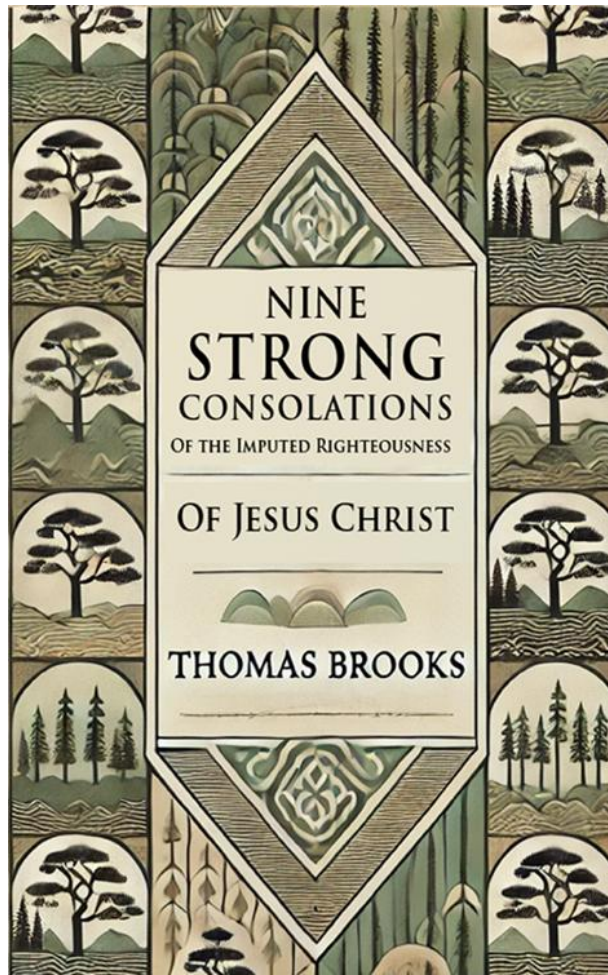


The book cover features a central rectangular text panel with a decorative border. The border consists of a repeating pattern of stylized landscape elements: a large tree on a hill, a smaller tree, and a cluster of evergreens, all set against a background of rolling hills and a sky with clouds. The central panel has a light beige background and is framed by a dark green border. At the top and bottom of the panel are decorative triangular motifs. The text is arranged in a formal, centered layout.

NINE
STRONG
CONSOLATIONS
OF THE IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS

OF JESUS CHRIST

THOMAS BROOKS



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Nine Strong Consolations

Of the Imputed Righteousness of Jesus Christ

by Thomas Brooks

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QUESTION.

But some may say, What blessed fruit grows upon this glorious tree of paradise—namely, the righteousness of Jesus Christ, which is imputed to all believers? What strong consolations flow from this fountain—the imputed righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ? I answer, there are these *nine choice consolations*, which flow in upon all believers, through the righteousness of Christ imputed to them—

1. First, Let all believers know for their comfort, that in this imputed righteousness of Christ—there is enough to satisfy the justice of God to the uttermost farthing, and to take off all his judicial anger and fury. The mediatorial righteousness of Christ is so perfect, so full, so exact, so complete, and so fully satisfactory to the justice of God, as that divine justice cries out, "I

have enough, and I require no more! I have found a ransom, and I am fully pacified towards you!" Ezek. 16:61-63; Heb. 10:10-12, 14; Isaiah 53:4-6.

It is certain that Christ was truly and properly a sacrifice for sin; and it is as certain that our sins were the meritorious cause of his sufferings. He did put himself into poor sinners' stead, he took their guilt upon him, and did undergo that punishment which they should have undergone. He died, and shed his blood, that he might thereby atone God and expiate sin, Romans 5:6-12. And therefore we may safely and boldly conclude, that Jesus Christ has satisfied the justice of God to the uttermost; so that now the believing sinner may rejoice and triumph in the *justice*, as well as in the *mercy* of God, Heb. 7:25; for doubtless the mediatorial righteousness of Christ was infinitely more satisfactory and pleasing to God, than all the sins of believers could be displeasing to him. God took more pleasure and delight in the bruising of his Son, in the humiliation of his Son, and he smelt a sweeter savor in his sacrifice—than all our sins could possibly offend him or provoke him, Isaiah 53:10.

When a believer casts his eyes upon his many thousand sinful commissions and omissions, no wonder if he fears and trembles! But then, when he looks upon Christ's satisfaction, he may see himself acquitted, and rejoice! For if there is no charge, no accusation against the Lord Jesus, there can be none against the believer, Romans 8:33-37. Christ's expiatory sacrifice has fully satisfied divine justice; and upon that very ground every believer has cause to triumph in Christ Jesus, and in that righteousness of his by which he stands justified before the throne of God! 2 Cor. 2:14; Rev. 14:4-5. Christ is a person of infinite, transcendent worth and excellency, and it makes highly for his honor to justify believers, in the most ample and glorious way imaginable, etc. And what way is that—but by

working out for them, and then investing them with, a righteousness adequate to the law of God; a righteousness that should be every way commensurate to the miserable estate of fallen man, and to the holy design of the glorious God.

It is the high honor of the second Adam that he has restored to fallen man a more glorious righteousness than that he lost in the first Adam. And it would be high blasphemy, in the eyes of angels and men, for any mortal to assert that the second Adam, our Lord Jesus Christ, was less powerful to save, than the first Adam was to destroy. The second Adam is "able to save to the uttermost all who come to God through him," Heb. 7:25. "The second Adam is able to save to all ends and purposes perfectly," says Beza. "He is able to save perpetually, or forever," says Tremellius. [He is able to save to the uttermost—of time, at all times, and forever, etc.] He is able to save to the uttermost obligation of the law, preceptive, as well as penal; and to bring in perfect righteousness, as well as perfect innocence. He is able to save to the uttermost demand of divine justice, by that perfect satisfaction that he has given to divine justice.

"Christ is mighty to save," Isaiah 63:1; and as he is mighty to save, so he loves to save poor sinners, in such a way wherein he may most magnify his own might; and therefore he will purchase their pardon with his blood, 1 Pet. 1:18-19, and make reparation to divine justice for all the wrongs and injuries which fallen man had done to his Creator and his royal law; and bestow upon him a better righteousness than that which Adam lost; and bring him into a more safe, high, honorable, and durable estate than that which Adam fell from when he was in his created perfection. All the *attributes* of God do acquiesce in the imputed righteousness of Christ, so that a believer may look upon the holiness, justice, and righteousness of God, and rejoice, and lay himself down in peace.

