

## IV

OF JUSTIFICATION; THE NOTION AND SIGNIFICATION  
OF THE WORD IN SCRIPTURE

The proper sense of these words, justification, and to justify, considered

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Unto the right understanding of the nature of justification, the proper sense and signification of these words themselves, justification and to justify, is to be inquired into; for until that is agreed upon, it is impossible that our discourses concerning the thing itself should be freed from equivocation. Take words in various senses, and all may be true that is contradictorily affirmed or denied concerning what they are supposed to signify; and so it has actually fallen out in this case, as we shall see more fully afterwards. Some taking these words in one sense, some in another, have appeared to deliver contrary doctrines concerning the thing itself, or our justification before God, who yet have fully agreed, in what the proper determinate sense or signification of the words does import; and therefore the true meaning of them has been declared and vindicated already by many. But whereas the right stating hereof is of more moment unto the determination of what is principally controverted about the doctrine itself, or the thing signified, than most do apprehend, and something at least remains to be added for the declaration and vindication of the import and only signification of these words in the Scripture, I shall give an account of my observations concerning it with what diligence I can.

The Latin derivation and composition of the word “justificatio,” would seem to denote an internal change from inherent unrighteousness unto righteousness likewise inherent, by a physical motion and transmutation, as the schoolmen speak; for such is the signification of words of the same composition. So sanctification, mortification, vivification, and the like, do all denote a real internal work on the subject spoken of. Hereon, in the whole Roman school, justification is taken for justifaction, or the making of a man to be inherently righteous, by the infusion of a principle or habit of grace, who was before inherently and habitually unjust and unrighteous. Whilst this is taken to be the proper signification of the word, we neither do nor can speak, ad idem, in our disputations with them about the cause and nature of that justification which the Scripture teaches.

And this appearing sense of the word possibly deceived some of the ancients, as Austin in particular, to declare the doctrine of free, gratuitous sanctification, without respect unto any works of our own, under the name of justification; for neither he nor any of them ever thought of a

justification before God, consisting in the pardon of our sins and the acceptance of our persons as righteous, by virtue of any inherent habit of grace infused into us, or acted by us. Wherefore the subject-matter must be determined by the scriptural use and signification of these words, before we can speak properly or intelligibly concerning it: for if to justify men in the Scripture, signify to make them subjectively and inherently righteous, we must acknowledge a mistake in what we teach concerning the nature and causes of justification; and if it signify no such thing, all their disputations about justification by the infusion of grace, and inherent righteousness thereon, fall to the ground. Wherefore, all Protestants (and the Socinians all of them comply therein) do affirm, that the use and signification of these words is forensic, denoting an act of jurisdiction. Only the Socinians, and some others, would have it to consist in the pardon of sin only; which, indeed, the word does not at all signify. But the sense of the word is, to assoil, to acquit, to declare and pronounce righteous upon a trial; which, in this case, the pardon of sin does necessarily accompany.

“Justificatio” and “justifico” belong not, indeed, unto the Latin tongue, nor can any good author be produced who ever used them, for the making of him inherently righteous, by any means, who was not so before. But whereas these words were coined and framed to signify such things as are intended, we have no way to determine the signification of them, but by the consideration of the nature of the things which they were invented to declare and signify. And whereas, in this language, these words are derived from “jus” and “justum,” they must respect an act of jurisdiction rather than a physical operation or infusion. “Justificari” is “justus censer, pro justo haberi;” — to be esteemed, accounted, or adjudged righteous. So a man was made “justus filius,” in adoption, unto him by whom he was adopted, which, what it is, is well declared by Budaeus, Cajus lib. 2, F. de Adopt. De Arrogatione loquens: “Is qui adoptat rogatur, id est, interrogatur, an velit eum quem adopturus sit, justum sibi filium esse. Justum”, says he, “intelligo, non verum, ut aliqui censent, sed omnibus partibus, ut ita dicam, filiationis, veri filii vicem obtinentem, naturalis et legitimi filii loco sedentem”. Wherefore, as by adoption there is no internal inherent change made in the person adopted, but by virtue thereof he is esteemed and adjudged as a true God, and has all the rights of a legitimate

son; so by justification, as to the importance of the word, a man is only esteemed, declared, and pronounced righteous, as if he were completely so. And in the present case justification and gratuitous adoption are the same grace, for the substance of them, John 1:12; only, respect is had, in their different denomination of the same grace, unto different effects or privileges that ensue thereon.

