

# *The Justification of the Sinner Before God*

SERMONS ON THE HEIDELBERG CATECHISM

XXIII. LORD'S DAY.

## **Johannes VanderKemp (1664-1718)**

Rom. vi. 5. But to him that worketh not, but believeth in him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

*Q. 59. But what doth it profit thee now, that thou believest all this?*

A. That I am righteous in Christ before God, and an heir of eternal life.

*Q. 60. How art thou righteous before God?*

A. Only by a true faith in Jesus Christ; so that though my conscience accuse me, that I have grossly transgressed all the commandments of God, and kept none of them, and am still inclined to all evil, notwithstanding God, without any merit of mine, but only of mere grace, grants and imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ; even so, as if I never had had, nor committed any sin; yea, as if I had fully accomplished all that obedience, which Christ hath accomplished for me, inasmuch as I embrace such a benefit with a believing heart.

*Q. 61. Why sayest thou, that thou art righteous by faith only?*

A. Not that I am acceptable to God on account of the worthiness of my faith; but only because the satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ is my righteousness before God, and that I cannot receive and apply the same to myself any other way than by faith only.

AMONG the various titles, with which faith is adorned in the word of God, the most goodly is that of "precious faith," 2 Peter 1.1. Faith is precious, inasmuch as it doth not belong to all men, but only to the precious elect of God, for "all men have not faith," 2 Thes. 3.2, but only "the elect of God," Titus 1.1. Faith is precious in itself, for it denies its own ingenuity and reason, that it may acknowledge the invisible God upon his single declaration to be true, and may rest in his revelation with respect to future and invisible things. It "receives the testimony of God, and sets to its seal that God is true," John 3.33. "It is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen," Heb. 11.1. Moreover, faith is

precious, because it hath the most precious objects of its holy nature, "exceedingly great and precious promises," 2 Peter 1.4, The Triune God, all his blessed and profound mysteries, "all things which are written in the law and the prophet," Acts 24.14, which the believing soul contemplates and embraceth, and which fill her full, with "all the fullness of God," Eph. 3.18,19. And will ye have more? Faith is precious also, because it is so profitable and advantageous to the person who possesses it. It unites him to God and Christ, whom it causes to "dwell in his heart," Eph. 3.17. "It gives him power to become a son of God, John 1.12. "It cleanses the heart," Acts 15.9. It renders prayer effectual, so that "it saves the sick," James 5.15. "It overcomes the world," 1 John 5.4. It can do all things; "all things are possible to him who believeth," Mark 9.23. See what all the saints of God have done by faith, Heb. 11. And that which is the greatest and most precious is, that "it justifieth" the guilty sinner "before God in Christ, and renders him an heir of everlasting life." Thus speaks the instructor, and thus also the word of God speaks, as we will show anon.

The instructor doth not deem it sufficient, in order to excite in his pupil a relish for precious faith, to declare the necessity and nature of it in the seventh Lord's day, and the great object of it from the eighth to the twenty-second Lord's day; but he proceeds also to exhibit the greatest advantage of faith, to wit, the justification of the sinner before God by faith; which he first explains in this Lord's day, and then defends in the following.

In order to explain this justification of the sinner before God, the catechism exhibits four particulars:

- I. It speaks of it in general, Q. 59.
- II. It explains the manner, in which the sinner is justified by God, Q. 60.
- III. It shows how we are justified by faith only, Q. 61. We will add to this,
- IV. The circumstances and qualities of justification.

I. We say, the catechism speaks first of justification in general, showing "that a person is righteous before God, and an heir of eternal life by faith in Christ," as it speaks in the fifty-ninth question. In order to understand this rightly, we must observe beforehand concerning the word "justify," that we must not attend so much to the literal signification of the word in our (Low Dutch) language, nor to that of the Latin word *justificare*, as though it intimated the making of a sinful person righteous and holy, by an infusion of holiness into him, as the Papists speak, when they assert a first and second justification, that is, according to their opinion, a first and second conversion; for we must seek for the proper import of this word and matter in the word of God, to which we must submit ourselves in every doctrine. We find there in the Hebrew, the word *bitzdik*, and in the Greek *dikaioun*, both signifying to acquit, and pronounce a person righteous before a tribunal. For these words are derived from judicatures, and are therefore opposed to accusing and

condemning; this we see, Prov. 17.15, "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the righteous, even they both are an abomination to the Lord." And in this sense must we understand this word in all its significations, whether a man justify God, Luke 7.29. Rom 3.4, or whether God justify his Son, 1 Tim. 3.17, or whether he justify man, as well with respect to his actions in themselves, Psalm 106.30,31, in comparison with others, Ezek. 16.51,52, and in opposition to others, 1 Kings 8.32, as with respect to his condition, approving it from his works." James 2.21-25. And so "Abraham and Rahab were justified by works," But we will not enlarge upon this subject; we refer the curious reader to Witsius's *Economy of the Covenants*, in the chapter on justification, where he treats of this matter both largely and clearly. We would only show that the words justifying, and justifying the sinner before God, signify no more than declaring him to be righteous, and acquitting him of his guilt on account of the righteousness of the Son of God, since it is opposed here also to accusing and condemning. This the apostle teacheth us, Rom. 8.33,34, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died." As therefore accusing and condemning is not an infusion of guilt, and of that which deserves condemnation, into a person, so justification is not a making of a person just or righteous, or an infusion of righteousness and holiness into him. Will any man insist upon the word justify, and say that it signifieth literally the making of a sinner righteous, we will allow that God makes the sinner righteous by justification, not by infusing righteousness and holiness into him; for that is done by sanctification, but by imputing to him, and rendering him a partaker of the righteousness of his Son, by which he, who was guilty, is acquitted, and declared to be entitled to eternal life. And that this word must be understood so here, appears still more, since to justify the sinner is to impute righteousness to him, and to forgive his sins: "Even as David also," according to the words of Paul, Rom. 4.6-8, "describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, whose sins are covered: blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."

