, *in* Kent.
the *ninth* *Month,*
1645.

FRAN. CORNWELL.

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To all the Churches of

Jesus the Christ, coming out of Mystical Babylon, gathered, or

scattered, that follow the Lamb,
the Lord Jesus where-
soever he goeth.

B *Eloved* *in* CHRIST,
Disdain *not* *to* *Read* *this*
Learned *Treatise* *of* *Ma-*
ster *John* *Cotton,* *of* *Bo-*
ston *in* *New-England,*
out of any prejudice thou mayest take a-

gainst the person, or publisher of it. What if some judge him a Schismatic? yet he regardeth not man's rash censure: Seeing he can with holy Paul, that before his Conversion persecuted the Church of God, safely Apologise for himself; Acts 24:14. That after the way that you call Heresy, so

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worship I the God of my Fathers; believing all things that are written in the Law, and in the Prophets. Verse 15. And have an hope toward God, which you your selves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just, and unjust. Verse 16. And herein do I exercise my self, to have always a Conscience void of offence toward God & toward man. *But yet this I confess unto you, that I am less then the least of all the Messengers of Christ; for I am not worthy to be called a Messenger, or Minister; for I persecuted the Church of God, that professed the Faith of Jesus the Christ; that held forth all his Royal offices, King, Prophet, Priest, according to his outward administration, in admitting of Members into his Spiritual Kingdom: And sided with the Antichristian Prelates, and Bishops, that denied, that Jesus is the Christ, whom the Spirit of God calleth Liars, and Antichristians, That denieth the Fa-*

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ther and the Son, 1 John 2:22. For though I, with the Antichristian Bishops, and Priests, did acknowledge

Jesus the Christ, our high Priest that ever liveth to reconcile us unto God; yet we have persecuted them that hold his Kingly and Prophetical Office to be eternally as well as his Priesthood, and the gathering of his Church according to his Royal Commission, Matth. 28. 18, 19, 20. Hence it is, that Christ divided, becometh no Christ to the divider; this according to the Vulgar Latin, *Solvere Jesum*, to dissolve Jesus, that is, to receive him only in part, and not in the whole, which is the spirit of Antichrist. Now when the Lord opened the eyes of my understanding, and convicted me of all the abominations I had done in my spiritual Captivity under Antichrist, especially, that I had crucified Jesus the Christ in his Members, being pricked in my heart, I trembling cried, what shall I do? The Spirit and the Bride, the Lambs wife, said; Repent, and be

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Baptized in the name of Jesus, &c. Then I gladly received the Word, was Baptised, and was added to the Church, Acts 2:38, 39, 40, 41, 42. Yet, by the grace of God, now I am, what I am; And having from some Friends, received this Learned Conference, kept it by me as a precious Diamond of great worthy from which my settle, through the great goodness of God, did reap much spiritual comfort. And did wait, hoping that some learned and faithful friends of his, would long ago have Printed a larger, and an ex-after Copy of it: but finding none, (I

that am less then the least of all Saints) could not any longer conceal it, but thought with my self, I was bound in Conscience to publish it, in this learned Age, wherein there is so much enquiry after truth, for the benefit of poor, hungry, empty, self-denying Spirits; rather then such a Learned Tract of heavenly light, should always lie in the dust, as unseen, and forgotten. For this cause alone, I have at-

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tempted (Courteous Reader) to preface to thy view this Learned Treatise; Not that I have any relation to that Learned man; nor any command from him to do it: But only in love, that this his Learned Disputation might not be buried in silence. Read it therefore (Beloved in Christ) not for his sake that publisheth it; but for his sake that was the Author of it; or rather for the God of Truth's sake. For whose cause the Learned Author contendeth for the Faith in these days, wherein the Gospel of Truth hath suffered so great Eclipses, through the rage and tyranny of the Popish Antichristian Prelates and Priests.

Thine that earnestly desireth to
 exalt the Lord Jesus the
 Christ, in all his royal Of-
 fices

FRAN. CORNWELL.

I

A

Conference that Mr

JOHN COTTON had

with the *Elders* of the Congre-
gations in *New-England*,

touching three Questions
that are here dis-
cussed on:

1. *Touching gracious conditions, or qua-
lifications, wrought in the soul before
faith.*
2. *Touching the gathering of our first e-
vident assurance of our faith from san-
tification.*
3. *Touching the active power of faith, and
other spiritual gifts of grace in a Chri-
stian conversation.*

The first Question.

WHether there be any gracious
conditions, or qualifications,
in the soul before faith, of
dependance unto which, such
promises are made?

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We deny it, for these reasons.

Reas. 1. If there be any gracious condi-
tions, or qualifications, wrought in
us before faith of dependance; then,

before we receive union with Christ: The reason is,

For by faith of dependence it is, that we first received union with Jesus Christ, *Joh. 1:12*.

But there be no gracious conditions wrought in us before we received union with Jesus Christ;

Therefore there be no gracious conditions, or qualifications, wrought in us before faith of dependence.

Minor.

If we cannot bring forth good fruit, till we be good trees; nor become good trees, until we be grafted or united unto Jesus Christ; then there can be no gracious conditions, or qualifications wrought in us, before we receive union with Christ.

But we cannot bring forth good

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fruit, till we become good trees; nor become trees of righteousness, until we be grafted into Jesus Christ;

Therefore there be no gracious conditions, or qualifications wrought in us, before we received union with Jesus Christ.

The Proposition is clear of it self, that we cannot bring forth good fruit, until we be good trees: *Mat. 7:18. A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit.* Nor can we become the good trees of righteousness,

of the Lords plantation, *Isai.* 61:3. until we be grafted into Christ. *Joh.* 15:4. *As the branch cannot bear fruit of it self, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me.* Verse 5. *I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me and I in him the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

A second proof of the Minor.

