

3. “There would then have been merit of works, which is now excluded.” Ans. Such a merit as arises from an equality and proportion between works and reward, by the rule of commutative justice, would not have been in the works of the first covenant; and in no other sense is it now rejected by them that oppose the imputation of the righteousness of Christ.
4. “All is now resolved into the merit of Christ, upon the account whereof alone our own personal righteousness is accepted before God unto our justification.” Ans. The question is not, on what account, nor for what reason, it is so accepted? But, whether it be or no? — seeing its so being is effectually constitutive of a covenant of works.

XIV

THE EXCLUSION OF ALL SORTS OF WORKS FROM AN
INTEREST IN JUSTIFICATION — WHAT IS INTENDED BY “THE
LAW,” AND THE “WORKS” OF IT, IN THE EPISTLES OF PAUL

All works whatever are expressly excluded from any interest in our justification before God

- What intended by the works of the law
- Not those of the ceremonial law only
- Not perfect works only, as required by the law of our creation
- Not the outward works of the law, performed without a principle of faith
- Not works of the Jewish law
- Not works with a conceit of merit
- Not works only wrought before believing, in the strength of our own wills
- Works excluded absolutely from our justification, without respect unto a distinction of a first and second justification
- The true sense of the law in the apostolical assertion that none are justified by the works thereof
- What the Jews understood by the law
- Distribution of the law under the Old Testament
- The whole law a perfect rule of all inherent moral or spiritual obedience
- What are the works of the law, declared from the Scripture, and the argument thereby confirmed
- The nature of justifying faith farther declared

We shall take our fourth argument from the express exclusion of all works, of what sort soever, from our justification before God. For this alone is that which we plead, — namely, that no acts or works of our own are the causes or conditions of our justification; but that the whole of it is resolved into the free grace of God, through Jesus Christ, as the mediator and surety of the covenant. To this purpose the Scripture speaks expressly. Romans 3:28, “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by

faith, without the deeds of the law.” Romans 4:5, “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” Romans 11:6, “If it be of grace, then is it no more of works.” Galatians 2:16, “Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.” Ephesians 2:8, 9, “For by grace are ye saved through faith... not of works, lest any man should boast.” Titus 3:5, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.”

These and the like testimonies are express, and in positive terms assert all that we contend for. And I am persuaded that no unprejudiced person, whose mind is not prepossessed with notions and distinctions whereof not the least little is offered unto them from the texts mentioned, nor elsewhere, can but judge that the law, in every sense of it, and all sorts of works whatever, that at any time, or by any means, sinners or believers do or can perform, are, not in this or that sense, but every way and in all senses, excluded from our justification before God. And if it be so, it is the righteousness of Christ alone that we must retake ourselves unto, or this matter must cease for ever. And this inference the apostle himself makes from one of the testimonies before mentioned, — namely, that of Galatians 2:19-21; for he adds upon it, “I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God; for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.”

Our adversaries are extremely divided amongst themselves. and can come unto no consistency, as to the sense and meaning of the apostle in these assertions; for what is proper and obvious unto the understanding of all men, especially from the opposition that is made between the law and works on the one hand, and faith, grace, and Christ on the other (which are opposed as inconsistent in this matter of our justification), they will not allow; nor can do so without the ruin of the opinions they plead for.

Wherefore, their various conjectures shall be examined, as well to show their inconsistency among themselves by whom the truth is opposed, as to confirm our present argument: —