But that we may understand the matter itself, we must know that man, in order to be declared righteous by God, must have either a righteousness of his own, or the righteousness of Christ. Which we apprehend thus:

God had entered into a covenant of works with man, and had demanded of him a perfect obedience, according to his law, and had promised that he would bestow life upon him, if he obeyed; but if man did not obey, he should die: now if man had obeyed perfectly, he would have had a righteousness and a right to demand life of God, on account of his promise annexed to perfect obedience; and thus God would have justified him according to his law. And this is the justification of the law by works; "for Moses," saith the apostle, Rom. 10.5, "describeth the righteousness which is of the law that the man who doth those things shall live by them." Since now man hath transgressed the law of God, he cannot be justified by his works, because he hath no righteousness, upon which he can demand life: "For this the law could not do," saith Paul, Rom.

8.3, "in that it was weak through the flesh." The law condemns and curseth him: "Now we know," saith also the same apostle, Rom. 3.19,20, "that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." See also how he speaks, Gal. 3.10. The Lord God having nevertheless not created all men in vain, made his Son under the law for the elect sinner, caused him to sustain the curse by his sufferings, and to fulfill the demand of the law by his obedience, that he might satisfy the justice of God, according to the demand of the law: and so the Son of God merited a righteousness before God for the sinner, in order to discharge him from the curse, and give him a right to life. See Rom. 8.3,4. When God renders the sinner a partaker of this righteousness of his Son, and imputes it to him, and he receives it by faith, then God justifies him. And so the instructor saith, "that he is righteous in Christ before God, and an heir of eternal life." This is the righteousness of the gospel and of faith, of which Paul speaks, Philip 3.9, "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." See also, Rom. 3.21,22.

II. In order to explain more particularly the manner in which God justifieth the sinner, we must observe that the word justification, being a forensic term, intimates that God deals in justification agreeably to the customs of courts of justice, in which the judges, when they find that the cited and accused person is righteous, acquit, and pronounce him righteous. And therefore we will consider in God's judiciary procedure with the sinner, in order to justify him, (1.) The Judge, (2.) The persons cited, (3.) The accusers, (4.) The advocate, and (5.) The sentence.

1. God alone is the judge; for he alone hath the supreme right to prescribe laws to man: "For the Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king, he will save us," saith the church, Isaiah 33.22. "There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy," James 4.12. Against him only do we sin, as David confesseth, Psalm 51.4. "Against thee, thee only have I sinned." And therefore he alone forgives sins, as he himself declares, Isaiah 43.25, "I even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake." It is therefore blasphemous in the Romish priests to forgive sinners their sins, and to justify them, according to Mark 2.7. Is it said that the preachers "justify many,"\* Dan. 12.3, and that they "remit sins," John 20.3, we must understand it only of a ministerial power, by which they, as messengers of God, make known his gracious sentence of absolution to penitent sinners, by proffering them pardon, if they will "be reconciled to God," 2 Cor. 5.20, and by assuring them that God hath forgiven their sins, as the preachers are commanded to do, Isaiah 40.1,2. For they forgive sins, when they preach repentance and forgiveness of sins, in the name of Christ, as appears from Luke 24.47, compared with John 20.23. Although justification is the work of the whole divine Trinity, nevertheless it is especially appropriated to the Father, as it is the dispensation of the Son to be the advocate, and as it is the special work of the Holy Spirit to

\* This is according to the Dutch translation.

make the sentence known, and to suggest it to believers. Therefore we read, Rom. 8.33,34. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? it is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died." In the distribution of the work of grace among the divine Persons, the exercise of justice is assigned to the Father as Judge, "who hath set his Son forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins," as we see, Rom. 3.25. But as God could not declare his righteousness in justifying sinners, and forgiving their sins, unless he also exercised his grace, he hath therefore sitten down, not only on his throne of justice, but also on his throne of grace, to which the sinner must therefore "come with boldness, that he may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need," as the apostle speaks, Heb 4.16.

2. The person who is cited is a sinner, "who hath sinned grievously against all the commandments of God, and hath kept none of them, and is still inclined to all evil." Not all who are such, but "those whom God hath foreordained, and also called" to justification, Rom. 8.29,30,33. Neither do they remain so abominable, but they are also "washed and sanctified, when they are justified," 1 Cor. 6.11. But we only say, that man is considered in justification, as such a sinner. The Remonstrants deem the words, "that he is still inclined to all evil" to be a hard saying, and contrary to the sixty fourth and hundred and fourteenth questions, which teach, that believers delight in all righteousness, and that it is impossible that they should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness." But we need not wonder that those men manifest displeasure at this assertion, for they imagine that man hath lost nothing by the fall, but his supernatural gifts, and that he is not become so corrupt; they also will have that God doth not justify man, before he perceives a good inclination of his will in him; but we need not concern ourselves about what they say, since this answer agreeth with the word of God: our text saith "he that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." And can a man be considered differently from this in justification, which is a forgiving of sins? must not a man appear then to God as a sinner? yea, when the sinner comes to God in order to be justified, must he not with the deepest humility accuse himself before God? is not his mouth stopped? would he then dare to speak of his good inclinations, and of his free will? no, the prodigal son spoke only of his sins and unworthiness, Luke 15.17-19. The Pharisee spoke like a Remonstrant, he thanked God in a flattering manner, that he was not so abominable, but had many good qualifications; but the publican spoke and acted differently from this, and more humbly; for "standing afar off, he would not so much as lift up his eyes toward heaven, but smote on his breast, saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner. And this man went down to his house justified rather than the other," Luke 18.10-14. When therefore the instructor saith, that "I am still inclined to all evil," he understands it of a sinner considered in himself, who comes, that he may be justified; and that such an one is inclined to evil Paul teacheth us, Rom. 3.9-20, and therefore the sixty fourth, and hundred and fourteenth questions do not contradict this assertion, inasmuch as they speak of man in his state of sanctification, as a fruit of his justification. And if we did say that a sanctified person was still inclined to all evil, would we

