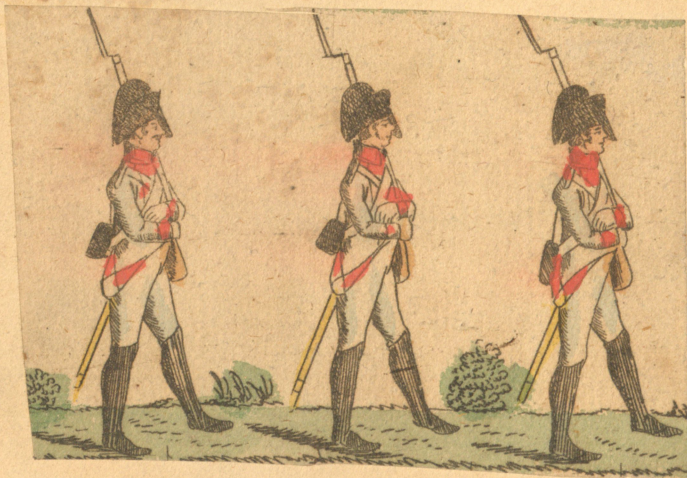


"How shall a man be just with God?"



Job 1x. 2. "How shall a man
be just with God?"

Every man living has some standard,
by which he justifies himself with his
fellow-creatures; and, it is not difficult,
at least for a while, to succeed; by
swimming with the current; and yielding
without much reflection to the wishes of
others; and by not being too honest ~~in~~ telling
them unpalatable truths. By following the

course of this world," one may be met with
smiles, and left with tears; till the
inconveniences of human caprice become
intolerable, and produce alienation or
neglect. No such imperfections or dis-
-appointments are incident to the Divine
Law, by which the Sinner becomes "just with
God." The sole impediment, lies in the
native opposition of the unconverted heart.
The Way by Faith, is thought to be dark,
and arduous; and the Way by Works, im-

-pleasant and impracticable; because they
require a Change of heart, and abody life;
for which, persevering Prayer; and Diligent
Self Examination, are indispensable.
How will erring man, be just with God;
may be, then, a more practical reading of
the passage. All persons hope to die the
Death of the Righteous; but, it is not so much
a Prayer; as a Desire, that they express,
^{when they say as Barabas did} in these words of a very bad man, who
was repentant in the midst of his Prig.

in the very act of grasping at the wages of sin,
while professing to be the servant of God! The
Lepers are not cleansed; nor do the deaf
hear; and the dead are not raised; unless
their sense of the sinfulness of their sin, springs
from a consciousness of their offensiveness to
God; and not from an apprehension of His
Punishment. The great solicitude of the
Saint, arises from his not realizing, as he
wishes to do, the amazing Love of the Son
of God, in stooping from Heaven to save

him from his sin. He can hardly "count
himself to have apprehended," this glorious
Reality; but, forgetting the things that are
behind, considering all that he has attained,
as wholly inadequate to satisfy his spirit;
he presses forward to the Mark of the
Prize of his high Calling!

But, perhaps, the Text, is rather an
Exclamation over the apparent impossibility
of the sinners coming to be "just with God;"
when there is so general a disposition in

men to justify themselves; to boast of their own
Reason; to take pride in their speculation;
and to cap at the Mysteries of the Divine
Ordinances! How can captious man, be
just with God! So long as men live in
such a state of mind, they can have no
proper feeling of their continual dependence
upon the Almighty; or of this minute in-
=specion of their hearts and lives! It is
they who have learned, most deeply, to distrust
themselves; who place the strongest reliance

on the Merits of Christ.

The Christian Ordinances, bear two
aspects; first, as means of admission to
Gospel Privileges; and second, as moral
Preparatives for an Immortality of Joy.
We are too much inclined to the former
of these; and to depend entirely on the mere
Instrumentalities, provided for placing the
Creature in Covenant Relation with his
Creator. But, the Great thing, is, to study
the Spiritual Influences, which the Sacraments

are united, and designed, to exercise over us.
We should cherish these relations, towards God,
as a Child does his Obligations to his
Parents, giving assurance of the most precious
Promises, and bestowing that moral, and
well-regulated Freedom, which, alone, can
make frail and perishable creatures happy.

They who complain, that Discussions on the
Doctrines and Ordinances, are dry, & speculative,
surely do not consider the high & holy apo-
ciations, that they form and strengthen, in

us; to quicken the sensibilities of our Conscience;
and to encourage us to patience towards
our fellow men, and to submission towards
Him, who suffered, that we might live! So far
from not being practical, they put us, at once,
upon the Great Duties of self-denial, and
active Benevolence; by the sacrifice of our
private pleasures and preferences, to seek the
Souls of our fellow creatures; and to hope
for the favour of Heaven, as we humbly
follow the steps of Christ.