I have read in story, that Pilate being called to Rome, to give an account unto the emperor for some misgovernment and mal-administration, he put on the seamless coat of Christ; and all the time that he had that coat upon his back, Caesar's fury was abated. Christ has put his coat, his robe of righteousness, upon every believer, Isaiah 61:10; upon which account all the judicial anger, wrath, and fury of God towards believers ceases! Isaiah 54:10, "For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed—but my kindness shall not depart from you, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, says the Lord that has mercy on you." But,

2. Secondly, Know for your comfort, that this imputed, this mediatorial righteousness of Christ—takes away all your unrighteousness. It cancels every bond; it takes away all iniquity, and answers for all your sins, Isaiah 53:5-7; Col. 2:12-15. "Lord, here are my sins of omission, and here are my sins of commission—but the righteousness of Christ has answered for them all. Here are my sins against the law, and here are my sins against the gospel, and here are my sins against the offers of grace, the strivings of grace, the affections of grace—but the righteousness of Christ has answered for them all."

I have read that when a cordial was offered to a godly man who was sick, "Oh," said he, "the cordial of cordials which I daily take is—that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all our sins!" 1 John 1:7. O sirs! it would be high blasphemy for any to imagine that there should be more demerit in any sin, yes, in all sin, to condemn a believer; than there is merit in Christ's righteousness to absolve him, to justify him, Romans 8:1, 33-35. The righteousness of Christ was shadowed out by the glorious robes and apparel of the high priest, Exod. 30. That attire in which the high priest appeared before God—what was it, but a type of Christ's righteousness? The filthy garments of

Joshua, who represented the church, were not only taken off from him, thereby signifying the removal of our sins, Zech. 3:4-5—but also a new, lovely garment was put upon him, to signify our being clothed with the wedding-garment of Christ's righteousness.

If any shall say, "How is it possible that a soul which is defiled with the worst of sins, should be whiter than the snow, yes, beautiful and glorious in the eyes of God?" Psalm 51:7. The answer is at hand, because to whoever the Lord gives the pardon of his sins, which is the first part of our justification; to them he also imputes the righteousness of Christ, which is the second part of our justification before God. Thus David describes, says the apostle, "the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputes righteousness without works; saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered," Romans 4:6, 7. Now to that man whose sins the Lord forgives—to him he does impute righteousness also: "Take off his filthy clothes," says the Lord of Joshua; "and he said unto him, See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you." Zech. 3:4. And what was that rich garment? Surely the perfect obedience and righteousness of the Lord Jesus, which God does impute unto us; in which respect also we are said, by justifying faith, to put on the Lord Jesus, Romans 13:14; and to be clothed with him as with a garment, Gal. 3:27. And no marvel if, being so appareled, we appear beautiful and glorious in the sight of God! "To her," that is, Christ's bride, "was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints," Rev. 19:8. This perfect righteousness of Christ, which the Lord imputes to us, and wherewith, as with a garment, he clothes us, is the only righteousness which the saints have to stand before God with; and having that robe of righteousness on, they may stand with great boldness and comfort before the judgment-seat of God. But,

3. Thirdly, Know for your comfort, that this righteousness of Christ, presents us perfectly righteous in the sight of God. "He is made to us righteousness," 1 Cor. 1:30. The robe of innocency, like the veil of the temple, is rent asunder; our righteousness is a ragged righteousness, our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, Isaiah 64:4. Look, as under rags the naked body is seen, so under the rags of our righteousnesses the body of death is seen. Christ is all in all in regard of righteousness. Christ is "the end of the law for righteousness to those who believe," Romans 10:4.

That is, through Christ we are as righteous as if we had satisfied the law in our own persons. The end of the law is to justify and save those who fulfill it. Christ subjected himself thereto; he perfectly fulfilled it for us, and his perfect righteousness is imputed to us. Christ fulfilled the moral law, not for himself—but for us; therefore Christ doing it for believers, they fulfill the law in Christ. And so Christ by doing, and they believing in him who does it, do fulfill the law. Or Christ may be said to be the end of the law, because the end of the law is perfect righteousness, that a man may be justified thereby, which end we cannot attain of ourselves, through the frailty of our flesh—but by Christ we attain it, who has fulfilled the law for us. Christ has perfectly fulfilled the decalog for us, and that three ways:

(1.) In his pure conception.

(2.) In his godly life.

(3.) In his holy and obedient sufferings. And he did this all for us. For whatever the law required that we should be, do, or suffer—he has performed in our behalf. We are discharged by him before God. Christ, in respect of the integrity and purity of his nature, being conceived without sin, Mat. 1:18; and in respect of his life and

actions, being wholly conformed to the absolute righteousness of the law, Luke 1:35; and in respect of the punishment which he suffered, to make satisfaction unto God's justice for the breach of the law, 2 Cor. 5:21; Col. 1:20. In these respects Christ is the perfection of the law, and "the end of the law for righteousness to those who believe." Jacob got the blessing in the garment of his elder brother; so in the garment of Christ's righteousness, who is our elder brother, we obtain the blessing; yes, "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places," Eph. 1:4. We are made "the righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. 5:21.

"The church," says Marorate, "which puts on Christ, and his righteousness, is more illustrious than the air is by the sun." The infinite wisdom and power of dear Jesus in reconciling the law and the gospel, in this great mystery of justification, is greatly to be magnified. In the blessed Scriptures we find the righteousness of justification to take its various names. In respect of the *material* cause, it is called the righteousness of the law, Romans 5:17. In respect of the *efficient* cause, it is called the righteousness of Christ, 1 Cor. 1:30. In respect of the *formal* cause, it is called the righteousness of God, he imputing of it, Romans 3:22. In respect of the *instrumental* cause, it is called the righteousness of faith, Phil. 3:9. In respect of the *moving* and *final* cause, we are said to be justified freely by grace, Romans 3:24; Titus 3:7.