then contradict the word of God? Verily, sanctification is not perfect: is there a new man, who delights in all righteousness, and brings forth fruits of thankfulness, there remains still an old man, and a great power of corruption: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit," Gal. 5.17. Can the flesh lust against the Spirit, without being inclined to all evil? Was not Paul obliged to bemoan himself on account of those evil inclinations? Rom. 8. When the saints were hurried to evil sins, did that happen without an inclination to evil? The reason why those evil inclinations do not always mislead the soul, is not because they do not exist in the soul, but because God restrains them by his grace, and the old man hath not always an opportunity to bestir himself. Peter thought that he would by no means deny his master; but when he was in the hall of Caiaphas, he then showed how strongly he was urged by his evil inclinations to deny his Master thrice, and to curse himself in a grievous manner, in order to save his life.

The sinner, seeing himself to be such an one, is seized with terror, and will endeavour, like Adam, to hide himself from the Lord; but he is called and cited to God's throne of grace, that he may receive a gracious sentence; "God sets his Son forth to him to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins," Rom. 3.25. The Son of God cries, "Look unto me and be saved, all ye ends of the earth," Isaiah 45.22. "The Holy Spirit affords," and effects for him "an access to the Father," Eph. 2.18, so that he "goes with" a humble "boldness to the throne of grace, that he may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need," Heb. 4.16.

3. But while he stands there, his accusers bestir themselves against him, and set themselves at his right hand, to resist him. The accusers are, (a) the law: "Moses accuseth him to the Father," John 5.45. For the law saith to him in his face, that "he ought to have done those things," all that was commanded, "if he would live," Rom. 10.5. The law saith also to him, that he hath not done those things; for "by the law is the knowledge of sin," and that therefore "no flesh can be justified before God by the deeds of the law," Rom. 3.20, and it denounceth the curse against the sinner, Gal. 3.10. The Holy Ghost, convincing him of this by the law, according to what the Saviour saith, John 16.8, the sinner's "mouth is stopped by the law," Rom. 3.19. The sinner cannot allege aught against this accusation of the law: with Paul he acknowledges that "the law, and the commandment is holy, and just, and good," Rom. 8.12. He confesses that he hath not kept any of those commandments, and that therefore, if the Judge will deal with him according to the demands of the law, "he cannot stand." Psalm 130.3, and thus he "dies to the law through the law," Gal. 2.19. (b) And so his conscience is also his accuser, "which accuseth him that he hath grossly transgressed all the commandments of God, and hath kept none of them, and is still inclined to all evil," which he therefore confesses with shame and detestation of himself before the Judge, crying out, "O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for mine iniquities are increased over my head, and my trespass is grown up unto the heavens," Ezra 9.6. But being come to the throne of grace, he pleads mercy, and not right, like the publican, Luke 18.13, and like David, Psalm 143.2. (c) Satan, knowing the unfathomable grace and mercy of the Lord, strives to prevent

the sinner from finding grace, and he therefore also sets himself as an accuser at his right hand, in order to resist him," Zech. 3.1. He endeavours to persuade the sinner, that it is not possible, that such a vile wretch as he is, should obtain grace; yea, he seeks to stir the Judge himself up against the sinner, as though he were an hypocrite, as he did, Job. 1.9,10; 2.4,5.

4. This would sink the poor and exceedingly burthened sinner into a total despair, it would cause him to "take his flesh in his teeth, and to put his life in his hands," if Jesus the Mediator and Advocate at the throne, did not interpose between God and him. Therefore John saith, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins," 1 John 2.1,2, and Jesus, when he pleadeth, saith to his Father for the sinner, Job 33.24. "Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom." He represents to the Father his satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness, and that he hath accomplished a perfect obedience for the sinner. Do the accusers allege, that the sinner is accursed, "because he hath not continued in all things written in the book of the law to do them," according to Gal. 3.10. the Advocate shows that "he hath delivered him from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for him," Gal. 3.13. Do they say that the sinner cannot live, because he hath not done those things, which are commanded, as the righteousness which is of the law required of him, according to Rom. 10.5. Jesus sets his active obedience against this, that the sinner may be made righteous," as Paul speaks, Rom. 5.19.

5. The Judge of the whole earth, determined to do right, passeth sentence in favour of the sinner. That we may have a proper idea of the nature of this sentence, we will consider, (a) the import of this sentence, (b) the causes of it, and, (c) the manner in which the sinner obtains an interest in it.

(a) The import of the sentence is favourable to the sinner. This doth not imply that the Judge saith, Thou hast not had, and thou hast not committed any sin, the accusations which have been exhibited against thee are false; for then "God's judgment would not be according to truth," contrary to Rom. 2.2, and "God will not justify the wicked," in this manner, as he himself declares, Exod. 23.7. But this sentence imports, (1) that God discharges and acquits the sinner from his deserved guilt by forgiving him his sin, and not imputing it to him: "As David also describeth the blessedness of the man, to whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin," this Paul teacheth us, Rom. 4.6-8, from Psalm 33.1,2. Therefore the Lord also saith to the sinner, Isaiah 54.9, "I have sworn that I will not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee," (2) This sentence consists also in adjudging to the sinner a right to life, which he had forfeited by his sins; for when "he obtains forgiveness of his sins, he also receives an inheritance among them who are sanctified," Acts 24.18. Being justified, he becomes "an heir according to the hope of eternal life," Tit. 3.7. And he thus also obtains a right to all the benefits of that great covenant of grace: for "Christ is made to him of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption," 1

Cor. 1.30. And he is thus as perfectly justified, "as if he had never had, nor committed any sin; yea, as if he had fully accomplished all that obedience, which Christ hath accomplished for him," as the instructor speaks, according to the word of God; for Paul saith, 2 Cor. 5.21, "Him who knew no sin hath he," to wit, God, "made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him," By which means the accusers are silenced, according to what Paul saith, Rom. 8.33,34. "The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the sinner," by his Surety, Rom. 8.4, and Satan is rebuked. All this is beautifully exhibited to us in Joshua the high priest, as a pattern, Zech. 3.1-5.