But the true and genuine signification of these words is to be determined from those in the original languages of the Scripture which are expounded by them. In the Hebrew it is “tsadak”. This the LXX render by “Dikaion apofainoo”, Job 27:5; “Dikaios anafainomai”, chap. 13:18; “Dikaion krinoo”, Proverbs 17:15; to show or declare one righteous; to appear righteous; to judge any one righteous. And the sense may be taken from any one of them, as Job 13:18, “Hinneh-na ‘arakti mishpat yada’ti ki-‘ani ‘etsdak” — Behold, now I have ordered my cause; I know that I shall be justified.” The ordering of his cause (his judgment), his cause to be judged on, is his preparation for a sentence, either of absolution or condemnation: and hereon his confidence was, that he should be justified; that is, absolved, acquitted, pronounced righteous. And the sense is no less pregnant in the other places. Commonly, they render it by “dikaio- oo”, whereof I shall speak afterwards.

Properly, it denotes an action towards another (as justification and to justify do) in Hiphil only; and a reciprocal action of a man on himself in Hithpael, “hitstadak”. Hereby alone is the true sense of these words determined. And I say, that in no place, or on any occasion, is it used in that conjugation wherein it denotes an action towards another, in any other sense but to absolve, acquit, esteem, declare, pronounce righteous, or to impute righteousness; which is the forensic sense of the word we plead for, — that is its constant use and signification, nor does it ever once signify to make inherently righteous, much less to pardon or forgive: so vain is the pretense of some, that justification consist only in the pardon of sin, which is not signified by the word in any one place of Scripture. Almost in all places this sense is absolutely unquestionable; nor is there any more than one which will admit of any debate, and that on so faint a pretense as cannot prejudice its constant use and signification in all other places. Whatever, therefore, an infusion of inherent grace may be, or

however it may be called, justification it is not, it cannot be; the word nowhere signifying any such thing. Wherefore those of the church of Rome do not so much oppose justification by faith through the imputation of the righteousness of Christ, as, indeed, deny that there is any such thing as justification: for that which they call the first justification, consisting in the infusion of a principle of inherent grace, is no such thing as justification: and their second justification, which they place in the merit of works, wherein absolution or pardon of sin has neither place nor consideration, is inconsistent with evangelical justification; as we shall show afterwards.

This word, therefore, whether the act of God towards men, or of men towards God, or of men among themselves, or of one towards another, be expressed thereby, is always used in a forensic sense, and does not denote a physical operation, transfusion, or transmutation. 2 Samuel 15:4, “If any man has a suit or cause, let him come to me,” “wehitsdaktiw”, “and I will do him justice;” — “I will justify him, judge in his cause, and pronounce for him.” Deuteronomy 25:1, “If there be a controversy among men, and they come unto judgment, that the judges may judge them,” “wehitsdiku et-hatsdik”, “they shall justify the righteous;” pronounce sentence on his side: whereunto is opposed, “wehirshi’u et-harasha” “and they shall condemn the wicked;” make him wicked, as the word signifies; — that is, judge, declare, and pronounce him wicked; whereby he becomes so judicially, and in the eye of the law, as the other is made righteous by declaration and acquitment. He does not say, “This shall pardon the righteous;” which to suppose would overthrow both the antithesis and design of the place. And “hirshia” is as much to infuse wickedness into a man, as “hitsdik” is to infuse a principle of grace or righteousness into him. The same antithesis occurs, Proverbs 17:15, “matsdik rasha umarshia tsadik” — “He that justifieth the wicked, and condemneth the righteous.” Not he that makes the wicked inherently righteous, not he that changes him inherently from unrighteous unto righteousness; but he that, without any ground, reason, or foundation, acquits him in judgment, or declares him to be righteous, “is an abomination unto the LORD.” And although this be spoken of the judgment of men, yet the judgment of God also is according unto this truth: for although he justified the ungodly, — those who are so in themselves, — yet he does it on the ground and

