

John Simpson

1615 - 1662

Blood of Christ

The blood of Christ doth, with powerful and undeniable arguments plead for those for whom it was shed. The straying and straggling sheep which are within the reach of God's Eternal Grace cannot be condemned, because "the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." {John 10:11} God knoweth that he hath received satisfaction beforehand for their sins, by the hand of the Lord Jesus, who is not now to pay anything, but hath already made payment for all their debts, and is become the Mediator of the new Covenant of Grace, which is sealed in his own blood; under which covenant upon this consideration there can be no remembrance of sin. {Heb.10:14} God beholding his elect in their Propitiation, which is Christ. John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Everlasting Love of God in Christ

That which I have delivered concerning the Eternal Grace of God, sufficiently confutes that error which is in the spirits of many men, who think that works and actings of the creature is the cause of God's love to the creature. God doth not love us, because we first love him; but we love God, because he first loved us from eternity. God doth not begin to love us, when we are made new creatures; but God loveth us that we may be new creatures. Faith is not the Antecedent cause, but consequent of election. "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." {Tit.3:5} By this passage it is evident, that mercy doth precede regeneration, and is the cause of spiritual renovation. Vocation and justification do follow Predestination, if Paul spake the truth. "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." {Rom.8:30} God loved us when we had no beings in ourselves, or among any creatures to assure us that he did not love us for anything in this, there being nothing at all in us when God first loved us. John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Everlasting Love of God in Christ

God doth not make known his love for the forgiveness of sin, but by Jesus Christ. I confess that we are saved by grace in respect of God, before we know the grace of God in Jesus Christ; but we cannot see this grace, until we behold it in the face of the Lord Jesus. We behold the love of God in giving the Lord Jesus to be the atonement, sacrifice, and propitiation for our sins, before we can read the everlasting love and favor of the Father to us in his Son. Eternal love is the primary cause of our salvation and justification; but it cannot be apprehended by us, until we apprehend in the first place our redemption in Jesus Christ; and when Christ is embraced as a Savior in the arms of faith, we rise higher in our thoughts, by the power of the Spirit, and are brought to look upon the eternity of love; and have liberty to read every line in his eternal volume, which doth concern our eternal life and salvation; and are fully confirmed in the point of God's eternal election, without the prevision of good works, which should be wrought by the creature. As the Apostle doth prove at large in the ninth to the Romans; and if any man will dispute or rather cavil against this truth, I shall say with the Apostle, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" {Rom.9:20,21} And though men, unacquainted with this truth, may account this rather a shift or evasion, than an answer to their carnal objections against election and reprobation, yet I shall not be ashamed of my answer. John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Faith

Many pretend that they look on grace, but it is through the spectacles of their own works; but he that truly doth eye grace, he looks on grace in an act of believing, and not through working. - Believing empties the creature of all works, and righteousness, and shows that he is nothing in himself, and that all his treasure, glory, happiness,

riches, and perfection lies treasured and laid up in Another. Faith bringeth a man in a poor and beggarly condition to Christ, that he may be enriched by Christ. John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Faith & Believing

If men already converted are not able to think a good thought, or to put forth one act of faith of themselves; then men unconverted are not able to believe of themselves before conversion; but men already converted are not able to think one good thought, or to put forth one act of faith of themselves, therefore unconverted men are not able to believe of themselves. There is that strength in the first proposition that I suppose no man pretending to be a scholar in the school of the Spirit will question the truth thereof. For should a man question it, he should by his questioning of it, attribute a greater strength to unconverted than converted men, which is such an absurdity in divinity that I think no spiritual man would be guilty of it. And for the minor, or second proposition, it is backed with such plain authority of Scripture, that it is in vain for any man to deny it. How plainly doth Paul deliver himself in this point, for when speaking of saints he saith, "not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." {II Cor.3:5} What spiritual act is more easy than to think a good thought? It is easier to think well, than to speak well, or do well; for we often think good thoughts that never come out upon the tongue, or appear in the action. Yet Paul is not afraid to profess that the best of us cannot think anything as of ourselves; which may be a sufficient proof of that which followeth in the same proposition, where we say that he cannot put forth one act of faith. In believing our spirits are placed and fixed upon God, and we are filled with high thoughts of his grace in his Son to his glory; and therefore if we cannot think well, certainly we cannot believe well; and that we cannot believe of ourselves after we do believe will be evident by the petition of the apostles, "Lord increase our faith." {Luke 17:5} What necessity was there, that they should have prayed to their Lord for the increasing of their faith, if by their own strength they could have believed when they had so pleased? - Men who have a life in Christ can do nothing of themselves; therefore such who are dead in sins and trespasses can do nothing of themselves, but God must do all in us by his grace. John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Faith & Believing

The work of faith is the work of omnipotency, according to the words of our Savior, "this is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." {Jn.6:29} Therefore if upon examination you do find that you are only persuaded concerning the mysteries of Christ, and the grace of God as you are persuaded of natural things in a natural way, and have not felt the power of heaven in enabling you to believe, your faith is a false faith; for where there is true faith, a man feels the power of God enabling him to believe the testimony that God gives of his Son Jesus Christ. - He that denies this is ignorant of Christ and the Gospel, and is not one who honors Christ, but a minister of Satan and Antichrist, and a deluder of the people. John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Faith the Gift of God