(b) But what influenceth the great Judge to this? what are the causes which move him to deal so favourably with such a vile sinner? Paul tells us this in one word, Rom. 3.24. "They are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." On the part of the sinner it is "freely." The sinner hath nothing to move the Lord; all that he hath is abominable, hateful and loathsome. His misery would not move God to mercy, for his misery is not adapted to excite compassion, but abhorrence; his misery demands the righteous aversion of God, and the vengeance of God upon him, as we have shown upon the first part of the catechism. We think therefore that no doctrine can be more detestable in the sight of God and of his saints, than that a man is justified for aught that is in him, whether it be called good works, or faith; but we will speak more fully to this on the following Lord's day. What therefore moves the Lord? the apostle saith in the passage before cited, that on God's part it is "his grace," that is, his unmerited goodness to the unworthy sinner, by which he is moved from and of himself to manifest himself glorious in his incomprehensible kindness to the vilest. It is "the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness which the sinner receives," Rom. 5.15,17. Doth any one think it is impossible for God to clear the guilty, and that such grace would be dishonourable to God, and would injure his justice? the apostle will satisfy him in the passage which we have quoted, when he saith, "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." This he accomplished by his satisfaction to the justice of God, through his active and passive obedience, whereby the justice of God is satisfied. And therefore the manifestation of this grace to the sinner, is not dishonourable to God, but tends to the declaration of his righteousness, agreeably to what we have often cited from Rom. 3.25,26; for this must exhibit the glory of God in the most illustrious manner, that such a wonderful union hath been effected between the grace and the justice of God in his conduct toward the guilty sinner. And therefore it is an idle assertion of the Socinians, that if it be of grace, it cannot be by the righteousness and sanctification of Christ; for it is grace in God to admit a Surety, to bestow one himself, and indeed his Son, and that on this and not on that and the other sinner. Therefore grace and satisfaction are very often joined together. See Rom. 3.24,25. Eph. 1.7. Col. 1.13. And so the sinner is justified on the part of Christ upon account of his righteousness, according to the language of Paul, Philip. 3.9, "Not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." This righteousness of God, on account of which the sinner is justified, is not his divine and essential righteousness infused into the sinner, and so inherent in him, according to the opinion of

Osiander; for this righteousness is infinite, and cannot be communicated to man; but it is the righteousness which he hath merited and obtained, and therefore his mediatorial righteousness, whereby "he is made righteousness to us," 1 Cor. 1.30. Further, the sinner is justified, not only on account of Christ's passive righteousness, but also on account of his active and obediential righteousness, as Paul teacheth us, Rom. 5.19. "By the obedience of one many shall be made righteous." Christ hath satisfied the justice of God by his obedience, as well as by his suffering, and the righteousness of the law required of the sinner obedience, as well as the suffering of punishment. Yea, Christ suffered in obedience to his Father, and this rendered his suffering a virtuous suffering. See Philip. 2.8. And this is the meaning of the instructor, when he speaks of "the satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness" of Christ, on account of which man is justified, as the satisfaction was effected by his righteousness and holiness.

(c) But how doth the sinner obtain an interest in this favourable sentence? It is effected, (1) by God's imputation of Christ's righteousness to man, (2) By the faith of man, whereby he appropriates that sentence and the righteousness of Christ to himself.

1. When God justifieth man on account of the righteousness of Christ, he imputes that righteousness to man as his righteousness, that is, he bestows it on him, by which therefore Christ's satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness becomes his righteousness before God, as the instructor speaks in the sixty-first question. And thus the sinner is considered as perfectly righteous by this imputation, as if he had never committed any sin; yea, "as if he had fully accomplished all that obedience, which Christ hath accomplished for him." The Papists and Remonstrants deny this imputation of Christ's righteousness, that they may teach justification on account of our own works and faith; but we maintain it, because David, as Paul teacheth us, Rom. 4.6, "pronounces the man blessed, to whom God imputeth righteousness without works." See also vs. 4,9,11, concerning the imputation of righteousness. This righteousness cannot be any other than the righteousness of Christ, because all our own righteousness is excluded there, as also Philip. 3.9. Surely this imputation is not so absurd, as our adversaries pretend, since the sins of believers were imputed to Christ, "that they might be made the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. 5.21, and that "the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in them," Rom. 8.3,4. Why should not the righteousness of Christ be imputed to us, as well as the sin of Adam is imputed to us? Paul shows this consequence very clearly, Rom. 5.15,19. In what other way doth the righteousness of Christ become ours? for "he is the Lord our righteousness," Jer. 23.6. And "he is made of God to us righteousness," 1 Cor. 1.30. Do not the Papists teach that the supererogatory works of the saints are imputed to others? and cannot the righteousness of Christ be imputed to the sinner? do not the Remonstrants acknowledge that the merits of Christ are advantageous to believers? but how can they be so, except by imputation?

2. We obtain an interest in this sentence and this righteousness also by faith, whereby we make these things our own. And indeed by faith only, without works: "We conclude then," to

adopt the words of Paul, Rom. 3.28, "that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." The apostle teacheth the same also, Gal. 2.16. Faith is indeed not without works; or "it is dead, when it is alone," James 2.17,18, and it is itself a good work, John 6.29, but it is not considered so here, because it is very carefully distinguished from works, yea, set in opposition to them, as we see in the text, and Rom. 3.28, and Gal. 2.16.