The law, as it was a covenant of works, required exact and perfect obedience, in men's proper persons; this was *legal* justification. But in the new covenant, God is contented to accept this righteousness in the hand of a surety, and this is *evangelical* justification. This righteousness presents us in the sight of God as "all fair," Cant. 4:7; as "complete," Col. 2:10; as "without spot or wrinkle," Eph. 5:27; as "without fault before the throne of God," Rev. 14:5; as "holy, and

unblamably, and unreprouvable in his sight," Col. 1:22. Oh, the happiness and blessedness, the safety and glory—of those precious souls, who, in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, stand perfectly righteous in the sight of God! But,

4. Fourthly, Know for your comfort, that this imputed righteousness of Christ will answer to all the fears, doubts, and objections of your souls. How shall I look up to God? The answer is—in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. How shall I have any communion with a holy God in this world? The answer is—in the righteousness of Christ. How shall I find acceptance with God? The answer is—in the righteousness of Christ. How shall I die? The answer is—in the righteousness of Christ. How shall I stand before the judgment-seat? The answer is—in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Your sure and only way, under all temptations, fears, conflicts, doubts, and disputes, is, by faith, to remember Christ, and the sufferings of Christ, as your mediator and surety; and say, "O Christ, you are my *sin*, in being made sin for me, 2 Cor. 5:21; and you are my *curse*, being made a curse for me, Gal. 3:13. Or rather, I am your sin, and you are my righteousness. I am your curse, and you are my blessing. I am your death, and you are my life. I am the wrath of God to you, and you are the love of God to me. I am your hell, and you are my heaven.

O sirs! if you think of your sins, and of God's wrath; if you think of your guiltiness, and of God's justice—your hearts will faint and fail; they will fear and tremble and sink into despair—if you do not think of Christ, if you do not stay and rest your souls upon the mediatorial righteousness of Christ, the imputed righteousness of Christ. The imputed righteousness of Christ answers all cavils and objections, though there were millions of them, which can be made against the good estate of a believer. This is a precious truth, more worth than a

world—that all our sins are pardoned, not only in a way of *truth* and *mercy*—but in a way of *justice*. Satan and our own consciences will object many things against our souls, if we plead only the mercy and the truth of God; and they will be ready to say, "Oh—but where is then the *justice* of God? Can *mercy* pardon without the consent of his *justice*? But now, while we rest upon the satisfaction of Christ, "justice and mercy kiss each other," Psalm 85:10; yes, justice says, "I am pleased!"

In a day of temptation, many things will be cast in our dish, about the multitude of our sins, and the greatness of our sins, and the grievousness of our sins, and about the circumstances and aggravations of our sins—but that good word, "Christ has redeemed us from all iniquities," he has paid the full price that justice could exact or require; and that good word, "Mercy rejoices against judgment," James 2:13, may support, comfort, and bear us up under all!

The infinite worth of Christ's obedience, did arise from the dignity of his *person*, who was God-man; so that all the obedience of angels and men, if put together, could not amount to the excellency of Christ's satisfaction! The righteousness of Christ, is often called the righteousness of *God*, because it is a righteousness of God's providing, and a righteousness that God is fully satisfied with; and therefore, no fears, no doubts, no cavils, no objections, no disputes, can stand before this blessed and glorious righteousness of Jesus Christ, which is imputed to us. But,

5. Fifthly, Know for your comfort, that the imputed righteousness of Christ is the best title that you have to show, for "a kingdom that shakes not, for riches that corrupt not, for an inheritance that fades not away, and for an house not made with

hands—but one eternal in the heavens," Heb. 12:28; 1 Pet. 1:3-5; 2 Cor. 5:1-4. It is the fairest certificate that you have to show for all that happiness and blessedness that you look for, in that other world. The righteousness of Christ is your life, your joy, your comfort, your crown, your confidence, your heaven—your all. Oh, that you were still so wise as to keep a fixed eye and an awakened heart, upon the mediatorial righteousness of Christ; for that is the righteousness by which you may safely and comfortably live, and by which you may happily and quietly die. It was a very sweet and golden confession, which Bernard made, when he thought himself to be at the point of death. "I confess," said he, "I am not worthy, I have no merits of mine own to obtain heaven by—but my Lord had a double right thereunto; an hereditary right as a Son, and a meritorious right as a sacrifice. He was contented with the one right himself, the other right he has given unto me; by the virtue of which gift I do rightly lay claim unto it, and am not confounded."

Ah, that believers would dwell much upon this—that they have a righteousness in Christ, which is as full, perfect, and complete, as if they had fulfilled the law. "Christ being the end of the law for righteousness to believers," invests believers with a righteousness, every way as complete, as the personal obedience of the law would have invested them with, Romans 8:3-4. Yes, the righteousness that believers have by Christ is, in some respect, better than that they would have had by Adam:

(1.) Because of the dignity of Christ's person, he being the Son of God, his righteousness is more glorious than Adam's was; his righteousness is called "The righteousness of God;" and we are made the "righteousness of God in him," 2 Cor. 5:21. The first Adam was a mere man, the second Adam is God and man.

(2.) Because the righteousness is perpetual. Adam was a mutable person, he lost his righteousness in one day, say some, and all that glory which his posterity should have possessed, had he stood fast in innocency. But the righteousness of Christ cannot be lost. His righteousness is like himself, from everlasting to everlasting. It is an everlasting righteousness, Dan. 9:24. When once this white raiment is put upon a believer, it can never fall off, it can never be taken off. This splendid glorious righteousness of Jesus Christ's, is as really a believer's, as if he had wrought it himself, Rev. 19:8. A believer is no loser—but a gainer, by Adam's fall. By the loss of Adam's righteousness is brought to light, a more glorious and durable righteousness than ever Adam's was; and upon the account of an interest in this righteousness, a believer may claim all the glory of that upper world as his own. But,

6. Sixthly, Know for your comfort, that this imputed righteousness of Christ is the only true basis, foundation, and ground—for a believer to build his happiness upon, his joy and comfort upon, and the true peace and quiet of his conscience upon. What though Satan, or your own heart, or the world, condemns you; yet in this you may rejoice—that God justifies you. You see what a bold challenge Paul makes, Romans 8:33, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? it is God who justifies." Some read it question-wise, thus, "Shall God—who justifies?" In no way! And if the judge acquits the prisoner at the bar, he cares not though the jailer or his fellow-prisoners condemn him. Just so here, there are no accusers that a believer needs to fear, seeing that it is God himself, who is the supreme judge—who absolves him as just. God absolves, and therefore it is to no purpose for *Satan* to accuse us, Rev. 12:10; nor for the *law* of Moses to accuse us, John 5:45; nor for our own *consciences* to accuse us, Romans 2:25; nor for the *world* to accuse us. God is the highest judge, and his

tribunal-seat is the supreme judgment-seat; therefore from thence there is no appealing.