consideration of a perfect righteousness made theirs by imputation; and by another act of his grace, that they may be meet subjects of this righteous favor, really and inherently changes them from unrighteousness unto holiness, by the renovation of their natures. And these things are singular in the actings of God, which nothing amongst men has any resemblance unto or can represent; for the imputation of the righteousness of Christ unto a person in himself ungodly, unto his justification, or that he may be acquitted, absolved, and declared righteous, is built on such foundations, and proceeds on such principles of righteousness, wisdom, and sovereignty, as have no place among the actions of men, nor can have so; as shall afterwards be declared. And, moreover, when God does justify the ungodly, on the account of the righteousness imputed unto him, he does at the same instant, by the power of his grace, make him inherently and subjectively righteous or holy; which men cannot do one towards another. And therefore, whereas man's justifying of the wicked is to justify them in their wicked ways, whereby they are constantly made worse, and more obdurate in evil; when God justifies the ungodly, their change from personal unrighteousness and unholiness unto righteousness and holiness does necessarily and infallibly accompany it.

To the same purpose is the word used, Isaiah 5:23, "Which justify the wicked for reward;" and chap. 50:8, 9, "karov matsdiki" — "He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me? Let us stand together: who is mine adversary? Let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord GOD will help me; who shall condemn me?" Where we have a full declaration of the proper sense of the word; which is, to acquit and pronounce righteous on a trial. And the same sense is fully expressed in the former antithesis. 1 Kings 8:31, 32, "If any man trespass against his neighbor, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house; then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants," "leharchi'a rasha" "to condemn the wicked," to charge his wickedness on him, to bring his way on his head, "ulhatsdik tsadik", "and to justify the righteous." The same words are repeated, 2 Chronicles 6:22, 23. Psalm 82:3, "ani warash hatsdiku" — "Do justice to the afflicted and poor;" that is, justify them in their cause against wrong and oppression. Exodus 23:7, "lo- 'atsdik rasha" — "I will not justify the wicked;" absolve, acquit, or pronounce him righteous. Job 27:5, "chalilah li im-atsdik etchem" — "Be

it far from me that I should justify you,” or pronounce sentence on your side as if you were righteous. Isaiah 53:11, “By his knowledge my righteous servant,” “yatsdik”, “shall justify many:” the reason whereof is added, “For he shall bear their iniquities;” whereon they are absolved and justified

Once it is used in Hithpael, wherein a reciprocal action is denoted, that whereby a man justifies himself. Genesis 44:16, “And Judah said, What shall we say unto my Lord? What shall we speak?” “Umah-nitstadak”, “and how shall we justify ourselves? God has found out our iniquity.” They could plead nothing why they should be absolved from guilt.

Once the participle is used to denote the outward instrumental cause of the justification of others; in which place alone there is any doubt of its sense. Daniel 12:3, “Umatsdikei harabim” — “And they that justify many,” namely, in the same sense that the preachers of the gospel are said “to save themselves and others,” 1 Timothy 4:16; for men may be no less the instrumental causes of the justification of others than of their sanctification.

Wherefore, although “tsadak” in Kal signifies “justum esse”, and sometimes “juste agere,” which may relate unto inherent righteousness, yet where any action towards another is denoted, this word signifies nothing but to esteem, declare, pronounce, and adjudge any one absolved, acquitted, cleared, justified: there is, therefore, no other kind of justification once mentioned in the Old Testament.

“Dikaio-oo” is the word used to the same purpose in the New Testament, and that alone. Neither is this word used in any good author whatever to signify the making of a man righteous by any applications to produce internal righteousness in him; but either to absolve and acquit, to judge, esteem, and pronounce righteous; or, on the contrary, to condemn. So Suidas, “Dikaioun duo deloi, to te koladzein, kai to dikaion nomidzein” — “It has two significations; to punish, and to account righteous.” And he confirms this sense of the word by instances out of Herodotus, Appianus, and Josephus. And again, “Dikaioosai, aitiatikei, katadikasai, kolasai, dikaion nomisai” with an accusative case; that is, when it respects and

affects a subject, a person, it is either to condemn and punish, or to esteem and declare righteous: and of this latter sense he gives pregnant instances in the next words. Hesychius mentions only the first signification.

