

**Justification Vindicated by Robert Traill. The Banner of Truth Trust, Carlisle, Pennsylvania. First published in 1692. New revised edition 2002. Pb.77 pp. Reviewed by Johan D.Tangelder.**

The Biblical view of justification has received little attention outside evangelical/reformed circles, though in 1997 a prominent group of Roman Catholics and evangelical Protestants issued a much debated statement on the meaning of salvation, and especially the doctrine of justification. Since this doctrine is central to the Biblical narrative of salvation, the Christian church stands or falls with it.

Robert Traill (1642-1716), son of a Scottish Covenanting minister, expounds and defends with brevity and clarity that justification is by grace alone, through faith alone, and on the ground of Christ's righteousness alone. He passionately and persuasively refutes all charges from the Roman Catholics and Arminians of his time against this doctrine. He notes that all the great fundamentals of Christian truth centre in this doctrine of justification. "The Trinity of Persons in the Godhead; the incarnation of the only begotten of the Father; the satisfaction paid to the law and justice of God for the sins of the world in that flesh he assumed; and the divine authority of the Scriptures which reveal all this: these are all straight lines of truth that centre in this doctrine of justification of a sinner by the imputation and application of that satisfaction." Traill also shows that justification is a verdict of acquittal, and so excluding all possibilities of condemnation. He affirms that a sinner, for his actual justification, must lay hold on and plead this redemption in Christ's blood by faith. The place of faith in justification is only that of a hand or instrument, receiving the righteousness of Christ, for the sake of which alone, we are justified.

Although this booklet was written in the 17th century, its arguments are still relevant. In our time of easy believism and doctrinal laxity, Traill's treatise will greatly encourage Reformed churches to uphold, teach, and champion the crucial doctrine of justification by faith.