If there be any gracious conditi-

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ons, or qualifications wrought; in us before union with Christ, then we may be in a state of grace and Salvation, before we be in Christ: But that cannot be: *Acts* 4:12. *Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given amongst men, whereby we may be saved.*

Reas. 2. If there be any gracious condition or qualification in us before faith, then there may be something in us pleasing unto God before faith:

But there is nothing in us pleasing unto God before faith; *Heb.* 11:6. *But without faith it is impossible for as to please him: for he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

Object. But there must be some saving preparatives wrought in the soul, to make way for faith, and our u-

nion with Christ. For we must be cut off from the old *Adam*, before

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we can be grafted into the new: We must be dead to the first husband, before we can be married unto another.

Answ. 1. To works of creation there needeth no preparation; the almighty power of God calleth them to be his people, that were not his people, 1 *Pet.* 2:10. And by calling them to be so, he maketh them to be so. *Rom.* 9:25, 26. *As he saith in Hosea, I will call them, My people, which were not my people; and her, Beloved, which was not beloved. Verse 26. And it shall come to pass that in the place where it is said unto them, Ye are not my people, there shall they be called, The Children of the living God.*

2. While Satan, the strong man, keepeth the house, Christ the stronger cometh upon him, and bereaveth him of his armour, and divideth the spoil, *Luke* 11:21, 22.

3. We are dead to our first husband the Law by the body of Christ, *Rom.* 7:4. and therefore it is

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by the virtue of Christ's death we have fellowship with Christ; and that giveth the deadly stroke unto our first husband.

The second Question.

WHether a man my evidence
his justification by his sancti-
fication?

The state of the Question is thus unfolded.

First, To take a mans sanctificati-
on, for an evident cause or ground
of his justification, is flat Popery.

Secondly, To take a man's san-
ctification, for an evident cause or
ground of that faith whereby he
is justified, is utterly unsafe; for
faith is built upon Jesus, the Christ,
the head corner stone, *Ephes.* 2:20.
Mat. 16:16. and not upon works:
A good work floweth from faith,
not faith from them.

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Thirdly, To take common san-
ctification, that is, such a reforma-
tion and a change of life as flow-
eth from a spirit of bondage, re-
straining from sin, and constraining
unto duty, and sometimes accom-
panied with enlargement and com-
forts in duty; yet without the sense
and feeling of the need of Christ,
and before union with him, to take
such a sanctification for an evident
sign of justification, is to build up-
on a false and sandy foundation.

Fourthly, That when a man hath
first attained assurance of his faith,
of his justification, by the witness
of the Spirit of Christ, in a free
promise of grace, made to him in
the blood of Christ, *Acts* 13:38, 39.

he may discern, and take his sanctification as a secondary witness, or an evident sign or effect of his justification.

The Question being thus stated, I propound the Question thus;

Whether a man may gather the first

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evidence or assurance of his faith, of his justification, by his sanctification?

We hold in the Negative part. *The first Argument.*

As Abraham came to the first assurance of his justification, so we, and all that believe, as Abraham did; for he is made a pattern to us in point of justification: Rom. 4:23. *How it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; V. 24. But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead. V. 25. Who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.*

But Abraham came to his first assurance of his sanctification, not from any promise made thereunto, but from a free promise of grace; Rom. 4:18. *Who against hope, believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations: according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. V. 19. And being not weak in faith,*

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he considered not his own body now dead, when he was above an hundred years old; neither the deadness of Sarah's womb. Vers. 20. He staggated not at

the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. Vers. 21. And being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able to perform: Vers. 22. And therefore it was imputed unto him for righteousness.

The promise was absolute, and free, So shall thy seed be as the stars of heaven: this, he believed with full assurance of faith, resting only an the faithfulness and grace, and power of him that promised, *Rom. 4:21.*

Therefore we, and all the children of *Abraham*, come to our first assurance of our Justification, not from our Sanctification, or from any promise made thereunto; but from the free promise of grace.

The second Argument.

No man can take his assurance of

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the faith of his Justification: But as God will declare and pronounce him righteous in Christ Jesus.

But God will not declare, and pronounce us righteous in Christ, upon the sight and evidence of our sanctification.

Therefore we cannot take the assurance of the faith of our Justification, from the sight and evidence of our sanctification.

The assumption is proved thus.

If God justifieth us (that is) declareth, and pronounceth us to be

righteous, he doth then declare his own righteousness, that he might be just, Then he doth not declare us to be righteous in Christ, upon the sight and evidence of our sanctification, which is a righteousness of our own.

But when God justifieth us, that is, first declareth us, and pronounceth us to be righteous, he doth declare his own righteousness; that he might be just.

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Therefore he doth not first pronounce and declare us righteous upon sight, and evidence of our sanctification, which is a righteousness of our own.

The proof of the Proposition.

It will not stand with the righteousness of God to declare and pronounce a man just, upon the sight of such an imperfect righteousness, as our best sanctification is: And therefore when God declareth, and pronounceth us righteous; He doth it not upon any sight of any sanctification, or righteousness of ours: But only upon the sight of the perfect righteousness of Christ imputed unto us.

The proof of the Assumption.

That when God justifieth us (that is, when he first declareth, and pronounceth us to be righteous) he doth declare his own righteousness, that he might be just, as *Paul* speaketh,

Rom. 3:26. and the justifier of him,
which believeth on Jesus.

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And it is the speech of *David*,
that when God declareth himself
to be just; he declareth only
the sinfulness of the Creature,
Psal. 5:14.

The third Argument.

If the promise be made sure of
God unto faith out of grace; Then
it is not first made sure to faith out of
works.