It is the prerogative of God's powerful will to show mercy, by giving faith for salvation to whom he will, and therefore it is not in the power of sinful man, effectually to will his own salvation. "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." {Rom.9:18} "Of his own will begat he us." {James 1:18} God is the God of salvation, and therefore the creature cannot be a Savior to himself. "Save me," saith the Psalmist, "for thy mercy sake." {Ps.31:16} Why should the Psalmist have prayed unto God, to save him, if he had been able to save himself, by working faith in his own heart. We are all sinners, saved by obtaining a psalm of mercy; and it is God that granteth us a psalm of mercy for the saving of our lives, and giveth us learning, by which we are enabled to read it. The will of God is the supreme ruler, and governor in all things; and therefore in this, for the giving of faith unto whom he pleaseth for salvation. Man lies under unbelief many years, when God comes and speaks the Word to command light to shine, then immediately we are enlightened. He created light by the Word of his power, and made the heavens; so by the same omnipotent Word, and power of his, he is pleased to create, and set up new light in the understandings of those whom he intends to save, giving to them the knowledge of the sweetness of his grace and glory in the countenance of Jesus Christ. This is the gift of his irresistible power; for his will and power cannot be resistant. If there were not such an irresistible power in grace, no man could ever be made a partaker of grace; for the strength of the natural man doth fight against grace, and taketh up arms against Jesus Christ; so that if God did not work irresistibly, there would never be wrought the work of grace in the heart of any man. If God shall persuade Japheth, he shall dwell in the tents of Shem. {Gen.9:27} "I will work," saith God, "and who shall let it." {Is.43:13} That is, none shall hinder it. All the devils in hell cannot hinder the work of

faith, when God intendeth to work it. "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." {Acts 13:48} All Christ's sheep shall hear his voice; {Jn.10:16;} and "the gathering of the people" shall be on to Shiloh. {Gen.49:10} God hath determined the thing to be done, before it is done. "Thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth." {Is.25:1} He would be unfaithful, if his determinations should not come to pass. The Apostle saith that the saints, "have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." {Eph.1:11} And if we consider the eternal counsel and determination for giving faith to some particular person, we shall find, that it is impossible, that these men should not believe, in that moment in which God hath appointed to work faith in their heart, and therefore the Apostle doth acquaint us with the immutability of this counsel. {Heb.6:17} And James saith, that with God there is no "variableness, neither shadow of turning." {James 1:17} Wherefore seeing God doth dispense the gifts of his grace unto his people, according to his unalterable decrees, and unchangeable counsels, it will be evident, that he worketh upon men irresistibly. God should err in his prescience or fore-knowledge of things, if you should foresee and determine that a man should believe, and that man at the same time should remain in unbelief. God's decrees are certain, irrevocable, and immutable, and that God working according to these decrees, doth work irresistibly, and therefore faith is his gift, because it proceedeth from his irresistible power according to that of our Apostle; "it is the gift of God." John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

False Professors of Christ

Let us not try our saintship by our large professions of Christ, and subjection to such things which we apprehend to be his ordinances for external worship; but by our new creation. It concerneth every man to be thoroughly assured of his heavenly birth who would make his claim good for heaven and glory; and be assured that he shall escape the damnation of hell. As our Savior said of Judas, that "it had been good for that man if he had not been born;" {Mt.26:24;} so it had been good for us that we had never been born, if we shall live and die professors of the knowledge of God in Christ, and not die possessors of God in Christ by the new creation. Every change or alteration which may be wrought in a man, doth not make him a Son of God by spiritual regeneration. Moral principles may make a great change in a man, and pharisaical principles may make a man seem to be very religious to himself and others; but the pharisaic proselyte is far enough from a true convert. "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." {Mt.5:20} We may walk far in the way of the Law, and performance of duties, to make ourselves new creatures, and the sons of God by our own righteousness and legal reformation, and may at last stumble at Christ, and never come to know what it is to be born of God. A man may take a long walk in the path of the Gospel, and may after a sort escape the pollutions of the world by Gospel principles and may even taste of the powers of the world to come and in conclusion may sit down short of the new creation here, and glory hereafter. {II Pet.2:20} Never truly knowing what it is to have the Spirit in him, and himself in the Spirit; God in him, and himself in God; Christ and him, and himself in Christ. John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Free & Sovereign Grace

That faith therefore cannot be true which proceeds from a natural heart; and that comfort cannot be sound which springs from such a faith. This may confute the doctrine of Papists, Arminians, and Popish Protestants that conceive that a man is able to do something to the furtherance of his own justification and salvation. This that hath been delivered, being seriously weighed in our spirits, is sufficient to overthrow this lying doctrine, which would attribute anything to man, or to the strength, wisdom, understanding, will or affections of the natural man in point of conversion, justification and spiritual renovation. Whosoever shall pull down the doctrine of free grace by exalting man's free will is deceived with an heretical spirit. And who will suffer himself to be so far blinded, as not to see that magnifiers of free will do overthrow the doctrine of God's grace and mercy, which Paul preached; when they shall hear him plainly concluding against all the free-willers in the world, "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." {Rom.9:16} The free grace and mercy which the Scripture acquainteth us with is inconsistent with man's free will to do good of himself. As Dagan was tumbled down when the ark, which was a type of Christ, and God's grace in him, was brought into the place where Dagan was set up, so when God's grace by the power of the Spirit appeareth, it tumbleth down, and overthroweth the daganish conceits and idolatrous apprehensions which men of the strength which is in of themselves delight themselves with. The spirits of men truly persuaded of the strength of grace, and their own weakness, disclaim their own strength and self-confidence; and cry out with those in the Prophet, "turn thou us unto thee, O LORD, and we shall be turned." {Lam.5:21} John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Godliness