“Dikaioumenon, koladzomenon, dikaioosai, kolasai”. They never thought of any sense of this word but what is forensic. And, in our language, to be justified was commonly used formerly for to be judged and sentenced; as it is still among the Scots. One of the articles of peace between the two nations at the surrender of Leith, in the days of Edward VI, was, “That if any one committed a crime, he should be justified by the law, upon his trial.” And, in general, “dikaousthai” is “jus in judicio auferre;” and “dikaioosai” is “justum censere, declarare pronuntiare;” and how in the Scripture it is constantly opposed unto “condemnare,” we shall see immediately.

But we may more distinctly consider the use of this word in the New Testament, as we have done that of “hitsdik” in the Old. And that which we inquire concerning is, — whether this word be used in the New Testament in a forensic sense, to denote an act of jurisdiction; or in a physical sense, to express an internal change or mutation, — the infusion of a habit of righteousness, and the denomination of the person to be justified thereon; or whether it signifies not pardon of sin. But this we may lay aside: for surely no man was ever yet so fond as to pretend that “dikaio-oo” did signify to pardon sin, yet is it the only word applied to express our justification in the New Testament; for if it be taken only in the former sense, then that which is pleaded for by those of the Roman church under the name of justification, whatever it be, however good, useful, and necessary, yet justification it is not, nor can be so called, seeing it is a thing quite of another or nature than what alone is signified by that word. Matthew 11:19, “Edikaioothe he Sofia”, — “Wisdom is justified of her children;” not made just, but approved and declared. Chap. 12:37, “E, toon logoon sou dikaioothesei” — “By thy words thou shalt be justified;” not made just by them, but judged according to them, as is manifested in the antithesis, “kai ek toon logoon sou katadikasthesei” — “and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” Luke 7:29, “Edikaioosan ton Theon” — “They justified God;” not, surely, by making him righteous in himself, but by owning, avowing, and declaring his righteousness. Chap. 10:29, “Ho de theloon dikaion heauton” — “He, willing to justify himself;” to declare

and maintain his own righteous ness. To the same purpose, chap. 16:15, “Hemeis este hoi dikaiountes heautous enoopian toon enthroonon” — “Ye are they which justify yourselves before men;” they did not make themselves internally righteous, but approved of their own condition, as our Savior declares in the place, chap. 18:14, the publican went down “dedikaioomenos” (justified) unto his house; that is, acquitted, absolved, pardoned, upon the confession of his sin, and supplication for remission. Acts 13:38, 39, with Romans 2:13, “Hoi poietai tou nomou dikaiouthesontai” — “The doers of the law shall be justified.” The place declares directly the nature of our justification before God, and puts the signification of the word out of question; for justification ensues as the whole effect of inherent righteousness according unto the law: and, therefore, it is not the making of us righteous, which is irrefragable. It is spoken of God, Romans 3:4, “Hopoos an dikaiotheis en tois logois sou” — “That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings;” where to ascribe any other sense to the word is blasphemy. In like manner the same word is used, and in the same signification, 1 Corinthians 4:4; 1 Timothy 3:16; Romans 3:20, 26, 28, 30; 4:2, 5; 5:1, 9; 6:7; 8:30; Galatians 2:16, 17; 3:11, 24; 5:4; Titus 3:7; James 2:21, 24, 25; and in no one of these instances can it admit of any other signification, or denote the making of any man righteous by the infusion of a habit or principle of righteousness, or any internal mutation whatever.

It is not, therefore, in many places of Scripture, as Bellarmine grants, that the words we have insisted on do signify the declaration or juridical pronouncement of any one to be righteous; but, in all places where they are used, they are capable of no other but a forensic sense; especially is this evident where mention is made of justification before God. And because, in my judgment, this one consideration does sufficiently defeat all the pretenses of those of the Roman church about the nature of justification, I shall consider what is excepted against the observation insisted on, and remove it out of our way.