1. Some say it is the ceremonial law alone, and the works of it, that are intended; or the law as given unto Moses on mount Sinai, containing that entire covenant that was afterwards to be abolished. This was of old the common opinion of the schoolmen, though it be now generally exploded. And the opinion lately contended for, that the apostle Paul excludes justification from the works of the law, or excludes works absolutely perfect, and sinless obedience, not because no man can yield that perfect obedience which the law requires, but because the law itself which he intends could not justify any by the observation of it, is nothing but the renovation of this obsolete notion, that it is the ceremonial law only, or, which upon the matter is all one, the law given on mount Sinai, abstracted from the grace of the promise, which could not justify any in the observation of its rites and commands. But of all other conjectures, this is the most impertinent and contradictory unto the design of the apostle; and is therefore rejected by Bellarmine himself. For the apostle treats of that law whose doers shall be justified, Romans 2:13; and the authors of this opinion would have it to be a law that can justify none of them that do it. That law he intends whereby is the knowledge of sin; for he gives this reason why we cannot be justified by the works of it, — namely, because “by it is the knowledge of sin,” chap. 2:20: and by what law is the knowledge of sin he expressly declares, where he affirms that he “had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet,” chap. 7:7; which is the moral law alone. That law he designs which stops the mouth of all sinners, and makes all the world obnoxious unto the judgment of God, chap. 3:19; which none can do but the law written in the heart of men at their creation, chap. 2:14, 15; — that law, which “if a man do the works of it, he shall live in them,” Galatians 3:12, Romans 10:5; and which brings all men under the curse for sin, Galatians 3:10, — the law that is established by faith, and not made void, Romans 3:31; which the ceremonial law is not, nor the covenant of Sinai; — the law whose righteousness is “to be fulfilled in us,” Romans 8:4. And the instance which the apostle gives of justification without the works of that law which he intends, — namely, that of Abraham, — was some hundreds of

years before the giving of the ceremonial law. Neither yet do I say that the ceremonial law and the works of it are excluded from the intention of the apostle: for when that law was given, the observation of it was an especial instance of that obedience we owed unto the first table of the decalogue; and the exclusion of the works thereof from our justification, inasmuch as the performance of them was part of that moral obedience which we owed unto God, is exclusive of all other works also. But that it is alone here intended, or that law which could never justify any by its observation, although it was observed in due manner, is a fond imagination, and contradictory to the express assertion of the apostle. And, whatever is pretended to the contrary, this opinion is expressly rejected by Augustine, lib. de Spiritu et Litera, cap. 8: “Ne quisquam putaret hic apostolum ea lege dixisse neminem justificari, quae in sacramentis veteribus multa continet figurata praecepta, unde etiam est ista circumcisio carnis, continuo subjunxit, quam dixerit legem et ait; ‘per legem cognitio peccati’”. And to the same purpose he speaks again, Epist. 200, “Non solum illa opera legis quae sunt in veteribus sacramentis, et nunc revelato testamento novo non observantur a Christianis, sicut est circumcisio praeputii, et sabbati non observantur a Christianis, sicut est circumcisio praeputii, et sabbati carnalis vacatio; et a quibusdam escis abstinentia, et pecorum in sacrificiis immolatio, et neomenia et ezymum, et caetera hujusmodi, verum etiam illud quod in lege dictum est, ‘Non concupisces’, quod utique et Christianis nullus ambigit esse dicendum, non justificat hominem, nisi per fidem Jesu Christi, et gratiam Dei per Jesum Christum Dominum nostrum”.

2. Some say the apostle only excludes the perfect works required by the law of innocence; which is a sense diametrically opposite unto that foregoing. But this best pleases the Socinians. “Paulus agit de operibus et perfectis in hoc dicto, ideo enim adjecit, sine operibus legis, ut indicaretur loqui eum de operibus a lege requisitis, et sic de perpetua et perfectissima divinatorum praeceptorum obedientia sicut lex requirit. Cum autem talem obedientiam qualem lex requirit nemo praestare possit, ideo subjecit apostolus nos justificari fide, id est, fiducia et obedientia ea quantum quisque praestare potest, et quotidie quam maximum praestare studet, et connititur. Sine operibus legis, id est, etsi interim perfecte totam legem sicut debebat complere nequit”; says Socinus himself. But, —

