

Ver. 30, (second clause). "And whom he called them he also justified."

Having appointed and called them to suffer, God justifies them in regarding this call as coming from Divine love; and in exercising, accordingly, patient and joyful hope, in the midst of tribulation.

As this justification has relation to the preceding call, and as this call was an invitation to them that love God, to submit to appointed or permitted sufferings, with the mind that was in Jesus as a sufferer; therefore, the justification that refers to this call, cannot be the justification of the ungodly who believe for pardon and regeneration. It must be the justification of the godly, who willingly obey the call to suffer as Christians; not gloomily, as if they were called to do penance, but cheerfully, as those who are promoting their present good, and heightening their future glory.

But what justification do they need? And how do they come to need it? The answer to these questions will be apparent, when we advert to the common, though strange fact, that men are disposed to give calumnious explanations, of the sufferings of the children of God. Where has it not been thought or said, that this or that professor of religion cannot have genuine piety, seeing that the one has such severe and long continued illness, and that such heavy calamities have passed successively over the other? So it was in the case of Job. Simply because of his sudden worldly losses, his family bereavements, his loathsome and terrible disease, it is judged, even by his friends, that notwithstanding all his high profession, he is in nothing better than a hypocrite. And, after seven days of amazed and upbraiding silence, they harshly utter stern accusations against him, as one guilty of dreadful, if not unpardonable, sins, which must sooner or later come to light.

But God justified the afflicted chieftain, by publishing to the world his testimony that "that man was perfect and upright, one that feared God and eschewed evil," Job 1. 1., when these tribulations came upon him. And that he was, accordingly, right in saying, "Though he slay me yet will I trust in him," Job 13. 15.

Jehovah-Jesus, too, being "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," had his character suspected and falsely spoken against, as a sinner "stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." But "he was just-