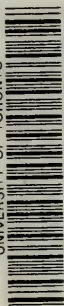


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# CHECKS TO ANTINOMIANISM,

BY THE REV. JOHN FLETCHER,

VICAR OF MADELEY, SALOP.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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LOGICA GENEVENSIS:

OR, A

FOURTH CHECK TO ANTINOMIANISM.

IN WHICH

ST. JAMES'S PURE RELIGION

IS DEFENDED AGAINST THE CHARGES, AND ESTABLISHED  
UPON THE CONCESSIONS, OF

*MR. RICHARD AND MR. ROWLAND HILL,*

IN A

SERIES OF LETTERS TO THOSE GENTLEMEN.

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BY THE REV. JOHN FLETCHER,

VICAR OF MADELEY.

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Tenth Edition.

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Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and [scriptural] doctrine; for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine.—2 TIM. iv. 2, 3.

Wherefore, rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith. But let brotherly love continue.—TITUS i. 13; HEB. xiii. 1.



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TO ALL

## CANDID CALVINISTS

IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

---

HONOURED AND DEAR BRETHREN,

A STUDENT from Geneva, who has had the honour of being admitted a Minister of your Church, takes the liberty of dedicating to you these *Strictures on GENEVA LOGIC*, which were written both for the better information of your candid judgment, and to obtain tolerable terms of peace from his worthy opponents.

Some, who mistake blunt truth for sneering insolence, and mild ironies for bitter sarcasms, will probably dissuade you from looking into this *FOURTH CHECK TO ANTINOMIANISM*. They will tell you that *Logica Genevensis* is a “very bad book,” full of “calumny, forgeries, vile slanders, acrimonious sneers, and horrid misrepresentations.” But candour, which condemns no one before he is heard, which weighs both sides of the question in an impartial balance, will soon convince you, that if ever irony proceeds from spleen and acrimony of spirit, there is as much of both in these four words of my honoured opponent, “*Pietas Oxonien-*

sis," and "Goliath Slain,"\* as in all the Four Checks; and that I have not exceeded the apostolic direction of my motto, "Rebuke them sharply," or rather *αποτομως*, *cuttingly*, "but let brotherly love continue."

I do not deny that some points of doctrine, which many hold in great veneration, excite pity or laughter in my Checks. But how can I help it? If a painter, who knows not how to flatter, draws to the life an object excessively ridiculous in itself, must it not appear excessively ridiculous in his picture? Is it right to exclaim against his pencil as malicious, and his colours as unfair, because he impartially uses them according to the rules of his art? And can any unprejudiced person expect that he should draw the picture of the *night*, without using any black shades at all?

If the charge of "bitterness" does not entirely set you against this book, they will try to frighten you from reading it, by protesting, that I throw down the foundation of Christianity, and help Mr. Wesley to place works and merit on the Redeemer's throne. To this dreadful charge I answer, 1. That I had rather my right hand should lose its cunning to all eternity, than use it a moment to detract from the Saviour's real glory, to whom I am more indebted than any other man in the world. 2. That

\* The ironical titles of two books written by my opponents, to expose the proceedings of the University of Oxford, respecting the expulsion of six students belonging to Edmund Hall.

the strongest pleas I produce for holiness and good works are quotations from the Homilies of our own Church, as well as from the Puritan Divines, whom I cite preferably to others, because they held what you are taught to call “the doctrines of grace.” 3. That what I have said of those doctrines recommends itself to every unprejudiced person’s reason and conscience. 4. That my capital arguments in favour of practical Christianity are founded upon our second justification by the evidence of works in the great day; a doctrine which my opponent himself cannot help assenting to. 5. That from first to last, when the meritorious cause of our justification is considered, we set works aside; praying God not to enter into judgment with us, or weigh our merits, but to pardon our offences for Christ’s sake; and gladly ascribing the whole of our salvation to his alone merits, as much as Calvin or Dr. Crisp does. 6. That when the word *meriting*, *deserving*, or *worthy*, which our Lord himself uses again and again, is applied to good works or good men, we mean absolutely nothing but “rewardable,” or “qualified for the reception of a gracious reward.” And 7. That even this improper merit or rewardableness of good works is entirely derived from Christ’s proper merit, who works what is good in us; and from the gracious promise of God, who has freely engaged himself to recompense the fruits of righteousness, which his own grace enables us to produce.

I hope, honoured brethren, that these hints will so far break the waves of prejudice which beat against your candour, as to prevail upon you not to reject this little means of information. If you condescend to peruse it, I trust it will minister to your edification, by enlarging your views of Christ's prophetic and kingly office; by heightening your ideas of that practical religion which the Scriptures perpetually enforce; by lessening your regard for some well-meant mistakes, on which good men have too hastily put the stamp of orthodoxy; and by giving you a more favourable opinion of the sentiments of your Remonstrant brethren, who would rejoice to live at peace with you in the kingdom of grace, and walk in love with you to the kingdom of glory. But, whether you consent to give them the right hand of fellowship or not, nobody, I think, can be more glad to offer it you, than he, who, with undissembled respect, remains,

Honoured and dear Brethren,

Your affectionate Brother, and  
obedient Servant in Christ,

JOHN FLETCHER.

LOGICA GENEVENSIS :

OR, A

FOURTH CHECK TO ANTINOMIANISM.

---

LETTER I.

TO RICHARD HILL, ESQ. ' "

HONOURED AND DEAR SIR,

My entering the field of controversy to defend St. James's pure religion procured me your Five Letters, which I compare to a shower of rain gently descending from the placid heaven. But the Six which have followed, resemble a storm of hail, pouring down from the lowering sky, ushered by some harmless flashes of lightning, and accompanied by the rumbling of distant thunder. If my comparison is just, it is no wonder that when I read them first, I was almost thunder-struck, and began to fear, lest, instead of adding *light*, I had only added *heat*, to the hasty zeal which I endeavoured to check.

But, at the second perusal, my drooping hopes revive : The disburdened clouds began to break : The air, discharged of the exhalations which rendered it sultry or hazy, seems clearer and cooler than before ; and the smiling plains of evangelical truth, viewed through that defecated medium, appear more gay after the unexpected storm. Methinks even moderation, the phenix consumed by our polemic fires, is going to rise out of its ashes ; and that, notwithstanding the din of a controversial war, the voice of the turtle is still heard in our land.

May the gentle sound approach nearer and nearer, and tune our listening hearts to the melodious accents of Divine and brotherly love ! And thou Prince of Peace, thou true Solomon, thou pacific Son of warlike David ; should an evil spirit come upon me as it did upon Saul, to make me dip my pen in the envenomed gall of discord, or turn it into a javelin to strike my dear opponent through and through, mercifully bow the heavens, gently touch the strings of my heart, and play upon them the melting tune of forgiving love ! Teach me to check the rapid growth of Antinomian errors, without hindering the slow progress of thy precious truth ; and graciously instruct me how to defend an insulted, venerable father, without hurting an honoured, though, alas ! prepossessed, brother. If the latter has offended, suffer me not to fall upon him with the whip of merciless revenge ; and if I must use the rod of reproof, teach me to weigh every stroke in the balance of the sanctuary with tender fear, and yet with honest impartiality.

Should I, in this encounter, gracious Lord, overcome by thy wisdom my worthy antagonist, help me by thy meekness to give him an example of Christian moderation ; and while I tie him with the cords of a man and a believer, while I bind him with reason and Scripture to the left wheel of thy Gospel chariot, which, alas ! he mistakes for a wheel of Antichrist's carriage ; let me rejoice to be tied by him with the same easy bonds to the right wheel, which he, without reason, fears I am determined to stop. And when we are thus mutually bound to the triumphant car, draw us with double swiftness to the happy regions where the good, as well as the wicked, cease from troubling, and those who are weary of contention are at rest. So shall we leave for ever behind the deep and noisy waters of strife, in which so many bigots miserably perish ; and the barren mountains of



Gilboa, where hurried Saul falls upon the point of his own controversial sword, and lovely Jonathan himself receives a mortal wound.

---

You remember, honoured Sir, that I opened the Second Check to Antinomianism, by demonstrating, that in the day of judgment we shall be justified by works, that is, by the evidence of works. A person of your penetration could not but see, that, if this legal proposition stood, your favourite doctrines of finished salvation, and Calvinian imputation of righteousness to an impenitent adulterer, would lose their exorbitant influence. You design, therefore, to bend yourself, with Samson's might, upon this adamantine pillar of our heretical doctrine. Let us see whether your redoubled efforts have shaken it, or only shown that it stands as firm as the pillars of heaven.

You enter upon the arduous labour of deciding, in your first paragraph, that I deal in "sneer, banter, sarcasm, notorious falsehood, calumny, and gross perversions;" and, to confirm this charge, you produce three anonymous letters, one of which deposes that what I have written upon finished salvation "is enough to make every child of God shudder;" while another pronounces, that my "book is full of groundless and false arguments;" and the third, that I am "infatuated," and have "advanced pernicious doctrines in bitter expressions." Your initial charge, supported by this threefold authority, will probably pass for a demonstration with some of your readers; but as I consider it only as a faint imitation of Calvin's book, called, *Responsio ad calumnias Nebulonis*, I hasten to what looks a little like an argument.

Page 4, you say, concerning justification by works, that is, by the evidence of works in the last

day, "I may *safely affirm* that it has no existence in the word of God." So, honoured Sir, the plainest and fullest passages of the sacred oracles, are, it seems, to fly like chaff before your *safe affirmation*; for you have not supported it by one single text. Near twenty have I produced which declare with one consent that we shall be judged, not according to our faith, but according to our works; and that the *doers* of the law, and they alone, shall be justified in the last day; but in your "*full and particular answer to my book*," you take a full and easy leap over most of these texts. Two, however, you touch upon; let us see if you have been able to press them into the service of your doctrine.

1. You find fault with our translation of Rev. xxii. 14, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life." You say, that the word which is rendered *right*, properly signifies *privilege*. Granting it for peace's sake, I ask, What do you get by this criticism? Absolutely nothing; for the word *privilege* proves my point as well as the word *right*; unless you can demonstrate that it makes a material difference in the sense of the following similar sentence: "Blessed was the son of Aaron, whom Moses anointed High-priest, that he might have the *right* (or, that he might have the *privilege*) of entering once a year into the holy of holies." If those different expressions convey the same idea, your objection is frivolous, and Rev. xxii. 14, even according to your own translation, still evidently confirms the words of our Lord and his favourite disciple:—"If thou wilt enter into *life*, keep the commandments: And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another."

2. The other text you touch upon is, Matt. xii. 36, 37, "In the day of judgment, by thy words shalt thou be justified." Page 10, you thus com-



ment upon it : “ Our Lord points out the danger of vain and idle words ; and affirms, that as every tree is known by its fruit, so may the true state of the heart be known by the evil or good things which proceed out of the mouth ; and having *laid down this rule of judgment*, he adds the words which you have so often cited in defence of your doctrine, ‘ By thy words thou shalt be justified,’ &c., that is, As words and works are the streams which flow from the spring of the heart, so by these it will appear whether that stream *was ever*” (I would say with more propriety, *is now*) “ purified by grace ; or whether it still remains in its natural corrupt state ; the actions of a man being the *declarative evidences*, both here and at the great day, whether or no *he was*” (I would say, *he is*) “ among the trees of righteousness which the Lord hath planted : This is the plain easy sense of this passage.”

Is it indeed, honoured Sir ? Well then, I have the pleasure of informing you, that supposing you allow of my little alterations, we are exactly of the same sentiment ; and I think that, upon second thoughts, you will not reject them : For it is evident, the actions of to-day show what a free agent is to-day, and not what he was yesterday, or will be six months hence. By what argument will you prove that because Lucifer was once a bright angel, and Adam a god-like creature, they continued such under all the horrors of their rebellion ? or that David’s repentance after Nathan’s expostulations evidenced that he was a penitent before ? In the last day the grand inquiry will not be, whether Hymeneus, Philetus, and Demas, “ were ever purified by grace ;” but whether they were so at death. Because our last works will be admitted as the last, and consequently the most important and decisive, evidences ; for as the tree falls so it lies. Apostates, far from

being justified for having been once purified by grace, will be counted worthy of a sorer punishment for having turned from the way of righteousness. Would not the world hiss a physician, who should publicly maintain, that, by feeling people's pulse now, he can tell whether they were ever sick or well? or that, because one of his patients was alive ten years ago, he is alive now, though every symptom of death and corruption is actually upon him? And shall your hint, honoured Sir, persuade your readers, that what would be an imposition upon common sense in a gentleman of the faculty, is genuine orthodoxy in Mr. Hill?

But I have too high an opinion of your good sense and piety, dear Sir, to think that you will persist in your inaccuracy, merely for the pleasure of maintaining the ridiculous perseverance of Antinomian apostates; and contradicting the God of truth, who expressly mentions the righteous turning from his righteousness, and dying in the sin that he has sinned. My hopes that you will give it up are the more sanguine, as it is rectified in the same page, by two quotations, which have the full stamp of your approbation.

“The judicious Dr. Guyse,” say you, “paraphrases thus on the place: ‘Your words, as well as actions, shall be produced in evidence for or against you, to prove,’” (not whether you *ever* were, but) “‘whether you *are* a saint or a sinner, a true believer or not; and according to their evidence you shall be either publicly acquitted or condemned in the great day.’” And as it is absurd to suppose that Christ shall inquire whether men *are* believers in the day of judgment, because faith will then be lost in sight, Mr. Wesley, whom you quote next as if he contradicted me, wisely corrects the little inaccuracy of the Doctor, and says, “Your words as well as actions shall be produced

in evidence for or against you, to prove, (not whether you *are*, but,) whether you *was* a true believer or not, and according to the evidence you will either be acquitted or condemned in the great day." The very doctrine this which I have advanced at large in the Second Check.