If thou by the lively operation of the Spirit hath seen the glory, grace, beauty and holiness in Christ for thy justification, thy spirit will be so enamored with the beauty of holiness and perfection in Christ, thou will desire to see the image, and picture of holiness and perfection which is in Christ to be drawn forth upon thine own heart and spirit. John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Gospel Ordinances & Justification

We are not saved by works in which we yield obedience to any Gospel ordinances, though they be ordinances appointed by the Lord Jesus Christ himself to be practiced by the Saints. I take in this, because I have found in my own spirit, and in many that I have dealt with, a secret and subtle kind of Popery in which we are apt to attribute something to the practice of ordinances in reference to our justification. And hence it is that people are so ready to run into every new way of worship, which is brought to light, thinking that unless they find out the right discipline, and government of Jesus Christ, the right baptism and ordinances, that they are not true Saints, nor sufficiently justified. As we are not justified by more inward and spiritual works; so neither are we justified by an outward observation of ordinances, or submitting to any command of the Lord Jesus Christ, but only by our obedience to the first and principal command of the Gospel, by which we believe justification by grace through Christ without works. John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Gospel Ordinances & Justification

We are not justified by the practice of any Gospel ordinances, which are commanded by the Lord Jesus Christ. There are some, who it may be, are convinced that they are not justified by works, yet I know not what new kind of Popery they have found out; for they think to please God by submitting to ordinances, and finding out the true discipline and government of Christ's Church; therefore you shall find a kind of spirit of bondage in them, if they be not satisfied concerning the true discipline, government and ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ. - Salvation is not in these, there is nothing to be found in these available to justification. Forms of government and ordinances do not make men Christians, but a lively faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. - Presbytery {all government} is nothing; Independency is nothing; dipping is nothing; but faith which worketh by love. The Apostle clearly proves this point, "for I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." {Gal.5:3,4} His meaning is this; that if a man submit to circumcision, as thinking it will any whit avail him to his justification and salvation, that man shall not be saved by Jesus Christ, but he is a debtor to the whole Law; he is not under grace, but under the curse of the Law. John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Gospel Ordinances & Justification

If any man to satisfy his conscience, desire one to dip him or join himself as a member to any Congregation, thinking by pleasing God and Christ to further his salvation in this way, he is a stranger to Christ, and unacquainted with the true Gospel. - Therefore if any man say unto you that you must be baptized or you cannot be saved, 'I cannot look unto you as a saint, except you be baptized; you must be members of the Church, or else you cannot be members of Christ, I cannot acknowledge you as a brother;' rather pity their ignorance than yield to their exhortations. What a sad thing is it for men to place saintship and religion in these things when the Scripture plainly and punctually in this respect overthroweth them? "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." {Rom.14:17} John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Gospel Ordinances & Justification

What abominable Popery is it to say that a man cannot be a saint if he does not submit to outward ordinances. I cannot but commend what I find in Luther, who was zealously carried forth against some in his time that made a rent from him in a legal way, because they differed from him about external things and ordinances, which are no just ground why Saints should divide themselves from one another. Luther said that they had brought in another kind of Popery, and more dangerous than that which he had overthrown by his preaching; for as for gross Popery, saith he, "men's eyes began to be enlightened to see the absurdities of it. But these men come in a subtle way,

and pretending a necessity of submitting to forms, institutions and ordinances do pervert the pure and simple Gospel of Christ, laboring to persuade men that if they do not submit to the ordinances of the Lord Jesus, he would not acknowledge and confess them before his Father." Therefore we are to be rightly informed concerning these things, and if we do submit to outward ordinances, we should not do it from legal principles, for it were better not to practice them, than to practice them from these principles, to the ruining of our souls. And they that draw disciples after them by such rigid and Gospel destroying principles, will find to their shame, that those that they have brought in by these principles will fall away from them to their shame and infamy. For God is dishonored, Christ is robbed of his grace, and the Spirit loses his glory. John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Gospel Ordinances & Justification

We may observe that such professors who are not acquainted with the true Gospel are unsettled in their spirits, when they doubt which is the true government, or external ordinances of the Lord Jesus. If they doubt whether they are baptized in a right way, or manner, they doubt whether they are justified; their comforts and assurance do vanish away, when they are not fully assured, that they know and are obedient unto all the commandments of the Lord Jesus. The cause of this legality in their spirits is because they do not see salvation firmly settled upon Christ. The spiritual man beholdeth justifying grace in believing, without his obedience to commands for external worship, and good works; and doth live joyfully and comfortably in the sight of his justification, though he knoweth that it is possible, that he may be ignorant of many things which other Christians may have the knowledge of; and in these days of darkness, contention, confusion and disorder, what man can have solid and lasting joy who is ignorant of Free Grace for Justification? If it were necessary to the assurance of justification to know whether the Episcopal, Presbyterian or Independent Government of the church were the Ordinance of the Lord Jesus; whether sprinkling of children, or dipping of professing believers were the institution of Christ in the labyrinth of the controversies of our times; how few would attain to an assurance of their justification? How would poor creatures be perplexed, and disquieted in their consciences; not certainly knowing in which of these ways they should walk for their justification and salvation. But that the promise might be sure to all the seed. {Rom.4:16} To those, who lived in the times of the Law, as well as to those, who live in these times of the Gospel, salvation is promised not to workers but believers, to all true believers in all ages, and places; to us who live in the time of the Babylonian apostasy, as well as to those who were hearers of the apostles, and members of those Congregations which were gathered and governed by them. John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Gospel Ordinances & Justification