III. We obtain an occasion of discussing this matter more fully in the sixty-first question, which demands of the pupil his reason for saying "that he is righteous by faith only." This question is asked, because the Papists conceive that we are acceptable to God on account of the worthiness of our faith, which possesseth so great a worthiness, because it is the root of other virtues, and produces others. The Remonstrants will have that faith justifieth man, because God reckons it by a gracious estimation, as a perfect observation of his law. But the instructor saith, "that I am not acceptable to God on account of the worthiness of my faith:" and he proves it when he saith, "that only the satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ is his righteousness before God," which he had explained in the sixtieth question, and which hath been proved by us. Therefore the believing sinner cannot be acceptable to God on account of the worthiness of his faith. This appears so much the more, because faith denies its own work and worthiness, and seeks all its worthiness in the righteousness of Christ. See this, Phil. 3.8,9. The Remonstrants will not indeed seek any worthiness in faith, but only a gracious estimation of God, whereby he reckons faith a perfect observation of his law: yet then their righteousness is not in Christ, but in faith which God esteems so worthy; but when they speak thus, they deny the whole gospel, which doth not place the righteousness of the sinner in faith, as the work of the sinner, but only in Christ. It is also impossible, that God should esteem faith a perfect observation of the law; for then "the judgment of God would not be according to truth," contrary to Rom. 2.2. Paul saith indeed, that "faith is counted for righteousness," Rom. 4.5, but in that passage, faith is put by a metonymy for Christ, because he is the object of faith, we unite ourselves to him, and seek our righteousness in him by faith. And thus faith is spoken of in other passages in such a manner, that we must understand by it the object of faith, either the doctrine of faith, or Christ; so Paul saith, Gal. 3.23,25. "Before faith came, we were kept under the law: but after that faith is come, we are no longer under a school-master." And Paul considered the matter thus also in Rom. 4.5. He would otherwise contradict himself, for he speaks of an ungodly person, who worketh not, and to whom righteousness is imputed without works. See vrs. 1.8.

But the difficulty still remains, how faith acts in justification. The instructor explains this, when he saith, "that I cannot receive and apply the same to myself any other way than by faith only." For faith serves here like an instrument, with which we do something, like a hand, with which we lay hold on that which is offered to us, make it our own, and unite it to ourselves. That faith hath such a powers we have shown from John 1.12, on the seventh Lord's day. We are to understand this so, that the Judge proffering his Son, his righteousness, and the gracious sentence

in him, the sinner accepts and lays hold on Christ, and all grace in him, and thus "submits to the righteousness of God," Rom. 10.3. It is indeed the nature of love also to accept of Christ, to embrace and unite him to ourselves; but we are not therefore justified by love, because love acts not like faith, since it doth not seek to obtain an interest in Christ, as Surety, but, as having an interest in him, to exercise friendship and fellowship with him. This is evident, because we do by a justifying faith, as by an assent to the wooing voice of Christ, say yea to him, conclude a match with him, and thus obtain an interest in him, and his righteousness to justification; but by love we exercise fellowship and friendship with him, as our Bridegroom. The sinner, as a sinner, in which respect he is justified, cannot love God, until his guilt is first taken away in justification; but when that is once taken away, his soul then opens and expands in love to God; and so "faith worketh by love," Gal. 5.6.

IV. In order to illustrate the mystery of justification more particularly, we must consider the circumstances and qualifications which accompany it. To this pertains,

(a) The time when God justifieth the sinner. We cannot say that he doth this in his eternal decree, for that was the purpose of God to justify him, and justification follows from that decree. Moreover, the satisfaction of Christ is not justification, but the meritorious cause of it: we may say that God justified all the elect in general so far, that he would never demand a satisfaction for their guilt of them when he appointed his Son to be their Surety, and transferred their sins on him, as he took all their sins upon him, in order that he might satisfy for them, and hath also actually satisfied for them by his sufferings; for "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses to them." 2 Cor. 5.19. Moreover, all the elect were justified in Christ, when God raised him from the dead, and declared, as it were, by an instrument of acquittance, that Christ had satisfied him for them all, for "Christ was justified in the Spirit," 1 Tim. 3.16, and so all the elect likewise in him; but this is not properly speaking, the justification of the sinner before God, of which we speak here: neither do we know that this is ever called justification in the word of God. Justification is indeed a benefit, of which every believer becomes a partaker by himself, whereby the righteousness of Christ is applied and communicated to him upon his act of faith. And so we see that justification takes place, when the elect sinner, being convinced of his guilt by effectual calling, being cited before the throne of grace, and appearing there, lays hold on the Surety and his righteousness, and thus receives this gracious sentence. We see this represented to us in Joshua the high priest, Zech. 3.1-5. We add to this,

(b) The different considerations of justification. Justification is considered as active or passive. The active takes place before the tribunal of God, where the sinner appears; where God actually absolves him from his guilt, and awards to him a right to life, upon the direct act of his faith. The passive takes place in the mind of the sinner, whereby the sentence of God is made known to his mind, so that he becomes conscious that he is justified before God; which takes place upon the reflex act of his faith, whereby he sees in himself the indisputable evidences of his justification. In