But the promise is made sure of
God to faith out of grace, *Rom.* 4:5.
to him that worketh not, but believeth
on him, that justifieth the ungodly,
his faith is accounted for
righteousness.

Therefore the promise is not
made sure to faith out of works.

From the opposition of Grace,
and Works, *Rom.* 11:6 *And if by grace
then it is no more of works; otherwise
grace is no more grace.*

Object. The opposition standeth not
only between grace and works, but
between grace and the merits of
works; now no man ascribeth the

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assurance of faith in the promise to
the merits of works.

Answ. The opposition standeth not only
between grace and the merits of
works: but between grace and the
debt due to works; For so the A-
postle *Paul* expresseth it, *Rom.* 4:4.

Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

If the assurance of faith of our justification, do spring from sight of sanctification, it is by right of some promise made unto such a work, and the right which a man hath by promise to a work, maketh the assurance of the promise, but debt unto him: and then the promise is not sure unto him but of grace.

The fourth Argument.

If when the Lord declareth himself pacified toward us, he utterly shames us, and confounds us, in the sight and sense of our unworthiness, and unrighteousness; then he doth not give unto us our first assu-

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urance of the faith of our justification, upon the sight and sense of sanctification.

But when the Lord declareth himself pacified towards us, he doth utterly ashame us, and confound us, in the sight and sense of our unworthiness, and unrighteousness.

Therefore he doth not first give us assurance of the faith of our justification, upon the sight and sense of our sanctification.

The consequence is plain from the Law of Contraries: For, if the Lord shame us with a sight and sense of sin; he doth not then, first comfort and encourage us, with

the sight and sense of sanctification.

Minor is proved, Ezek. 16:63.
Rom. 4:5.

Ezek. 16:63. *That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and open thy mouth any more because of shame; when I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.*

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Rom. 4:5. *To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness.*

The first Argument.

When sanctification is not evident, it cannot be an evidence of justification.

But when Justification is hidden, and doubtful, Sanctification is not evident.

Therefore Sanctification cannot be our first evidence of Justification.

Minor.

When Faith is hidden and doubtful, Sanctification is not evident:

But when Justification is hidden and doubtful, Faith is hidden and doubtful.

Therefore when Justification is hidden and doubtful, Sanctification is not evident.

The first proof of the Major.

If *Faith* be the evidence of things not seen, then when Faith it self is hidden and doubtful which ma-

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keth all things evident, what can be clear unto us.

But *Faith* is the evidence of things not seen, *Hebr.* 11:1.

Therefore when Faith it self is hidden and doubtful, Sanctification cannot be evident.

The second proof of the Major.

If no Sanctification be true and sincere, but when it is wrought in faith: then neither can it be evident. But when it evidently appeareth to be wrought in Faith: Therefore when Faith is hidden, and doubtful, Sanctification cannot be evident.

But no Sanctification is pure and sincere, but when it is wrought in Faith: nor cannot be evident, but when it evidently appeareth to be wrought in Faith.

Therefore when Faith is hidden and doubtful, Sanctification cannot be evident.

The sixth Argument.

Such a Faith as a practical Syllogism can make, is not a Faith

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wrought by the Lord's Almighty power: For though *Syllogismus fidei facit*; yet such a faith is but an human faith; because the Conclusion followeth but from the strength of reasonings, or reason; not from the power of God, by which alone Divine things are wrought, *Ephes. 1:19, 20. Gal. 2:20.*

But the Faith which is wrought by a word, and a work, and the light of a renewed Conscience without the witness of the spirit; and before it, is such a Faith as a practical Syllogism can make.

Therefore such a Faith as is wrought by a word, and a work, or by the light of a renewed Conscience, without the witness of the Spirit, and before us is not a Faith wrought by the Lord's Almighty power.

The proof of the Minor.

From the condition of all these three, the Word, the Work, and the light of a renewed Conscience; they

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are all but created blessings, and gifts. Therefore cannot produce of themselves a word of Almighty power. Because the Word without the Almighty power of the Spirit is but a dead Letter; and the Work hath no more power then the Word; nor so much neither. For Faith cometh rather by hearing of a Word,

then by seeing of a Work, *Rom.* 10: 17. And the light of a renewed Conscience, is a created gift of spiritual knowledge in the conscience.

Object. 1. 1 *John* 2:3. *Hereby we know that we know him, that we keep his Commandments.* 1 *John* 3:14, *We know we have passed from death to life, because we love the Brethren.* *Vers.* 19. *Hereby we knew we are of the truth.*

Answ. 1. No better Answer need to be expected then what *Calvin* hath given in the exposition of these Scriptures, who thus expoundeth them.

‘Though every believer hath the testimony of his Faith from his works, yet that cometh in

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a posteriori probatione, a latter, or, secondary proof, instead of a sign. Therefore the assurance of Faith (saith he) doth wholly reside in the grace of Christ; and we must always, saith he, remember, that it is not from our love to the Brethren, that we have the knowledge of our estate, which the Apostle speaketh of, as if from thence were fetched the assurance of salvation. For surely we do not know by any other means, that we are the Children of God: but because he sealeth unto our heart by his Spirit, our adoption of us out of free-grace: and we by faith receive the assured pledge of him, given in Christ’s love. Therefore as an addition, or inferior help, for a

prop unto faith, not for a foundation to lean on.

