

parable objections both from reason and from Scripture. But the collective merit and moral effects of all which the Mediator did and suffered are so reckoned to our account when we are justified, that, for the sake of Christ and in consideration of his obedience unto death, we are released from guilt, and accepted of God. From this statement of the meritorious cause of justification, it appears that while our pardon is, in its origin, an act of the highest grace, it is also, in its mode, an act most perfectly consistent with God's essential righteousness, and demonstrative of his inviolable justice. It proceeds not on the principle of abolishing the law or its penalty; for that would have implied that the law was unduly rigorous, either in its precepts or in its sanctions. But it rests on the ground that the law has been magnified and vindicated, and that its penalty, or sufferings, which were fully equivalent to that penalty in a moral view, when the dignity of the sufferer is considered, have been sustained by our voluntary substitute. Thus "grace reigns *through* righteousness," not at the expense of righteousness. Now, the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. iii. 21—26. (3) As to the instrumental cause of justification, the merit of the blood of Jesus does not operate necessarily so as to produce our pardon as an immediate and unavoidable effect, but through the instrumentality of faith. The faith by which we are justified is present faith, faith actually existing and exercised. We are not justified by to-morrow's faith foreseen; for that would lead to the Antinomian notion of justification from eternity, a notion which to mention is to confute. We are not justified by yesterday's faith recorded or remembered; for that would imply the opinion that justification is irreversible. The justification offered in the Scriptures is a justification upon believing, in which we are never savingly interested until we believe, and which continues in force only so long as we continue to believe. On all unbelievers the wrath of God abides. The atonement of Jesus was indeed accepted, as from him, at the time when it was offered; but it is not accepted, as from us, to our individual justification, until we individually believe, nor after we cease to believe.—The OBJECT of justifying faith may be inferred from what has been before said, as to the originating and meritorious causes of justification. It has respect, in general, to all that Christ is set forth in the gospel, as doing or suffering, by the gracious appointment of the Father, in order to our redemption and pardon. But it has respect, in particular, to the atoning sacrifice of