order to illustrate this we will explain,

(c) The manner in which the sentence of justification is made known to the believing sinner. This is done either externally or internally. God makes known to the believing sinner that he hath justified him externally by his word: the scripture is, as it were, the certificate of his pardon; for "all the prophets bear witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins," Acts 10.43. See also Gal. 3.8. The Lord sends also for this purpose his messengers of peace, "why comfort his people from his mouth, speak comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned," Isaiah 40.1,2. These, as ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech by them, "invite, call and pray" the sinner "in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God," 2 Cor. 5.20,21. When the sinner consents to this by receiving the Surety, the preachers are then empowered to assure him, that he hath peace with God: "I create the fruit of the lips: peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord," Isaiah 57.19. And in this manner do the preachers "justify many" sinners, Dan. 12.3. Yea, that the believer may be certain of this, God gives him not only his oath, "swearing that he will not be wroth with him, nor rebuke him," Isaiah 57.9, but also his sacraments, or the seals of his covenant: thus "Abraham received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith," Rom. 4.11. In the same manner do baptism and the Lord's supper also seal justification: see Acts 2.38. Matt. 26.26-28. But the reflex act of faith, being yet very weak, and the heart being too much disturbed on account of the sentence of death, which the sinner had already in himself, this external assuring doth not much affect the mind, and therefore the Judge gives him also his Spirit to be a pledge and seal, whereby he is effectually sealed, as Paul showeth repeatedly, 2 Cor. 1.22. Eph. 1.13,14. & 4.30, The work of the Holy Spirit here is, (a) that he teaches the believing sinner to form a conclusion from the word, and from his heart; for he assures him of the truth of the word, which saith, that every one who believeth in Christ hath the forgiveness of sins; "the Spirit beareth witness that the Spirit is the truth," 1 John 5.6. The Holy Spirit also enlightens his soul, and enables him to "know the things," to wit, faith, and the fruits thereof, "which are freely given him by God," 1 Cor. 2.19. Whereupon he determines the soul to conclude that she is justified, for "the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God," Rom. 8.16. (b) The Holy Spirit also effects a peaceful frame of mind, and a calm tranquility of soul, whereby the former perturbation and agitation, which had seized her, is composed, and she enjoys thus "righteousness, peace and joy through the Holy Ghost," according to Rom. 14.17. See also Philip. 4.7. Rom. 5.1. (c) The Holy Ghost works in a higher and in a more effectual manner, in order to assure a person, when he suggests the sentence of absolution to the soul, with much clear and sensible grace, speaking secretly, but very powerfully to the soul, in this or that manner, "Moses, thou hast found favour in my sight, Daniel, thou art a man greatly beloved; son, or daughter, thy sins are forgiven thee;" which is then conveyed with so much light and power to the soul, that she sees clearly, that it is a word, which is sent to her from the throne; and so much the more, because "the Holy Ghost sheds" also "the love of God abroad in her," Rom. 5.5. Yea, he causeth her to taste the power and

the fruit of this benefit with great joy, so that she saith from Isaiah 61.10. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness,"

(d) We say furthermore, that justification is a complete act. Sanctification is only in part, but justification is perfect in this life; for the righteousness of Christ is wholly imputed to the sinner, in consequence of which all his sins, past and present, are forgiven him; and also his future sins so far, that God will never condemn him on account of them, but will always forgive them; for God saith that "he will never be wroth with him, nor rebuke him," Isaiah 54.9, and that "there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus," Rom. 8.1. Moreover, believers are justified daily, since they must pray daily, that their sins may be forgiven them, Matt. 7.12. Therefore it is also said, Rev. 22.11. "He that is righteous, let him be justified still."\* See this exhibited more largely upon the fifth petition.

\* We have quoted this passage according to the Dutch translation.

(e) That our exposition may not be too diffuse, we say lastly, that this is a benefit of the church, not only of the New, but, also of the Old Testament. How the Socinians deny this we have shown on the sixth Lord's day, where we have also refuted them. We have likewise evinced there that it is a mistake, that the fathers under the Old Testament were subject to guilt, to wrath, to the curse, to a restless conscience, and the fear of death, which disproves withal the assertion, that they had not then the perfect forgiveness of their sins. They had certainly the perfect forgiveness of their sins, as well as the believers of the New Testament. David surely saith this in the thirty-second psalm, and Paul proves from that psalm the forgiveness of the New Testament, Rom. 4.6-8. We do not however deny, that there is a great difference between the justification of the Old, and of the New Testament; for the believers under the Old Testament were justified upon the ground of the future satisfaction of the Surety, their justification was administered to them in a dark and legal manner by the law of ceremonies, it was made known to them by the Holy Ghost in an exceedingly scarce manner, and it was the peculiar privilege of Israel, confined within the narrow limits of Canaan: but under the New Testament believers obtain this benefit by the accomplished satisfaction of the Mediator, it is administered to them in a clear and easy manner, and with a greater assurance of the Holy Ghost, and even to the Gentiles. And so "God is no longer a God of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles: seeing it is one God, which shall justify the circumcision by faith and uncircumcision through faith." Thus Paul speaks, Rom. 3.29,30.

#### APPLICATION

It is time to contemplate this matter more precisely for our advantage.

What think ye, hearers, have not we reason to boast, that we alone possess the pure doctrine according to the word of God, when we teach that the sinner is justified before God by faith only, on account of the perfect righteousness of Christ, through the free grace of God? Is not this

doctrine the only foundation, and the principal article of the whole gospel? Can we apprehend rightly the meaning of Paul in his epistles, without this doctrine of ours? What can we understand of the righteousness of Christ, of the grace of God, and of faith, if we do not make use of this our key? Is the efficacy of the sacrifices of atonement, and of the trespass offerings intelligible without this fundamental article? What can quiet the guilty mind, and glorify God on account of his righteousness and grace in saving sinners, but this opinion of ours? can the good inclination of the sinner's will, his good works, and evangelical obedience, according to the law of Christ? Whose disturbed mind will be quieted by these means? The convinced sinner, despairing of himself must find a perfect, a divine, and an eternal righteousness without himself, if he shall be able to support himself with a hope, that God will be favourable to him. And how shall the Lord obtain his honour, as long as the sinner gazes on himself, and his virtues? And therefore we may safely conclude, that we possess the pure doctrine of truth, and that the Pelagians and Semipelagians do not. The revelation of God is on our side.