Answ. 2. Certain it is, that those which *John* writ unto, were three sorts of men: *Old men, Young men, and Babes:* Yet there was none of them but

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did know their good estate, by the knowledge of the Father; before they knew their good estate by their brotherly love: For even of Babes (he saith) *they knew the Father,* 1 *Joh.* 2:13. And therefore by the rule of relation, they knew their Son-ship and adoption: And if it should be asked, how they knew it; *John* telleth, *By the unction they had received from Christ,* 1 *Joh.* 2:27. that is, *by the spirit itself, which taught them to know all things;* which no created gifts of Sanctification could do. Even in nature, children do not first come to know their parents, either by their love to their brethren, or by their obedience to their parents; but from their parents love descending on them: *So we loved him, because he first loved us,* 1 *John* 4:19. *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins,* 1 *Joh.* 4:10.

Object. If *John* could give sanctification for an evidence of adoption, to such as

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knew their good estate before by the witness of the Spirit; this were but to light a Candle unto the Sun?

Answ. 1. Whether were it more absurd to light a Candle unto the Sun, or

to light a Candle to see to a man's eyes; Now faith is instead of eyes unto the soul: *By Faith Abraham saw the day of Christ, and rejoiced, though it were a far off, Joh. 8:56.*

Answ. 2. The same Apostle saith, that there be six Witnesses that give light and evidence unto our spiritual life in Christ: of which three be in heaven, and three on the earth; and the Spirit in both: yet he did not think it a vain thing to give the water of *Baptism*, (as out of the death and resurrection of Christ we receive the powers *to walk in newness of life, Rom. 6:3, 4.*) as a witness after four of the greater lights.

Answ. 3. If you take Sanctification for a treated gift, it is indeed but a Candle to the Sun. But when *John* maketh it, but to confirm faith, he

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meaneth then, the Spirit of God beareth witness in it: or else the testimony of sanctification, though it be a divine gift or work, yet it would not give a divine testimony, nor increase divine faith; for the heavens and earth are divine and supernatural works, yet they do not give divine testimony of the Godhead, unless the Spirit of God himself do bear witness in them.

Therefore *John* giving sanctification for an evidence of a good estate, to such as already knew it, by the witness of the Spirit, is not a lighting of a candle to the Sun; but as the setting up of another win-

dow, though a lesser, to convey the same Sun light into the house another way.

Object. 2. In 2 *Pet. chap.* 1. from *verse* 5. to 10. the Apostle exhorteth us, by adding one gift of sanctification to another, to *make our calling and election sure.*

Answ. Let *Calvin* answer for me: This

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assurance (saith he) whereof *Peter* speaketh, by adding grace to grace, is not in my judgement to be referred unto confidence, as if the faithful did thereby before God know themselves called, and chosen; but if any man will understand it, of making of it sure before men, there will be no absurdity in this sense: Nevertheless it might be extended further, that every one may be confirmed in their calling, by their godly and holy life. But that is a proof, nor from the cause; but from a sign, and effect.

Object. 3. There be many conditional promises in the Gospel, which are made to the gifts and duties of sanctification; which are all in vain, if poor drooping souls, finding such gifts, and duties of sanctification in themselves, may not take comfort from them, according to the promise.

Answ. 1. The conditional promises are made to poor drooping souls, not in respect of such conditions, or as

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they are qualified with such gifts and duties of sanctification; but in

respect of their union with Christ, to whom the promises belong, *Gal.* 3:26, 28, 29. The fruits of such an union with Christ, such duties and gifts of sanctification be, when they be sincere: otherwise, if the promises were made to such souls, in respect of such conditions, then the reward promised would belong unto them, not of grace, but of debt, *Rom.* 4:4. A promise made to any condition, after it be made, it becometh due debt to him, in whomsoever such condition is to be found: But therefore that such promises might be of grace, they are made to us, not as we are endued with such and such conditions; but as we who have such and such conditions are united unto Christ. Whence it is, that such blessings offered in such promises, as they are tendered to us in Christ, so are they fulfilled to us in Christ. Where-

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upon, we look for the blessing, not in our gifts and duties; but ingoing still unto Christ, for a clearer and fuller manifestation of him to us, and of comfort in him. As for example, A thirsty soul, to whom promise is made that he shall be satisfied; he looketh not presently to be satisfied from his thirsting, nor from any right his thirsting might give him in the promise; but he looketh to be satisfied by going into Christ, in drinking more abundantly of him by his Spirit, as

Christ himself directeth such drooping souls to do: and so we are to make use of such kind of promises; *Joh. 7:37, 38, 39.*

Answ. 2. No man can see his gifts and duties of sanctification in himself, but he must first have seen Christ by faith, the Spirit of Christ enlightening his understanding in the knowledge of him. As in case of mourning, to which many promises are made, No man can (with E-

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vangelical repentance,) mourn over Christ, and for himself, until the Spirit work faith; and by faith beholding Christ, he hath seen him crucified, and by him, *Zech. 12:10.* So then these conditions, and the promises made to them, do not give us our first sight of Christ, nor the first glimpse of light and comfort from him; but rather our sight of Christ, and some glimpses of light and comfort from him, doth beget such conditions in us.

Answ. 3. Such conditional promises are not in vain, though poor drooping souls have found no comfort by them, and though they cannot suck present comfort from them, and from their good conditions accordingly to them.

Reas. 1. Because these promises being discerned in a Covenant of free-grace made in Christ, by them do work (if they were not wrought before) or at least confirm such conditions in the soul. As when God pro-

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mised them to send a Redeemer out of Sion, unto them which turn from transgression in Jacob, Isai. 59:20. the Apostle expoundeth it, That Christ shall come out of Sion, and shall turn away transgression from Jacob: which is as much as if he should say, He shall work that condition which the promise was made unto. And this the Apostle maketh to be the meaning, and the blessing of the promise, according to the Covenant of grace, *Rom. 11:26, 27.*

Reas. 2. The promises are not in vain to such souls, in whom such good conditions are wrought; because they direct them where they may find comfort, and satisfying to their hearts desire: to wit, not by clearing their good conditions in themselves; but by coming unto Christ, and drinking a more full draught of his Spirit; as Christ directeth thirsty souls to do, *Joh. 7:37. If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drink. V. 38. He that believeth on me, (as*

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the Scripture saith) out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. V. 39. But this he spake of the Spirit, that they which believe on him, shall receive.