However, triumphing as if you had won the day, you conclude by saying, "In the mouth of these two witnesses may *the truth* be firmly established." To this pious wish, honoured Sir, my soul breathes out a cordial *Amen!* I rejoice to see that God has given you candour to the acknowledgment of *the truth*: And as it is firmly established in the mouth of Dr. Guyse and Mr. Wesley, may it be for ever confirmed by this spontaneous testimony of Mr. Hill! But in the name of brotherly love, if you thus hold *the truth* which I contend for, that is, justification by the evidence of works in the last day, why do you oppose me? Why do you represent my sentiment, "as full of rottenness and deadly poison?" Till you solve this problem, permit me to vent my surprise by a sigh, and to say, *Logica Genevensis!*

Having seen how fully and particularly you have granted the fundamental doctrine of the book to which you was to give a full and particular answer, namely, that our final justification will turn upon the evidence of works in the last day, I go back to page 4, where, to my utter astonishment, you affirm, "that as this doctrine has no existence in the word of God, so neither in any Protestant Church under heaven!" Thus, to unchurch Mr. Wesley and me, you unchurch Dr. Guyse and yourself!

To support your assertion you quote Bishop Cowper, Dr. Fulke, and Mr. Hervey, who agree to maintain, that "justification is *one single act*, and must therefore be done or undone." As neither you nor they have supported this proposition

by one single argument, I shall just observe, that a thousand Bishops and Doctors are lighter than vanity, when weighed in the balance against the authority of Christ and his Apostles.

However, if you forget your proofs, I shall produce mine; and by the following syllogism I demonstrate, that justification in the day of our conversion, and justification in the last day, are no more one single act, than the day of the sinner's conversion, and that of judgment, are one single day.

Two acts, which differ as to time, place, persons, witnesses, and circumstances, &c., cannot be one single act: (The one may be done when the other remains undone:) But our first justification, at conversion, thus differs from our second justification in the great day: Therefore our first and second\* justification cannot be one single act, &c

The second proposition which alone is disputable, may be thus abundantly proved. Our first and second justification differs, 1. With respect to time: The time of the one is the hour of conversion; and the time of the other the day of judgment. 2. With respect to place: The place of the former is this earth; and the place of the latter the awful spot, in the new heaven or on the new earth, where the tribunal of Christ shall be erected. 3. With respect to the witnesses: The witnesses of the former are the Spirit of God and our own conscience; or, to speak in Scripture language, the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit that we are the children of God: But the witnesses of the latter will be the countless myriads of men and angels assembled before Christ. 4. With

\* I still call them *first* and *second*, not only to accommodate myself to the Rev. Mr. Shirley's expression in his Narrative, but because they may with propriety be thus distinguished, when considered with respect to each other.

respect to the Justifier : In the former justification, one God justifies the circumcision and uncircumcision ; and in the latter, one Mediator between God and man, even the man Christ Jesus, will pronounce the sentence ; for the Father judgeth no man, but has committed all judgment to the Son. 5. With respect to the justified : In the day of conversion a penitent sinner is justified ; in the day of judgment, a persevering saint. 6. With respect to the article upon which justification will turn : Although the meritorious cause of both our justifications is the same, that is, the blood and righteousness of Christ, yet the instrumental cause is very different ; by *faith* we obtain (not purchase) the *first*, and by *works* the *second*. 7. With respect to the act of the Justifier : At our conversion, God covers and pardons our sins ; but in the day of judgment, Christ uncovers and approves our righteousness. And, Lastly, with regard to the consequences of both : At the first justification, we are enlisted by the Friend of sinners to fight the good fight of faith in the Church militant ; and at the second, we are admitted by the righteous Judge to receive a crown of righteousness, and shine like the sun in the Church triumphant.

Is it not strange, that the enchanting power of Calvinian logic should have detained us so long in Babel, where things so vastly different are perpetually confounded ? Is it not deplorable, that, when Mr. Wesley has the courage to call us out of mystic *Geneva*, so many tongues and pens should be sharpened against him ? Shall foreign logic for ever prevail over English good sense, and Christian brotherly kindness ? Have we so “ leaned towards Calvinism,” as to be totally past recovery ? And is the balance between St. Paul’s and St. James’s justification lost among pious Protestants for ever ? O ye regenerate Britons, who



have unhappily fallen in love with the Geneva Delilah, awake! awake! put on strength, and leap out of the arms of that enchantress. If she rocks you asleep in her bosom, it is only to bind you fast with cords of Antinomian practices. Has she not already cut off the locks, and put out the eyes, of thousands? And does not Samson publicly grind for the Philistines? Have we not seen Mr. Hill himself tell the world, that all sins work for good to the pleasant children, who go on forwardly from adultery to treachery, and from treachery to murder?

But you have an answer ready. Page 6, you insinuate, that it is I who have erected a Babel, by denying that the two above-described justifications are one and the same: And, to prove it, you advance a dilemma which is already obviated in the Third Check. We readily grant you, honoured Sir, that if a man dies the moment he is justified by faith, the inward labour of his love (for living faith always works by love) will justify him in the day of judgment. But you must also grant us, that if he lives, and turns from his righteousness; or, which is the same, if his faith, instead of working by love and obedience, works by lust and malice, by adultery and murder, it is no longer a living faith; it is the dead faith of which St. James says, "What does it profit, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can that faith save him? Faith, if it hath not works, is dead." You see then, how that, in what you call "the intermediate state," as well as in the last day, "by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." James ii.

Page 6, you assert, that my "favourite scheme is rather overthrown than supported by the instance of the collier," on whose evidence I supposed myself acquitted in a court of judicature. "His testimony," say you, "proves indeed your inno-

cence, but it does in no degree *constitute* that innocence." Are then to *justify a man*, and to *constitute him innocent*, expressions of the same import? Nay, some believe, that when God justifies returning prodigals at their conversion, he does not constitute them innocent, but for Christ's sake mercifully pardons their manifold sins, and graciously accepts their guilty persons; and that when Christ shall justify persevering saints in the last day, he will not constitute them innocent, but only declare, upon the evidence of their last works, that they are pure in heart, and therefore qualified to see God and worthy to obtain that world where the children of the resurrection are equal to angels.

To show that the instance of the grafted tree overthrows also the doctrine of a two-fold justification, you quote that great and good man, Mr. Hervey. But you forget that his bare assertion is no better than your own. I appeal from both your assertions to the common sense of any impartial man, whether there is not a material difference between declaring that a *crab-stock* is properly grafted; and pronouncing that an *apple-tree* is not cankered and barren, but sound and fruitful. Mr. Hervey's mistake appears to me so much the more surprising, as the distinction which he explodes is every where obvious.

Look into your orchards, and you will see some trees that were once properly grafted, but are now blasted, dead, rotten, and perhaps torn up by the roots. Consider our congregations, and you will cry out as the pious Divine \* under whose ministry you sit at present, "O what sad instances does the

\* The Rev. Mr. De Courcy, in his "Delineation of true and false Zeal," a little edifying tract, which does justice to St. James's pure religion, and shows that some pious Calvinists clearly see the growth, and honestly check the progress, of Antinomianism, so far as their principles will allow.

present state of the Church afford us, of persons who set out with a most vehement zeal at the beginning, seemed to promise great things, and carry all before them ; who are now like the snuff of an extinguished taper, devoid of any apparent life ! We swarm with slumbering virgins on the right hand and on the left. 'The Delilah of this world has shorn their locks, their former strength is gone, their frame is totally enervated, and the Philistines are upon them.'

But above all, search the Oracles of God, and there you will see various descriptions of apostates, that is, of men who, to the last, tread under foot the Son of God, and account the blood of the covenant, wherewith they are sanctified, and consequently justified, a common, despicable thing. These, in a dying hour, have no right to say, "I have kept the faith ;" for, alas ! by putting away a *good* conscience, concerning faith they have made shipwreck. These, like withered branches of the heavenly vine, in which they once blossomed, shall be taken away, cast forth, and burned, in the last day, together with the chaff, for not bearing fruit, and ending in the *flesh* : Agreeable to that awful clause of the Gospel charter : "The works of the *flesh* are adultery, fornication, uncleanness, idolatry, hatred, variance, wrath, strife, envying, murder, drunkenness, revellings, and such like : Of which I tell you, (justified believers,) as I have told you in time past, that they who *do* such things *shall not* inherit the kingdom of heaven." Thus, the numerous tribe of apostates, after having been justified by faith in the day of their conversion, shall be condemned by works in the day of judgment. So real, so important is the distinction, which Mr. Hervey looks upon as needless, and you, Sir, as "full of deadly poison."

However, says Bishop Cowper, "This distinction confounds two benefits, justification and sanc-



tification." To this assertion, which, according to a grand rule of your logic, is also to pass for proof, I answer, that our sanctification will no more be confounded with our justification in the last day, than our faith is confounded with our acceptance in the day of our conversion. When you shall demonstrate, that the witnesses upon whose testimony a criminal is absolved, are the same thing as the sentence of absolution pronounced by the judge, you will be able to make it appear, that sanctification is the same thing as justification in the last day; or, which is all one, that there is no difference between an instrumental cause, and its proper effect. May both our hearts lie open to the bright beams of convincing truth! And may you believe that my pen expresses the feelings of my heart when I subscribe myself,

Honoured and dear Sir,

Your most obedient Servant in Him who  
will justify us by our words,

JOHN FLETCHER.

## LETTER II.

*TO RICHARD HILL, ESQ.*

HONOURED AND DEAR SIR,

AN assertion of your's seems to me of greater moment than the quotation from Bishop Cowper, which I answered in my last. You maintain, (page 11,) that "the doctrine of a two-fold justification is not to be found in any part of the Liturgy of our Church."

I. Not to mention again the latter part of St. Athanasius's Creed; permit me, Sir, to ask you, if on the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Sundays after Trinity, you never considered what is implied

in these and the like petitions? "Grant that we may so faithfully serve thee in this life, that we fail not finally to attain thy heavenly promises through the merits of Jesus Christ. Make us to love that which thou dost command, that we may obtain that which thou dost promise." Again, on St. Peter's day, "Make all pastors diligently to preach thy holy word, and the people obediently to follow the same, that they may receive the crown of everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ." And on the Third Sunday in Advent, "Grant that thy ministers may so prepare thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient, that, at thy second coming to judge the world, we may be found an acceptable people in thy sight."

St. James's justification by works, consequent upon justification by faith, is described in the service for Ash-Wednesday: "*If* from henceforth we walk in his ways, *if* we follow him in lowliness, patience, and charity, and be ordered by the governance of his Holy Spirit, seeking always his glory, and serving him duly with thanksgiving." Then comes the description of our final justification, which is but a solemn and public confirmation of St. James's justification by works: "This *if* we do, Christ will deliver us from the curse of the law, and from the extreme malediction which shall light upon them that shall be set on the left hand; and he will set us on his right hand, and give us the gracious benediction of his Father, commanding us to take possession of his glorious kingdom."—*Commination*.

I flatter myself, honoured Sir, that you will not set these quotations aside, by just saying, what you do on another occasion: "As to the quotation you have brought from Mr. Henry in defence of this doctrine, for any good it does your cause, it might as well have been urged in defence of extreme unction." I hope you will not object, that the

words, "second justification by works," are not in our Liturgy; for if the *thing* is evidently there, what can a candid inquirer after truth require more? Should you have recourse to such an argument, you will permit me to ask you, What would you say to those who assert, that the *doctrine* of the Trinity is not found in the Scripture, because the word "Trinity" is not read there? And the same answers which you would give to such opponents, I now before-hand return to yourself.

II. As final justification by the evidence of works is clearly asserted in our Liturgy, so it is indirectly maintained in our Articles. You know, honoured Sir, that the Eleventh treats of justification by faith at our conversion; and you yourself very justly observe, (p. 11,) "that our Reformers seemed to have had an eye to the words of our Lord,—‘The tree is known (i. e., is evidenced) by its fruits,’ when they drew up our Twelfth Article, which asserts that a lively faith may be as evidently known by good works, as a tree discerned by its fruit." This, honoured Sir, is the very basis of Mr. Wesley's "rotten" doctrine; the very foundation on which St. James builds his pure and undefiled religion. This being granted, it necessarily follows, to the overthrow of your favourite scheme, that a living, justifying faith may degenerate into a dead condemning faith, as surely as David's faith, once productive of the fruits of righteousness, degenerated into a faith productive of adultery and murder.

You are aware of the advantage that the Twelfth Article gives us over you; therefore, to obviate it, you insinuate, in your Five Letters, that David's faith, when he committed adultery, was the same as when he danced before the ark. It was justifying faith still, only "in the winter season." This argument, which will pass for a demonstration in Geneva, will appear an evasion in England, if our readers

consider that it is founded merely upon the Calvinian custom of forcing rational comparisons to go upon all-four, like brutes, and then driving them far beyond the intention of those by whom they were first produced. We know that a tree on the banks of the Severn may be good in winter, though it bear no good fruit ; because no trees bear among us any fruit, good or bad, in January. But this cannot be the case either of believers, or unbelievers ; they bear fruit all the year round ; unless you can prove, that, like men in an apoplectic fit, they neither think, speak, nor act “in a winter season.” Again :

Believers who commit adultery and robbery are not good trees, even in a negative sense ; for they positively bear fruit of the most poisonous nature. How then can either their faith or persons be evidenced a good tree by such bad fruit, such detestable evidence ? While you put your logic to the rack for an answer, I shall take the liberty to encounter you a moment with your own weapons, and, making the degraded comparison of our Twelfth Article walk upon all-four against you, I promise you, that, if you can show me an apple-tree which bears poisonous crabs in summer, much more one that bears them “in a winter season,” I will turn Antinomian, and believe that an impenitent murderer has justifying faith, and is complete in Christ’s righteousness.