As among men, people accused or condemned, may appeal, until they come to the highest court—but if in the highest, they are absolved and discharged—then they are free, and safe and well. Just so, the believer being absolved before God's tribunal-seat, there are no further accusations to be feared, all appeals from thence being void and of no force. The consideration of which should arm us and comfort us and strengthen us against all terrors of conscience, guilt of sin, accusation of the law, and cruelty of Satan; inasmuch as these either dare not appear before God to accuse us or charge us; or if they do, it is but lost labor.

"It is God who justifies." Ambrose gives the sense thus, "None can or dare retract the judgment of God; for he confidently challenges all adversaries, if they dare come forth to accuse; not that there is no cause—but because God has justified." "It is God who justifies;" therefore it is in vain to accuse them. "It is God who justifies them;" if God does it none can reverse it, for there are none who are equal with God. Let all the accusations, which shall come in against you, from one hand or another, be true or false—they shall never hurt you; for he from whom there is no appeal, has fully acquitted you, and therefore no accusation can endanger your peace!

Ah! what a strong cordial would this be to all the people of God, if they would but live in the power of this glorious truth—that it is "God who justifies them," and that there lies no accusations in the court of heaven against them! The great reason why many poor Christians are under so many dejections, despondencies, and perplexities—is because they drink so little of this water of life, "It is God who justifies." Did Christians live more upon this breast, "It is God who

justifies," they would be no more like Pharaoh's lean cows—but would be fat and flourishing, Gen. 41:1-3. Did they but draw more out of this well of salvation, "It is God who justifies," how would their spirits revive, and a new life rise up in them, as did in the dead child, by the prophet Elisha's applying himself to it, 2 Kings 4:34-37.

The imputed righteousness of Christ is a real, sure, and solid foundation, upon which a believer may safely build his peace, joy, and everlasting rest. Yes, it will help him to glory in tribulations, and to triumph over all adversities; Romans 5:1-3; Isaiah 45:24, "Surely, shall one say—in the Lord I have righteousness and strength." That which is the greatest terror in the world to unbelievers, is the strongest ground of comfort to believers—that is, the justice and wrath of God against sin. Look how it was when the angel appeared at the resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ, "The keepers were affrighted, and became as dead men;" but it was said to the women, "Fear not, for you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified," Mat. 28:4-5: so it is much more in this case. When God's justice is powerfully manifested, the sinners of Zion and the world are afraid and terrified, Isaiah 33:14. But yet, poor believers, seek for Christ who was crucified; you need not fear anything; yes, you may be wonderfully cheered at this, and it is your greatest comfort that you have to deal with this just God, who has already received satisfaction for your sins.

It is observable that the saints triumph in the justice and judgments of God, which are most terrible to the enemies of God, in that which is the substance of the song of Moses and the Lamb, Rev. 15:3-5. Just so in Luke 21:28, where the day of judgment is described, say some, and that in it, "there shall be distress of nations, and men's hearts failing them for fear"—namely, of the justice and wrath of God. Why so? It is for "looking after those things which are to come upon the

earth; for the powers of the earth shall be shaken," etc. "But when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draws near." This day is the most dreadful day that ever was in the world to all the ungodly. But the just and faithful then shall be able to lift up their heads, to see all the world on fire about them, and all the elements in terrible confusion. But how dare a poor creature lift up his head in such a case as this? "They shall see the Son of man, coming in a cloud, with power and great glory." Here is enough to comfort the poor members of Christ—to see Christ, on whom they have believed, and who has satisfied God's justice for them, and imputed his own righteousness to them: to see him set upon his judgment-seat, cannot but be matter of joy and rejoicing to them. Now they shall find the power of that word upon their souls: Isaiah 40:1-2, "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins;" that is, their conflict with the wrath of God is at an end, the punishment of their iniquity is accepted, they have received in their head and surety, Christ Jesus, double for their sins; that is, justice has passed upon them, in their head, Christ Jesus; and they are sure that the judge of all the earth will do right, and will not punish their sins twice. The exactness of God's justice cannot do this.

Job 34:10, "Far be it from God, that he should do wickedness, and from the Almighty, that he should commit iniquity;" verse 12, "Yes, surely God will not do wickedly, neither will the Almighty pervert justice." It would be high injustice in a magistrate to punish the same offence twice; and it would be high blasphemy for any to assert that ever God should be guilty of such injustice. While Christians set up a righteousness of their own, and build not upon the righteousness of Christ, how unsettled are they! Romans 10:3; how miserably are they

tossed up and down, sometimes fearing and sometimes hoping, sometimes supposing themselves in a good condition, and afterwards seeing themselves upon the very brink of hell! But now all is quiet and serene with that soul that builds upon the righteousness of Christ; for, he being "justified by faith, has peace with God," Romans 5:1. Observe that noble description of Christ in that Isaiah 32:2, "And a man," that is, the man Christ Jesus, "shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." When a man is clothed with the righteousness of Christ, who is God-man, it is neither wind nor tempest, it is neither drought nor weariness, which can disturb the peace of his soul; for Christ and his righteousness will be a hiding-place, a covert, and rivers of water, and the shadow of a great rock unto him; for, being at perfect peace with God, he may well say with the psalmist, "I will lay me down in peace," Psalm 4:6-8.

The peace and comfort of an awakened sinner can never stand firm and stable—but upon the basis of a positive righteousness. When a sensible sinner casts his eye upon his own righteousness, holiness, fastings, prayers, tears, humblings, meltings—he can find no place for the sole of his foot to rest firmly upon, by reason of the spots, and blots, and blemishes, which cleave both to his graces and duties. He knows that his prayers need pardon, and that his tears need washing in the blood of the Lamb, and that his very righteousness needs another's righteousness to secure him from condemnation. "If you, Lord, should mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand?" Psalm 130:3, and 1:5; that is, "stand" in judgment. Extremity of justice he deprecates; he would not be dealt with in rigor and rage. The best man's life is fuller of sins than the sky is of stars, or the furnace of sparks; and therefore who can stand in judgment, and not fall under the weight of your just wrath, which burns as low as hell itself? that

is, none can stand. Were the faults of the best man alive but written in his forehead, he was never able to stand in judgment.

