

**THE SCRIPTURE GROUND  
OF JUSTIFICATION; OR,  
AN INQUIRY INTO THE  
DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE**

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The Scripture ground of justification; or, An inquiry into the doctrine of Scripture by E. H. Hoare

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**E. H. HOARE**

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# THE SCRIPTURE GROUND

OF

## JUSTIFICATION;

OR,

In Inquiry

INTO THE DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE

CONCERNING

THE ACTIVE AND PASSIVE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST.

With a Notice

OF THE BISHOP OF OSSORY'S ARGUMENTS ON THE SUBJECT,  
CONTAINED IN HIS VOLUME OF TEN SERMONS ON  
JUSTIFICATION, PREACHED IN THE CHAPEL  
OF TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN.

BY THE

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## PREFACE.

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THE following Treatise has not been written in the least degree for the sake of controversy, but from a simple desire to set forth what the Author considers to be the testimony of Scripture upon a confessedly important subject, namely, *the ground* of a sinner's justification before God. This he believes to be Christ's meritorious cross and sufferings, and not the Active Obedience of His life. He is aware that many of eminence in the Christian Church have been and are opposed to this statement; and it has lessened the pleasure he would otherwise have had in the investigation; while at the same time it has convinced him that the discussion is far from being superfluous. Human authority has not been relied on, although, as will be shown, men, "whose praise is throughout all the Churches," have maintained the same doctrine; such as Beza, Bullinger, Calvin, D. Pareus, Piscator, Tillotson, and Whitby. But the simple question with the Author has been, "What saith the Scripture" upon the subject? His appeal throughout has been, "To the law and to the testimony." Some passages which *seemed* unfavourable to the principle advocated in this treatise, and which are rested upon by its opponents, were found to give way upon its application, (and that without any violence done to the Sacred Text) and thus to strengthen the induction, instead of destroying or even weaken-

ing it. What is true in Natural Philosophy is true also in Divinity. "The surest and best characteristic of a well-founded and extensive induction is, when verifications of it spring up, as it were, spontaneously into notice, from quarters where they might be least expected, or even among instances of that very kind which were at first considered hostile to them. Evidence of this kind is irresistible, and compels assent with a weight which scarcely any other possesses."\* It is freely admitted that this is not a point *affecting salvation*: yet it cannot be doubted that a clear view of the Scripture-doctrine on such a subject is very important, especially for those whose duty it is to "speak as the oracles of God." The doctrine of *imputed righteousness* is maintained in this treatise in all strictness: it is *the ground*, or procuring cause of it, which forms the subject of inquiry. Reference is had to justification only, and not to sanctification, or the law as the undoubted rule of every true believer's life. It has been the Writer's desire to discuss the question in the spirit which alone befits the study of the Divine Word; and if he has expressed his views with plainness and decision, it has arisen from a deeply-rooted conviction of their correctness, and a wish that his meaning should not be misunderstood by any. He only asks, that his expositions of the various texts of Scripture which have come before him and his arguments in general be considered with candour and impartiality, and he willingly leaves the issue with God,—having aimed at nothing but the advancement of His Truth.

\* Herschel's Natural Philosophy. Page 170. Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopædia.

# THE SCRIPTURAL GROUND OF JUSTIFICATION.

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CLEAR and correct views of the doctrine of justification are of the greatest importance ; for if any doctrine may be said to be fundamental, it is *this*. And whence shall we obtain such correct views but from the sacred Scriptures ; which are the Depository and Fountain of the Truth ? To the Scriptures, then, our appeal must be made on the subject. Our present Inquiry is to be, What *that* is, for the sake of which God accounts any of the sinful children of men RIGHTEOUS ? Is it Christ's Active Obedience to the precepts of the Moral Law for man ? Or, is it His sufferings and death upon the cross ? Or, is it both of these together ? Many hold, that while Christ's sufferings atone for, and obtain the remission of, sin, His Active Obedience to the demands of the Law constitutes the believer's righteousness, and so becomes his title to Heaven. The present work is designed to show, that there is no foundation for the latter statement ; but that Christ's sufferings and death are set forth in Scripture as abundantly sufficient to "magnify the law and make it honourable," and to answer all the purposes and will of God in regard to the great matter of a sinner's justification.

Before entering upon the consideration of the direct testimony of the Scripture, two things may be stated, which, if duly weighed, will serve to prepare the mind for the better under-



standing of the subject, and to remove some objections which in the outset are apt to be brought against the view here advocated.