III. Having thus, I hope, rescued our Twelfth Article from the violence which your scheme offers to its holy meaning, I presume to ask, Why do you not mention the Homilies, when you say that the doctrine of a two-fold justification is not found in any part of the Offices and Liturgy of our Church ? Is it because you never consulted them upon the subject of our controversy ? To save you the trouble of turning them over, and to undeceive those who are frightened from the pure doctrine of their own

Church by the late cries of "Arminianism! Pelagianism! and Popery!" I shall present you with the following extract from our Homilies, which will show you they are not less opposite to Antinomianism than our Liturgy and Articles:—

"The first coming unto God is through faith, whereby we are justified before God. And, lest any man should be deceived, it is diligently to be noted, that there is one faith, which in Scripture is called a dead faith, which bringeth forth no good works, but is idle, barren, and unfruitful. And this faith, by the holy Apostle St. James, is compared to the faith of devils. And such faith have the wicked, naughty Christian people, who, as St. Paul saith, confess God with their mouths, but deny him in their deeds. Forasmuch as faith without works is dead, it is not *now* faith, as a dead man is not a man. The true, lively Christian faith liveth and stirreth inwardly in the heart. It is not without the love of God and our neighbour, nor the desire to hear God's word, and follow the same, in eschewing evil, and doing gladly all good works. Of this faith, this is first to be noted, that it does not lie dead in the heart, but is lively and fruitful in bringing forth good works. As the light cannot be hid, so true faith cannot be kept secret, but shows itself by good works; and as the living body of a man ever exerciseth such things as belong to a living body; so the soul that has a lively faith in it, will be doing alway some good work, which shall declare that it is living. For he is like a tree set by the waterside, his leaf will be green, and he will not cease to bring forth his fruit."—*Homily of Faith, First Part.* Here is no Antinomian salvo; no "winter state" allowed of, to bring forth the dire fruits of adultery and murder:—

"There is one *work* in which are all good works, that is, 'faith which *worketh* by charity.' If you have it, you have the ground of all good works; for



wisdom, temperance, and justice, are all referred unto this faith: Without it we have not virtues, but only their names and shadows. Many have no fruit of their works, because faith, the chief *work*, lacketh. Our faith in Christ must go before, and after be nourished by good works. The thief did believe only, and the most merciful God justified him. If he had lived, and not regarded the *works* of faith, (N. B.) he should have *lost his salvation* again."—*Homily on Good Works, First Part.*

"The third thing to be declared unto you is, what manner of works they are which spring out of true faith, and lead faithful men to everlasting life. This cannot be known so well as by our Saviour himself, who, being asked of a certain great man this question, 'What works shall I do to come to eternal life?' answered him, 'If thou wilt come to everlasting life, keep the commandments: Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not commit adultery,' &c. By which words Christ declared, that the laws of God are the very way which lead to everlasting life. So that this is to be taken for a *most true* lesson, taught by Christ's *own mouth*, that the works of the moral commandments of God are the very true works of faith, which lead to the life to come. But the blindness and malice of men hath ever been ready to fall from God and his *law*, and to invent a new way to salvation by works of their own device. Therefore Christ said, 'You leave the commandments of God to keep your own traditions.' You must have an assured faith in God, love him, and dread him evermore: Then for his sake love *all* men, friends and foes, because they are his creation and image, and *redeemed by Christ as ye are*. Kill not; commit no manner of adultery, in will nor in deed, &c. Thus in keeping the commandments [wherein standeth his pure honour, and which, wrought in faith, he hath ordained to be the right trade and path-way to heaven] you

*shall not fail to come to everlasting life.*”—*Homily on Good Works, Third Part.*

“Whereas God hath showed, to all that *truly believe* his gospel, his face of mercy in Jesus Christ, which does so enlighten their hearts, that, if they behold it as they ought, they are transformed to his image, and made partakers of the heavenly light and of his Holy Spirit; so, if *they after do neglect* the same, and order not their life according to his example and doctrine, he will take away from them his kingdom, because they bring not forth the fruit thereof.—And if this will not serve, but still we remain disobedient, behaving ourselves uncharitably, by disdain, envy, malice, or by committing murder, adultery, or such detestable works; then he threateneth us by terrible comminations, swearing in great anger, that *whosoever* does these works shall *never* enter into his rest, which is the kingdom of heaven.”—*Homily of Falling from God, First Part.*

“We do call for mercy in vain, *if* we will not show mercy to our neighbour. For *if* we do not put wrath and displeasure forth out of our hearts to our brother, no more will God forgive the wrath that our sins have deserved before him. For under this *condition* does God forgive us, *if* we forgive others. God commands us to forgive, *if* we will have any part of the pardon which Christ purchased by shedding his precious blood. Let us, then, be favourable one to another, &c. By these means shall we move God to be merciful to our sins. He that hateth his brother\* is *the child of damnation and of the devil*, cursed and hated of God, *so long as he so remaineth*. For as peace and

\* Did not David once hate Uriah, as much as Jezebel did Naboth? Was not innocent blood shed in both cases, by means of sanguinary letters? Is it to the honour of David, that he out-did Jezebel in kindly desiring Uriah to carry his own death-warrant to Joab?

charity make us the blessed children of God, so do hatred and malice make us the cursed children of the devil.”—*Homily for Good Friday*.

The Homily on *Dress* brings to my mind what you say, p. 85, upon that head. If I am not mistaken, you quote Mr. Hervey in support\* of finery, which surprises me so much the more, as the plainness of your dress is a practical answer to what can be advanced in support of that branch of Antinomianism. Permit me, however, to guard your ornamented quotation in the plain, nervous language of our Church. After mentioning the round attires of the head, exposed by Isaiah, she says, “No less truly is the vanity used among us. For the proud and haughty stomachs of the daughters of England are so maintained with divers disguised sorts of costly apparel, that, as Tertulian saith, there is left no difference of apparel between an honest matron and a common strumpet. Yea, many care not what they spend in disguising themselves, ever desiring new toys, and inventing new fashions. Therefore we must needs look for God’s fearful vengeance from heaven, to overthrow our pride, as he overthrew Herod, who, in his royal apparel, forgetting God, was smitten of an angel, and eaten up of worms.

“But some vain women will object, ‘All which we do, in decking ourselves with gay apparel, is to please our husbands.’ O most shameful answer, to the reproach of thy husband! What couldst thou say more to set out his foolishness, than to

\* I blame, in the Second Check, only such professors of godliness as “wear gold, pearls, and precious stones, when no distinction of office or state obliges them to do it.” As you find fault with this guarded doctrine, and insinuate that I “dwindle the noble ideas of St. Paul into a meanness of sense befitting the superstitious and contracted spirit of a hermit;” it necessarily follows, that you plead for finery, or that you oppose me for opposition’s sake, when you mean exactly the same thing with me.



charge him to be pleased with the devil's attire? Nay, nay, this is but a vain excuse, of such as go about to please" (*themselves and*) "others, rather than their husbands.—She does but deserve scorn, to set out all her commendation in Jewish and Heathenish apparel, and yet brag of her Christianity; and sometimes she is the cause of much deceit in her husband's dealings, that she may be the more gorgeously set out to the sight of the vain world. O thou woman, not a Christian, but worse than a Pagan, thou settest out thy pride, and makest thy indecent apparel the devil's net to catch souls. Howsoever thou perfumest thyself, yet cannot thy beastliness be hidden. The more thou garnishest thyself with these outward blazings, the less thou carest for the inward garnishing of thy mind. Hear, hear what Christ's holy Apostles do write." Then follow those passages of St. Peter and St. Paul, which you suppose I "do not rightly understand."

To convince you, however, that our Church has as much of "the superstitious and contracted spirit of a hermit" as myself, I shall plead a moment more against finery in her own words: "The wife of an Heathen being asked why she wore no gold; she answered, that she thought her husband's virtues sufficient ornaments. How much more ought every Christian to think himself sufficiently garnished with our Saviour Christ's heavenly virtues! But, perhaps some will answer, that they must do something to show their birth and blood; as though these things," *jewels and finery*, "were not common to those who are most vile; as though thy husband's riches could not be better bestowed than in such superfluities; as though, when thou wast christened, thou didst not *renounce* the pride of this world, and the pomp of the flesh. If thou sayest that the custom is to be followed, I ask of thee, Whose custom should be followed? of the wise, or of fools? If thou sayest, 'Of the wise;' then I say,

Follow them ; for fools' customs who should follow but fools? If any lewd custom be used, be thou the first to break it ; labour to diminish it, and lay it down, and thou shalt have more praise before God by it, than by all the glory of such superfluity. I speak not against convenient apparel, for every state agreeable, but against the superfluity whereby thou and thy husband are compelled to rob the poor to maintain thy costliness. Hear how holy queen Esther setteth out these goodly ornaments, as they are called, when in order to save God's people she put them on : 'Thou knowest, O Lord, the necessity which I am driven to, to put on this apparel ; and that I abhor this sign of pride, and that I defy it as a filthy cloth.'—*Homily against Excess of Apparel.*

So far is our Church from siding with Antinomian Solifidianism, which perpetually decries good works, that she rather leans to the other extreme. If "Popery is about half-way between Protestantism and the Minutes," you will hardly think that the Mass itself is a quarter of the way between Dr. Crisp's scheme, and the following propositions extracted from the *Homily on Alms-Deeds* :—

"Most true is that saying of St. Augustine, *Via cali pauper est*, 'relieving of the poor is the right way to heaven.' Christ promiseth a reward to those who give but a cup of cold water in his name to them that have need of it ; and that reward is the kingdom of heaven. No doubt, therefore, God regardeth highly that which he rewardeth so liberally. He that hath been liberal to the poor, let him know that his godly doings are accepted, and thankfully taken at God's hands, which he will requite with double and treble ; for so says the wise man : He who showeth mercy to the poor, doth lay his money in bank to the Lord for a large interest and gain ; the gain being chiefly the possession of the life everlasting, through the merits of Christ."

When our Church has given us this strong dose of legality, that she may by a desperate remedy remove a desperate disease, and kill or cure the Antinomian spirit in all her children; lest the violent medicine should hurt us, she, like a prudent mother, instantly administers the following balsamic corrective:—

“Some will say, ‘If charitable works are able to reconcile us to God, and deliver us from damnation, then are Christ’s merits defaced; then are we justified by works, and by our deeds may we merit heaven.’ But understand, dearly beloved, that no godly men, when they, in extolling the dignity, profit, and effect of virtuous and liberal alms, do say that it bringeth us to the favour of God, do mean that our work is the *original* cause of our acceptance before God, &c.; for that were indeed to deface Christ, and to defraud him of his glory. But they mean, that the Spirit of God mightily working in them, who seemed before children of wrath, they *declare* by their outward deeds, that they are the undoubted children of God. By their tender pity, (wherein they show themselves to be like unto God,) they declare openly and manifestly unto the sight of all men, that they are the sons of God. For as the good fruit does argue the goodness of the tree, so doth the good deed of a man prove the goodness of him that doeth it.”

In justice to our holy Church, whom some represent as a patroness of Antinomianism; in brotherly love to you, honoured Sir, who seem to judge of her doctrines by a few expressions which custom made her use after St. Augustine; in tender compassion to many of her members who are strangers to her true sentiments; and in common humanity to Mr. Wesley, who is perpetually accused of erecting Popery upon her ruins; I have presented you with this extract from our Homilies. If you lay by the veil of prejudice, which keeps the light from your

honest heart, I humbly hope it will convince you, that our Church nobly contends for St James's evangelical legality ; that she pleads for the rewardableness (which is all we understand by *the merit*) of works, in *far* stronger terms than Mr. Wesley does in the Minutes; and that in perpetually making our justification, merited by Christ, turn upon the instrumentality of a lively faith, and the evidence of good works, as there is opportunity to do them, she tears up Calvinism and Antinomian delusions by the very roots.

Leaving you to consider, how you shall bring about a reconciliation between your Fourth Letter and our godly Homilies, I shall just take the liberty to remind you, that when you entered, or took your degrees, at Oxford, you subscribed to the Thirty-nine Articles, the thirty-fifth of which declares, that "the Homilies contain a godly and wholesome doctrine, necessary for these" Papistical and Antinomian "times."

That, keeping clear from both extremes, we may evidence the godliness of that doctrine by the soundness of our publications, and the exemplariness of our conduct, is the cordial prayer of,

Honoured and dear Sir,

Your obedient Servant in the Liturgy, Articles,  
and Homilies of the Church of England,

JOHN FLETCHER.

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### LETTER III.

TO RICHARD HILL, ESQ.

HONOURED AND DEAR SIR,

IN my last I endeavoured to show you that our Church, far from warping to Crispianity, strongly enforces St. James's undefiled religion : Let us now

see what modern Divines, especially the Puritan, thought about the important subject of our controversy.

Page 13, you oppose the doctrine which you have (p. 11) so heartily wished to be *firmly established* in the mouth of two witnesses. "If Mr. Whitefield had been now living," say you, "I doubt not but he would have told you, that if need should be, he was ready to offer himself among the foremost of those true Protestants, who, you tell us, could have burned against the doctrine of a second justification by works. And as to the Puritan Divines, there is not one of the many hundreds of them but what abhorred the doctrine of a second justification by works, as full of rottenness and deadly poison. Surely then it is not without justice that I accuse you of the grossest perversions and misrepresentations that perhaps ever proceeded from any author's pen. The ashes of that laborious man of God, Mr. Whitefield, you have raked up, in order to bring him as a coadjutor to support your tottering doctrine of a second justification by works." And again, pages 91 and 92, "I am not afraid to challenge Mr. F—r, to fix upon one Protestant Minister, either Puritan or of the Church of England, from the beginning of the Reformation to the reign of Charles the Second, who held the doctrines he has been contending for."—"Sure I am, that you have grieved many a pious heart among our Dissenting brethren, by fathering upon their venerable ancestors such a spurious offspring as can only trace its descent from the loins of the man of sin, by whom it was begotten, out of the mother of abominations, the scarlet Babylonish whore, which sitteth upon many waters."

Your charges and challenge, honoured Sir, deserve an answer, not because they fix the blot of the grossest perversions upon my insignificant character ; but because they represent the holy Apostle



James, whose doctrines I vindicate, as *the man of sin*, begetting his undefiled religion out of the scarlet Babylonish whore. I begin with what you say about Mr. Whitefield.

I never thought he was clear in the doctrine of our Lord, "In the day of judgment by thy words shalt thou be justified;" for if he had seen it in its proper light, he would instantly have renounced Calvinism. All I have asserted is, "that the most eminent Ministers, Mr. Whitefield himself not excepted, perpetually allude to that doctrine, when their enlarged hearts (under a full gale of God's free Spirit) get clear of the shallows of bigotry, or the narrow channels of their favourite systems; for then, sailing in deep water, and regardless of the rocks of offence, they cut their easy way through the raging billows of opposition, and speak *all* the truth as it is in Jesus; or at least *allude*" (this was my expression, see Second Check) "to what, at another time, they would perhaps oppose with all their might.