When a man comes to the law for justification, it convinces him of sin. When he pleads his innocence, that he is not so great a sinner as others are, when he pleads his righteousness, his duties, his good meanings, and his good desires—the law tells him who they are all weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, and found too light, Dan. 5:27; the law tells him who the best of his duties will not save him, and that the least of his sins will damn him; the law tells him who his own righteousnesses are as filthy rags, do but defile him, and that his best services do but witness against him. The law looks for perfect and personal obedience, and because the sinner cannot come up to it—it pronounces him accursed, Gal. 3:10. And though the sinner sues hard for mercy—yet the law will show him none, no, though he seeks it carefully with tears, Heb. 12:17.

But now, when the believing sinner casts his eye upon the righteousness of Christ, he sees that righteousness to be a perfect and exact righteousness, as perfect and exact as that of the law. Yes, it is the very righteousness of the law, though not performed by him—yet by his surety, "The Lord his righteousness;" and upon this foundation he stands firm, and "rejoices with joy unspeakable, and full of glory." The saints of old have always placed their happiness, peace, and comfort, in their perfect and complete *justification*, rather than in their imperfect and incomplete *sanctification*, as you may see by these scriptures, with many others which are scattered up and down in the blessed book of God. [Jer. 23:6; 1 Peter 1:8; Luke 7:48, 50; Romans 4:6, 8, and 5:1, 3; Isaiah 38:16-17, and 45:24-25; Phil. 4:7.]

That text is worthy to be written in letters of gold: Isaiah 61:10, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord," says the sound believer, "my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation." He has imputed and given unto me the perfect holiness and obedience of my blessed Savior, and made it mine. "He has covered me (all over, from top to toe) with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels." Though a Christian's inherent righteousness is weak and imperfect, maimed and stained, blotted and blurred, as it is—yet it affords much comfort, peace, joy, and rejoicing, as you may see by comparing these scriptures together. [1 Chron. 29:9; Job 27:4-6; Neh. 13:14, 22; Isaiah 38:31; Proverbs 21:14; 2 Cor. 1:12; 1 Pet. 3:3-4, and 5:4.]

Job was much taken with his inherent righteousness: Job 29:14, "I put on righteousness as my clothing; justice was my robe and my turban." Look, as sober, modest, lovely apparel does much set forth and adorn the body in the eyes of men; just so does inherent grace, inherent holiness, inherent righteousness, when it sparkles in the faces, lips, lives, and good works of the saints, much more beautify and adorn them in the eyes both of God and man. Now if this garment of inherent righteousness, that has so many spots and rips in it, will adorn us, and joy us so much, what a beauty and glory is that which the Lord our God has put upon us, in clothing us with the robe of his Son's righteousness; for by this means we shall recover more by Christ than we lost by Adam. The robe of righteousness which we have gotten by Christ, the second Adam, is far more glorious than that which we were deprived of by the first Adam. But,

7. Seventhly, Then know for your comfort, that you have the highest reason in the world to rejoice and triumph in Christ Jesus, Gal. 6:14: Phil. 3:3, "For we are the true circumcision,

who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus." We rejoice in the *person* of Christ, and we rejoice in the *righteousness* of Christ: 2 Cor. 2:14, "Now thanks be to God, who always causes us to triumph in Christ." *Deo gratias* was ever in Paul's mouth, and should be ever in a Christian's mouth, when his eye is fixed upon the righteousness of Christ. Every believer is in a more blessed and happy estate, by means of the righteousness of Christ, than Adam was in innocency. And that upon a threefold account; all which are just and noble grounds for every Christian to rejoice and triumph in Christ Jesus.

(1.) That righteousness which Adam had was **uncertain**, and such as it was possible for him to lose, Gen. 3; yes, he did lose it, and that in a very short time, Psalm 8:5. God gave him power and freedom of will either to hold it or lose it; and we know soon after, upon choice, he proved a bankrupt. But the righteousness that we have by Jesus Christ is made more firm and sure to us. It is that good part, that noble portion, which shall never be taken from us, as Christ said to Mary, Luke 10:42. Adam sinned away his righteousness—but a believer cannot sin away the righteousness of Jesus Christ. It is not possible for the elect of God, so to sin as to lose Christ, or to strip themselves of that robe of righteousness which Christ has put upon them, 1 John 3:9; Romans 8:35, 39. The gates of hell shall never be able to prevail against that soul who is savingly interested in Christ, who is clothed with the righteousness of Christ, Mat 16:18. Now what higher ground of joy and triumph in Christ Jesus can there be than this? But,

(2.) The righteousness that Adam had was **in his own keeping**; the spring and root of it was founded in himself, and that was the cause why he lost it so soon. Adam, like the prodigal son, Luke 15:12-13, had all his portion, his happiness, his holiness, his blessedness, his

righteousness—in his own hands, in his own keeping; and so quickly lost it all. Oh but now, that blessed righteousness that we have by Jesus Christ, is not in our own keeping—but in our Father's keeping. Look, as our persons, graces, and inherent righteousness are kept, as in a strong refuge, by the power of God unto salvation, 1 Pet. 1:5; so that righteousness which we have by Jesus Christ is kept for us by the mighty power of God unto salvation.