- (1.) We have herein the whole granted of what we plead for, — namely, that it is the moral, indispensable law of God that is intended by the apostle; and that by the works of it no man can be justified, yea, that all the works of it are excluded from our justification: for it is, says the apostle, “without works.” The works of this law being performed according unto it, will justify them that perform them, as he affirms, chap. 2:13; and the Scripture elsewhere witnesses that “he that does them shall live in them.” But because this can never be done by any sinner, therefore all consideration of them is excluded from our justification.
 - (2.) It is a wild imagination that the dispute of the apostle is to this purpose, — that the perfect works of the law will not justify us, but imperfect works, which answer not the law, will do so.
 - (3.) Granting the law intended to be the moral law of God, the law of our creation, there is no such distinction intimated in the least by the apostle, that we are not justified by the perfect works of it which we cannot perform, but by some imperfect works that we can perform, and labor so to do. Nothing is more foreign unto the design and express words of his whole discourse.
 - (4.) The evasion which they retake themselves unto, that the apostle opposes justification by faith unto that of works, which he excludes, is altogether vain in this sense; for they would have this faith to be our obedience unto the divine commands, in that imperfect manner which we can attain unto. For when the apostle has excluded all such justification by the law and the works thereof, he does not advance in opposition unto them, and in their room, our own faith and obedience; but adds, “Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ; whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood.”
3. Some of late among ourselves, — and they want not them who have gone before them, — affirm that the works which the apostle excludes from justification are only the outward works of the law, performed without an inward principle of faith, fear, or the love of God. Servile

works, attended unto from a respect unto the threatening of the law, are those which will not justify us. But this opinion is not only false, but impious. For, —

- (1.) The apostle excludes the works of Abraham, which were not such outward, servile works as are imagined.
- (2.) The works excluded are those which the law requires; and the law is holy, just, and good. But a law that requires only outward works, without internal love to God, is neither holy, just, nor good.
- (3.) The law condemns all such works as are separated from the internal principle of faith, fear, and love; for it requires that in all our obedience we should love the Lord our God with all our hearts. And the apostle says, that we are not justified by the works which the law condemns, but not by them which the law commands.
- (4.) It is highly reflexive on the honor of God, that he unto whose divine prerogative it belongs to know the hearts of men alone, and therefore regards them alone in all the duties of their obedience, should give a law requiring outward, servile works only; for if the law intended require more, then are not those the only works excluded.

4. Some say, in general, it is the Jewish law that is intended; and think thereby to cast off the whole difficulty. But if, by the Jewish law, they intend only the ceremonial law, or the law absolutely as given by Moses, we have already showed the vanity of that pretense; but if they mean thereby the whole law or rule of obedience given unto the church of Israel under the Old Testament, they express much of the truth, — it may be more than they designed.

5. Some say that it is works with a conceit of merit, that makes the reward to be of debt, and not of grace, that are excluded by the apostle. But no such distinction appears in the text or context; for, —

- (1.) The apostle excludes all works of the law, — that is, that the law requires of us in a way of obedience, — be they of what sort they will.
 - (2.) The law requires no works with a conceit of merit.
 - (3.) Works of the law originally included no merit, as that which “ariseth from the proportion of one thing unto another in the balance of justice; and in that sense only is it rejected by those who plead for an interest of works in justification.
 - (4.) The merit which the apostle excludes is that which is inseparable from works, so that it cannot be excluded unless the works themselves be so. And unto their merit two things concur: — First, A comparative boasting; that is, not absolutely in the sight of God, which follows the “meritum ex condigno” which some poor sinful mortals have fancied in their works, but that which gives one man a preference above another in the obtaining of justification; which grace will not allow, chap. 4:2. Secondly, That the reward be not absolutely of grace, but that respect he had therein unto works; which makes it so far to be of debt, not out of an internal condignity, which would not have been under the law of creation, but out of some congruity with respect unto the promise of God, verse 4. In these two regards merit is inseparable from works; and the Holy Ghost, utterly to exclude it, excludes all works from which it is inseparable, as it is from all. Wherefore,
 - (5.) The apostle speaks not one word about the exclusion of the merit of works only; but he excludes all works whatever, and that by this argument, that the admission of them would necessarily introduce merit in the sense described; which is inconsistent with grace. And although some think that they are injuriously dealt withal, when they are charged with maintaining of merit in their asserting the influence of our works into our justification; yet those of them who best understand themselves and the controversy itself, are not so averse from some kind of merit, as knowing that it is inseparable from works.
6. Some contend that the apostle excludes only works wrought before believing, in the strength of our own wills and natural abilities, without the aid of grace. Works, they suppose, required by the law are such as we

perform by the direction and command of the law alone. But the law of faith requires works in the strength of the supplies of grace; which are not excluded. This is that which the most learned and judicious of the church of Rome do now generally retake themselves unto. Those who amongst us plead for works in our justification, as they use many distinctions to explain their minds, and free their opinion from a coincidence with that of the Papists; so, as yet, they deny the name of merit, and the thing itself in the sense of the church of Rome, as it is renounced likewise by all the Socinians: wherefore, they make use of the preceding evasion, that merit is excluded by the apostle, and works only as they are meritorious; although the apostle's plain argument be, that they are excluded because such a merit as is inconsistent with grace is inseparable from their admission.