Object. But why may not the holy Spirit breathe his first comforts into our souls, even on such conditions? Is not this to limit the Spirit, who is free, and bloweth where he listeth? *Joh. 3:8.*

Answ. He doth not breathe his first comforts in such conditions, because he listeth not: it is not his good pleasure to give us our first comfort (which is the comfort of our Justification; from our own righteousness, before he give us comfort in the righteousness of Christ. The holy Spirit in all his dispensations to us ward, delighteth to receive all from Christ, rather than from us; that so he might glorify Christ in us. *The Comforter whom I shall send to you, he shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shew it unto you,* Joh.16:14. Nor will he

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so much dishonour the righteousness and grace of the Father of glory, as first to pronounce and declare us justified in the fight of our own righteousness.

Object. 4. In *Mat.* 7. from *verse* 16. to 20. The tree is known by his fruit.

Answ. True, to others; but not unto himself. If a tree could know it self, it would first come to know it self, by seeing upon what root it grew, before it came to see what fruit it did bear; *Joh.* 15:1, 2, 3, 4, 5.

Object. 5. But this Doctrine is new, it is not ancient, nor grey-headed.

Answ. The Doctrines of the Covenant of free-grace are ever new; because they are the Doctrines of the New-Covenant, which can never wax old: should it once wax old, it would soon vanish away, *Heb.* 8.

from *vers.* 8. to 13. though it be as ancient as *Abraham*, yea, as *Adam*; for he had his first comfort and assurance, in an absolute promise of

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free-grace, *Gen.* 3:15. yet it hath ever seemed new in every age.

Augustine's Doctrine of Conversion, that is of grace, and not of free-will.

Luther's Doctrine of Justification, that is of faith, not of works.

Calvin's Doctrine of Predestination, that is of grace, not of faith and works fore-seen: were all of them thought new Doctrines in their times; and yet all of them the ancient truths of the everlasting Covenant of grace.

And surely, for this Doctrine in hand, *Calvin* is as clear, as my hearts desire to God is we all might be; his words have been partly rehearsed before, in the answer of some Objections; and partly in my large Answer to your Reply.

Bellarmino taketh it to be the general Doctrine of the *Lutherans*, That Assurance of faith goeth before works, and doth not follow after *Institut. lib. 3. cap. 9.* And *Partus* in

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answer unto him, saith, That though there be an assurance that followeth good works, yet the former assurance from the witness of the Spirit goeth before.

And seeing they that are the chief Reformers of the Protestant Assem-

blies, do generally make sanctification a fruit of faith, and do define faith to be, A special assurance of mercy in Christ; it must needs be out of controversy their judgement, That a man receiveth his first assurance, not from his sanctification, which they make to be an effect flowing from it; but from an higher principle, even from the grace of the Father, and the righteousness of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ; and witnessed by the holy Spirit.

Bilney, in the Book of Martyrs, in his Epistle to B. *Tunstall*, relating the manner of his conversion, protested, That when he had wearied himself in many superstitious works

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of fasting, and Popish penance, he received at last his first assurance, from that place in *Timothy*, 1 *Tim.* 1:15. he calleth it a most sweet word unto him, *This is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief.* A word from an absolute promise, set home unto him by the holy Spirit, without respect of any sanctification formerly wrought or seen in him.

Alas, how far are they mistaken, that think the contrary Doctrine hath been sealed with the blood of Martyrs?

Zancheus his judgement, though he was a godly and an eminent lear-

ned man, yet I would not have named him, but that Mr *Perkins* highly approved his discourse, and translated it, as a choice piece, into his own Volume, which maketh it obvious to every godly Reader, that studieth *Perkins* learned Works;

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Page 429. the first testimony, saith *Zanchey* and *Porcius*, for him; by which God assureth us of our election; is that inward testimony of the Spirit, of which the Apostle *Paul* speaketh, *Rom.* 8:16. *The Spirit witnesseth to our spirits, that we are the sons of God;* And afterward coming to give some direction how a man may know, whether this testimony be true, and proceedeth from the holy Spirit, or no.

He answereth, *Page* 433. three ways.

1. First, A man may know it, first, by the persuasion it self.
2. Secondly, By the manner of its persuasion.
3. Thirdly, By the effects.

1. For the first, the holy Spirit doth not simply say it, but doth persuade with us; that we are the sons of God: And no flesh can do it again.

2. By reasons drawn not from our

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work, or from any worthiness in us; but from the alone goodness of God the Father, and the grace of Christ freely bestowed, and in this

manner the Devil will never persuade any man.

3. The persuasion of the holy Spirit is full of power; for they which are persuaded that they are the sons of God, cannot, but must needs call him Father, and in regard of love to him do hate sin; and on the contrary, they have a sound hearty desire to do his Word and Will revealed.

Answ. 2. For the second Answer to the imputation of Novelty; 'Either (saith *John Cotton*) I am exceedingly deceived, or it justly falleth upon the contrary Doctrine, and they care much mistaken that think otherwise; I never read it to my best remembrance, in any Author old or new: that ever a man received his first evidence of the faith of his Justification, from his Sanctification; unless it to one, (whom I met with

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'within these two days) Printed within these two years, that maintaineth our first comfort of Justification from Sanctification. But generally all our English Orthodox Teachers do oppose it.