Lud. de Blanc, in his reconciliatory endeavors on this article of justification, (“Thes. de Usu et Acceptatione Vocis, Justificandi, ”) grants unto the Papists that the word “dikaio-oo” does, in sundry places of the New Testament, signify to renew, to sanctify, to infuse a habit of holiness

or righteousness, according as they plead. And there is no reason to think but he has grounded that concession on those instances which are most pertinent unto that purpose; neither is it to be expected that a better countenance will be given by any unto this concession than is given it by him. I shall therefore examine all the instances which he insists upon unto this purpose, and leave the determination of the difference unto the judgment of the reader. Only, I shall premise that which I judge not an unreasonable demand, — namely, that if the signification of the word, in any or all the places which he mentions, should seem doubtful unto any (as it does not unto me), that the uncertainty of a very few places should not make us question the proper signification of a word whose sense is determined in so many wherein it is clear and unquestionable. The first place he mentions is that of the apostle Paul himself, Romans 8:30, “moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified”. The reason whereby he pleads that by “justified” in this place, an internal work of inherent holiness in them that are predestinated is designed, is this, and no other: “It is not,” says he, “likely that the holy apostle, in this enumeration of gracious privileges, would omit the mention of our sanctification, by which we are freed from the service of sin, and adorned with true internal holiness and righteousness. But this is utterly omitted, if it be not comprised under the name and title of being justified; for it is absurd with some to refer it unto the head of glorification.”

Ans.

1. The grace of sanctification, whereby our natures are spiritually washed, purified, and endowed with a principle of life, holiness, and obedience unto God, is a privilege unquestionably great and excellent, and without which none can be saved; of the same nature, also, is our redemption by the blood of Christ; and both these does this apostles in other places without number, declare, commend, and insist upon: but that he ought to have introduced the mention of them or either of them in this place, seeing he has not done so, I dare not judge.
2. If our sanctification be included or intended in any of the privileges here expressed, there is none of them, predestination only excepted, but it is

more probably to be reduced unto, than unto that of being justified. Indeed, in vocation it seems to be included expressly. For whereas it is effectual vocation that is intended, wherein a holy principle of spiritual life, or faith itself, is communicated unto us, our sanctification radically, and as the effect in it adequate immediate cause, is contained in it. Hence, we are said to “be called to be saints,” Romans 1:7; which is the same with being “sanctified in Christ Jesus,” 1 Corinthians 1:2. And in many other places is sanctification included in vocation.

3. Whereas our sanctification, in the infusion of a principle of spiritual life, and the acting of it unto an increase in duties of holiness, righteousness, and obedience, is that whereby we are made meet for glory, and is of the same nature essentially with glory itself, whence its advances in us are said to be from “glory to glory,” 2 Corinthians 3:18; and glory itself is called the “grace of life,” 1 Peter 3:7: it is much more properly expressed by our being gloried than by being justified, which is a privilege quite of another nature. However, it is evident that there is no reason why we should depart from the general use and signification of the word, no circumstance in the text compelling us so to do.

The next place that he gives up unto this signification is 1 Corinthians 6:11, “Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.” That by justification here, the infusion of an inherent principle of grace, making us inherently righteous, is intended, he endeavors to prove by three reasons: — 1. “Because justification is here ascribed unto the Holy Ghost: ‘Ye are justified by the Spirit of our God’ But to renew us is the proper work of the Holy Spirit.” 2. “It is manifest,” he says, “that by justification the apostle does signify some change in the Corinthians, whereby they ceased to be what they were before. For they were fornicators and drunkards, such as could not inherit the kingdom of God; but now were changed: which proves a real inherent work of grace to be intended.” 3. “If justification here signify nothing but to be absolved from the punishment of sin, then the reasoning of the apostle will be infirm and frigid: for after he has said that which is greater, as heightening of it, he adds the less; for it is more to be washed than merely to be freed from the punishment of sin.”