But the Roman church cannot so part with merit. Wherefore, they are to find out a sort of works to be excluded only, which they are content to part withal as not meritorious. Such are those before described, wrought, as they say, before believing, and without the aids of grace; and such, they say, are all the works of the law. And this they do with some more modesty and sobriety than those amongst us who would have only external works and observances to be intended. For they grant that sundry internal works, as those of attrition, sorrow for sin, and the like, are of this nature. But the works of the law it is, they say, that are excluded. But this whole plea, and all the sophisms wherewith it is countenanced, have been so discussed and defeated by Protestant writers of all sorts against Bellarmine and others, as that it is needless to repeat the same things, or to add any thing unto them. And it will be sufficiently evinced of falsehood in what we shall immediately prove concerning the law and works intended by the apostle. However, the heads of the demonstration of the truth to the contrary may be touched on. And, —

- (1.) The apostle excludes all works, without distinction or exception. And we are not to distinguish where the law does not distinguish before us.
- (2.) All the works of the law are excluded: therefore all works wrought after believing by the aids of grace are excluded; for they are all required by the law. See Psalm 119:35; Romans 7:22. Works not

required by the law are no less an abomination to God than sins against the law.

- (3.) The works of believers after conversion, performed by the aids of grace, are expressly excluded by the apostle. So are those of Abraham, after he had been a believer many years, and abounded in them unto the praise of God. So he excludeth his own works after his conversion, Galatians 2:16; 1 Corinthians 4:4; Philippians 3:9; and so he excludes the works of all other believers, Ephesians 2:9, 10.
- (4.) All works are excluded that might give countenance unto boasting, Romans 4:2, ; 3:27; Ephesians 2:9; 1 Corinthians 1:29-31. But this is done more by the good works of regenerate persons than by any works of unbelievers.
- (5.) The law required faith and love in all our works; and therefore if all the works of the law be excluded, the best works of believers are so.
- (6.) All works are excluded which are opposed unto grace working freely in our justification; but this all works whatever are, Romans 11:6.
- (7.) In the Epistle unto the Galatians, the apostle does exclude from our justification all those works which the false teachers pressed as necessary thereunto: but they urged the necessity of the works of believers, and those which were by grace already converted unto God; for those upon whom they pressed them unto this end were already actually so.
- (8.) They are good works that the apostle excludes from our justification; for there can be no pretense of justification by those works that are not good, or which have not all things essentially requisite to make them so: but such are all the works of unbelievers performed without the aids of grace, — they are not good, nor as such accepted with God, but want what is essentially requisite unto the constitution of good works; and it is ridiculous to think that the apostle disputes about the exclusion of such works from our justification as no man in his wits would think to have any place therein.
- (9.) The reason why no man can be justified by the law, is because no man can yield perfect obedience thereunto; for by perfect

obedience the law will justify, Romans 2:13; 10:5. Wherefore, all works are excluded that are not absolutely perfect; but this the best works of believers are not, as we have proved before.

- (10.) If there be a reserve for the works of believers, performed by the aid of grace, in our justification, it is, that either they may be concauses thereof, or be indispensably subservient unto those things that are so. That they are concauses of our justification is not absolutely affirmed; neither can it be said that they are necessarily subservient unto them that are so. They are not so unto the efficient cause thereof, which is the grace and favor of God alone, Romans 3:24, 25; 4:16; Ephesians 2:8, 9; Revelation 1:5; — nor are they so unto the meritorious cause of it, which is Christ alone, Acts 13:38; 26:18; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21; — nor unto the material cause of it, which is the righteousness of Christ alone, Romans 10:3, 4, — nor are they so unto faith, in what place soever it be stated; for not only is faith only mentioned, wherever we are taught the way how the righteousness of Christ is derived and communicated unto us, without any intimation of the conjunction of works with it, but also, as unto our justification, they are placed in opposition and contradiction one to the other, Romans 3:28. And sundry other things are pleadable unto the same purpose.