Justification doth not lie in our obedience to the ordinances of Jesus Christ, but in Jesus Christ. We are not made Saints by being made members of any Church or Congregation but by faith in the Head of the Church. Woe to him that maketh his obedience and submission to any ordinance the ground of his comfort, as to many zealous formalists do, who run from congregation to congregation, from one ordinance to another, to get solid comfort to their souls, apprehending that they are undone creatures, and cannot be true Saints, unless they be under the true practice of all ordinances; whereas it is a plain truth, revealed in the Gospel of truth, that neither submitting to an ordinance can make one a true Saints, nor the want of ordinances un-saint any man that is made one with Christ. "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." {Rom.2:28,29} So he is a true saint, who is not necessarily a visible member of a congregation, but he whose life of faith is hidden in Jesus Christ. He is baptized, not whose body is washed with water, but whose soul is washed in the blood of Christ. {I Pet.3:21} He is a good communicant, and breaks bread, who doth not break bread outwardly, but by faith doth inwardly feed upon the Bread of Life. We are not justified by works of the Law done before or after justification, nor by yielding obedience to any command concerning outward ordinances, but by our submitting in our judgments to the truth of God's grace in Jesus Christ for justification without these. I would not here be mistaken, as though I did speak against any Saints, or any who are spiritual and faithful in the observation of any external ordinances; but against zealous formalists, who do make saintship and fellowship to depend upon these things, and are not spiritually acquainted with the truth of God's grace, but are perverters of the Gospel. John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Incommunicable Prerogative of God's Grace in Christ

Nothing in man doth precede or prevent the grace of God. The light and beams of grace do dispel the clouds of our sins. Not for our sakes, but for his Name's sake he covereth our sins. It is God's prerogative to free us from sin by

grace, and to remove them far from us. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." {Ps.103:12} He only can remove sin against whom it is committed. He only can cast sin into the depths of the sea, who hath an ocean of grace in himself, in which he swalloweth them up. Micah is spiritually transported beyond himself in admiring this incommunicable prerogative of the God of Grace. "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage &c.;" {Micah 7:18;} and who can think that he will part with this privilege, which is his delight? For so it followeth in the same verse, "he retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in mercy." John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Irresistible Grace of God

Free will is not free, but a slave; for there is not freedom, but slavery in it. It is not free to do good, unless it be freed from sin by grace. If man in the state of integrity could not stand of himself, how shall he of himself in his state of corruption be able to rise now that he is fallen; unless God come down with a mighty power and force us against our natural will to receive Christ we shall never be made partakers of Christ. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and I will raise him up at the last day." {John 6:44} When a man is drawn, he is drawn against his will. I need not draw a man that is willing to come after me. If we were willing to go after God in our conversion, we should stand in need of no drawing; but we see that God must compel us to come into Christ, or else we will never come in unto him, nor submit unto his will. John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Justification Truth

This is a doctrine which if it were preached unto us every day, we should forget it every day. The daily teaching and hourly learning of it cannot wholly free us from the ignorance of this truth. But as far as we are carnal and fleshly, we are strangers to the knowledge thereof. So that he that thinks he perfectly knows the doctrine of justification, I dare profess to that man, that he knows nothing of this doctrine of justification as he ought to know. As long as we live upon the earth, we may be learners of this doctrine. Paul after he had been a scholar, and an aged teacher in the school of Christ many years, did then profess, that he endeavored to forget his own works, and legal righteousness in reference to his justification, and pressed forward to know more of the mystery of Christ, laboring to be found in the righteousness which is of God by faith. {Phil.3:10} John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Law & Gospel Distinctions

A man must see his good works, as done either under the Law, or under the Gospel, and look upon them, either in the glass of the Law, or the glass of the Gospel. If a man look upon them in the glass of the Law, and do rightly and spiritually understand the Law, he shall be so far from drawing an assurance of his justification from them, that he shall behold himself cursed and damned, with all his good works. For the Law curseth every man that continueth not in the doing of all things which are commanded by God. It is indeed a divine looking glass, in which things to be done or avoided are discovered; but it will sentence us to death for the least spot or wrinkle which it doth discover; so that it is impossible, that a man should see himself justified in the glass of the Law. But thou will say, he may indeed look upon his love, sincerity and works in the glass of the Gospel. And to this I answer, that if he look upon them in the glass of the Gospel which is Jesus Christ, then he must put himself under the Gospel, and look upon himself as a man in Christ, that so he may see his works good by Jesus Christ alone; which he will never be able to see without the eye of faith, which seeth things invisible, Heb.11:1, and by which we look upon Christ, I John 2:1, dwell in Christ, Eph.3:17, live in Christ, Gal.2:19, and do living works acceptable to God by the life of Christ in us. Heb.11:4. By faith we "with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord;" {II Cor.3:18;} and see that our good works are the effects of Christ's love, discovered in himself and in his Gospel to our souls; and therefore when John doth inform us, that we shall know that we know him, if we keep his commandment; he doth propose believing as the first commandment of God, without which we cannot assure ourselves that we are obedient to his other commands. "This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ." {I John 3:23} Good works after a man hath faith are not the cause of justification, but the consequent; they follow a man's justification; they do not precede the act of justification, they neither precede the act of God's grace, by which he justifieth a sinner, neither do they precede justification in the court of conscience; but being justified by faith, we have peace, {Rom.5:1,} in our conscience. - Thus; if any man that is justified look on his works and does not