God the Father is the Lord Keeper, not only of our inherent righteousness—but also of the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ unto us. "My sheep shall never perish," says our Savior, John 10:28, 29, "neither shall any pluck them out of my hand; my Father who gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hands." Though the saints may meet with many shakings and tossings in their various conditions in this world—yet their final perseverance, until they come to full possession of eternal life—is certain. God is so unchangeable in his purposes of love, and so invincible in his power—that neither Satan, nor the world, nor their own flesh—shall ever be able to separate them from the "crown of righteousness," 2 Tim. 4:7, 8; "the crown of life," Rev. 2:10; "the crown of glory," 1 Pet. 5:4. The power of God is so far above all created opposition, that it will certainly maintain the saints in a state of grace. Now what a foundation and ground for rejoicing and triumphing in Christ Jesus is here! But,

(3.) Admit, that the righteousness that Adam had in his creation had been unchangeable, and that he could never have lost it—yet, it had been but **the righteousness of a man**, of a mere creature; and what a poor, low righteousness would that have been, compared to that high and glorious righteousness which we have by Jesus Christ, which is the righteousness of such a person as was God as well as man. Yes, that righteousness that we have by Jesus Christ is a higher

righteousness, and a more excellent, transcendent righteousness than that of the angels. Though the righteousness of the angels be perfect and complete in its kind—yet it is but the righteousness of mere creatures—but the righteousness of the saints, in which they stand clothed before the throne of God, is the righteousness of that person who is both God and man. Look, as the second Adam was a far more excellent person than the first Adam was: "The first man was of the earth, earthy," as the apostle speaks; "the second was the Lord from heaven," 1 Cor. 15:47; not for the matter of his body, for he was made of a woman—but for the original and dignity of his person; whereof you may see a lively and lofty description in Heb. 1:2-3; so his righteousness also must needs be far more excellent, absolute, glorious, and every way all-sufficient to satisfy the infinite justice of God, and the exact perfection of his holy law—than ever Adam's righteousness could possibly have done.

Remember, sirs, that that righteousness that we have by Jesus Christ is called the righteousness of God: "He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the *righteousness of God* in him," says the apostle in 2 Cor. 5:21. Now that righteousness that we have by Jesus Christ, is called the righteousness of God:

- (1.) Because it is such a righteousness as God requires.
- (2.) As he approves of and accepts.
- (3.) As he takes infinite pleasure and delight and satisfaction in.

The righteousness the apostle speaks of in that scripture last mentioned, is not to be understood of the essential righteousness of Christ, which is infinite, and no ways communicable to the creature, unless we will make a creature a God. But we are to understand it, of that righteousness of Christ which is imputed to believers, as their

sin is imputed to him. Now what a well of salvation is here! What three noble grounds and what matchless foundations are here for a Christian's joy and triumph in Christ Jesus, who has put so glorious a robe as his own righteousness upon them! Ah, Christians, let not the consolations of God be small in your eyes, Job 15:11. Why do you take no more comfort and delight in Christ Jesus? Why do you not rejoice more in him? Not to rejoice in Christ Jesus is a plain breach of that gospel command, "Rejoice in the Lord always," that is, rejoice in Christ, "and again I say, rejoice," says the apostle, Phil. 4:4. He doubles the mandate, to show the necessity and excellency of the duty. Phil. 3:1, "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord." Now, in some respects, the breach of the commands of the gospel are greater than the breach of the commands of the moral law; for the breach of the commands of the gospel carries in it a contempt and light esteem of Jesus Christ, see Heb. 2:2-3, 8:6, and 10:28-29. Men's not rejoicing in Christ Jesus must flow from some dangerous sin, and base corruption or other, which highly distempers their precious souls. If all created excellencies, if all the privileges of God's people, if all the kingdoms of the earth, and the glory of them, were to be presented at one view, they would all appear as nothing and emptiness—in comparison of the excellency and fullness which is to be found in Christ Jesus. Therefore the greater is their sin, who rejoice not in Christ Jesus.

"Do you ask me where be my jewels? my jewels are my husband and his triumphs," said Phocion's wife. "Do you ask me where be my ornaments? my ornaments are my two sons brought up in virtue and learning," said the mother of the Gracchi. "Do you ask me where be my treasures? my treasures are my friends," said Constantius, the father of Constantine. But now, if you ask a child of God, when he is not clouded, tempted, deserted, dejected, where be his jewels, his treasures, his ornaments, his comfort, his joy, his delight; he will

answer with that martyr, "none but Christ, none but Christ! Oh! none to Christ, none to Christ! Christ is all in all unto me!" Col. 3:11. That joy lasts forever, whose object remains forever. Such an object is our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore the joy of the saints should still be exercised upon our Lord Jesus Christ. Shall the worldling rejoice in his barns, the rich man in his bags, the ambitious man in his honors, the voluptuous man in his pleasures, and the wanton in his Delilahs; and shall not a Christian rejoice in Christ Jesus, and in that robe of righteousness, and in those garments of salvation, with which Christ has covered him? Isaiah 61:10.

The joy of that Christian who keeps a fixed eye upon Christ and his righteousness cannot be expressed, it cannot be painted. No man can paint the sweetness of the honeycomb, nor the sweetness of a cluster of Canaan's grapes, nor the fragrance of the rose of Sharon. As the being of things cannot be painted, so the sweetness of things cannot be painted. The joy of the Holy Spirit cannot be painted; nor can that joy be painted, which arises in a Christian's heart, who keeps up a daily converse with Christ and his righteousness; it cannot be expressed. Who can look upon the glorious body of our Lord Jesus Christ, and seriously consider, that even every vein of that blessed body did bleed to bring him to heaven—and not rejoice in Christ Jesus? Who can look upon the glorious righteousness of Christ, imputed to him—and not be filled with an exuberance of spiritual joy in God his Savior?

There is not the pardon of the least sin, nor the least degree of grace, nor the least drop of mercy—but cost Christ dear, for he must die, and he must be made a sacrifice, and he must be accursed—that pardon may be yours, and grace yours, and mercy yours. And oh, how should this draw out your heart to rejoice and triumph in Christ Jesus! The work of redemption sets both angels and saints a-

rejoicing and triumphing in Christ Jesus, Rev. 5:11-14; and why not we, why not we also, who have received infinitely more benefit by the work of redemption, than ever the angels have? Rev. 1:5-6, and 5:8-10. A beautiful face is at all times pleasing to the eye—but then especially, when there is joy manifested in the countenance. Joy in the face puts a new beauty upon a person, and makes that which before was beautiful, to be exceeding beautiful, it puts a luster upon beauty. Just so, does holy joy and rejoicing in Christ Jesus, put, as it were, a new beauty and luster upon Christ. Though the Romans punished one who feasted, and looked out at a window with a garland on his head, in the second Punic war—yet, you may be sure, that God will never punish you for rejoicing and triumphing in Christ Jesus, let the times be ever so sad or bad, in respect of war, blood, or misery. But,