7. Some affirm that the apostle excludes all works from our first justification, but not from the second; at; as some speak, the continuation of our justification. But we have before examined these distinctions, and found them groundless.

Evident it is, therefore, that men put themselves into an uncertain, slippery station, where they know not what to fix upon, nor wherein to find any such appearance of truth as to give them countenance in denying the plain and frequently-repeated assertion of the apostle.

Wherefore, in the confirmation of the present argument, I shall more particularly inquire into what it is that the apostle intends by the law and works whereof he treats. For as unto our justification, whatever they are, they are absolutely and universally opposed unto grace, faith, the

righteousness of God, and the blood of Christ, as those which are altogether inconsistent with them. Neither can this be denied or questioned by any, seeing it is the plain design of the apostle to evince that inconsistency.

1. Wherefore, in general, it is evident that the apostle, by the law and the works thereof, intended what the Jews with whom he had to do did understand by the law, and their own whole obedience thereunto. I suppose this cannot be denied; for without a concession of it there is nothing proved against them, nor are they in any thing instructed by him. Suppose those terms equivocal, and to be taken in one sense by him, and by them in another, and nothing can be rightly concluded from what is spoken of them. Wherefore, the meaning of these terms, “the law,” and “works,” the apostle takes for granted as very well known, and agreed on between himself and those with whom he had to do.

2. The Jews by “the law” intended what the Scriptures of the Old Testament meant by that expression; for they are nowhere blamed for any false notion concerning the law, or that they esteemed any thing to be so but what was so indeed, and what was so called in the Scripture. Their present oral law was not yet hatched, though the Pharisees were brooding of it.

3. “The law” under the Old Testament does immediately refer unto the law given at mount Sinai, nor is there any distinct mention of it before. This is commonly called “the law” absolutely; but most frequently “the law of God,” “the law of the Lord;” and sometimes “the law of Moses,” because of his especial ministry in the giving of it: “Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him,” Malachi 4:4. And this the Jews intended by “the law.”

4. Of the law so given at Horeb, there was a distribution into three parts.

- (1.) There was “‘aseret hadevarim”, — Deuteronomy 4:13, “The ten words;” so also chap. 10:4; — that is, the ten commandments written upon two tables of stone. This part of the law was first given, was the foundation of the whole, and contained that perfect

obedience which was required of mankind by law of creation; and was now received into the church with the highest attestations of its indispensable obligation unto obedience or punishment.

- (2.) “chukim”, which the LXX render by “dikaioomata”, — that is, “jura,” “rites,” or “statutes;” but the Latin from thence, “justificationes,” (“justifications,”) which has given great occasion of mistake in many, both ancient and modern divines. We call it “the ceremonial law.” The apostle terms this part of the law distinctly, “Nomos entoloon en dogmasi”, Ephesians 2:15, “The law of commandments contained in ordinances;” that is, consisting in a multitude of arbitrary commands.
- (3.) “mishpatim”, which we commonly call “the judicial law.” This distribution of the law shuts up the Old Testament, as it is used in places innumerable before; only the “aseret hadevriem”, — “the ten words,” — is expressed by the general word “torah”, — “the law,” Malachi 4:4.

5. These being the parts of the law given unto the church in Sinai, the whole of it is constantly called “torah”, — “the law,” — that is, the instruction (as the word signifies) that God gave unto the church, in the rule of obedience which he prescribed unto it. This is the constant signification of that word in Scripture, where it is taken absolutely; and thereon does not signify precisely the law as given at Horeb, but comprehends with it all the revelations that God made under the Old Testament, in the explanation and confirmation of that law, in rules, motives, directions, and enforcements of obedience.