We are just, by Ordinances, then, only when
such Results are produced in our Hearts and
Lives, when the Sacraments prove to us,
helps to a humble, holy, and patient walk
with God. It is in vain, however, for
Sinners to stand aloof from Ordinances. Even
human laws require the Oath of fidelity &
allegiance. The sworn Soldier, only, fights his
Country's battle. The Controversy with him,
can be waged, successfully, only by such as
take the Pledge to "show forth the Lord's

Death, till He come." The promise, is, "He
that doeth His Will, shall know of the Doctrine,
that it is of God." We can make no claim
for our pretended Zeal, while we persist in
our own way, and not Christ's, in our
proposals to promote the salvation of souls.
He has told His Creatures, clearly, what is
His Will. He leaves none, under necessity
doubt. They who will follow their irregular
schemes, even for doing good, like unlisted,
and unbidden Combatants, injure the Cause,

they claim to espouse!

We are just, then, by Faith. Such, is the comfortable doctrine of our article. We believe, that a proper use and application, of Christ's Sufferings, and Example, will enable us to "overcome evil with good;" to subvert Enmity, by Kindness; to turn away Wrath in Love; to change Cursing into Blessing; to derive peace and consolation, from deep sorrows and sharp afflictions; and to be, either rich in poverty; or poor in spirit, in the midst of wealth.

We know, that holy and faithful men, have learned all this, in the School of Christ's Discipline, and have enjoyed that "meek & quiet spirit", in all their trials; which has set them above the stripes, reproaches of wicked men; and, despising all earthly honors, in comparison with peace of conscience, they have come off as more than Conquerors, with Crowns of unfading Glory. We believe, on competent proof; as Children believe, that Ships pass the Ocean, against wind & tide,

though impeded by currents, and exposed to storms,
because they are impelled by a Power, which few
are able fully to explain. Believers, do "pass
the waves of this troublesome world;" and come
"to the Haven where they would be;" because
they take the Church, for their ark of safety.
There has never been an instance, where
one has desired, in the tempest, to forsake this
Refuge!

The Essential condition of our Justification,
in one word, is the Regeneration of our corrupt

nature, by the Holy Spirit. "Make you a new heart,
and a new spirit; for, why will ye die, O House
of Israel!" Such, was the Exhortation, in the
Prophetic age; and, the Gospel announcement,
amounts to the same thing; "Repent, and believe
on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be baptized, and
wash away your sins!" The "right Spirit," that
the Psalmist prays the Lord, to renew within
him, will cause the Disciple to do Christ's
will, uniformly, habitually, and consistently, from
first to last; not complying in some points and

Omitting others; not following the Master's steps, with
zeal, for a season; and then yielding to some
personal caprice. We must justify ourselves to
our Maker, for every proposition, that he lays us.
We must restore every faculty, unimpaired. Every
talent, must bring divine use. We must be
thankful, that he holds us to this responsibility;
since, otherwise, we should sink into torpor,
and indecidability, and wretchedness.

It is neither possible, nor needful, to tell the
time, the place, or the circumstances, under which

the Penitent obtains justifying faith. It is enough,
that his views and feelings, are not what they
formerly were; that he takes a delight in per-
forming Christian Duties and offices, which were
heretofore, burdensome; that his feet have been
led out of a crooked into a direct path.
We are often led by an influence, which we
do not feel. A person may flatter himself,
that he has reached a given result, by his
own sagacity; while he has, insensibly, followed
the guidance of some friend. Everything has

worked together for his good; and ends have been attained, at which, he did not particularly aim; but, he can not recall the precise spot, or time, where he, first, acted, by the motions of another! If a person were shut up in a dark cell, from his birth; and to grow to maturity, without ever seeing Light; the rays of the Sun, might be admitted into his apartment, one by one, in the course of as many months; without his discovering a particular period, at which, the blessings of vision were bestowed

on him. A single ray would not even stir the veil of darkness, that enveloped him. And, when several rays had entered, he would not notice them, unless they fell, directly, on his eye! Even, when objects around him, should be faintly discernible; the gradual increase of the light, would be imperceptible; and, he would know nothing of the changes of intensity, from period to period, except by his capacity to define things, which, before, he could not discover; or could apprehend but imperfectly. The Scriptures, so, define the Path

of the Just. It is, as the dawning light, which
shineth more and more, to the perfect day. The
Believer, is enlightened, by degrees, as he remains,
in patient expectation for the Coming of his Lord.
He is not thrown, at once, from the gloom of
a dungeon; into the noon-tide glare, which
would be too powerful, painful, for him, to
endure. His views of what Jesus has done & suffered
for him, become more and more touching to his
spirit; and his thoughts & affections are more more
concentrated, on the joys of the Redeemed; as he