And do you not, honoured Sir, allow that Mr. Whitefield did this in the application of his sermons with regard to my doctrine, when you say, (p. 15,) "All that can be gathered from his expressions is, that he believed there would be a great and awful day, in which all who sit under the sound of the Gospel shall be called to give a solemn account of what they hear, and every Minister as solemn an account of the doctrine delivered by him." To convince you that you grant me all I contended for, permit to ask, whether this solemn account will be in order to a mock-trial, or to the solemn justification or condemnation mentioned by our Lord, Matt. xii. 37. If you affirm the former, you traduce heavenly wisdom, you blaspheme Jesus Christ: If the latter, you give up the point; our hearing and speaking, that is, our works, will turn evidence for or against us in the day of judgment; and

according to their deposition, the scale of absolution and condemnation will turn for heaven or hell.

Let therefore the public judge, who wrongs Mr. Whitefield; I, who represent him as speaking agreeably to the plain words of his heavenly Master; (Matt. xii. 37;) or you, dear Sir, who make him advance as a zealot at the head of a body of prejudiced men, to burn against as explicit and important a declaration as ever dropped from the Redeemer's lips. I say important, because the moment you strike at our justification by works in the last day, you strike at the doctrine of a day of judgment; and the moment that fundamental doctrine is overthrown, natural and revealed religion sink in a heap of common ruins.

Pass we on now to the other reason, for which you "accuse me of the grossest misrepresentations and perversions that perhaps ever proceeded from any author's pen." I have affirmed, (Second Check,) that all the "*sober Puritan Divines* have, directly or \* *indirectly*, asserted a second justification by works;" and you tell us, p. 13, "There is *not one* of them but what abhorred it, as full of rottenness and deadly poison." One of us is undoubtedly mistaken; for our propositions are diametrically opposite. Let us see who is the man.

To dispute about words is unbecoming men of reason and religion; and that we may not be guilty of this common absurdity, and oppose one another when perhaps we mean the same thing, permit me to state the question as clearly as I possibly can. Not considering the *meritorious*, but the *instrumental* cause of our justification, I ask, In the day of judgment, shall we be justified or condemned by the works which Christ did in the days of his flesh, or by the works which we ourselves do in the days of our

\* These were my limited expressions.

flesh? Or, in other terms, Shall we be justified by the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, as Calvin supposes it was imputed to David in Uriah's bed; or, by the righteousness of Christ implanted in us, as it was implanted in David when his eyes ran down with water because men kept not God's law? Or, if you please, Shall we be justified by Christ's loving God and man for us; or by our loving God and man ourselves? The former of those sentiments is that of Dr. Crisp, and all his admirers: That the latter was the sentiment of Dr. Owen, and all the *sober* Puritan Divines, when they regarded Christ more than Calvin, I prove thus:—

Dr. Owen, (the pious and learned champion of the Calvinists in the last century, whom you quote, p. 93,) speaking, in his *Treatise on Justification*, p. 222, of one justified at his conversion, says, “That God does indispensably require of him personal obedience, which may be called his evangelical righteousness: That *this* righteousness is\*pleadable unto an acquitment against any charge from Satan, the world, or our own consciences:—That upon *it* we shall be declared righteous in the last day; and without *it* none shall. And if any shall think meet from hence to conclude unto an *evangelical justification*, or call God's acceptance of *our* righteousness by that name, I shall by no means contend † with them. Whenever this inquiry is made, how a man that professeth evangelical faith in Christ shall be tried and judged; and whereon, as such, he shall be *justified*; we grant that it is, and must be, *by his own personal obedience*.”

\* I have shown in the Vindication, how David and Ezekiel pleaded this righteousness before God. Another instance of this plea! lately found in Nehemiah. That man of God, after describing his royal hospitality, and tender regard for the poor, says, “Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.” (Neh. v. 19.)

† Who indeed would contend with them, but such as are not afraid of flying in the face of St. Paul and Jesus Christ? See Rom. ii. 13, and Matt. xii. 37.



This important quotation is produced by D. Williams, in his "Gospel Truth vindicated against Dr. Crisp's Opinions," p. 149. It is introduced to confirm the following Gospel Truth: "The Lord Jesus has of grace, for his own merits, promised to bring to heaven such as are partakers of true holiness, and do good works perseveringly; and he appoints these, as the way and means of a believer's obtaining salvation; requiring them as indispensable duties and qualifications of all such whom he will save and bless; and excluding all that want and neglect them, or live under the power of what is contrary thereto." Here is evidently the pure doctrine of the Minutes, and the undefiled religion of St. James.

The same judicious author, in his preface, speaks thus upon the subject of our controversy: "The revival of these (Dr. Crisp's) errors, must not only exclude that ministry as legal, which is most apt to secure the practical power of religion; but also render unity amongst Christians impossible. Mutual censures are unavoidable; while one side" (the sober Puritans) "press the terms of the gospel, under its promises and threats, for which they are accused as enemies to Christ and grace; and the other side" (the followers of Dr. Crisp) "ignorantly set up the name of Christ and free grace, against the government of Christ and the rule of judgment."

"I believe, many abettors of these mistakes are honestly zealous for the honour of free grace, but have not light to see how God has provided for this. By this pretence Antinomianism corrupted Germany; it bid fair to overthrow church and state in New-England: And by its stroke at the vitals of religion, it alarmed most of the pulpits in England. Many of our ablest pen-were engaged against these errors; as Mr. Gatas ker, Mr. Rutherford, Anthony Burgess, the pro-

vincial synod at London; with very many others, whose labours God was pleased to bless to the stopping of the attempts of Crisp, by name opposed by the aforesaid Divines, Saltmarsh, Eaton, &c.

“To the grief of such as perceive the tendency of these principles, we are engaged in a new opposition, or must betray the truth as it is in Jesus. I believe many abettors of these notions have grace to preserve their minds and practices from their influence: But they ought to consider, that the generality of mankind have no such antidote; and they themselves need not fortify their own temptations, nor lose the defence which the wisdom of God has provided against remissness in duty, and sinful backslidings.

“In this present testimony to the *Truth of the Gospel*, I have studied plainness. To the best of my knowledge I have in nothing misrepresented Crisp’s opinions, nor mistaken his sense; for most of them he oft studiously pleads; of each I could multiply proofs, and all of them are necessary for his scheme, although not consistent with all his other occasional expressions.”

The whole works of D. Williams, and consequently the preceding quotations, have the remarkable sanction of the following certificate:—“We, whose names are subscribed, do judge that our Rev. Brother has, in all that is material, fully and rightly stated the truths and errors mentioned as such, in the following Treatise; and do account he has, in this work, done considerable service to the Church of Christ; adding our prayers, that these labours of his may be a means for reclaiming those who have been misled into such dangerous opinions; and for establishing those that waver in any of these truths.” Signed by near fifty Puritan Ministers, the first of whom is William Bates, and the last Edmund Calamy,—two of the greatest preachers in the last century.

The following appendix closes the certificate: "I have by me near as many worthy names, such as Mr. Woodhouse, Mr. Hallet, Mr. Boys, &c., who have approved of this work. But I think this number sufficient to convince the world that the Presbyterian Ministers, at least, espouse not the Antinomian dotages: Yea, I am credibly informed that the most learned country Ministers, of the Congregational persuasion, disallow the errors here opposed, and are amazed at such of their brethren in London as are displeased with this book."

Now, dear Sir, you must either prove that what Dr. Owen, D. Williams, and such a cloud of Puritan Divines, consent to call an "evangelical justification, in the last day, by our own personal obedience," is not a justification; or you must confess that you have given the world a true specimen of *Geneva Logic*, when you have declared that "there is *not one* Puritan Divine but what abhorred the doctrine of such a justification, as full of rottenness and deadly poison." And you must do me the justice to acknowledge, you did not give yourself time to weigh your words in the balance of brotherly kindness, when you accused me of calumny and "the grossest perversions that perhaps ever proceeded from any author's pen," for asserting what I thought my quotations from Mr. Henry sufficiently proved, and what your groundless charge has obliged me fully to demonstrate. And now, permit me to apologize for the severity of your conduct towards me, by reminding my reader, that your great Diana was in danger; and that, on such a trying occasion, even a good man may be put into a hurry, and act, before he is aware, inconsistently with the Christian virtues which blazon his character.

D. Williams's "Gospel Truth vindicated" might be confirmed by numberless quotations from Puritan authors, who directly or indirectly assert a

second justification by works. Take one instance out of a thousand: Anthony Burgess, Fellow of Emmanuel College in Cambridge, (I think, one of the ejected Ministers,) speaking in his twelfth sermon of obedience as a sign of grace, concludes his discourse by this truly Anti-Crispian paragraph:—

“Art thou universal in thy obedience? Then thou mayest take comfort. Otherwise know, if thou hast not respect to all the ways and duties required by God, thou wilt be confounded: Though with Ahab and Herod thou do many things, yet if not all things, confusion will be upon thee. O then how few are there, who may claim a right to grace! \* Many men have an external obedience only, and no internal; but most have a partial, and not entire, complete obedience; therefore it is, that many are called, but few chosen. Consider that terrible expression of St. James, ii. 10, 11, where the Apostle informs *believers*, that if they are guilty but of that one sin,—accepting of persons,—they are transgressors of the law in general; which he farther urgeth by this assertion, ‘He that keepeth all, and offendeth in one, is guilty of all;’ not, with the guilt of every particular sin, but in respect of the authority of the Lawgiver, according to that, ‘Cursed is every one that continueth not in every thing commanded by the law.’ Seeing, therefore, God in regeneration does write his law in our hearts, which does seminally contain the exercise of all holy actions; so that there cannot be an instance of any godly duty, of which God does not infuse a principle in us: And seeing glorification will be universal of soul and body, in all parts and faculties, how necessary is it that sanctification should be universal! Take heed there-

\* Some of the Puritans understood by *grace*, a state of justification and sanctification.

fore that the works of grace in thee be not abortive or monstrous, wanting essential and necessary parts. Let not thy ship be drowned by any one leak."

From this alarming quotation it appears, holy Calvinist Ministers saw, a hundred years ago, that if believers did not secure St. James's justification by universal obedience, the works of grace in them would prove abortive, their hopes would perish, their ship would sink though by one leak only; and consequently they would be condemned as Hymeneus and Philetus, in the day of judgment. And let none complain of the legality of this doctrine; for our Lord himself fully preached it, when he said, "Except a man forsake *all*, he cannot be my disciple."

Take another instance of a later date. The Rev. Mr. Haweis, that has distinguished himself among the zealous Ministers of our Church who have espoused Calvin's sentiments, speaks to the point, in the comment on Matt. xii. 37: "Not an idle word passes without the divine notice, but we must answer for it at the day of judgment. With what circumspection then should we keep the door of our lips, when our eternal state is to be determined thereby, and our words must all be produced at the bar of God as evidences of our justification or condemnation, and sentence proceed accordingly!" If this is not maintaining, at least indirectly, justification by works in the day of judgment, my reason fails, and I can no more understand how two and two make four.

Mr. Madan, himself, if I am not mistaken, grants what I contend for, in the very title of one of his sermons, "*Justification by works reconciled with justification by faith*," &c., but much more in the following passages, which I extract from it:—

"In every person that is justified, three parti-



culars concur, 1. The meritorious cause of our justification, which is Christ. 2. The instrumental cause, which is faith,—and then the justification in the text,” [Ye see how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only,] “which is to be understood in a declarative sense,—no person being justified in Paul’s sense, that is not also in the sense of our text,” that is, in the sense of St. James.

The truth contained in this last sentence is the rampart of practical Christianity, and the ground of the Minutes. If Mr. Madan considers what his proposition necessarily implies, I am persuaded he will not only side with Mr. Wesley against the Benedictine Monk, but also give up Calvinism, with which his assertion is more reconcilable, than it is with what you, Sir, call “a winter” (and I beg leave to name an “Antinomian”) “state,” in which we are supposed to be justified in Paul’s sense, while we fly in the face of St. James, by the commission of adultery and murder.

The same eminent Minister asks, in the same discourse, “What does it profit, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?” (Can faith save David in Uriah’s bed? Can it save Solomon worshipping Ashtaroath, perhaps with his seven hundred wives, and three hundred concubines?) that is, “such a faith as has not works, as is not productive of the fruit of the Spirit in the heart and life? Is this saving faith? Certainly not; for such a faith wants the evidence of its being true and real, and nothing but true faith can save. If my faith does not produce the proper fruits, it is no better than the devil’s faith.—We have no Scripture testimony of our being any other than the devil’s children, unless we evidence the truth of our faith by showing forth the genuine fruits and works of faith. All this the Apostle confirms, verses 20, 26,

“Faith without works is dead.—As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”

This excellent passage is the demolition of Calvinism, and the very doctrine of the Minutes, if you except the article about the word *merit*, which I do not read in our author's sermon. However, p. 12, I find the word *deserve* in the following important question: “How can *we* not only escape the penalty threatened, but *deserve* the *rewards* promised under the law?” And as I do not understand “splitting a hair,” I think *that the two expressions, meriting and deserving, when duly considered, are not as wide as east is from west*: And I fear that if Mr. Wesley is an heretic for using the former at a Conference among friends; Mr. Madan is not quite orthodox, for using the latter in St. Vedast's church, before friends and enemies. But as this question may turn upon some nicety of the English language, which, as a foreigner, I have not yet observed, I drop it, to obviate an objection.

You will perhaps say, that all the above-mentioned authors, being sound Calvinists, hold *your* election, and that you could produce passages out of their writings absolutely irreconcilable with the preceding quotations. To this I reply, that a volume of such passages, instead of invalidating the doctrine which I maintain, would only prove, that the peculiarities of Calvin are *absolutely irreconcilable* with St. James's undefiled religion; and that even the most judicious Calvinists cannot make their scheme hang tolerably together.