Ans.

1. All these reasons prove not that it is the same to be sanctified and to be justified; which must be, if that be the sense of the latter which is here pleaded for. But the apostle makes an express distinction between them, and, as this author observes, proceeds from one to another, by an ascent from the lesser to the greater. And the infusion of a habit or principle of grace, or righteousness evangelical, whereby we are inherently righteous, by which he explains our being justified in this place, is our sanctification, and nothing else. Yea, and sanctification is here distinguished from washing, — “But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified;” so as that it peculiarly in this place denotes positive habits of grace and holiness: neither can he declare the nature of it any way different from what he would have expressed by being justified.

2. Justification is ascribed unto the Spirit of God, as the principal efficient cause of the application of the grace of God and blood of Christ, whereby we are justified, unto our souls and consciences; and he is so also of the operation of that faith whereby we are justified: whence, although we are said to be justified by him, yet it does not follow that our justification consists in the renovation of our natures.

3. The change and mutation that was made in these Corinthians, so far as it was physical, in effects inherent (as such there was), the apostle expressly ascribes unto their washing and sanctification; so that there is no need to suppose this change to be expressed by their being justified. And in the real change asserted — that is, in the renovation of our natures — consists the true entire work and nature of our sanctification. But whereas, by reason of the vicious habits and practices mentioned, they were in a state of condemnation, and such as had no right unto the kingdom of heaven, they were by their justification changed and transferred out of that state into another, wherein they had peace with God, and right unto life eternal.

4. The third reason proceeds upon a mistake, — namely, that to be justified is only to be “freed from the punishment due unto sin;” for it comprises both the non-imputation of sin and the imputation of

righteousness, with the privilege of adoption, and right unto the heavenly inheritance, which are inseparable from it. And although it does not appear that the apostle, in the enumeration of these privileges, did intend a process from the lesser unto the greater; nor is it safe for us to compare the unutterable effects of the grace of God by Christ Jesus, such as sanctification and justification are, and to determine which is greatest and which is least; yet, following the conduct of the Scripture, and the due consideration of the things themselves, we may say that in this life we can be made partakers of no greater mercy or privilege than what consists in our justification. And the reader may see from hence how impossible it is to produce any one place wherein the words “justification”, and “to justify”, do signify a real internal work and physical operation, in that this learned man, a person of more than ordinary perspicacity, candor, and judgment, designing to prove it, insisted on such instances as give so little countenance unto what he pretended. He adds, Titus 3:5-7, “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; that, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” The argument which he alone insists upon to prove that by justification here, an infusion of internal grace is intended, is this: — that the apostle affirming first, that “God saved us, according unto his mercy, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost,” and afterwards affirming that we are “justified by his grace,” he supposes it necessary that we should be regenerate and renewed, that we may be justified; and if so, then our justification contains and comprises our sanctification also.

Ans. The plain truth is, the apostle speaks not one word of the necessity of our sanctification, or regeneration, or renovation by the Holy Ghost, antecedently unto our justification; a supposition whereof contains the whole force of this argument. Indeed he assigns our regeneration, renovation, and justification, all the means of our salvation, all equally unto grace and mercy, in opposition unto any works of our own; which we shall afterwards make use of. Nor is there intimated by him any order of precedency or connection between the things that he mentions, but only between justification and adoption, justification having the priority in

order of nature: “That, being justified by his grace, we should be heirs according to the hope of eternal life.” All the things he mentions are inseparable. No man is regenerate or renewed by the Holy Ghost, but withal he is justified; — no man is justified, but withal he is renewed by the Holy Ghost. And they are all of them equally of sovereign grace in God, in opposition unto any works of righteousness that we have wrought. And we plead for the freedom of God’s grace in sanctification no less than in justification. But that it is necessary that we should be sanctified, that we may be justified before God, who justifies the ungodly, the apostle says not in this place, nor any thing to that purpose; neither yet, if he did so, would it at all prove that the signification of that expression “to be justified,” is “to be sanctified,” or to have inherent holiness and righteousness wrought in us: and these testimonies would not have been produced to prove it, wherein these things are so expressly distinguished, but that there are none to be found of more force or evidence.