8. Eighthly, The imputed righteousness of Christ may serve to comfort, support, and bear up the hearts of the people of God, from fainting and sinking under the sense of the weakness and imperfection of their inherent righteousness. The church of old have lamentingly said, "We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness is as filthy rags," Isaiah 64:6. When a Christian keeps a serious eye upon the spots, blots, blemishes, infirmities, and follies, which cleave to his inherent righteousness—fears and tremblings arise, to the saddening and sinking of his soul. But when he casts a fixed eye upon the righteousness of Christ imputed to him—then his comforts revive, and his heart bears up. For though he has no righteousness of his own, by which his soul may stand accepted before God—yet he has God's righteousness, which infinitely transcends his own, and such as, in God's account, goes for his, as if he had exactly fulfilled the righteousness which the law requires; according to that verse of the apostle, Romans 9:30, "What shall we say then? the Gentiles which

followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith."

Faith wraps itself in the righteousness of Christ, and so justifies us. The Gentiles sought righteousness, not in themselves but in Christ, which they apprehending by faith—and were by it justified in the sight of God. But the Jews, seeking righteousness in themselves, and thinking, by the goodness of their own works, to attain to the righteousness of the law, missed of it; it being in no man's power perfectly to fulfill the law. Only Christ has exactly fulfilled it for all who by faith close savingly with him. O sirs! none can be justified in the sight of God, by a righteousness of their own making. But whoever will be justified, must be justified by the righteousness of Christ, through faith, Romans 3:20, 28, and 10:3; Gal. 2:16; Tit. 3:5. The Gentiles by faith attain the righteousness of the law, therefore the righteousness of the law and of faith are all one; namely, in respect of matter and form; the difference is only in the worker. The law requires it to be done by ourselves; the gospel mitigates the rigor of the law, and offers the righteousness of Christ, who performed the law, even to a hair's-breadth. The right way to righteousness for justification is by Christ—who is the way, the door, the truth, and the life. Because we lack a righteousness of our own, God has assigned us the righteousness of Christ, which is infinitely better than our own, yes, better than our very lives—may I not say, yes, better than our very souls? "The branch," Christ Jesus is called, "Jehovah Tsidkenu, the Lord our righteousness."

Jer. 23:6, "And this is his name whereby he shall be called, *the Lord our Righteousness*." Where note, first, to be called by this name is to be so really, for Christ is never called what he is not; and so he is to the same purpose elsewhere called "Immanuel, God with us," Mat. 1:23; that is, he shall be so indeed, "God with us." So here he shall be

called, "the Lord our righteousness;" that is, he shall be so indeed. Secondly, observe this is one of his glorious names; that is, one of his attributes, which he accounts his excellency and his glory. Now all the attributes of Christ are unchangeable, so that he can as easily change his nature as his name. Now remember that this imputed righteousness of Christ procures acceptance for our inherent righteousness.

When a sincere Christian casts his eye upon the weaknesses, infirmities, and imperfections, which daily attend his best services, he sighs and mourns—but if he looks upward to the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, that shall bring forth his infirm, weak, and sinful performances perfect, spotless, and sinless, and approved according to the tenor of the gospel, so that they become spiritual sacrifices, he cannot but rejoice, 1 Pet. 2:5. For as there is an imputation of righteousness to the persons of believers, so there is also an imputation to their services and actions. As the act of Phinehas was imputed to him for righteousness, Psalm 106:31, so the imperfect good works which are done by believers are accounted righteousness, or, as Calvin speaks, "are accounted for righteousness, they being dipped in the blood of Christ," that is, they are accounted righteous actions. And so sincere Christians shall be judged according to their good works, though not saved for them, Rev. 11:18, and 20:12; Mat 25:34-37.

And it is observable, in that famous process of the last judgment, that the supreme judge makes mention of the bounty and liberality of the saints, and so bestows the crown of life and the eternal inheritance upon them; so that, though the Lord's faithful ones have eminent cause to be humbled and afflicted for the many weaknesses which cleave to their best duties—yet, on the other hand, they have wonderful cause to rejoice and triumph that they are made perfect

through Jesus Christ, and that the Lord looks at them, through the righteousness of Christ, as fruits of his own Spirit, Heb. 13:20-21; 1 Cor. 6:11. The Sun of Righteousness has healing enough in his wings for all our spiritual maladies, Mal. 4:2. The saints' prayers, being perfumed with Christ's fragrance, are highly accepted in heaven, Rev. 8:3-4. Upon this foundation of imputed righteousness, believers may have exceeding strong consolation, and good hope through grace, that both their persons and services do find singular acceptance with God, as having no spot or blemish at all in them. Surely *imputed righteousness* must be the top of our happiness and blessedness, Romans 4:5-6. But,

9. Ninthly and lastly, Know for your comfort, that imputed righteousness will give you the greatest boldness before God's judgment-seat. There is an absolute and indispensable necessity of a perfect righteousness wherewith to appear before God. The holiness of God's nature, the righteousness of his government, the severity of his law, and the terror of wrath, calls aloud upon the sinner for a complete righteousness, without which there is no standing in judgment, Psalm 1:5. That righteousness alone, is able to justify us before God which is perfect, and which has no defect nor blemish in it, such as may abide the trial before his judgment-seat, such as may fitly satisfy his justice, and make our peace with him; and consequently, such as whereby the law of God is fulfilled. Therefore it is called the *righteousness of God*, such a righteousness as he requires, as will stand before him, and satisfy his justice, Romans 10:3. Just so, the apostle says, "The righteousness of the law must be fulfilled in us," Romans 8:4. Now there is no other righteousness under heaven whereby the law of God was ever perfectly fulfilled—but by the righteousness of Christ alone. No righteousness below the righteousness of Christ was ever able to abide the trial at God's judgment-seat, and fully to satisfy his justice,

and pacify his wrath. A gracious soul triumphs more in the imputed righteousness of Christ, than he would have done if he could have stood in the righteousness in which he was created. This is the crowning comfort to a sensible and understanding soul, that he stands righteous before a judgment-seat, in that full, exact, perfect, complete, matchless, spotless, peerless, and most acceptable righteousness of Christ imputed to him.