The first respects Christ's *substitution* for us, or His standing in our stead. It cannot but have been observed, that when the Active Obedience of Christ for justification is insisted on, a *supposed necessity* for it is at once alleged. Christ is regarded as man's substitute; and the law of God, or rather the Covenant of works, requiring from man himself perfect obedience, it is said, that this perfect obedience must be paid by the substitute, and put down to the account of those in whose place He stood. But when God gave His law to man, He did *not* say to him, Either *thou* must keep the law, or *another* for thee; and if it be broken, thou shalt die, or another for thee. When the original Covenant or engagement with man was broken, *it rested altogether with the Lawgiver to determine in what way His justice and other perfections should be satisfied*, and the honour of His moral government asserted, in connection with a purpose of mercy to the offenders. If the terms of the law are to be understood as strictly as the advocates of Christ's Active Obedience assert, the salvation of a sinner would have been altogether hopeless, "*Do this, and thou shalt live.*" Nothing is said here of anyone else doing it for him. And thus the way was left open for the bringing in of a new and better Covenant. Substitution, or the putting of one person or thing in the place of another, was doubtless a prevailing principle in the divine plan. But it was not substitution strictly in *kind* or in *degree*. *One* was substituted for *many*. "The Lord from heaven,"—"The Word made flesh,"—took the place of those who were only "flesh" and "earthly." The curse of hanging some hours upon a tree was substituted for the curse of everlasting fire. The "disobedience by which many were

made sinners" was to a positive precept given to Adam in Paradise, that he should not eat of a certain tree in the garden. But the Redeemer was not placed in Paradise; nor was "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" the test of that "obedience by which many are made righteous." It is "zeal," then, "not according to knowledge," when any take upon themselves to say, that the *Active* Obedience of Christ to the precepts of the law forms the righteousness which is necessary to the justification of a sinner. We may be quite sure that God would take care of the honour of His own law; but we must learn from Him, and not dictate to Him, the means of doing this. And as substitution has entered so largely into the divine proceedings respecting man's salvation, no reason can be given why it should not be applied also here, and *the doing of God's will by His incarnate Son, when He offered Himself on the cross,—and not His Active Obedience to the precepts of the moral law,—*be accepted by the Father as a full equivalent both for the obedience and the disobedience of the whole world.

The second thing, which may properly be considered in the opening of the subject, has respect to *sins*;—what sin is, and what is the actual state into which the forgiveness of sin brings us. A due appreciation of this would remove the difficulties and the objections so commonly met with in this discussion. Sin is *twofold*. It consists in either the neglect of what God has commanded to be done, or the doing of any thing which God has forbidden to be done. The former is called a sin of omission: the latter a sin of commission. But both of these are *sins*. It is surely quite as much a transgression of God's law when His rational creature, man, fails to do what God has bidden him do, and quite as offensive in His sight, as when he does what God has plainly and expressly

said he must not do. The Lawgiver's authority is as much set at nought and the honour of His law sullied, by the one as by the other; and sin in this *treacherous* character attaches to every child of Adam. But, blessed be God, sin, *all* sin, may be, and through Christ is, forgiven. Let forgiveness, then, be applied to the two kinds of sin just mentioned. And what does it do for the man who is forgiven? His sins of *commission* are considered as though they had never been committed. His *neglect of duty* can no longer be charged against him, (or he would have *sin*; but this has been entirely removed by forgiveness;) and so he may stand and with humble boldness challenge the law and justice of God to find in him any fault at all. Although the law cannot abate one tittle of its demand of full and perfect obedience,—although it says, (and justly says) “Pay me that thou owest, even to the uttermost farthing,”—the pardoned sinner may reply, with all *humility*, (knowing that he has not in any wise to thank himself for the high privilege) yet with all *confidence*, “I owe thee nothing. Point out, if thou canst, a single instance of *defect of duty* or the least departure from the strict rule of thy requirements.” If the law could do either of these, there would be *sin*; but sin has been pardoned and put away. Thus remission of sin exalts or fills up the valleys of our deficiencies of duty, and it makes low or removes the mountains and hills of our evil doings. It makes all *straight and level with the law*: and surely this is *righteousness*. And hence the sinner who is forgiven not only claims deliverance from punishment, but makes good his indefeasible title to eternal life. To have sin not imputed is to have *righteousness* imputed; as St. Paul will be found to teach in his Epistle to the Romans. What a cheering, heart-reviving view does this give of the blessedness of forgiveness! And if this view were taken, there would be no more need to discuss the question of