The last place wherein he grants this signification of the word “dikaio-oo”, is Revelation 22:11, “Ho dikaios dikaiioothetoo eti” — “Qui justus est, justificetur adhuc”; which place is pleaded by all the Romanists. And our author says they are but few among the Protestants who do not acknowledge that the word cannot be here used in a forensic sense, but that to be justified, is to go on and increase in piety and righteousness.

Ans. But, —

- (1.) There is a great objection lies in the way of any argument from these words, — namely, from the various reading of the place; for many ancient copies read, not “Ho dikaios dikaiioothetoo eti”, which the Vulgar renders “Justificetur adhuc;” but, “Dikaiosunen poiesatoo eti” — “Let him that is righteous work righteousness still,” as does the printed copy which now lies before me. So it was in the copy of the Complutensian edition, which Stephens commends above all others, and in one more ancient copy that he used. So it is in the Syrian and Arabic published by Hutterus, and in our own Polyglot. So Cyprian reads the words, “De bono patientiae; justus autem adhuc justior faciat, similiter et qui

sanctus sanctiora”. And I doubt not but that it is the true reading of the place, “dikaioothetoo” being supplied by some to comply with “hagiasthetoo” that ensues. And this phrase of “dikaiosunen poiein” is peculiar unto this apostle, being nowhere used in the New Testament (nor, it may be, in any other author) but by him. And he uses it expressly, 1 Epist. 2, 29, and chap. 3, 7, where these words, “Ho poioon dikaiosunen, dikaios esti”, do plainly contain what is here expressed.

- (2.) To be justified, as the word is rendered by the Vulgar, “Let him be justified more” (as it must be rendered, if the word “dikaioothetoo” be retained), respects an act of God, which neither in its beginning nor continuation is prescribed unto us as a duty, nor is capable of increase in degrees; as we shall show afterwards.
- (3.) Men are said to be “dikaioi” generally from inherent righteousness; and if the apostle had intended justification in this place, he would not have said “ho dikaios”, but “ho dikaiootheis”. All which things prefer the Complutensian, Syrian, and Arabic, before the Vulgar reading of this place. If the Vulgar reading be retained, no more can be intended but that he who is righteous should so proceed in working righteousness as to secure his justified estate unto himself, and to manifest it before God and the world.

Now, whereas the words “dikaio-oo” and “dikaiousmai” are used thirty-six times in the New Testament, these are all the places whereunto any exception is put in against their forensic signification; and how ineffectual these exceptions are, is evident unto any impartial judge.

Some other considerations may yet be made use of, and pleaded to the same purpose. Such is the opposition that is made between justification and condemnation. So is it, Isaiah 50:8, 9; Proverbs 17:15; Romans 5:16, 18; 8:33, 34; and in sundry other places, as may be observed in the preceding enumeration of them. Wherefore, as condemnation is not the infusing of a habit of wickedness into him that is condemned, nor the making of him to be inherently wicked who was before righteous, but the passing a sentence upon a man with respect unto his wickedness; no more

is justification the change of a person from inherent unrighteousness unto righteousness, by the infusion of a principle of grace, but a sentential declarations of him to be righteous.