behold them in the glass of the Gospel, he shall read his own condemnation for his works. John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Law and Gospel Distinctions

God promised to meet his people at the mercy seat; {"And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel." Ex.25:21,22;} which was a type of Christ, and we can never meet with God to the salvation of our souls but by meeting with this grace in the Lord Jesus. The Law is the ministry of death; it is the Gospel of grace which is the ministry of life and salvation. Look therefore beyond the Law, which is a ministry of condemnation, beyond thine own righteousness, which is impurity to the eye of Justice, beholding thee under the Law, beyond thyself, who art an object of misery, horror and confusion, and by a spiritual eye of God's own making behold his grace in Christ for lost and undone sinners. John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Law and Gospel Distinctions

The Law may be considered as delivered in Sinai and Zion, "Which things are an allegory; for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar." {Gal.4:24} As the covenant of Sinai, or as a part of the covenant of Zion. "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem." {Isa.2:3} As delivered by the hand of Moses or by the hand of Christ. And though this distinction hath been branded by some of the learned teachers of our times in their pulpits and presses, with the infamous mark of antinomianism, yet I do not doubt, but that I shall easily prove it to be a Scripture distinction. This is the meaning of that speech of John, "for the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." {John 1:17} By Moses; that is, by the hand of Moses; as it is plain by Leviticus 26:46; "These are the statutes and judgments and laws, which the LORD made between him and the children of Israel in mount Sinai by the hand of Moses." So grace and truth is given by the hand of Jesus Christ. Christ is called the Mediator of the better covenant; {Heb.8:6;} and as he is the Mediator of this better covenant, he doth give the Law to the Saints by his hand in this Covenant. The Law is translated from Moses to Christ, out of the hand of Moses, into the hand of Christ, the true Mediator; as the priesthood is translated from Aaron to Christ. - The Law as it was in the hand of Moses, is now abrogated to believers by Christ; but as it is in the hand of Christ, it is confirmed and established. - The Law as delivered by Moses is not the rule by which a believing Christian doth walk, but as it is delivered unto him in the Covenant of Grace by the hand of the Lord Jesus. - The Apostle doth frequently distinguish between the righteousness of the Law, and the Law to the Righteousness of Grace, and the Covenant of Grace; which he could not do if the Law were a covenant of grace. "Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them; but the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise &c." {Rom.10:5,6} Observe the Apostle's words well; the Gospel righteousness is the righteousness of faith; he doth not say that the Law requireth doing and working for justification, according to the false glosses, and interpretations of the Pharisees, as some writers of late with the papists of old have asserted. John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Law and Gospel Distinctions

Though I deny the Law to be a rule as it was delivered in the letter upon Mount Sinai, yet I do not deny the matter and substance of it in the spirit, as it is delivered unto us by the Mighty Counselor, and Great Lawgiver, our Lord Jesus Christ. "For the LORD is our judge, the LORD is our lawgiver, the LORD is our King; he will save us." {Is.33:22} - I acknowledge with Paul, that in the mind I myself do serve the Law of God, not only by believing in the grace of God through Christ for justification; but by loving God and my brother by a sanctifying work of the Spirit of grace within me. I confess that the Law is old for the matter and substance thereof, as it commandeth love to God and our neighbor; and yet it is new in us and to us, as it is delivered in the covenant of the Gospel. "Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you; because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth." {I John 2:7,8} This Law written or preached may be called the external rule of the Spirit, as the Law of the Spirit within is the internal and powerful rule. The Law of the Spirit in the substance thereof, is nothing else but the will of God, but imprinted in the vivified hearts by the Spirit of God, by which we do not only truly know God, and piety

and equity; but we are so moved to serve Him, to trust in Him, to love Him, to worship and adore Him, and to love and serve our neighbor, and to mortify ourselves, and to bear valiantly all persecutions for God, and to lead a life in Christ, that we willingly run to the doing of these things. John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Law and Gospel Distinctions

When justification is preached and an experienced servant of Christ knowing that men naturally seek righteousness by the Law, and the works of the Law; it is necessary for the ministers of the Gospel to persuade their hearers, not to look to the Law for justification, but to the grace of God in Jesus Christ. John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Preservation in Christ