I hope, Sir, the preceding pages will convince my readers, that you have spoken unwarily, when you have asserted, that *there is not one of the many hundred Puritan Divines, but what abhorred my doctrine as full of rottenness*; and that the author of *Goliath Slain* has been rather too forward in

*challenging me to fix upon one Protestant Minister, either Puritan, or of the Church of England, who to the reign of Charles the Second held this doctrine I have been contending for.*

Your challenge provokes me to imitation : And I conclude this letter by challenging you, in my turn, to fix upon a man who will expose your mistakes more bluntly, and yet esteem and love you more cordially, than,

Honoured and dear Sir,

Your most obedient Servant, in

St. James's pure religion,

JOHN FLETCHER.

## LETTER IV.

TO RICHARD HILL, ESQ.

HONOURED AND DEAR SIR,

BEFORE I take my leave of the Puritan writers, you will permit me to make some observations upon the fault you find with my quoting one of them. Page 94, you introduce a *judicious, worthy, reverend friend*, charging me with having *most notoriously perverted the quotation* which I produced out of Flavel, (in the Vindication,) and you stamp with your approbation, his exclamation on the subject, *Could you have expected such disingenuity from Madeley ?*

Now, Sir, full of *disingenuity* as you suppose me to be, I can yet act with *frankness*. And, to convince you of it, I publicly stand to my quotation, and charge your worthy friend with—what shall I call it?—a gross mistake. My quotation I had from that judicious Puritan Divine, D. Williams, who, far from *notoriously perverting* the sense of the Ministers that drew up Flavel's preface, has



weakened it by leaving out some excellent Anti-Crispian sentences. Permit me to punish your friend for his hasty charge, by laying the whole passage before my readers; reminding them, that only the sentences inclosed in crotchets, [ ] are quoted in the Vindication.

A body of seven eminent Divines, all friends, it seems, to Crisp, but enemies to his *Antinomian dotages*, charitably endeavour to apologize for him, at the same time that they recommend Flavel's *Treatise on Mental Errors in General, and on Antinomianism in Particular*, where Crisp is opposed by name. Having mentioned two similar propositions of his, viz., *Salvation is not the end of any thing we do*,—and, *We are to act from life, not for life*, they bear this full testimony against the absurdity which they contain:—

“[It were in effect to abandon human nature,] and to sin against a very fundamental law of our creation, not to intend our own felicity; it were to make our first and most deeply fundamental duty, in one great essential branch of it, our sin, viz., to take the Lord for our God: For, to take him for our God most essentially includes our taking him for our *supreme good*, which we all know is included in the notion of the *last end*; it were to make it unlawful to strive against all sin, and particularly against sinful aversion from God, wherein lies the very death of the soul, or the sum of its misery; or to strive after perfect conformity to God in holiness, and the full fruition of him, wherein the soul's final blessedness does principally consist.

“[It were to teach us to violate the great precepts of the Gospel:] Repent, that your sins may be blotted out—Strive to enter in at the strait gate,—Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;—to obliterate the patterns and precedents set before us in the Gospel: ‘We have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified—I keep

under my body lest I should be a cast-away—That thou mayest save thyself and them that hear thee.

“ [It were to suppose us bound to do more for the salvation of others, than our own] salvation. We are required to save others with fear, plucking them out of the fire. Nay, we were not (by this rule strictly understood) so much as to pray for our own salvation, which is a doing somewhat ; when, no doubt, we are to pray for the success of the Gospel, to this purpose, on behalf of other men.

“ [It were to make all the threatenings of eternal death, and promises of eternal life, we find in the Gospel of our blessed Lord, useless, as motives to shun the one, and obtain the other :] For they can be motives no way, but as the escaping the former, and the attainment of the other, have with us the place and consideration of an end.

“ [It makes what is mentioned in the Scripture, as the character and commendation of the most eminent saints, a fault,] as of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ; that *they sought the better and heavenly country* ; and plainly declare that they did so, which necessarily implies their making it their end.”

Now, honoured Sir, it lies upon you to prove, that because Mr. Williams and I have not produced *all* that makes against you, we are guilty of a *most notorious perversion* \* of the quotation. If you

\* Want of argument in a bad cause, which people will defend *at all events* (if I may use the words which Mr. Hill too hastily lends me in his book, but justly claims as his own in the errata,) obliges me to fly to personal charges. *Zelus arma ministrat*. Their Diana is in danger ; they must raise dust, and make a noise, to divert the attention of the reader from the point : Who knows but she may escape in the hurry ? At the end of the above-mentioned quotation, I had added three lines, to throw some light upon the last clause, which D. Williams had cut off too short. As I did not inclose them in commas, it never entered into my mind, that any body would charge me with presenting them as a quotation, nor do they in the least *misrepresent*, much less *pervert*, the sense of the author. Upon this, however, my opponent

affirm, that the *perversion* I am charged with consists in saying, that the Divines who wrote Flavel's

brings me to a trial. But if, at p. 97, he lets me escape without condemning me point-blank for *forging quotations*; he is not so mild, p. 27. I have observed in the Second Check, that Mr. Wesley, in his Minutes, guards the foundation of the Gospel by the two clauses, where he mentions the exclusion of the *merit of works* in point of salvation, and *believing in Christ*. The two clauses I present in one point of view, in the very words of the Minutes, although not in the *tense* of the verb *believing*, thus, "Not by the merit of works," but by "believing in Christ." My opponent is pleased here to overlook the commas, which show, that I produce two different places of the Minutes; and then he improves *his own oversight* thus, "Forgeries of this kind have long passed for no crime with Mr. Wesley. I did not think you would have followed him in these ungenerous artifices, which must unavoidably sink the writer in our esteem. But I am sorry to say, Sir, that this is not the only stratagem of this sort, which you have made use of: Instance your bringing in Mr. Whitefield as a maintainer of a second justification by works," &c. &c. The bare mention of such groundless accusations being a sufficient refutation of them, I shall close this note by observing, that the pure religion which I vindicate, is too well grounded on Scripture, to need the support either of the pretended forgeries which my opponent contrives for me, or of the blackening charges which he is forced to produce for want of better arguments.

In almost any other but my opponent, I should think that this severity proceeded from palpable disingenuity; but my respect for him does not permit me to entertain such a thought. I urge for his excuse, the inconceivable strength of prejudice, and the fatal tendency of his favourite system. Yes, O Calvinism! upon thee I charge the mistakes of my antagonist! If at any time his benevolent temper is soured, thy heaven has done it. It is by thy powerful influence that he discovers a *forgery*, where there is not so much as the printer's omission of a comma to countenance his discovery. It is through the mists which thou raisest, that he sees, in the works of one of our most correct authors, nothing but "regular series of inconsistencies, a wheel of contradiction running round and round again."—"Thou lendest him thy deceitful glass, when he looks at my Second Check, and cries out, "Base and shocking slander! Acrimonious, bitter and low sneers! Horrid misrepresentations, and notorious perversions: Abominable beyond all the rest! A wretched spirit of low sarcasm and slanderous banter runs through the whole book," which contains "more than a hundred close pages, as totally void of scriptural argument, as they are replete with calumny, gross perversions, equivocations,"—and a "doctrine full of rottenness and deadly poison, the spurious offspring of the man of sin, begotten out of the scarlet whore."

I beg my readers would not think the worse of my opponent's candour, on account of these severe charges. In one sense they

preface were *shocked* at Crisp's doctrine, when they nevertheless apologize for his person ; I reply, that their apology confirms my assertion, even more than their arguments ; for they say, "*It is likely the Doctor meant,*" just what Mr. Wesley does, "*that he shall not work for life only, without aiming at working from life also. For it is not tolerable charity to suppose, that one would deliberately say, that salvation is not the end of any good work we do, or that we are not to work for life in the rigid sense of the words.*" And they profess their hopes, that, *upon consideration, he would presently unsay it,* (namely, the absurd proposition, "*We are not to work for life,*") *being calmly reasoned with.*

Thus hoped those pious Divines concerning Crisp ; and thus I once hoped also concerning his admirers. But, alas ! experience has damped my hope ; for, when they have been "*calmly reasoned with,*" they have shown themselves much more ready to *unsay* what they had said right, than what the Doctor had said wrong ; and to this day they publicly defend those *Antinomian dotages* which the authors of Flavel's preface could not believe Dr. Crisp could possibly mean, even when he preached and wrote them.

appear to me very moderate ; for who can wonder that a good mistaken man, who finds Calvin's everlasting, absolute, and unconditional reprobation in the mild oracles of the God of love, should find "*forgery, vile slander, calumny, horrid perversions, deadly poison,*" &c., in my sharp Checks, and perpetual contradictions in Mr. Wesley's Works ? Are we not treated with remarkable kindness, in comparison of the merciful God whom we serve ? Undoubtedly ; for neither of us is yet so much as indirectly charged with contriving in cool blood the murder of *one* man ; much less with forming from all eternity the evangelical plan to save unconditionally by free grace the little flock of the elect, and damn unconditionally by free wrath the immense herd of the reprobates ! and with spending near six thousand years in bringing about an irresistible decree, that the one shall absolutely go to heaven, let them do what they please to be damned ; and that the other shall absolutely go to hell, and be burnt there to all eternity, let them do what they can to be saved !

You express, Sir, a most extraordinary wish, p. 94: Speaking of Flavel's *Discourse upon Mental Errors*, which is also called, *A Blow at the Root*, you say, "*I should have been glad, could I have transcribed the whole discourse.*" But as you have not done it, I shall give *a blow at the root* of your system, by presenting you with an extract of the second appendix, which is a pretty large treatise, full against *Antinomianism*:—

"The design of the following sheets," says that great Puritan Divine, in the discourse you should be *glad wholly* to transcribe, "is to free the grace of God from the dangerous errors which fight against it under its own colours; to prevent the seduction of some that stagger; and to vindicate my own doctrine. The Scripture, foreseeing there would arise such a sort of men in the Church, as would wax wanton against Christ, and turn his grace • into lasciviousness, has not only cautioned us in general to beware of such opinions as corrupt the doctrine of free grace; 'Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid;' but has marked those very opinions by which it would be absurd, and made abundant provision against them. As namely, 1. All vilifying expressions of God's holy law, Rom. vii. 2. All opinions inclining men to the neglect of the duties of obedience, under the pretence of free grace and liberty by Christ, James ii. Matt. xxv 3. All opinions, neglecting sanctification as the evidence of justification, which is the principal scope of St. John's first epistle.

"Notwithstanding, such is the *wickedness* of some, and *weakness* of others, that in all ages (especially in the last and present) men have notoriously corrupted the doctrine of free grace, to the great reproach of Christ, scandal of the world, and hardening of the enemies of the Reformation. 'Behold,' says Contzen, the Jesuit, 'the fruit of Protestantism, and their Gospel preaching!'



“The Gospel makes sin more odious than the law did, and discovers the punishment of it in a more dreadful manner. ‘For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every disobedience received a just recompence of reward, how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?’ It shows us our encouragements to holiness greater than ever; and yet corrupt nature will still abuse it. The more luscious the food is, the more men are apt to surfeit upon it.

“This perversion of free grace is justly chargeable both upon *wicked* and *good* men. Wicked men corrupt it designedly, that by entitling God to their sins, they might sin the more quietly. So the Nicolaitans, and school of Simon; the Gnostics, in the very dawning of gospel light; and he that reads the preface of learned Mr. Gataker’s book will find, that some Antinomians of our days are not much behind the vilest of them. One of them cries out, ‘Away with the law, it cuts off a man’s legs, and then bids him walk.’ Another says, that ‘if a man, by the Spirit, knew himself to be in a state of grace, though he commit murder,\* God sees no sin in him.’”

“But others† there are, whose *judgments* are unhappily tainted with those *loose* doctrines; yet being in the main, *godly* persons, they dare not take liberty to sin, or live in the neglect of known duties, though their principles too much incline that way: But though they dare not, others will, who imbibe *corrupt* notions from them; and the *renowned piety* of the authors will be no antidote against the danger; but make the poison operate the more powerfully, by receiving it in such a vehicle. Now it is highly probable that these

\* This is, I fear, the very doctrine of your Fourth Letter, where an impenitent murderer is represented as *complete in Christ, &c.*

† Here my opponent is exactly described by Flavel.

men were charmed into these opinions upon such accounts as these :

“1. Some of them might have felt in themselves the anguish of a perplexed conscience under sin, and, not being able to live under the terrors of the law, might too hastily snatch at such doctrines which promise relief and ease. 2. Others have been induced to espouse these opinions, from the excess of their zeal against the errors of the Papists. 3. Others have been sucked into those quicksands of Antinomian errors, by fathering their own fancies upon the Holy Spirit. 4. And it is not unlike, but a comparative weakness of mind, meeting with a fervent zeal for Christ, may induce others to espouse such *taking* and *plausible*, though *pernicious*, doctrines.

“Let all good men beware of such opinions and expressions, as give a handle to wicked men to abuse the grace of God, which haply the author himself dares not do, and may strongly hope others may not do ; but if the principle will yield it, it is in vain to think corrupt nature will not catch at it, and make a vile use and dangerous improvement of it.

“For example : If such a principle as this be asserted before the world, ‘that men need not fear, that any, or all the sins they commit, shall do them any hurt ;’\* let the author warn and caution readers, [as the *Antinomian author*† of that expression has done,] not to abuse this doctrine ; it is to no purpose, the doctrine itself is full of dangerous consequents, and wicked men have the best skill to draw them forth to cherish their lusts.

\* My opponent has publicly advanced, not only that sin, even adultery and murder, does not hurt the pleasant children, but that it even *works for our good*.

† Crisp, who was publicly called an *Antinomian* by the Puritans, and his tenets, *loose, corrupt, and pernicious doctrines ; Antinomian dotages, &c.*

That which the author *might design for the relief of the distressed*, quickly turns into poison in the bowels of the wicked. Nor can we excuse it, by saying, 'Any gospel truth may be thus abused:' For this is *none* of that number, but a principle that gives offence to the godly, and encouragement to the ungodly. And so much as to the rise and occasion of Antinomian errors.