makes the word of God, a Lantern to his feet. It is not
needful for him, to become learned, or distinguished;
to be clothed in purple, or to fare sumptuously every
day; or to stand in a high place & have multitudes
waiting for some token of his favour! The Scepter
and the spade, monoton in the same Tomb.
The bones of Princes, blend with the Beggars'
ashes. He reads his title, to better honour, in
Christ's promise; "Blessed are the pure in heart;
for they shall see God". His propensities of hatred
for sin, and devotion to holiness, are not like

paper money, of no credit; paid only in fresh emissions
of the same worthless currency. He prays the Prayer
of the atonement, earnestly, and practically; having
his life, in Christ. Death comes not, to snatch,
to interrupt their Delight; but, to consecrate
them. ^{Heavenly King} He may lay his cold hand, suddenly, on
their hearts; but, the holy affections are beyond his
power. It costs them no struggle, to give up
the world; for, their work, is finished. The
Light on the brow of the dying Disciple, is
like the soft radiance of the setting sun, that

still the agitation of the Tempest! The Clouds
are rolled away; and the golden beams gild the
mountain tops. The air is purified, & filled
with sound of Joy. We feel, that Heaven may
rise, and set again; and, that "the Righteous
shall be had, in Everlasting Remembrance."

There has been no difference, in Principle, in successive
ages. Salvation was, once, offered, by the ministry of angels;
but, the angel of the Covenant, was the anticipated Re-
deemer; who should "take on him, the Seed of Abraham".
The Greatness of this Salvation, consists, not, in the miracles,

that He performed; but, in uniting His Being with ours; & suffering
for our Sins. He forgave Sins, by no delegated authority; but,
said, so directly, "Great is thy Faith, God is peace"; that the
Jews were incensed, at His making Himself Equal with God.
That He was God, we see, from the first Christians, praying
to Him everywhere, as God; knowing their need; & able to
supply them; and, also, from the spread of His Religion,
by means least suited to gain human influence. It has
continued, under every form of Civil Government; and, the
most powerful Kingdom ever known; which oppressed and
persecuted the Church; was itself, overthrown. No hand

has ever prospered; that has been lifted against, the King=
=dom of Blessed Lord; who is still, Ruler, in
Heaven on Earth! The very terms, in which He
promises Life to His Disciples; show His Ubiquity, &
Omnipotence. "I am the Vine; Ye are the Branches". He
fills Eternity; can see all; and hear all; and sustain
all! The Inspired Writers say, He "was manifest in
the flesh; justified in the Spirit; seen of Angels; preached
unto the Gentiles; believed on in the world; received up
into Glory;" and, they say, moreover, that Believers, are
"made partakers of His Divine nature." The attributes, &

actions of the almighty, are ascribed to Him; and, the angels
of God, worship Him. He creates Human Souls; and joins
them with mortal bodies, with the same ease, that He
said, "Let there be Light;" for, He is "the author and
Giver of Life;" and said of His own Life, "I have
Power to lay it down; and, I have Power to take it again."
Departed Spirits, He called back from the Dead; and
re-united them with their bodies; from which, it was
inferred, that "It was not possible for Him to be holder of
Death;" or to lose His power to restore such as believe
in Him, from the Grave! Where, then, is he that

condemneth any child of God; since it is Christ, who
justifieth! Our Salvation, is Great, in life; it is greater, in
Death; it is greatest of all, in the Judgment. See all
these, it delivers us! all things else, are little, & low,
and weak, and worthless! Yet, men, often, think it a
Great thing, to justify a fellow creature, on Earth! Strange,
that we must urge Reasons, upon Reasons, to induce a
Sinner, to accept safety from the death-terrors of the
Guilty Conscience!

Be persuaded, then, my Hearers, to entertain this Clear,
and undoubting assent to the Doctrines; & Princples of

the Gospel, which adopts them, with heart & soul, &
mind and strength, because God has revealed them
and established them; for, such is Christian Faith;
a dependence on the veracity of Him who has
promised; and for no other reason, than that He
has promised. We cherish this trust & confidence
in the Speaker & Proposer, that we give up our
whole being to His guidance; nay, we live
in Him; and see with His Eyes, and hear with
His Ears, and understand with His Heart;
for, if we just, through Faith in His Blood,

we are "one with Him;" and, we "dwell in Him,
and He in us!" In a loose sense, men
may speculatively believe, without experiencing any
such living result; because, their Faith, not
doing the same works, not rendering the same
obedience, is, to all the intents & purposes of
Christian Life, inoperative and unfruitful.
Such men acknowledge, there is a God; that He
governs the world by Christ: & will judge it
by Him; but, they are not preparing to meet
their God, in Peace! They only tremble, while they so believe!