Moreover, the thing intended is frequently declared in the Scripture by other equivalent terms, which are absolutely exclusive of any such sense as the infusion of a habit of righteousness; so the apostle expresses it by the “imputation of righteousness without works,” Romans 4:6, 11; and calls it the “blessedness” which we have by the “pardon of sin” and the “covering of iniquity,” in the same place. So it is called “reconciliation with God,” Romans 5:9, 10. To be “justified by the blood of Christ” is the same with being “reconciled by his death”. “Being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath by him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.” See 2 Corinthians 5:20, 21. Reconciliation is not the infusion of a habit of grace, but the effecting of peace and love, by the removal of all enmity and causes of offense. To “save,” and “salvation,” are used to the same purpose. “He shall save his people from their sins,” Matthew 1:21, is the same with “By him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses,” Acts 13:39. That of Galatians 2:16, “We have believed, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law,” is the same with Acts 15:11, “But we believe that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.” Ephesians 2:8, 9, “By grace are ye saved through faith;....and not of works,” is so to be justified. So it is expressed by pardon, or the “remission of sins,” which is the effect of it, Romans 4:5, 6; by “receiving the atonement,” chap. 5:11; not “coming into judgment” or “condemnation,” John 5:24; “blotting out sins and iniquities,” Isaiah 43:26; Psalm 51:9; Isaiah 44:22; Jeremiah 18:23; Acts 3:19; “casting them into the bottom of the sea,” Micah 7:19; and sundry other expressions of an alike importance. The apostle declaring it by its effects, says, “Dikaioi katastathesontai hoi polloi” — “Many shall be made righteous,” Romans 5:19. “Dikaioi kathistatai”, (he is made righteous) who on a juridical trial in open court, is absolved and declared righteous.

And so it may be observed that all things concerning justification are proposed in the Scripture under a juridical scheme, or forensic trial and sentence. As, —

- (1.) A judgment is supposed in it, concerning which the psalmist prays that it may not proceed on the terms of the law, Psalm 143:2.
- (2.) The judge is God himself, Isaiah 50:7, 8; Romans 8:33.
- (3.) The tribunal whereon God sits in judgment, is the “throne of grace,” Hebrews 4:16. “Therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you; and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you; for the LORD is a God of judgment,” Isaiah 30:18.
- (4.) A guilty person. This is the sinner, who is “hupodikos tooi Theooi”, — so guilty of sin as to be obnoxious to the judgment of God; “tooi dikaioomati tou Theou”, Romans 3:19; 1:32, — whose mouth is stopped by conviction.
- (5.) Accusers are ready to propose and promote the charge against the guilty person; — these are the law, John 5:45; and conscience, Romans 2:15; and Satan also, Zechariah 3:1; Revelation 12:10.
- (6.) The charge is admitted and drawn up in a handwriting in form of Law, and is laid before the tribunal of the Judge, in bar, to the deliverance of the offender, Colossians 2:14.
- (7.) A plea is prepared in the gospel for the guilty person; and this is grace, through the blood of Christ, the ransom paid, the atonement made the eternal righteousness brought in by the surety of the covenant, Romans 3:23-25; Daniel 9:24; Ephesians 1:7.
- (8.) Hereunto alone the sinner retakes himself, renouncing all other apologies or defensatives whatever, Psalm 130:2, 3; 143:2; Job 9:2, 3; 42:5-7; Luke 18:13; Romans 3:24, 25; 5:11, 16-19; 8:1-3, 32, 33; Isaiah 53:5, 6; Hebrews 9:13-15; 10:1-13; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 1:7. Other plea for a sinner before God there is none. He who knows God and himself will not provide or retake himself unto any other. Nor will he, as I suppose, trust unto any other defense, were he sure of all the angels in heaven to plead for him.

- (9.) To make this plea effectual, we have an advocate with the Father, and he pleads his own propitiation for us, 1 John 2:1, 2.
- (10.) The sentence hereon is absolution, on the account of the ransom, blood, or sacrifice and righteousness of Christ; with acceptance into favor, as persons approved of God, Job 33:24; Psalm 32:1, 2; Romans 3:23-25; 8:1, 33, 34; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:13, 14.

Of what use the declaration of this process in the justification of a sinner may be, has been in some measure before declared. And if many did seriously consider that all these things do concur, and are required, unto the justification of every one that shall be saved, it may be they would not have such slight thoughts of sin, and the way of deliverance from the guilt of it, as they seem to have. From this consideration did the apostle learn that “terror of the Lord,” which made him so earnest with men to seek after reconciliation, 2 Corinthians 5:10, 11.

I had not so long insisted on the signification of the words in the Scripture, but that a right understanding of it does not only exclude the pretenses of the Romanists about the infusion of a habit of charity from being the formal cause of our justification before God, but may also give occasion unto some to take advice, into what place or consideration they can dispose their own personal, inherent righteousness in their justification before him.