The righteousness of Christ is therefore called the *righteousness of God*, because it is it which God has assigned, and which God does accept for us in our justification, and for and in which he does acquit and pronounce us righteous before his seat of justice, Romans 3:21-22, and 10:3; Phil. 3:9. There is an indispensable necessity which lies upon the sinner, to have such a righteousness to his justification as may render his appearance safe and comfortable in the day of judgment. Now there is no righteousness which can abide that day of fiery trial—but the righteousness of Christ imputed to us. Paul, that great apostle, had as fair and as full a certificate to show for a *legal* justification as any person under heaven had, Phil. 3:4-6; Acts 23:6; 2 Cor. 11:22; but yet he dared not stand by that righteousness, he dared not plead that righteousness, he dared not appear in that righteousness before the dreadful judgment-seat.

But oh, how earnest, how importunate is he, that he may be found, in that great day of the Lord—in the mediatorial righteousness of Christ, and not in his own personal righteousness, which he looked upon as filthy rags, as dross, dung, dogs' meat, Phil. 3:9-10. The great thing that he most strongly insists upon is, that he might be clothed with the robe of Christ's righteousness; for then he knew that the law could not condemn him, and that the judge upon the bench would pronounce him righteous, and bid him enter into the joy of his Lord, Mat. 25:21, 23, 24; a joy too great to enter into him, and therefore he

must enter into that. When the match is made up between Christ and the soul, that soul bears her sovereign's name. The spouse of the first Adam and her husband had both one name, "God called their name Adam, in the day that he made them," Gen. 5:2; so the spouse of the second Adam, in the change of her condition, from a single to a married estate with Christ the Lamb, had a change of her name. The head is called, "the Lord our righteousness," Jer. 23:6; and so is the church: Jer. 33:16, "In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, the Lord our righteousness." Here is a sameness of name. [Christ and Christians are namesakes. The head is called Christ, and the members are called Christ, 1 Cor. 12:12. Christ is called Solomon, Cant. 1:1, and 3:11, in Hebrew, Shelomah of peace, and the church is called Shulamite, by her bridegroom's name, Cant. 6:13.] As Christ is called, "the Lord our righteousness," so his spouse is called, "the Lord our righteousness." Oh, happy transnomination! Christ's bride being one with himself, and having his righteousness imputed to her, is called, "the Lord our righteousness;" and therefore they may, with the greatest cheerfulness and boldness, bear up, in the great day of account, who have **the perfect righteousness of Christ** imputed to them, especially if you consider,

(1.) That this righteousness is of infinite value and worth.

(2.) That it is an everlasting righteousness, a righteousness that can never be lost, Dan. 9:24.

(3.) That it is an unchangeable righteousness. Though times change, and men change, and friends change, and providences changes, and the moon changes—yet the Sun of Righteousness never changes, "in him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," Mal. 4:2; James 1:17.

(4.) That it is a complete and unspotted righteousness, an unblamably righteousness, and unblemished righteousness. And therefore God can neither in justice except it, or object against it. In this righteousness the believer lives, in this righteousness the believer dies, and in this righteousness believers shall arise, and appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, to the deep admiration of all the elect angels, and to the transcendent terror and horror of all reprobates, and to the matchless joy and triumph of all on Christ's right hand, who shall then shout and sing, Isaiah 61:10, "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorned herself with jewels."

Oh, how will Christ, in this great day, be admired and glorified in all his saints, 2 Thes. 1:10, when every saint, wrapped up in this fine linen, in this white robe of Christ's righteousness, shall shine more gloriously than ten thousand suns! In the great day of the Lord, when the saints shall stand before the tribunal of God, clothed in the perfect righteousness of Jesus Christ, they shall then stand and be pronounced righteous, even in the court of divine justice, which sentence will fill their souls with comfort, and the souls of sinners with astonishment, Rev. 20:12, and 12:10. Suppose we saw the believing sinner, holding up his hand at God's bar; the books opened, the accuser of the brethren present, the witnesses ready, and the judge on the bench thus bespeaking the sinner at the bar, Romans 7:12, 14, 16, and Gal. 3:10. "O sinner, sinner, you stand here indicted before me, for many millions of sins of commission, and for many millions of sins of omission; you have broken my holy, just, and righteous laws beyond all human conception or expression, and hereof you are proved guilty! What have you now to say for yourself, why you should not be eternally lost"? Upon this, the sinner pleads

guilty—but withal he earnestly desires that he may have time and liberty to plead for himself, and to offer his reasons why that dreadful sentence, "Go, you cursed," etc., Mat. 25:41, should not be passed upon him. The liberty desired, being granted by the judge, the sinner pleads that his surety, Jesus Christ, has, by his blood and sufferings, given full and complete satisfaction to divine justice, and that he has paid down upon the penny, the whole debt at once, and that it can never stand with the holiness and unspotted justice of God to demand satisfaction twice, Heb. 10:10, 14. If the judge shall further object, "Ay—but sinner, sinner, the law requires an exact and perfect righteousness in the personal fulfilling of it; now, sinner, where is your exact and perfect righteousness?" Gal. 3:10; Isaiah 45:24. Upon which the believing sinner very readily, cheerfully, humbly, and boldly replies, "My righteousness is upon the bench—in the Lord have I righteousness. Christ, my surety, has fulfilled the law on my behalf!"

The law's righteousness consists in two things,

- (1.) In its requiring perfect conformity to its commands.
- (2.) In its demanding satisfaction, or the undergoing of its penalty, upon the violation of it.

Now Christ, by his active and passive obedience, has fulfilled the law for righteousness; and this active and passive obedience of Jesus Christ is imputed to me. His obeying the law to the full, his perfect conforming to its commands, his doing, as well as his dying obedience—is by grace made over and reckoned to me, in order to my justification and salvation; and this is my plea, by which I will stand before the judge of all the world. Upon this, the sinner's plea is accepted as good in law, and accordingly he is pronounced righteous; and goes away, glorying and rejoicing, triumphing and shouting it

out, Righteous, righteous, righteous, righteous! "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory," Isaiah 45:25. And thus you see that there are nine springs of strong consolation that flow into your souls, through the imputation of Christ's righteousness unto you.

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ePub,.mobi & .pdf Editions March 2025. Requests for information should be addressed to: Monergism Books, PO Box 491, West Linn, OR 97068