Amongst the English Teachers none, for ought I know, did more advance the Doctrine of Marks and Signs, then Master *Nicholas Byfield*, and yet he himself professeth, that human reason cannot believe such great things from God, from any thing that is in us: But only because we having the Word of God assuring such happiness unto such

as lay hold upon the promises contained in it. So that it is that which breedeth Faiths or as he calleth it, the persuasion of our good estates. Yet notwithstanding, saith he, the assurance of Faith is much increased, and confirmed by Signs; the former part of which speech, touching the first begettings of the assurance of Faith, consenteth with me;

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the latter, concerning the increasing and confirming of the assurance, argueth plainly his consent, thus far also, that he meant not that the assurance of the Faith of Judication should spring from Sanctification: But when he would have the assurance of Faith to be increased and confirmed by the light of Signs, I would not refuse it; If by the assurance of Faith, he means only assurance of Knowledge; or if he meaneth only assurance of Faith, properly so called, I would then put in this caution.

That then the Spirit of God himself had need, by his own testimony, to reveal our justification unto us, and God's free grace in accepting us in Christ: or else it is not Word, nor Work, nor the light of a renewed conference, that can increase, or confirm, the assurance of Faith of our Justification; But only the manifestetion of God's

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Free-grace, in a Divine testimony, ratified by his own good Spirit.

**The third Question is concerning
the activeness of Faith;
The Controversy is**

Quest. 3. *Whether Faith concur as an active instrumental cause to our purification?*

In the explicating of it, I must first speak what it is that justifieth me.

1. First, we do believe, that in our effectual calling, *God draweth us to union with Christ, Joh. 6:44. Shedding abroad his Spirit in our hearts, Rom. 5:5. And working Faith in us to receive Christ, Joh. 1:12, 13. And to live by Faith upon him, Gal. 2:20.*

2. Secondly, we are no sooner alive in a *Christ*, but we are accounted of God as his *adopted children in Christ, Gal. 3:26. Ephes. 1:5. and so are made*

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heirs of righteousness, Galat. 3:29. God imputing the righteousness of his Son Jesus to us for our justification, Rom. 4:23, 24, 25.

As we were no sooner alive in the first *Adam*, but we became his children, and heirs of his transgression; God imputing the guilt of it to our condemnation.

Now in this we all consent; that in receiving the gift of Faith we are merely passive.

But yet a double Question here ariseth.

Quest. 1. Whether in receiving of *Christ* (or the Spirit, who cometh into our hearts in his name) we be merely passive?

Quest. 2. Whether our Faith be active to lay hold upon the righteousness of Christ, before the Lord do first impute the righteousness of Christ unto us.

Our Reasons are.

Reas. 2. If it be the spirit of Grace shed abroad in our hearts, that doth be-

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get Faith in us: then if we were Passive in receiving Faith, we are much more passive, in receiving Christ, or the Spirit of Christ, that begetteth Faith: for if we have no life to be Active until Faith come; we have much less life to be Active before the Cause, and root of Faith come.

But it is the spirit of Grace, shed abroad in our hearts, that begetteth Faith in us, *Zech.* 12:10.

Therefore if we be Passive in receiving Faith; we are much more Passive, in receiving the spirit that begetteth Faith.

Reas. 2. If we be active in laying hold on Christ, before he hath given us his Spirit: then we apprehend him, before he apprehend us: then we should do a good act, and so bring forth good fruits, before we become good trees; yea, and be good trees before we be in Christ.

But these are all contrary to the Gospel, *Philip*. 3:12, 13. *Matth.*

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7.18, *John* 15:4, 5.

Therefore we be not active in laying hold on Christ, before he hath given us his Spirit.

Quest. 2. Whether our Faith be active to lay hold upon Christ for his righteousness, before the Lord do first impute the righteousness of Christ to us; we conceive no.

For these Reasons.

Reason 1. If the sin of *Adam* were imputed unto us for our condemnation, as soon as we were alive by natural life before we had done any ad of life, good or evil: then the righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed unto us to our Justification, as soon as we be alive unto God by Faith, before we have done any act of Faith.

But the former is plain, *Rom.* 5:18, 19.

Therefore the latter also.

Reas. 2. If our Faith be first active, to lay hold upon Christ for his righteousness, before God imputeth it unto

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us; Then we take Christ's righteousness to our selves, before it be given unto us.

But that we cannot do, for in the order of nature, giving is the cause of taking; unless we take a thing by stealth.

Reas. 3. If our Faith be first active in laying hold on Christ for his righteousness, before God impute it unto us; then we do justify God, before he doth justify us.

For he receiveth the testimony which God hath given of his Son: that God hath given us life in his Son, he hath set to his seal *that God is true*, *John* 5:33. And so he which justifieth God, as others that do not receive the testimony, condemn God of lying, 1 *Joh.* 5:10.

But we cannot Justify God before he justify us; no more then we can love him *before he first loved us*, 1 *Joh.* 4:19.

Reas. 4. If our Faith be first active to lay hold on *Christ* for his righteousness,

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before God impute his righteousness unto us: Then we are righteous men to act, and work out our own righteousness, before we be righteous, by the imputed righteousness of *Christ*.

But we be to our best acts and works of righteousness, unrighteous, till our sins be pardoned, which is not until the righteousness of *Christ* be imputed to us.

Reason 5. In the order of nature, the object is before the act that is conversant about it: Therefore it is in the order of nature, before the act of our Faith.

Object. 1. To believe on the name of Christ is an act of Faith; To believe on

the name of *Christ*, is to receive *Christ*, *John* 1:12.

Therefore the receiving of *Christ* is by an act of Faith.