6. Wherefore; “torah”, — “the law,” — is the whole rule of obedience which God gave to the church under the Old Testament, with all the efficacy wherewith it was accompanied by the ordinances of God, including in it all the promises and threatening that might be motives unto the obedience that God did require; — this is that which God and the church called “the law” under the Old Testament, and which the Jews so called with whom our apostle had to do. That which we call “the moral law” was the foundation of the whole; and those parts of it which we call “the judicial and ceremonial law,” were peculiar instances of the obedience which the church under the Old Testament was obliged unto, in the

especial polity and divine worship which at that season were necessary unto it. And two things does the Scripture testify unto concerning this law: —

- (1.) That it was a perfect, complete rule of all that internal spiritual and moral obedience which God required of the church: “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple,” Psalm 19:7. And it so was of all the external duties of obedience, for matter and manner, time and season; that in both the church might walk “acceptably before God”, Isaiah 8:20. And although the original duties of the moral part of the law are often preferred before the particular instances of obedience in duties of outward worship, yet the whole law was always the whole rule of all the obedience, internal and external, that God required of the church, and which he accepted in them that did believe.

- (2.) That this law, this rule of obedience, as it was ordained of God to be the instrument of his rule of the church, and by virtue of the covenant made with Abraham, unto whose administration it was adapted, and which its introduction on Sinai did not disannul, was accompanied with a power and efficacy enabling unto obedience. The law itself, as merely receptive and commanding, administered no power or ability unto those that were under its authority to yield obedience unto it; no more do the mere commands of the gospel. Moreover, under the Old Testament it enforced obedience on the minds and consciences of men by the manner of its first delivery, and the severity of its sanction, so as to fill them with fear and bondage; and was, besides, accompanied with such burdensome rules of outward worship, as made it a heavy yoke unto the people. But as it was God’s doctrine, teaching, instruction in all acceptable obedience unto himself, and was adapted unto the covenant of Abraham, it was accompanied with an administration of effectual grace, procuring and promoting obedience in the church. And the law is not to be looked on as separated from those aids unto obedience which God administered

under the Old Testament; whose effects are therefore ascribed unto the law itself See Psalm 1, 19, 119.

This being “the law” in the sense of the apostle, and those with whom he had to do, our next inquiry is, What was their sense of “works,” or “works of the law?” And I say it is plain that they intended hereby the universal sincere obedience of the church unto God, according unto this law. And other works the law of God acknowledges not; yea, it expressly condemns all works that have any such defect in them as to render them unacceptable unto God. Hence, notwithstanding all the commands that God had positively given for the strict observance of sacrifices, offerings, and the like; yet, when the people performed them without faith and love, he expressly affirms that he “commanded them not,” — that is, to be observed in such a manner. In these works, therefore, consisted their personal righteousness, as they walked “in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless,” Luke 1:6; wherein they did “instantly serve God day and night,” Acts 26:7. And this they esteemed to be their own righteousness, their righteousness according unto the law; as really it was, Philippians 3:6, 9. For although the Pharisees had greatly corrupted the doctrine of the law, and put false glosses on sundry precepts of it; yet, that the church in those days did, by “the works of the law,” understand either ceremonial duties only, or external works, or works with a conceit of merit, or works wrought without an internal principle of faith and love to God, or any thing but their own personal sincere obedience unto the whole doctrine and rule of the law, there is nothing that should give the least color of imagination. For, —

1. All this is perfectly stated in the suffrage which the scribe gave unto the declaration of the sense and design of the law, with the nature of the obedience which it does require, and was made at his request by our blessed Savior. Mark 12:28-33, “And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?” (or as it is, Matthew 22:36, “Which is the great commandment in the law?”) “And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our Gods is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy

strength; this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none but he: and to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.” And this (is) so expressly given by Moses as the sum of the law, — namely, faith and love, as the principle of all our obedience, Deuteronomy 6:4, 5, that it is marvelous what should induce any learned, sober person to fix upon any other sense of it; as that it respected ceremonial or external works only, or such as may be wrought without faith or love. This is the law concerning which the apostle disputes, and this the obedience wherein the works of it do consist; and more than this, in the way of obedience, God never did nor will require of any in this world. Wherefore, the law and the works thereof which the apostle excludes from justification, is that whereby we are obliged to believe in God as one God, the only God, and love him with all our hearts and souls, and our neighbors as ourselves; and what works there are, or can be, in any persons, regenerate or not regenerate, to be performed in the strength of grace or without it, that are acceptable unto God, that may not be reduced unto these heads, I know not.