Take heed that thou dost not embrace the doctrines of free will and falling away from grace; for that man will not stand long, who hath no strength but his own legs to uphold him. Neither will that man stand long for Christ, who stands more by the strength of his own will, than by the power of God's grace. Adam standing in his own strength lost his happiness when he was wise and holy, and canst thou maintain thyself in an happy condition by thine own strength, when thou art unrighteous? True Saints are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. {I Pet.1:5} The word signifies a keeping of anything as by a guard. God's grace is a guard, by which he doth keep all his, in the way of salvation, so that it is impossible they should fall away from his grace. John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Salvation by Grace Alone

We are saved by grace in the purpose of God, from eternity in the eye and sight of God who seeth all things absent as if they were present, and speaks of things before they are done, as if they were done. Grace in Scripture is considered, not only as it is in God, and as it is as eternal as God himself; but the Scripture speaks of the grace of God, as it is manifested forth to us in Jesus Christ; and so we are saved by grace, God discovering his grace to us in his Son Jesus Christ. So the Apostle speaking of grace saith, "but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." {II Tim.1:10} He speaks first of grace, as it is in God, and as it is as eternal as God himself; then he speaks of eternal grace, manifested to us in the Gospel of his dear Son. It is by the preaching of the Gospel that the eternal grace of the Father in the Son is made known to us; and this grace is called sometimes the grace of God the Father; sometimes it is called the grace of Jesus Christ; and sometimes the grace of them both, because Jesus Christ is God, one God, in one divine essence with his Father. - This grace in Scripture is made known unto us as the sole cause of our justification and salvation. Grace is so held forth for justification that all things besides grace are excluded. We are justified by grace exclusively; all other things being shut out. When God justifieth a man, he eyes that man only in his own grace; and when God justifieth a man in the court of his own conscience, he strips him of all his own works, of his own love to him, and to the brethren; and gives him only a sight of divine grace. - If we look upon grace as it is in God; so, before God we were saved in his eternal thoughts; he in his own purpose and grace, having elected us to justification and eternal salvation in glory by his Son Jesus Christ. Yet he never holds forth his grace to us, but in the countenance of his Son Jesus Christ; in whom the glory of his justice shines bright, with the glory of his grace. He shows us that he hath laid all our sins on his Son; that his justice hath received full satisfaction from the sufferings of his Son for all our sins, and so comes to discover his grace to us in the pardon and forgiveness of our sins. John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Salvation by Grace Alone

As Noah was preserved from the destruction which came upon the old world by going for his safety into the Ark, so by the foot of faith we walk into our Ark, Christ Jesus, for the salvation of our souls. The world of sin is a dismal wilderness, full of fiery serpents, by faith we eye Jesus Christ, as our brazen Serpent, and set footing in the heavenly Canaan of God's free grace, while this sinful Sodom of the world is destroyed with the rain of fire and brimstone; by faith like righteous Lot, we escape out of it. When with Peter, we are ready to sink and perish in the sea of sin, by faith we touch the saving arm of the Lord Jesus, and are preserved when we drink the deadly poison of sin; for by faith we take in Jesus Christ as our Antidote, and the deadly poison doth not hurt us, but we are miraculously preserved. Faith beholdeth Christ crucified before us, {Gal.3:1,} and evidently set forth, who hath

nailed the Law of works, our sin and death to his own cross, and we who deserve damnation are saved through grace. John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Salvation by Grace Alone

It is grace, and grace alone which bringeth salvation; {Tit.2:11;} and therefore not our works. Grace and works are inconsistent in this point of justification; they can no more stand together than the ark of God and Dagon. Let Grace stand up in its glory and works will quickly be overthrown; and set up works, and you destroy the doctrine of grace. By eternal grace we were elected and made vessels of mercy from eternity; by grace we are saved before God in heaven in the presence of the Lord Jesus; by grace we were saved in the person of Christ before faith. By the revelation of grace on to us through faith we are saved in the court of our own consciences. By grace salvation is begun here, and completed, and perfected hereafter. "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." {Rom.6:23} John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Sin and its Removal by Christ