Answ. The Place in *John*, upon which the weight of this Argument lieth, saith no more, but that they which received *Christ* in the second *Aorist*

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in the time past, do believe on his name in the time present. Which we willingly grant; that they who receive *Christ*, their faith becometh active through him to believe in his name, that so they might receive him, and his righteousness.

Object. 2. *We are justified by Faith*, Rom. 3:28.

Answ. When we are said to be justified by Faith; It is by the righteousness of *Christ* imputed unto us.

Object. 3. *Abraham's To credere*, his act of believing, *was imputed unto him for righteousness*, Rom. 4:3.

Answ. It is taken generally amongst the Learned, for a singular opinion of Matter *Wotton*, that *To credere*, the act of believing should be imputed for righteousness.

For, indeed, the act of believing is neither a righteousness according unto the Law; For *the Law is perfect*, Psal. 19:7, Nor a righteousness according unto the Gospel; For the act of believing is an act

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of our own, though given of grace: But the righteousness of the Gospel is not an act of our

own. And therefore *Paul desireth that he may be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of Christy the righteousness which is of God by faith,* Phil. 3:9. to wit, *the righteousness of Christ imputed.*

Object. 4. But this Doctrine is opposite unto the stream of all the Learned; a passive Faith is not heard of amongst men, and they do generally make Faith an instrumental cause of their Justification.

Answ. A passive Faith is rarely hard of out of my mouth, but yet the thing meant by it, is never rare in the writings of the learned, nor sometimes the word passive Faith.

Two things are meant by the word of Faith, and may be said to be passive in our Justification, in a double respect.

1 Because a habit of Faith may be

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called passive, before it putteth forth any act, and we are justified as soon as by an habit of faith we are alive in *Christ*; in the first moment of our conversion, before Faith hath put forth any act: as we were all guilty of *Adam's* sin, before we were active to reach forth any consent unto it.

2. Faith may be said to be passive in our justification, because it doth not lay hold on *Christ*, to fetch Justification from him, till *Christ* have first laid hold on us, and imputed his righteousness to us; and declared

it unto us by his Spirit, in a free promise of Grace: And then Faith becometh active, actually to receive *Christ's righteousness*; and actually to believe on it, either by way of dependence, or assurance.

For the truth is, seeing we are not justified, neither as it is a gift in us; nor as it is an acting and working from us; bat in regard of his object, the righteousness of *Christ*

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which it receiveth.

Therefore which way soever Faith may receive *Christ* first or last, by the same way we may be justified by it.

Now Faith of it self, even the habit of Faith is an emptying grace, and so is as an empty vessel, fit to receive *Christ* and his righteousness.

And both the act of Faith, whether of dependence on *Christ*, or of our assurance in *Christ*, carrieth us out of our selves unto him, and so maketh us fit to receive *Christ*, and his righteousness.

Thus I have explained what I mean by a passive Faith.

Let me shew you, that neither the Word, nor the naming of it, is an untruth from our best learned men of eminent worth for parts and abilities.

Calvin in his Institutions, *Lib.* 3. *cap.* 3. *Sect.* 5. *Quoad Justificationem.*

Ursinus in his Catechism, *Quest.* 60. *Sect.* 5. *Potius Deum primum.*

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Chemierius de side, lib. 13. Chap. 6. Verissimum esse duo.

Doctor *Amesius in Medullam Theologiae, lib. 1. Cap. 26. Recepti Christi.*

Paul Baynes on the Ephesians 2. Vivificant. He quicken us, since he acknowledge a passive receiving of Christ, he must acknowledge a passive Faith: for there is no receiving of Christ, but by Faith.

In a Book of choice *English Sermons*, that goeth under the name of Doctor *Sibbes*, and our Brother *Hooker*, and matter *Davenport*, there one styled the Witness of Salvation, on *Rom. 8:15, 16.* where in *Page 135.* are these words: *In Justification, Faith is a sufferer only; But in Sanctification, it worketh, and purgeth the whole man.*

As for our Learned men that do generally make Faith an instrumental cause of their Justification. I confess it is true; But I do not understand them (as *Chemierius* doth in the like case) to

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mean no other kind of cause; then *Causa sine qua non*, or, *Causa removens*, or *prohibens*. For Faith keepeth the Soul empty of confidence in itself, and maketh a way for the receiving of the righteousness of Christ. Even as the poor Widows empty vessels made a way for the receiving the oil out of the Cruze; whereas the ful-

ness of the Vessel caused the stay.

The good Lord empty us more and more of our selves, that we may be filled with him, *Out of whose fulness we receive grace for* grace, John 1:16.

Gloria sit soli Deo.

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Twelve Reasons laid

down against prescribed

and stinted Forms of

Prayers or Praises.

*R*eason 1. Because it is against God's glory, in stinting unto him such a daily measure of Service (consisting of Prayer or Praise) and so hindering the spiritual petitions and phrases, that otherwise would be, if God's good gifts were used.

2. It is against the dignity of Christ, which hath qualified his Saints with a proportionable measure of the gifts of the Spirit, for Prayer or Praise, 1 *Cor.* 14:15, 16. in making their gifts needless and useless, when they can serve themselves with Books, and Forms, without them.

It quencheth the gifts of the ho-

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ly Spirit; because it hath no spiritual employment for Prayer nor Praise in his spiritual house, 1 *Pet.* 2:5.

4 God is so jealous of his glory, that he cannot endure his worship should be corrupted with the least mixture of man: *Nadab* and *Abihu*, for offering with strange fire which God commanded them not, were destroyed with fire from the Lord, *Levit.* 10:1, 2.

Uzzah, for touching the Ark contrary to the order of the God of Israel, was smitten dead, and Israel had a breach made amongst them, 1 *Chron.* 13:9, 10, 11. compared with 1 *Chron.* 15:12, 13.