But what will this boasting avail us, if we ourselves do not make a profitable, comfortable, and sanctifying use of our doctrine? Permit me therefore to exhibit this benefit of justification to you in its proper lustre, that we may urge you the more to a suitable improvement of it, Consider then,

1. Whom God justifieth, and so graciously acquits. Is it not a sinner, yea, one of "the chief of sinners," with Paul? 1 Tim. 1.15, who hath sinned against all the commandments of God, and hath not kept one of them; yea, who hath transgressed most grievously against God, who hated God and his neighbour, was "sometimes foolish, disobedient, serving divers lusts, hateful, and hating others," as Paul confesses of himself, and other justified persons, Titus 3.3. Yea, who is still inclined to all evil, "carnal, sold under sin, in whose flesh there dwelleth no good thing," Rom. 7.14,18, who is self-condemned, hopeless, and knows of no remedy, saying "there is no hope," Isaiah 57.10, and whose mouth is stopped, being unable to excuse himself in the least. When the Lord God shows favour to such an one, and admits him to grace, must it not be a great thing, and cause the sinner to humble himself to the uttermost, and to lose himself in the grace of God?

2. It is inconceivable that his Judge, whom he hath injured in the highest degree, and who might therefore proceed against him with the utmost severity, favours him with the greatest grace. This, this must exhibit the Judge as incomparably good to the sinner, so that he may cry out with the church, Micah 7.18,19. "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant o? his heritage? he retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion on us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." He descends from his throne of vindictive justice, and sits upon his throne of grace, and that without injuring yea, to the glory of his justice; a wonder, before which "Moses bowed himself with his head to the earth," when the Lord proclaimed it before him, saying, "The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression

and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty," Exod. 34.5,8.

3. Is not this a wonderful benefit, that God himself bestows his Son to be a Surety, Mediator and Advocate? The sinner must have been condemned according to the law, and the testimony of his conscience: but the bowels of the tender mercy of God made his Son to be sin, that the sinner might be the righteousness of God in him. He cannot be condemned now upon the allegations of his accusers, although their accusations be ever so just; they themselves must be condemned; for according to the words of Paul, Rom. 8.3,4. "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us." This is the great promise of God, who justifieth the sinner, that he saith, Isaiah 54.17. "Every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." Do the accusers renew their complaints with his daily offences, "Jesus Christ the righteous is his Advocate with the Father, and he ever liveth to make intercession for him," agreeably to the testimony of John and Paul, 1 John 2.1. Heb. 7.25.

4. Will ye have more, look at the sentence. How precious is it, and like cold water to a thirsty soul, bowed down under the burthen of so many and just accusations! Can aught be more joyful, than that a justly, and a self-condemned malefactor is informed, that he hath obtained pardon? How soul enrapturing is it to a sinner, who bears with the greatest anxiety the sentence of everlasting condemnation in his bosom, to hear the Judge say, Thou shalt not die, but live: I will seat thee upon the throne of my Son, I have set my heart, my love on thee, and when his Judge gives him the kiss of reconciliation! How must such a poor heart revive, as it were, from the pangs of death, with the greatest pleasure! Such a soul saith straightway, "O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live. Behold, for peace I had great bitterness; but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption; for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back," Isaiah 38.16,17. Once more:

5. Why doth God do such great things for such a vile child of hell? It cannot be, because he saw so much moral goodness in him; not only God, but the sinner himself, knew better. Nothing, nothing but grace moved the Lord to glorify himself in such a subject of condemnation. It is "to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved," saith the apostle, Eph. 1.6. Yea, the sinner doth still do nothing to obtain this sentence, he only assents to it, that he may obtain grace and peace, agreeably to the method and wisdom of the King: his Advocate saith, "Fear not, only believe," Mark 5.36.

What think ye, hearers, is not David in the right, when he pronounces a sinner, who is justified in this manner, blessed? Psalm 32.1,2. Surely yes. But what will this avail you and me, if we ourselves have no interest in this great benefit? ought we not then to inquire thoroughly in what state we are with regard to this particular? what think ye, are ye already acquitted before the tribunal

of God? or do ye not concern yourselves with this important matter? This would indeed be wretched. Or do ye say, We hope that we do, and we trust that all our sins are forgiven for the sake of Christ's merits? Have ye any ground or proof of this? Surely this is a matter of too great importance to be trifled with in such a manner. Permit me to inform you what are the marks of a justified person, and let each of you examine himself by them, and see whether they can be found in him.

1. The person who hath been justified before God, "his conscience hath accused him that he hath grossly transgressed all the commands of God, and that he hath kept none of them, and is still inclined to all evil." He knows this, not merely from hearsay, but he looks back, and sees that his whole life hath been without God, he sees even now clearly and plainly every evil inclination rise up in him against God, and his ways, and against his neighbour. This distresses him, and affects him with shame and concern, and he earnestly desires to find grace only; this urges him to prayer, and to seek God, that, like such a vile wretch, he may find grace and mercy with God. See this in the publican, Luke 18.13,14.

2. Such a person seeks his righteousness and pardon only in Christ. At first he seeks relief for his distressed heart in forsaking evil and doing good; but he is soon driven from this, for he sees that whatever he doth is so mixed with sin, that the more he strives to do any thing, the more his evil inclinations appear, and the more distress of mind he experiences on account of them, until his soul, entirely perplexed, hears the good report of the ability and willingness of the Mediator, whereupon being driven out of himself, he turns himself to him, surrenders himself to him, chooses, and accepts of him, that he may be justified by him before the throne. How exceedingly low doth he now rate his virtues, although he once valued them so highly! and how is Jesus risen in his esteem! Like Saul he saith with his whole heart, "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ the righteousness which is of God by faith," Philip. 3.8,9. Once more:

3. The person who is justified before God is also sanctified. These two benefits always accompany each other; see 1 Cor. 6.11. "With God there is forgiveness, that he may be feared, Psalm 130.4. David saith also that in the spirit of the justified person there is no guile, Psalm 32.2. Indeed faith alone justifieth, but it doth not by itself prove that a person is justified, unless he also prove it by good works. James demonstrates this by the most forcible arguments: see his epistle, the second chapter, vrs. 14-26. It is also the nature of the justified person to be holy. He knows, he hates, and opposes the wicked inclinations of the old man; he knows and loves the holy will of God, and seeks to do it, and for this purpose surrenders himself to the Lord; love to God hath captivated his soul, and urges him to conduct himself according to his will, and with justified Paul he strives to be conformed to Christ, and to be perfect, Philip. 3.10-14.