If God look upon the hand writing against us; doth he not see the bills canceled with the precious blood of his Son and our Surety; which for matter of guilt, defilement and punishment is sufficient to expunge, cover, nullify, abolish and wholly to take away our sins in such sort, that he neither sees, will see, nor can see them as sins, and debts, bearing action against us, obliging us to any penalty. I might heap up places out of the books of the faithful which have subscribed to the same truth, in the same or the like words; as there is no phrase so commonly used by Luther in his Commentary upon the Galatians as this; that God seeth no sin in his children; but because the testimony of man to truth is of no authority with myself, considering that we should not consider so much who it is that speaketh, as what is spoken. Therefore I shall not burden the page with quotations out of writers; but shall rather present unto you some grounds from Scripture; by which it will appear that in a Scripture sense God may be said to see no sin in his children. Arg.1. Christ hath redeemed us from all iniquity, Tit.2:14, and therefore God seeth no sin in us, from which we are not redeemed. Arg.2. God hath forgiven us through Christ all our trespasses, Col.2:13, and therefore there is no trespass in us which God can see as not forgiven. Eph.4:23. Arg.3. He hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, Rev.1:5, and therefore can see no sin in us from which we are not washed. When spots are washed out of a cloth, they do not remain in it still. God hath washed away the spots of our souls, and therefore they do not still remain upon our souls. Arg.4. Christ is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, John 1:29, and therefore God doth not see any sin which is not taken away. Arg.5. Christ hath made an end of our sins, Dan.9:24, and therefore God in this respect doth not any longer see them. Arg.6. God hath removed sin as far from us as the East is from the West, Psal.103:12, and therefore he doth not see them, or us as unjustified from them. Arg.7. God hath blotted them out of his debt book, Is.43:25, and therefore he doth not see them as chargeable upon us. "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Arg.8. God is pacified towards us for all that we have done, Ezek.16:63, and therefore he doth not see sin in us. Arg.9. God by his Son hath removed the iniquity of his people in one day, Zech.3:9, and therefore he doth not see them as not removed away. Arg.10. Christ Jesus doth save his people from their sins, Mt.1:21, and therefore God doth not see any sin in them, from which they are not saved. Arg.11. All that believe in Him are justified from all things, Acts 13:39, and therefore God doth not see any sin in them from which they are not justified. Arg.12. God hath covered the sins of his people, Rom.4:7, and therefore God doth not see them. Arg.13. Believers are not in their sins, I Cor.15:17, and therefore God doth not see them as yet in their sins. Arg.14. Christ is made unto us of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, I Cor.1:30, and therefore God doth not see sin in us. Arg.15. Christ is made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, II Cor.5:21, and therefore God doth not see sin in us. Arg.16. Christ hath given himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God, and our Father, Gal.1:4, and therefore the Father doth not see sin in us. Arg.17. We are holy, unblamable and unreprouvable in the sight of God, Col.1:22, and therefore he seeth no sin in us. Arg.18. The conscience is purged from sin by the blood of Christ to serve the living God, Heb.9:14, and therefore God doth not see sin in us. Arg.19. Christ hath borne our sins, I Pet.2:24, and therefore God doth not see them upon us, but knoweth where he hath laid them. {Is.53:6} Arg.20. We have an answer of a good conscience by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, I Pet.3:21, and therefore God doth not see sin in us; for a conscience guilty of sin is an evil conscience. Arg.21. Nothing can be laid to our charge, Rom.8:33, and therefore God seeth no sin as chargeable upon us, or to be imputed to us. Arg.22. He that doth deny this, doth in essence deny the coming of Christ, and is an antichrist. For "he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin." I Jn.3:5. For these and many other reasons which might be produced, it may be truly said, that God seeth no sin in his justified people; and therefore Christ speaking

of his justified Church saith, "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee." {Song 4:7} Also, "the King's daughter is all glorious within; her clothing is of wrought gold." {Ps.45:13} Though I affirm all this concerning God's not seeing sin in his children; yet I do not deny but that in a sense God may indeed be said to see sin in his justified children. God, though he seeth us perfectly justified from all sin, yet he seeth and knoweth that we are not perfectly sanctified; and in this respect he may be said to see sin in us; and I do apprehend it to be a gross error, and destructive to the power of godliness, to maintain that God in no sense may be said to see sin and his people. It is by the light of the Spirit, that we do behold the sin which is in our flesh, when we do believe that all our sins are pardoned, and not seen by God in reference to our justification; and therefore it is contrary to spiritual reason, Scripture, and the experience of all those that are truly faithful to assert, that God in no sense may be said to see sin in his justified children. Arg.1. If God did not see sin in any sense, he could not help us against our sins, lusts, and corruptions, against which we go unto Him in the name of Christ for strength; but he doth give us help against particular lusts and corruptions {as true Saints have found, and do find by experience;} and therefore in a sense he may be said to see sin in us. Arg.2. His Spirit doth mortify sin in us, and what an absurd thing it is for a man to affirm that God in no sense may be said to see that sin, which he doth mortify in us by his own Spirit? Arg.3. Saints may grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby they are sealed unto the day of redemption, Eph.4:30, and therefore in a sense God may be said to see sin in them; for how can we imagine that the Spirit of God in a saint should be grieved by sin; and yet that God should not see it? Arg.4. God doth inwardly check us in the spirit for many frailties and infirmities, which will sufficiently evidence the thing to every man, who will not be captivated to error in his understanding; that God in a sense may be said to see sin. Though God doth not rebuke us in wrath as an enemy; yet he doth rebuke us in love for walking unworthy of his grace and favor in Christ Jesus. Arg.5. God doth work in us evangelical sorrow, and humiliation for sins which we do commit after our justification through faith; and therefore it is evident that he seeth and knoweth the sins which we commit after our justification. Arg.6. God doth chastise his justified children for their profit, that they may be partakers of his righteousness, Heb.12:10, and therefore it must be granted, that God in a sense doth see sin in them. Arg.7. The flesh lusteth against the spirit in God's justified children, Gal.5:17, which is a sufficient demonstration of God's seeing of sin in a sense in his justified children. And by this you may perceive, that by making use of distinctions grounded upon plain Scripture, it is warrantable to say that God doth see sin in his children, and that he doth not see sin in his children; which if it be well weighed, may teach us not to censure our brethren in such points and controversies, until we have received their tenants from themselves; which if it had been granted unto me, it might have prevented many reproaches which I have lain under, and prevented many sins in those who have rashly censored me. John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Spiritual Truth Discerned