Jeroboam devised worship at *Dan* and *Bethel*, though he pretended by it to worship the true God, and advance the worship of *Jehovah*; yet he worshipped nothing but the Devils, and Calves that he made, 2 *Chron.* 11:15. *And it became a sin to Jeroboam and his house, to*

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destroy it root and branch, and all the Kings that countenanced and upheld it; 1 *Kin.* 13:34. 2 *Kin.* 17:21, 22, 23. But such as feared the Lord amongst them, both Levites and Priests, left their Cities, and possession; and of the people, such as set their hear to seek the Lord God of Israel, came to *Jerusalem*: So *Jeroboam's* Kingdom weakened; but *Rehoboam*, that gave liberty of conscience to

worship the true God, strengthened;
2 *Chron.* 11:15, 17.

Now, was God so jealous of his glory under the Law, that he that sinned against that worship which God by *Moses* prescribed, he died without mercy? how much severer punishment are they worthy of, that sin against the Son's authority, seeing he is Lord of the spiritual house, *whose house are we*, Heb. 3:6. And the heavenly Father commandeth us to *hear him*, Mat. 17:5. *and that in all things*, or our souls must perish, *Acts* 3:22, 23? Now, if

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we worship God in prayer or praise, or any other way, by any innovation or invention of man, let us hear what our Prophet Jesus saith, *In vain ye worship me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of men*, *Esay* 29:13, 14. *Mar.* 7:6, 7, 8. And however it may seem glorious in our eyes, yet God hath set this stigma on it, That it is a vain worship.

5 I cannot worship God in a stinted form of worship, in prayer, and praise, and the like, lest I make my self guilty of the blood of Christ.

Christ by his death hath freed me from the whole Ceremonial Law, so that if I consent to rear again what Christ by his death hath abolished, I crucify Christ, make my self guilty of his blood, and as much as in me lieth, expel him out of the Nation.

Now, the Ceremonial Law had his constitution in Israel, either from *Moses*, or from God: Not from *Mo-*

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ses, for he was a servant in his house, and he did nothing in the Tabernacle, nor about it, but what God shewed him, *Exod.* 25:4. *Acts* 7:44. But the Ceremonial Law had his originally law from God: Now, if the death of Christ were of that power, to put an end to the whole Ceremonial prescribed Worship, so that whosoever should rear it again should crucify Christ, and make us guilty of his blood, &c. Then, that death of Christ is of force, to put an end to man's Ceremonial Worship:

But the first is true; *Ergo*, the latter.

Object. The Consequence is denied.

Answ. That power which can disannul the greater, must needs disannul the lesser; if the death of Christ put an end to the heavenly Fathers Ceremonial Worship, and in prayer and praise, at, or before the Ark, or in the Temple; then it will put an end to all man's devised Worship,

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unless you will advance the authority of man above God the Father. *Col.* 2:20, 21, 22, 23. If Christ by his death hath freed us from the rudiments of the world, the Mosaical Ceremonies, why living in the world are we entangled with ordinances, after the doctrine, tra-

ditions, and commandments of men?

Object. But they are set up for the glory of God.

Ans. Not I, but *Paul* shall answer for me; *They have a shew of wisdom, in will-worship;* but it is only a shew, there is no substance in it.

6. We harden the obstinate Papists in their superstition; for they say, and that truly, We received most of our forms of prayer and praise from them.

7. We rob the Spirit of his glory, who is given to Saints to form prayer and praise in them, 1 *Cor.* 14: 15, 16. *Rom.* 8:26. *Gal.* 4:6.

8. We impose a burden upon the

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conscience to be practised, which God hath left arbitrary, to be used according to our necessities; *If we be afflicted, then pray;* if we have tasted how bountiful the Lord hath been to us in blessings, then let us praise him; *Jam.* 5:13.

9. If we frequent devised forms of Worship in prayer or praise, we shall lay a stumbling block before a weak brother, and cause him to fall. *Woe be to them that follow the way of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel,* *Revel.* 2:14. *Jud.* v. 11. *Now offences must come, but woe unto the men by whom they come: It were better for me, that a millstone were hanged about my neck, and that I were cast*

into the sea, then that I should offend one of these little ones, Luk. 17:1, 2.

10. If we frequent devised forms of Worship in prayer or praise, we shall offend our consciences; (even so many of us as are Saints enlightened, to behold the beauty of his

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 spiritual Worship, performed, or offered in his spiritual house, the Congregation of the faithful united;) *Now if our consciences condemn us, God is greater than our consciences, and he will condemn us also, 1 Joh. 3:19. for he knoweth all things. Therefore I say to you (who blame us for not frequenting devised forms of Worship in prayer and praises) as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego did to King Nebuchadnezzar, We are not careful to answer you in this matter; Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us out of your hand: But if he will not, be it known to you, we will not serve your gods; nor worship our God in that devised way that men set up, Dan. 3:16, 17, 18.*

11. If one set form of spiritual Worship in prayer and praises had been needful, Christ would have left one: But the Prophets, Christ, the Apostles, never prayed nor praised God by any set form of Worship invented by man; but by the pow-

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 erfull work of the holy Spirit, *Rom. 8:26. Gal. 4:6.*

12. A set form of Worship prescribed in prayer or praises, cannot in

prayer express the several necessities of God's people; for the more grace they have, the more they see their own wants; and the more sensible they are of their own infirmities, corruptions, and sins. Neither can it in praises express the manifold experiences that the Saints daily observe of Gods merciful dealing with them: Therefore a set Form of prayer or praises; to God's Saints, and faithful ones, principled with a spirit of prayer and praise, it is altogether unuseful; 1 Cor. 14, 15, 16.

Soli Deo honor & gloria

FINIS.