"II. Let us view next, some of the chief errors of Antinomians. 1. Some make justification to be an eternal act of God, and affirm, that the elect were justified before the world had a being; others, that they were justified at the time of Christ's death: With these Crisp harmonizes. 2. That justification by faith is no more but a manifestation to us of what was done before we had a being. 3. That men ought not to question whether they believe or not.—SALTMARSH *On Free Grace*, p. 92, 95. 4. That believers are not bound to mourn for sin, because it was pardoned before it was committed; and pardoned sin is no sin.—EATON'S *Honeycomb of Justification*, p. 4, 6. 5. That God sees no sin in believers, whatsoever sins they commit. 6. That God is not angry with the elect; and that to say he smites them for their sins is an injurious reflection upon his justice. This is avouched generally in all their writings. 7. That by God's laying our iniquities upon Christ, he became as completely sinful as we, and we as completely righteous as Christ.—CRISP, p. 270. 8. That no sin can do believers any hurt, nor must they do any duty for their own salvation. 9. That the new covenant is not made properly with us, but with Christ for us; and that this covenant is all of it a promise, having *no condition* on our part. They do not absolutely deny that faith, repentance, and obedience are *conditions* in the new covenant; but say, they are no conditions on our side, but Christ's, and that he repented, believed, and obeyed for us —SALTMARSH *On Free Grace*, p. 126. 10. They



speaking very slightly of trying ourselves by marks and signs of grace ; Saltmarsh calls it ‘a low, carnal way ;’ but the New-England Antinomians call it ‘a fundamental error, to make sanctification an evidence of justification :’ They say, that ‘the darker our sanctification is, the brighter is our justification.’

“ I look upon such doctrines to be of a very dangerous nature ; and their malignity and contagion would certainly spread much farther than it does, had not God provided two powerful antidotes :

“ 1. The scope and current of the Scriptures. They speak of the elect as ‘children of wrath during their unregenerate state. They frequently discover God’s anger, and tell us, his castigatory rods are laid upon them for their sins. They represent sin as the greatest evil ; *most opposite* to the glory of God and good of his saints. They call the saints to mourn for their sins, &c. They put the people of God to the trial of their interest in Christ, by signs and marks from the divers branches of sanctification. They infer *duties* from privileges ; and therefore the Antinomian dialect is a *wild note*, which the generality of serious Christians do easily distinguish from the Scripture language.

“ 2. The experience and practice of the saints greatly secure us from the spreading malignity of Antinomianism. They acknowledge, that before their conversion they were equal in sin and misery with the vilest wretches in the world. They fear nothing more than sin. They are not only sensible that God sees sin in them, but they admire his patience, that they are not consumed for it. They urge his commands and threatenings, as well as promises, upon their own hearts, to promote sanctification. They excite themselves to duty and watchfulness against sin. They encourage themselves by the *rewards* of obedience, knowing ‘their labour is not in vain in the Lord.’ And he that

shall tell them, 'their sins can do them no hurt, or duties no good,' speaks to them not only as a barbarian, but in such language as their souls *abhor*. The zeal and love of Christ being kindled in their souls, they have no patience to hear such doctrines as so greatly derogate from his glory, under a pretence of honouring and exalting him. It wounds and grieves their very hearts to see the world hardened in their prejudices against reformation, and a gap opened to all licentiousness. But notwithstanding this double antidote, we find, by daily experience, such doctrines too much obtaining in the professing world: *Tantum religio suadere malorum*.

"For my own part, He that searcheth my heart is witness, I would rather choose to have my right hand wither, and my tongue rot within my mouth, than to speak one word, or write one line, to cloud the free grace of God. Let it arise and shine in its meridian glory. None owes more to it, or expects more from it, than I do; and what I write in this controversy is to vindicate it from those opinions which, under pretence of exalting it, do really militate against it."

Then follows a prolix refutation of the above-mentioned Antinomian errors, most of which necessarily flow from your Second and Fourth Letters. When our pious author attacks them as a disciple of St. James, he carries all before him; but when he encounters them as an admirer of Calvin, his hands hang down, Amalek prevails, and a shrewd logician could, without any magical power, force him to confess, that most of the errors which he so justly opposes are the natural consequences of *unconditional* election, *particular* redemption, *irresistible* grace, Calvinian imputation of righteousness to impenitent murderers, the *infallible* perseverance of believers who defile their fathers' beds, and, in a word, salvation *finished* for all the "pleasant child-

ren," who go on frowardly in the way of their own heart. Thus it would appear that Calvinism is "the *πρωτον ψευδος*," to use Mr. Flavel's words, "*the radical and prolific error from which most of the rest are spawned.*"

He concludes his Anti-Crispian treatise by the following truly Christian paragraph:—

"I call the Searcher of Hearts to witness, that I have not intermeddled with this cōhtroversy of Antinomianism, out of any delight I take in polemic studies, or an unpeaceable contradicting humour; but out of pure zeal for the glory and truths of God, for the vindication and defence whereof I have been *necessarily* engaged therein. And having discharged my duty thus far, I now resolve to return, if God permit me, to my much more agreeable studies; still maintaining my Christian charity for those whom I oppose; not doubting but I shall meet those in heaven, from whom I am forced in lesser things to dissent upon earth."

While my heart is warmed by the love which breathes through the last words of Mr. Flavel's book, permit me to tell you that I cordially adopt them with respect to Mr. Shirley and yourself, hoping that if you think yourself obliged "to cut off all intercourse and friendship with me" upon earth, on account of what you are pleased to call my *disingenuity* and *gross perversions*, you will gladly ascribe to the Lamb of God a common salvation truly finished in heaven, together with,

Honoured and dear Sir,

Your most obedient Servant in the pure

Gospel of St. James,

JOHN FLETCHER.

## LETTER V.

TO RICHARD HILL, ESQ.

HONOURED AND DEAR SIR,

I HAVE hitherto endeavoured to show, that the exploded doctrine of a second justification by works, (that is, by the evidence or instrumentality of works,) in the day of judgment, is scriptural, consonant to the doctrine of our Church, and directly or indirectly maintained, as by yourself, so by all Anti-Crispian Puritan Divines, whenever they regard St. James's holy doctrine more than Calvin's peculiar opinions. I shall now answer a most important question, which you propose about it, p. 149. You introduce it by these words:—

“You cannot suppose that when Mr. Shirley said, *Blessed be God, neither Mr. Wesley, nor any of his Preachers, (Mr. Olivers excepted,) hold a second justification by works*, he intended to exclude good works in an evidential sense.” Indeed, Sir, *I did* suppose it; nor can I to this moment conceive how Mr. Shirley could lean towards Calvinism, if he were settled in St. James's doctrine of justification by the evidence of works. You proceed,

“Neither Mr. Shirley, nor I, nor any Calvinist that I ever heard of, deny that a sinner is declaratively justified by works, both here and at the day of judgment.” You astonish me, Sir; why then do you, at the end of this very paragraph, find fault with me for saying, that it will be absurd in a man, set on the left hand as a rebellious subject of our heavenly King, to plead the works of Christ, when his own works are called for, as the only *evidences* according to which he must be justified or condemned? Why do you cry out, in the

fifth letter of your *Review*, "*O shocking to tell! Horresco referens,*" &c. Why do so many Calvinists *shudder* with horror, because I have represented our Lord as condemning by the evidence of works, (agreeably to his own express doctrine, Matt. xxv.,) a practical Antinomian, a canting apostate, who had no good works to be *declaratively justified* by in the day of judgment? Why do you maintain, that when David committed adultery and murder, he was *justified from all things; his sins past, present, and to come, were for ever and for ever cancelled?* And why do you (p. 70) call me a *snake that bites the Calvinist Ministers*, because I have exposed the Antinomianism of those Preachers, who, setting aside Christ's doctrine of justification by the evidence of works in the last day, give thousands to understand, that they shall then be abundantly justified by *righteousness imputed* in Calvin's way, and by nothing else? You go on,

"Therefore, I say, if you utterly disclaim all human works, as the *procuring, meritorious* cause of justification, what need was there of addressing Mr. Shirley as you have done? Yea, what need was there of your making this point a matter of controversy at all? We are quite agreed, both as to the expression, and as to the meaning of it."

Are we indeed *quite agreed, both as to the expression* of a second justification by works in the day of judgment, *and as to the meaning of it*, to which I once more set my seal, viz., that we shall be justified, *not by the merit but by the evidence* of works? What a pity is it then, that you did not find this out till you came to the 149th page of your book! It would probably have saved you the trouble of writing it, and me the thankless office of exposing it.

However, it is but right I should requite your candid concession, by answering your important question: *What need was there of making this point,*



(of justification by the evidence of works in the day of judgment) *a matter of controversy at all?* I will ingenuously tell you; I wanted an immovable point to fix my engine upon, in order to throw down your great Diana, and pull up by the roots the immense tree of Antinomian knowledge. And now you have so fully and repeatedly granted me the firm point which I desired, permit me, honoured Sir, to throw myself at your feet, to return you thanks, and tell you, that you are the happy prisoner of the truth which I vindicate.

“What do you mean?”—What you little expect, dear Sir, and what I think you cannot possibly avoid. Yes, whether you will or no, I must serve a friendly warrant, and “Young Ignorance” arrests you in the name of English Logic, to make you publicly subscribe to the Anti-Crispian propositions, which your *Benedictine* Monk has rashly traduced.—“I will never do it: I am ready to offer myself among the foremost of those true Protestants, who could have burned against the doctrine of a second justification by works.”—Well then, Sir, you shall go, not to the stake near Baliol College, but to the ground and pillar of truth; and that you may not make a needless resistance, I humbly presume to bind you before all the candid and judicious Calvinists in England, with the following necessary consequences of a capital doctrine, which, you tell us, “was never denied either by Mr. Shirley, or yourself, or any Calvinist you ever heard of.”

If we are “justified by works, that is, by the evidence of works, both here and at the day of judgment,” it follows, 1. That Mr. Wesley’s doctrine with respect to man’s faithfulness in good works, is true; and that, if a man (Judas for instance) is not faithful in the unrighteous mammon, God will not give him the true riches of glory. Though he should once have had faith enough to leave all and follow Christ, his shipwrecked faith, sunk by bad

works, *will profit him nothing*; he shall as surely be condemned by the evidence of his *unfaithfulness*, as ever an highwayman was condemned, upon the fullest *evidence*, that he had robbed upon the highway.

2. The second proposition of the Minutes also stands now upon an immovable basis: "Every believer, till he comes to glory, works *for*, as well as *from* life;" since his *works* will appear as witnesses *for* or against him at the day of judgment, and *life* or death will be the certain consequence of their deposition.

3. The third proposition of the Minutes now shines like the meridian sun after an eclipse: "Nothing is more false than the maxim, that a man is to do nothing in order to justification," either at conversion, or in the last day. For the *work of faith* undoubtedly takes place in the day of conversion, agreeable to those words of St. Paul, "We have believed *that* we might be justified." And if even Calvinists grant that a sinner is "justified by the evidence of works both here and at the day of judgment," it is indubitable, that he must provide that evidence, as there is opportunity; and that, if even an Apostle provides it not, he shall, notwithstanding his election, increase the number of those practical Antinomians, whose condemnation I have described in the Second Check. Hence appears also the error couched under the unguarded proposition which you advance, (p. 12,) "*In the act of justification, we affirm, good works have no place:*" For the *good work* of faith *has* the important place of an *instrument*, when we are justified at our conversion; and the *good work* of love will *have* the *place* of the chief witness, by whose deposition we shall be *justified* in the great day.

You indeed produce the words of our Church: "The thief did believe *only*, and the merciful God justified him;" but they make against you, for they



intimate, that the work of faith was previous to his justification. And that he was not saved *without works*, strictly speaking, although he was saved without the *merit* of works, I prove by your quotation from Bishop Cowper, *Justifying faith, whereby we are saved, cannot be without works*; and by these words of St. James, and Mr. Madan, adapted to the present case: Could “faith save him? that is, such a faith as *hath not works*, as is not productive of the fruits of the Spirit in the heart and life? Is this saving faith? Certainly not.” When our Church says, that he went to heaven without works, she means, without the outward works which Pharisees trust to, such as receiving the sacraments, going to the temple, and giving alms; or she grossly contradicts St. James, Bishop Cowper, Mr. Madan, and herself. Therefore, notwithstanding all you have advanced, *even* the penitent thief’s experience, who, as our Church says, *should have lost his salvation*, and consequently his justification and election, *if he had lived and not regarded the works of faith*, is “a formidable rampart” *for*, not against, St. James’s undefiled religion. Again,

4. When, in the *Review of the whole affair*, Mr. Wesley says, that “he who now believes in Christ with a loving, obedient heart, is now accepted of God;” what does he say more than you, and your favourite Bishop, who tells us, (p. 12.) “That justifying faith, whereby we are saved, *cannot* be without good works; for faith worketh by love?” Does it not evidently follow, from your own, as well as Mr. Wesley’s proposition, that while the incestuous Corinthian defiled his father’s bed, his living, justifying faith had degenerated into a dead, devilish faith? agreeable to that evangelically-legal proposition of Mr. Madan, “If my faith does not produce the proper fruits, it is no better than the devil’s faith:” Whence it necessarily follows,

that the devil's faith is justifying, or that the Corinthian backslider was condemned ; and consequently, that Calvinism and Antinomianism, the grand pillars of defiled religion, are two broken reeds.

5. It is now an indubitable truth, that a *sincere Heathen*, who never heard the name of Christ, and nevertheless *feareth God and worketh righteousness, according to his light, is accepted of him* : For, if he perseveres, he will be justified in the last day by the *evidence* of his works of righteousness ; and he is now justified by the *instrumentality* of his faith in the light of his dispensation ; for this light, when we receive it by faith, if we may believe those excellent mystics,\* St. John and St. Paul, is Christ in us, the hope of glory. (John i. 5, 9 ; Col. i. 27 ; Eph. iii. 17, and v. 14.)