Take heed of spiritual pride; for one reason why so many falloff from the truth of Holy Scripture to various horrid opinions, is from a principal of spiritual pride. Some of these thought that they had a great deal of knowledge, wisdom, and understanding, and that they understood as much of the Doctrine of Christ, and mysteries of the Gospel as was necessary; that they had heard as much of the doctrine of justification as any could preach of it, and of the resurrection, as they could speak. They knew as they supposed what this man spake, and what the other preached; what this man's judgment was, what these authors did write, and they knew perfectly as they imagined whatsoever lies in the Scripture to be embraced for truth; and by their pride did forfeit of their knowledge, supposing that they knew all points of the Gospel, when indeed and in truth, they knew nothing of the Gospel savingly, spiritually or practically; so that as the people of Israel came to loath Manna, and lusted after other food; so these being puffed up with spiritual pride, begin to loath the Heavenly Manna of the Gospel, and disesteem it for the plainness and simplicity that is in it. And nothing now will please them, but new fancies; therefore they must have sermons dressed in another fashion, new cooked, new notions, and other conceits; and anything that is new, pleasing them better than the old and ancient truths of the Lord Jesus Christ. But when God teaches a man to understand the Gospel aright, the more he knows the Gospel, the more he feels his ignorance of the Gospel. John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Union with Christ

There being such a glorious union between us and Christ, it should engage the spirit of saints to be much in the contemplation thereof. As the blood and spirits do run through the body, so this doctrine of Union doth run through the whole body of Christian Religion. Our justification in the Person of Christ, and our own justification in our own persons by Christ cannot be clearly understood, if we be totally ignorant of union with Christ. As the philosopher saith, that all moral virtues are linked together in justice, so all the points of Christianity are concatenated and

joined together in this doctrine of union. As the star did lead the wise men to Christ, shining over the place where Christ was, so this doctrine of our union with Christ, shining among other truths of Christ in the Scripture, doth hold forth unto us a light to direct us through the grace of God, into a perfect and comfortable knowledge of all other truths. John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Union with Christ & the Resurrection

If thou look upon thyself, and thy body, and consider how thou hast dishonored God in thy body; it may be thou art startled in thy spirit; and have such sad thoughts as these: Will Christ ever raise this body as his that I have abused to sin? Shall this body be glorified which I have dishonored by base and filthy lusts? But when thou hast any such thoughts as these, in which the devil appears to thee as an angel of light, to make thee question the truth of the glorious Resurrection of thy body, then look beyond thyself, beyond the sins that thou hast committed against God in thy body and spirit; and think thus with thyself: This body, though I have abused it by lust and intemperance; though I have dishonored God by the sins which I have committed, and acted as it were upon a stage in this body, and flesh of mine; yet now the property is altered. I am not now to look on it as my body, I am to look at it as the body of the Lord Jesus; it is that body, that he hath washed from all sin in his own blood; it is that body, that he died for, that he might cleanse it from filthiness, and uncleanness; it is his body, he hath all right to it, and a property in it; it is His, and none of mine. Christ will not lose that which belongs to Himself and therefore it shall be raised in glory. We see how unwilling men are to part with that which is their possession, and inheritance. We know how Naboth answered Ahab, who would have had his vineyard. "Should I give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee." {I Kings 21:3} We are the inheritance, the possession of the Lord Jesus; and he will not lose any part of his inheritance. This argument is of sufficient strength to silence carnal reason, if it were thoroughly weighed by us in the balance of the sanctuary. For if a man look on himself as out, of himself, and the being which he hath in the first Adam; and behold himself as one with the Lord Jesus, in a spiritual oneness, seeing himself as such a part of Christ, as a hand, or a foot may be said to be part of the body; and knowing Christ hath undertaken to provide for his body, and to own it for his own; this will establish him in an unshaken confidence, that the Lord Jesus Christ intends to raise his body, and to assure and ascertain us that he will raise us, as he Himself is risen in his own person. John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}

Union with Christ & the Resurrection

This truth concerning the union of Christ with his Church may strengthen the faith of every one of us concerning the certainty of the resurrection. What saith the Apostle? "For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church." {Eph.5:29} The Lord Jesus Christ cannot hate his own flesh; nor forget his own body, the bodies of the saints, but in the love will raise them; for even while they lie in the dust they are his body. Our property in a thing doth draw out our affection to the thing. Our bodies belong to the Lord, and are in his heart and affections, even while they molder in the dust; therefore let this truth pierce your understandings, and sink deep into your memories, and be fully persuaded that your bodies shall be raised, because they are not so much your bodies as the body of the Lord Jesus. The Scripture speaks so gloriously of that union which all the saints have with Jesus Christ in that one Spirit which is in Christ and every saint, that it seems to hold forth Christ as incomplete, till he hath gathered all his members into one body. And certainly, Christ will not appear incomplete in his body at the resurrection, which he should do, should he not by his power command the bodies of the saints to come out of the Earth. Therefore he will not suffer any part of himself to lie in the dust; he will not appear at the general resurrection, without a limb, not without a hand, not without a finger, nor without the least member. – The king when he rides in triumph, or to his great counsel; he rides in his royal robes and in all his glory. When Christ shall appear the second time, he will ride in triumph, as a Conqueror of all enemies, and will ride to his great counsel or Parliament of Saints, who are to judge the delinquents of the world. And the saints are his glory, and therefore they must be raised that he may be in his full glory. John Simpson {Perfection of Justification, 1648}