If ye, who hear this, examine yourselves by it, ye will see how it is with you in this respect; if we were not to speak of justification on the following Lord's day, we should show you now how many are yet estranged from this great benefit, and how wretched their condition is; but this we must do on the twenty-fourth Lord's day.

But with respect to you, whose souls are humbled under sin, who have sought and found your righteousness in Christ only, and pursue after holiness, be active and zealous in your improvement of this matter. And particularly,

1. Let this truth be precious to you, and do all that in you lieth to retain it in the church; and therefore endeavour to understand it thoroughly, and to teach it to others; suspect and oppose those who cavil at it in the least. Applicable are here the words of holy Jude in his epistle, the third verse, "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints." The doctrine of the justification of the sinner, before God is the chief truth of Christianity: with this article the church either stands or falls. No doctrine can remain unviolated, when this is impaired. He who doth not hold this truth pure, cannot have a pure opinion of the satisfaction of Christ, nor of the state of grace; his humility, his faith, his hope, his charity and sanctification is vain. He cannot "serve God in the Spirit, while he doth not glory in Christ Jesus, and hath confidence in the flesh," as Paul speaks, Philip. 3.3.

2. Let this truth possess and captivate your souls so that it may ravish and transport you with wonder, joy and thanksgiving to the Lord. Think what hath been done to you, that ye, who were so vile and guilty, have been raised up out of the bottomless pit of misery, and compassed with joyful songs of deliverance, on account of the righteousness of the Son of God, by such an exalted grace, upon the consenting act of your faith, that ye might receive and praise for ever grace for grace. How should your souls now be filled with the praises of God, with his honour all the day! Have ye not greater reason than Hagar, to say with her, "Have I here also looked after him that seeth me?" Gen 16.13. See only how David strove to do this, when he said, Psalm 103.1-5. "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's."

3. Be and remain lowly and humble. Remember what ye were, (and yet are in yourselves,) surely a Magor missabib, a terror round about to yourselves and to all who beheld you with a discerning eye. Ye know how loathsome and hateful ye were in your own eyes, when God first laid his hand on you; there was none so filthy, so wicked and damnable as ye were in your own opinion. Will ye now exalt yourselves on account of the excellency of your revelation? will ye forget yourselves, because ye are believers, and beloved? "Who maketh you to differ? and what have ye, that ye have not received?"

and if ye have received it, why do ye glory, as if ye had not received it?" thus I ask you with Paul, 1 Cor. 4.7. Do ye no longer know what ye have been, know then what ye are now still, through the evil inclinations of your hearts; if this will not humble you, and render you lowly, the Lord will "give you a sharp thorn in your flesh, a messenger of Satan, to buffet you." And why not you, as well as Paul, "that ye may not exalt yourselves?" 2 Cor. 12.2. Why did the Lord withdraw his hand, and suffer the greatest saints to fall into exceedingly grievous sins? was it not that they might remain humble?

4. When ye have sinned against your great Benefactor, Judge and Father, be grieved and sorry for it. Shall one, who hath been delivered from so great a death, behave himself unthankfully, basely, and like a degenerate child toward him, who hath delivered him, and who hath been so inconceivably kind to him? "Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy Father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee?" thus speaks Moses to Israel, Deut. 32.6. Let your hearts bleed on account of this, and bewail it with briny tears, like David and Peter, Psalm 51, and Matt. 26.75. Do not however sink down in discouragement, but seek pardon for your ill behaviour with humility; draw near unto God, as a Father, whose gracious gift of righteousness is without repentance, and who will never more be wroth with you, as a Judge; he sits yet upon his throne of grace, to afford grace, help and mercy in time of need. Your Surety hath brought in an everlasting righteousness for you, and hath been made righteousness to you of God, ye have still a right to it, it is imputed to you entirely, and for ever. He hath justly turned his face away from you, but ye have not lost your title to his righteousness by your iniquities; have ye been unfaithful, he remains faithful: therefore lay hold anew on the righteousness of your Surety for reconciliation, come with it to the throne, and plead upon "his resurrection, with the answer of a good conscience," as Peter requireth, 1 Peter 3.21. And rest not, until your souls be really and actually at peace again with the Father.

5. Conduct yourselves worthily of the great favour that hath been shown to you. This Paul enjoins, when he saith, Philip. 1.27. "Only let your conversation be as becometh the gospel of Christ." The benefit of justification is the great theme of the gospel; and to what, think ye, doth so great a benefit oblige you? doth it not to fight against sin, to mortify it, to live for God, according to his will, to be filled with fruits of righteousness, self-denial, weanedness from the world, to be heavenly-minded, to burn with love to God and your neighbour, and that as those who belong to God and Christ? Hear what Paul saith, Tit. 2.14. "Who," namely Christ Jesus, "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Show yourselves then to be of "the righteous people, which keepeth the truth."

Thus will ye have the testimony, that nothing can be laid to your charge, because God hath justified you, Christ hath died for you, and sitteth at the right hand of God to make intercession for you, until he shall at length appear on the great day, to execute judgment, that he may perfect and complete your whole state, by absolving you in the sight and hearing of the whole world from every sin, and punishment, and adjudging you to eternal life, yea, even instating you in it, when he will say

to you from Matt. 25.34. "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Amen.

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