\* The word *Mysticism*, like the word *Enthusiasm*, may be used in a good or bad sense. I am no more ashamed of the true Mystics, that is, those who fathom the deep mysteries of inward religion, than of the true Enthusiasts, those who are really inspired by the grace and love of God. When I said that Solomon was the great Jewish Mystic, I took the word *Mystic* in a good sense : If all are Mystics who preach *Christ in us*, and *Christ the light of the world*, (as you intimate in your five letters,) I affirm, that St. Paul and St. John are two of the greatest mystics in the world. And when I intimated, that Solomon's Song is a mystical book, and that the Rev. Mr. Romaine has given us a mystical, and, in general, edifying explanation of the 107th Psalm ; I no more insulted these good men, than our Church reflects upon our Lord, when she says, that "matrimony represents to us the mystical union between Christ and his Church." If Mr. Wesley has spoken against mysticism, it is undoubtedly against that which is wild and unscriptural ; for he has shown us his approbation of rational and scriptural mysticism, by publishing very edifying extracts from the works of the great German and English Mystics, Kempis and Mr. Law. Permit me to recommend to you, what Mr. Hartley, a Clergyman whom you have quoted with honour, has written in defence of the mystics, and to remind you, that, abroad, those who go a little deeper into inward Christianity than the generality of their neighbours, are called *Pietists* or *Mystics*, as commonly as they are called *Methodists* in England. On the preceding accounts I hope, that when Mr. Wesley or Mr. Shirley shall again condemn mysticism, they will particularly observe, that it is only unscriptural and irrational mysticism which they explode.

6. Nor can you now justly refuse to clear Mr. Wesley of the charge of *heresy*, because he says, *Salvation is not by the merit of works, but by works as a condition*; for in the present case, where is the difference between the word *evidence*, which you use, with Dr. Guyse, Mr. Wesley, and me; and the word *condition*, which Mr. Wesley uses, and our Church, and most of the Puritan Divines? An example will enforce my appeal to your candour: You sit upon the bench as a Magistrate, and a prisoner stands at the bar; you say to him, "You are charged with calumny, forgery, and gross perversions; but you shall be acquitted, on *condition* that some of your reputable neighbours give you a good character." A lawyer checks you for using the treasonable word *condition*, insisting you must say, that the prisoner shall be acquitted, or condemned, according to the *evidence* which his creditable neighbours will give of his good behaviour. You turn to the bar, and say, "Prisoner, did you understand me?" "Yes, Sir," replies he, "as well as the gentleman who stops your Honour." "That is enough," say you, "let us not *dispute about words*: I am persuaded, the court understands, we all mean that the acquittal or condemnation of the prisoner will entirely turn upon the deposition of proper witnesses."

7. With regard to the word *merit*, I hope our controversy is at end; for Mr. Wesley and I, or, to speak your own language, *old Mordecai and young Ignorance*, freely grant what Bishop Hopkins and you assert, (*Review*, p. 42,) namely, that "in all *proper merit* there must be an equivalence, or at least a proportion of worth between the work and the reward;—and that the obedience we perform cannot be said, without a *grand impropriety*, to *merit* any reward from God." But, you must also grant us, that if our Lord, speaking after the manner of men, by a *grand cata-*

*chresis*,\* a very condescending *impropriety*, frequently uses the word *meriting* or *deserving*, we may without heresy use it after him.

Should you ask me, how can I prove that our Lord ever used it; I reply that if he used again and again words answering to it, as face answers to face in a glass, it is just as if he had used the English word *merit*, or Mr. Wesley's Latin word *meritum*; and to prove that he did so, I appeal to the first Greek lexicon you will meet with. I suppose it is that of Schrevelius, because it is the most common all Europe over. Look for *mereor*, to *merit* or *deserve*, and you will find that the correspondent Greek is, *μισθον φερειν*, literally, *to carry a reward*, and *αξιως ειναι*, *to be worthy*; *αξια* answers to *meritum*; and *αξιως* to *meritò*, *deservedly*, or *according to one's merit*.

To prove, therefore, that our Lord did not scruple to use the word *merit* in an *improper* sense, I need only prove that he did not scruple applying the words *μισθος* and *αξιος* to man. Take some instances of both:

1. "Give them *τον μισθον*, *their hire*," or reward. (Matt. 8. xx.) And again, (Matt. v. 12.) "Your reward, *μισθον*, is great in heaven," &c. Hence the Apostle calls God, *μισθαποδοτης*, the *Rewarder*; and Moses is said to look to *μισθαποδοσιαν*, the *recompence of reward*. (Heb. xi. 6, 26.) And the word *μισθαποδοσια*, the *bestowing of a reward*, as much answers to the word *μισθοφορια*, the *carrying of a reward*, or *merit*, as the relative words which necessarily suppose one another. He, therefore, that uses the former without scruple, makes himself quite ridiculous before unprejudiced people, if he scruples using the latter; much more if he thinks the doing it is a *dreadful heresy*.

\* A figure of speech, which consists in using a word in an *improper sense*; as when unfaithful Ministers are called "dogs that cannot bark."

2. As for the other word, *αξιος*, *meriting*, *deserving*, or *worthy*, it is as scriptural as any word in the Bible. You find it used both in a proper, and in an improper sense in the following Scriptures : (1.) In a *proper* sense, "The labourer *is worthy of*, or *merits* his hire. (Luke x. 7.) "*Worthy*," or *deserving* of "stripes." (Luke xii. 48) "*Worthy of*," or *meriting* "death." (Acts xxi. 11.) "They have shed the blood of thy saints, and thou hast given them blood to drink, for they *are worthy*," that is, they *merit*, they *deserve* it. (Rev. xvi. 6.) (2.) In an *improper* sense, which you represent as heretical : "They shall walk with me in white, for they *are worthy*," (Rev. iii. 4.) "Enquire who *is worthy*." (Matt. x. 11.) "*Worthy* of me." (Matt. x. 37.) "They that were bidden *were not worthy*." (Matt. xxii. 8.) "*Worthy* to escape these things." (Luke xxi. 36.) "*Worthy* to obtain that world." (Luke xx. 35,) &c. &c.

In all these passages the original word is *αξιος*, *worthy*, *meriting*, or *deserving*. Bishop Cowper, therefore, whom you quote in your Five Letters, (p. 26,) spoke with uncommon rashness when he said, "No man led by the Spirit of Jesus did ever use this word of *merit*, [that is, *αξιος ειναι*,] as applying to man ; it is the proud speech of Antichrist. Search the Scriptures, and ye shall see that none of all those who speak by divine inspiration did ever use it ; yea, the godly Fathers always abhorred it." What ! the sacred writers "never use the word *αξιος ειναι* ?" "The godly Fathers always abhorred" an expression which the Holy Ghost so frequently makes use of ? Christ himself "spoke by the proud spirit of Antichrist ?" When I see such camels obtruded upon the Church, and swallowed down by thousands as glib truth, I am cut to the heart, and in a pang of sorrow and shame groan, "From such divinity, good Lord, deliver me, my worthy opponent, and all real Protestants !"

To this Mr. Rowland Hill answers beforehand,



in his *Friendly Remarks*, p. 28: This is “a bad criticism upon the word  $\alpha\chi\iota\omega\varsigma$ , which *more properly* means *meet* or *fit*.” Now, Sir, to your *bare* assertion I oppose, (1.) All the Greek lexicons. (2.) The testimony of Beza, Calvin’s successor, who, speaking of the word  $\alpha\chi\iota\omega\varsigma$ , says, “It is properly used of that which is of equal weight and importance.” (3.) The testimony of Leigh, another learned Calvinist, who, in his *Critica Sacra*, says, “ $\text{A}\chi\iota\omega\varsigma$ , has its name from  $\alpha\gamma\epsilon\iota\nu$ , a *trahendo*; *quæ preponderant, lancem attrahunt*; and is a metaphor taken from balancees, when one scale doth counterpoise another.” And speaking of  $\alpha\chi\iota\omega\omega$ , a word derived from  $\alpha\chi\iota\omega\varsigma$ , he adds, “It signifieth when either *reward* or *punishment* is given according to the proportion of *merit*.” And this he proves, by 1 Tim. v. 17, “Let the elders that rule well, be counted *worthy* of double honour: For the Scripture says, The labourer is *worthy* of his reward.”

When I see learned Calvinists forced to grant all we contend for, I wish that no Protestant may any longer expose his prejudice, in denying what is absolutely undeniable, viz., that Christ and his Apostles assert, some *merit*, or *are worthy* of, rewards. Taking care, therefore, never to fix to those scriptural words the idea of *proper* worthiness, or merit of *condignity*, let us no longer fight against Christ, by saying, They are in no sense worthy, whom Christ himself *makes*, *accounts*, and *calls worthy*; yea, whom he gloriously *rewards* as such.”

8. As for this modest proposition of the Minutes, “It is a doubt, if God justifies any one that never did fear him and work righteousness,” it stands now *established* by your concessions, not as matter of *doubt*, but as matter of *fact*, if we speak of justification in the hour of conversion, or in the day of judgment. For, with respect to the former, you justly observe, (p. 12,) that “the faith whereby we are saved,” and consequently justified, “*cannot be*

without good works :” And with regard to the latter, you say, (p. 149,) “What need is there of making our justification by the evidence of works in the day of judgment, a matter of controversy at all? We are quite agreed, that a sinner is declaratively justified by *works*.” Now, honoured Sir, if he is justified by *works*, it is undoubtedly by works of *righteousness*, unless it could be proved, that he may be justified by works of *unrighteousness*, by adultery and murder.

9. It is likewise evident from your own concessions, that “talking of a justified or a sanctified state,” without paying a due regard to good works, *tends to mislead men*, and actually misleads thousands. If Judas, for instance, when he neglected good works, which are the *mark* of our first, and the *instrument* of our second, justification, trusted to what was done in the moment in which he was effectually called to leave all, and follow Jesus, he grossly deceived himself: Or, if he depended upon imputed righteousness, when he neglected personal holiness, he built upon the loosest sand.

The seasonableness of Mr. Wesley’s caution in this respect, will strike you, if you cast your eyes upon the numbers of fallen believers, who once, like obedient Judas, left all to follow Christ; but, having resumed their besetting sin, like the apostolic traitor, now sell their Saviour and election, perhaps for a less valuable consideration than he did. However, they were once in a justified and sanctified state; and Mr. Hill tells them, “that in the act of justification good works have no place;” and insinuates, that adulterers and murderers may be in the *winter season* of a sanctified state; therefore, they reasonably conclude, that they are still justified and sanctified. Thus they live, and if God does not send them an honest Nathan, or if when he comes they stop their ears, and cry out *Heresy!* thus like Judas they will die.



10. With respect to the last clause of the Minutes, you must acknowledge, that “we are every moment pleasing or displeasing to God, according to the whole of our inward tempers and outward behaviour;” or, to clothe Mr. Wesley’s doctrine in words in which you agree with me, you must confess, that “as we may die every hour and every moment, we are liable to be every hour and every moment justified or condemned, by the evidence of our works.”\* This is evident, if you consider St. Paul’s words, “Without faith it is impossible to *please* God;” and if you do not recant what you say, *Review*, p. 12, “Justifying faith,” the faith by which we *please* God, “cannot be without good works.” You must therefore prove, that adultery, treachery, and murder, are *good works*, and by that means openly plead for Belial, Baal, and Beelzebub; or you must grant that when David committed those crimes, he had not “justifying faith,” and consequently could not “please God.” And the moment you grant this, you set your seal to the last proposition of the Minutes, which you esteem most contrary, and I entirely agreeable, to sound doctrine.

Having thus, by the help of your own concessions, once more removed the rock of offence under which you try to crush the seasonable rampart of St. James’s undefiled religion, which we call *the Minutes*, I leave you to consider how much Mr. Wesley has been misunderstood, and how much the truth of the Gospel has been set at nought.

I am, honoured and dear Sir,

Your’s, &c.

JOHN FLETCHER.

\* The reader is once more desired to remember, that by works, we understand, not only the works of the tongue and hands, that is, words and actions; but also, and chiefly, the works of the mind and heart, that is, thoughts, desires, and tempers.

## LETTER VI.

*TO RICHARD HILL, ESQ.*

HONOURED AND DEAR SIR,

WHILE my engine, common sense, stands yet firm upon the point of our justification by the evidence of works, which you have so fully granted me, permit me to level it a moment at the basis of the main pillars which support Antinomianism and Calvinism.

1. If righteous Lot had died when he repeated the crimes of drunkenness and incest, his justification would have been turned into condemnation, according to St. Paul's plain rule, "If thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision:" For neither the holy God, nor any virtuous man, can possibly justify a sinner upon the evidence of drunkenness and incest.

2. If old Solomon, doating upon heathenish young women, and led away by them into abominable idolatries, had died before he was brought again to repentance, he could never have seen the kingdom of God; he would have perished in his sin: Unless Geneva logic can make it appear, in direct opposition to the word of God, that the impenitent shall not perish, and that idolaters shall inherit the kingdom of God. (Luke xiii. 3; 1 Cor. vi. 9.)

3. If the incestuous Corinthian had been cut off while he defiled his father's bed, the justification granted him at his first conversion, far from saving him in the day of judgment, would have aggravated his condemnation, and caused him to be counted worthy of a much severer punishment than if he had never known the way of righteousness,—never been justified: Unless you can

prove that Christ would have acquitted him upon the horrid evidence of apostasy and incest ; which appears to me as difficult a task, as to prove that Christ and Belial are one and the same filthy god.

4. If David and Bathsheba had been run through by Uriah, as Zimri and Cosbi were by Phineas ; and if they had died in their flagrant wickedness ; no previous justification, no Calvinian imputation of righteousness, would have secured their justification in the last day. For upon the evidence of adultery and premeditated murder, they would infallibly have been condemned ; according to those awful words of our Lord, “ I come quickly, to give *every man*,” (here is no exception for the *pleasant children*,) “ according as his works shall be,” not according as my work has been : “ Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may enter in through the gates into the city ; for without are dogs, *whoremongers*, and *murderers*.” (Rev. xxii. 12, &c.)

Should you say, “ It is provided in the decree of absolute election, that adulterers, who once walked with God, shall not die till they have repented ;” 1. I demand a proof that there was ever such a decree. In the second Psalm, indeed, I read about God’s *decree* respecting Christ and mankind ; but it is the very reverse of Calvin’s decree, for it implies *general* redemption and *conditional* election. “ I will declare the *decree* : Thou art my Son : I will give thee the *Heathen* for thine inheritance, and the *utmost* parts of the earth for thy possession.—Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way.”