2. The apostle himself declares that it is the law and the works of it, in the sense we have expressed, that he excludes from our justification. For the law he speaks of is “the law of righteousness,” Romans 9:31, — the law whose righteousness is to be “fulfilled in us,” that we may be accepted with God, and freed from condemnation, chap. 8:4; — that in obedience whereunto our own personal righteousness does consist, whether that we judge so before conversion, Romans 10:3; or what is so after it, Philippians 3:9; — the law which if a man observe, “he shall live,” and be justified before God, Romans 2:13; Galatians 3:12; Romans 10:5; — that law which is “holy, just, and good,” which discovers and condemns all sin whatever, chap. 7:7, 9.

From what has been discoursed, these two things are evident in the confirmation of our present argument: — first, That the law intended by the apostle, when he denies that by the works of the law any can be

justified, is the entire rule and guide of our obedience unto God, even as unto the whole frame and spiritual constitution of our souls, with all the acts of obedience or duties that he requires of us; and, secondly, That the works of this law, which he so frequently and plainly excludes from our justification, and therein opposes to the grace of God and the blood of Christ, are all the duties of obedience, — internal, supernatural; external, ritual, — however we are or may be enabled to perform them, that God requires of us. And these things excluded, it is the righteousness of Christ alone, imputed unto us, on, the account whereof we are justified before God.

The truth is, so far as I can discern, the real difference that is at this day amongst us, about the doctrine of our justification before God, is the same that was between the apostle and the Jews, and no other. But controversies in religion make a great appearance of being new, when they are only varied and made different by the new terms and expressions that are introduced into the handling of them. So has it fallen out in the controversy about nature and grace; for as unto the true nature of it, it is the same in these days as it was between the apostle Paul and the Pharisees; between Austin and Pelagius afterwards. But it has now passed through so many forms and dresses of words, as that it can scarce be known to be what it was. Many at this day will condemn both Pelagius and the doctrine that he taught, in the words wherein he taught it, and yet embrace and approve of the things themselves which he intended. The introduction of every change in philosophical learning gives an appearance of a change in the controversies which are managed thereby; but take off the covering of philosophical expressions, distinctions, metaphysical notions, and futilous terms of art, which some of the ancient schoolmen and later disputants have cast upon it, and the difference about grace and nature is amongst us all the same that it was of old, and as it is allowed by the Socinians.

Thus the apostle, treating of our justification before God, does it in those terms which are both expressive of the thing itself, and were well understood by them with whom he had to do; such as the Holy Spirit, in their revelation, had consecrated unto their proper use. Thus, on the one hand, he expressly excludes the law, our own works, our own

righteousness, from any interest therein; ally in opposition unto, and as inconsistent with them, in the matter of justification, he ascribes it wholly unto the righteousness of God, righteousness imputed unto us, the obedience of Christ, Christ made righteousness unto us, the blood of Christ as a propitiation, faith, receiving Christ, and the atonement. There is no awakened conscience, guided by the least beam of spiritual illumination, but in itself plainly understands these things, and what is intended in them. But through the admission of exotic learning, with philosophical terms and notions, into the way of teaching spiritual things in religion, a new face and appearance is put on the whole matter; and a composition made between those things which the apostle directly opposes as contrary and inconsistent. Hence are all our discourses about preparations, dispositions, conditions, merits “*de congruo et condigno,*” with such a train of distinctions, as that if some bounds be not fixed unto the inventing and coining of them (which, being a facile work, grows on us every day), we shall not see long be able to look through them, so as to discover the things intended, or rightly to understand one another; for as one said of lies, so it may be said of arbitrary distinctions, they must be continually new thatched over, or it will rain through. But the best way is to cast off all these coverings, and we shall then quickly see that the real difference about the justification of a sinner before God is the same, and no other, as it was in the days of the apostle Paul between him and the Jews. And all those things which men are pleased now to plead for, with respect unto a causality in our justification before God, under the names of preparations, conditions, dispositions, merit, with respect unto a first or second justification, are as effectually excluded by the apostle as if he had expressly named them every one; for in them all there is a management, according unto our conceptions and the terms of the learning passant in the present age, of the plea for our own personal righteousness, which the Jews maintained against the apostle. And the true understanding of what he intends by the law, the works and righteousness thereof, would be sufficient to determine this controversy, but that men are grown very skillful in the art of endless wrangling.