2. This evasion is founded upon a most absurd supposition, which sews pillows to the arms of backsliders and apostates, by promising them immortality if they persevere in sin. But, setting aside the absurdity of supposing, that old Solomon, for example, might have kept himself alive till now

by assiduously worshipping Ashtaroth ; or, which is the same, that he might have put off death by putting off repentance, because he could not die till he had repented : I ask, Where is this strange gospel written ? Certainly not in the Old Testament ; for God asks there, with indignation, “ When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, *shall he live ?* No ; in his sin that he has sinned *shall he die.*” (Ezek. xviii. 24.) Much less in the New, where Christ protests, that he will spew lukewarm believers out of his mouth ; and that every branch in him which bears not fruit, shall be taken away, or cut off : An awful threatening this, which was executed even upon one of the twelve Apostles ; for our Lord himself says, “ Those that thou *gavest* me I have kept, and none of *them* is *lost*” but Judas, who fell *finally*, since he died in the very act of self-murder, and is particularly called *the son of perdition*.

But granting you, that lest Lot, David, and Solomon should be condemned by works in the day of judgment, they were to be immortal till they repented and did their first works ; this very supposition indicates, that till they repented they were sons of *perdition*, according to that solemn declaration of Truth manifest in the flesh, “ Except ye repent, ye shall all perish.”

As if you were aware of this difficulty, (p. 149,) you have recourse to a noted distinction in Geneva logic, by which you hope to secure your favourite doctrines, as well as fond Rachel once secured her favourite teraphim. You say, “ that though a sinner” (David, for instance, or Solomon) “ be justified *in the sight of God* by Christ alone, he is declaratively justified by works both here and at the day of judgment.”

Now, Sir, this necessarily implies, that though David in Uriah’s bed, and Solomon at the shrine

of Ashtaroath, were justified in the sight of God by Christ's chastity and piety imputed to them : Yet, before men, and before the Judge of quick and dead, they are justified by the evidence of their own chastity and piety. This distinction, one of the main supports of Calvinism, is big with absurdities ; for if it is just, it follows,

1. That while God says of Solomon, worshipping the goddess of the Zidonians, "He is still a true believer, he is justified from all things;" Christ says, "By his fruit ye shall know him ;" he is an impenitent, unjustified idolater;" and St. James, siding with his Master, says roundly, that Solomon's faith, being now without works, is a dead, unjustifying faith, by which, as well as by his bad works, he is condemned already. Now, Sir, it remains that you should give up Antinomian Calvinism, or tell us who is grossly mistaken, God or Christ : For upon your scheme, God says of an impenitent idolater, who once believed in him, "He is fully justified by the perfect law of liberty;" and Christ says, "He is fully condemned by the same law !" and reason dictates, that both parts of a full contradiction cannot be true.

Do not say, that, upon the Calvinian plan, the Father and the Son never contradict one another in the matter of a sinner's justification ; for if the Father justifies by the imputation of an external righteousness, which constitutes a sinner righteous while he commits all sorts of crimes ; and if the Son, on the other hand, condemns a sinner for his *words*, much more for the commission of adultery, idolatry, and murder ; their sentence must be as frequently different, as a believer acts or speaks contrary to the law of liberty. For Christ, being the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, cannot justify, he must condemn *now*, as well as in the day of judgment, every man who *now* acts or speaks wickedly.



Should you attempt to account for the Father's imaginary justification of an impenitent idolater, by bringing in Calvin's decrees, and saying that God reckoned Solomon a converted man at the shrine of Ashtaroath, because he had absolutely decreed to give him restoring grace : I reply, that supposing such decrees are not imaginary, is it not absurd to say, God reckons that cold is heat, and confounds January with July, because he has *decreed* that summer shall follow winter ? Therefore which way soever you turn, absurdities or impieties stare you in the face.

2. The unreasonableness of Calvinism will appear to you more glaring still, if you suppose a moment that David died in Uriah's bed. For then, according to Crisp's justification by the imputation of Christ's chastity, he must have gone straight to heaven ; and, according to our Lord's condemnation, by the evidence of personal adultery, he must have gone straight to hell. Thus, by the help of Geneva logic, so sure as the royal adulterer might have died before Nathan stirred him up to repentance, I can demonstrate, that David might have been saved and damned, in heaven and in hell, at the same time !

3. Your distinction insinuates, that there will be two days of judgment ; one to try us secretly *before God*, by imputed sin and imputed righteousness ; and the other, to try us publicly *before men and angels*, by personal sin and personal righteousness : A new doctrine this, which every Christian is bound to reject, not only because the Scripture is silent about it, but because it fixes a shocking duplicity of conduct upon God ; for it represents him, first, as absolutely saving or damning the children of men according to his own capricious imputation of Christ's righteousness, or of Adam's sin ; and then as being desirous to make a show of justice *before men and angels*, by pretending to jus-

tify or condemn people according to their works, when, in fact, he has already justified or condemned them without the least respect to their works ; for, say Bishop Cowper and Mr. Hill, " In the act of justification, good works have no place : " And indeed how should they, if free-grace and free-wrath have unalterably cast the lot of all, before the foundation of the world ; or, in other terms, if *finished* salvation and *finished* damnation have the stamp of God, as well as that of Calvin ?

4. According to your imaginary distinction, Christ, as King of Saints, frequently condemns for inherent wickedness, those whom he justifies, as a Priest, by imputed righteousness ; and so, to the disgrace of his wisdom, he publicly recants, as a Judge, the sentence of complete justification, which he privately passes as a God. Permit me to enforce this observation by the example of Judas, or any other apostate. I hope nobody will charge me with blasphemy, for saying that our Lord called Judas with the same sincerity with which he called his other disciples. Heaven forbid that any Christian should suppose, the Lamb of God called Iscariot to get him into the pit of perdition, as the fowler does an unhappy bird which he wants to get into a decoy ! Judas readily answered the call, and undoubtedly believed in Christ, as well as the rest of the apostles : For St. John says, " ' This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory ; and his disciples, " of whom Judas was one, " believed in him. " His faith was true, so far as it went ; for he was one of the little flock to whom it was God's good pleasure to give the kingdom. ( Luke xii. 32. ) Our Lord pronounced him *blessed*, with the rest of his disciples, ( Matt. xiii. 16, ) and conditionally promised him one of the twelve apostolic crowns in his glory. ( Matt. xix. 28. )

If you say, that " he was *always* a traitor and



a hypocrite, you run into endless difficulties ; for, (1.) You make Christ countenance, by his example, all bishops, who knowingly ordain wicked men ; all patrons, who give them livings ; and all kings, who prefer ungodly men to high dignities in the Church. (2.) You suppose that Christ, who would not receive an occasional testimony from an evil spirit, not only sent a *devil* to preach and baptize in his name, but at his return encouraged him in his horrid dissimulation, by bidding him “rejoice that his name was written in heaven.” (3.) You believe, that the faithful and true Witness, in whose mouth no guile was ever found, gave this absurd, hypocritical charge to a goat, an arch hypocrite, a *devil* : “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves ; but fear not, the hairs of your head are all numbered. A sparrow shall not fall to the ground without *your Father*, and ye are of more value than many sparrows. Do not premeditate, it shall be given you what you shall speak : For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.”

When our Lord spoke thus to Judas, he was a *sheep*, that is, he heard Christ's voice, and followed him. But, alas ! he was afterwards taken by the bright shining of silver and gold, as David was by the striking beauty of Uriah's wife. And when he had admitted the base temptation, our Lord, with the honesty of a Master, and tenderness of a Saviour, said, “‘Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil ?’ He has let the tempter into his heart.” This severe, though indirect reproof, reclaimed Judas for a time ; as a similar rebuke checked Peter on another occasion. Nor was it probably till near the end of our Lord's ministry, that he began to be unfaithful in the mammon of unrighteousness : And even then Christ kindly warned, without exposing him.

Some, indeed, think that our Lord was partial

to Peter; but I do not see it; for with equal love and faithfulness he warned all his disciples of their approaching fall, and mentioned the peculiar circumstances of Judas's and Peter's apostasy.—“Ay, but he prayed for Peter, that his faith might not fail.”—And is this a proof that he never prayed for Judas, that he always excepted him when he prayed for his disciples, and that he would have excepted him, if he had been alive, when he interceded for all his murderers?—“However, he *looked at Peter*, to cover him with penitential shame.”—Nay, he did more than this for Judas; for he pointed at him, first indirectly, and then directly, to bring him to a sense of his crime. But supposing our Lord had not at all endeavoured to stop him in his dreadful career, would this have been a proof of his reprobating partiality? Is it not said, that “the Lord weigheth the spirits?” As such, did he not see that Judas offended of malicious wickedness, and calm deliberation; and that Peter would offend merely through fear and surprise? Supposing therefore he had made a difference between them, would it be right to account for it by Calvinian election and reprobation, when the difference might so naturally be accounted for from the different state of their hearts, and nature of their falls? Was it not highly agreeable to the notions we have of justice, and the declarations we read in the Scripture, that our Lord should reprobate or give up Judas, when he saw him immovably fixed in his apostasy, and found that the last hour of his day of grace was now expired?

From all these circumstances, I hope I may conclude, that Judas was not always a hypocrite; that he may be properly ranked among apostates, that is, among those who truly fall from God, and therefore were once truly in him; and that our Lord spoke no untruth, when he called the Spirit of God the Spirit of Judas's Father, without

making any difference between him and the other disciples.

If you ask how he fell; I reply, that, overlooking an important part of our Lord's pastoral charge to him, "He that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved," he dallied with worldly temptations, till the evil spirit, which was gone out of him, entered in again, with seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and took possession of his heart, which was once swept from reigning sin, and garnished with the graces which adorn the Christian in his infant-state. Thus like Hymeneus, Philetus, Demas, and other apostates, "by putting away a good conscience, concerning faith he made shipwreck," and evidenced the truth of God's declaration, "When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: In his sin that he has sinned he shall die."

"Nay, Judas kept his Master's money, and was a thief: Therefore he was always a hypocrite, an absolute reprobate."

To show the weakness of this objection, I need only retort it thus: David set his heart upon his neighbour's wife, as Judas did upon his Master's money, and like him betrayed innocent blood; therefore he was always a hypocrite, an absolute reprobate. If the inference is just in one case, it is undoubtedly so in the other.

"But David repented, and did his first works."

I thank my objector for this important concession. Did Judas perish? It was then because he *did not do his first works* though he *repented*. And is David saved? It is because he not only repented, but *did also his first works*; or, to use your own expressions, because he recovered "justifying faith, which *cannot* be without good works." Thus, when he had recovered justifying faith

*before God*, he could again be justified by the evidence of works, both *before* his fellow-mortals, and that God who judges the world in righteousness, and who sentences every man according to *his own* works, and not merely according to works done by *another* near six thousand or eighteen hundred years before they were born. Thus the royal adulterer, who died a justified, chaste penitent, can, through the merits of Christ, stand before the throne in a better and more substantial righteousness, than the fantastic robe in which you imagine he was clothed, when his eyes were full of adultery and his hands full of blood ;—an airy, loose, flimsy robe this, cut out at Geneva and Dort, not at Jerusalem or Antioch ;—a wretched contrivance, the chief use of which is to cover the iron-clay feet of the Calvinian Diana, and afford a safe asylum, a decent canopy, to the *pleasant children*, while they debauch their neighbours' wives, and hypocritically murder them out of the way.

O ye good men, how long will ye inadvertently represent our God, who is glorious in holiness, as the pander of vice ; and Christ's immaculate righteousness, as the unseemly cloak of such wickedness as is not so much as named among the Gentiles ? O that salvation from this evil were given unto Israel out of Zion ! O that the Lord would deliver his people from this preposterous error ! O that the blast of Divine indignation, and the sighs of thousands of good men, lighting at once on the great image, might tear away the loose robe of righteousness, which Calvin put upon her in a "*winter-season* !" Then could all the world read the mark of the beast and the fiend, which she wears on her naked breast : "Free adultery, free murder, free incest, any length of sin for the pleasant children, the little flock of the elect : Free wrath, free vengeance,

free damnation for the immense herd of the reprobates !”

But to return to Judas, the first of all Christian apostates : Waving the consideration of his justification in his infancy, I observe, that, as he had once true faith, he undoubtedly believed to righteousness, and consequently it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now, if this means, that God put upon him a loose robe of righteousness, which for ever screened him from condemnation, and under which he could conceal a bag of stolen money, as easily as you suppose David hid the ewe-lamb which he conveyed away from Uriah’s pasture ; it follows, upon your scheme, that, “ justification being one single immutable act, in which works have no place,” Judas is still completely justified before God, by Calvinian imputation of righteousness ; although Christians have hitherto believed, works have so important a place in justification, that the apostate is no less condemned before God, than before men and angels, by his avarice and treason.

Let those who can split a hair, as easily as an eagle can find her passage between east and west, take the chosen Apostle, who did not make his election sure by the works of faith ; and let them split him asunder : So shall happy Iscariot, the dear elected child of God, wrapped in imputed righteousness, and carried by everlasting love, infallibly go to heaven *without works*, in consequence of his Calvinian justification before God ; while poor reprobated Judas, for accomplishing God’s decree, shall infallibly go to his own place, in consequence of his condemnation by the evidence of wicked works.

Thus, Sir, by fixing my plain engine, *common sense*, upon the immovable point which you have granted me, that is, St. James’s justification by works, I hope I have not only removed the rock



of offence from off Mr. Wesley's Anti-Crispian propositions, but heaved also your great Diana, and her brother Apollyon, (I mean unconditional *Election* and absolute *Reprobation*;) from off the basis of orthodoxy, on which you suppose they stand firm as the pillars of heaven. May the God of pure, impartial love, whom they have so long indirectly traduced, as a God of blind dotage to hundreds, and implacable wrath to millions, of his creatures in the very same circumstances;—the God whom those *graceless* doctrines have represented as fond Eli, and grim Apollyon: May He, I say, arise, for his name's sake, and touch the Geneva Colossus with his own omnipotent finger: So shall it in a moment fall from the amazing height of reverence to which Calvin, the Synod of Dort, and Elisha Coles have raised it; and its undeceived votaries shall perceive they had no more reason to call Geneva impositions *the doctrines of grace*, than good Aaron and the mistaken Israelites, to give the tremendous name of *Jehovah* to the ridiculous idol, which they had devoutly set up in the absence of legal Moses: So, giving glory to God, they shall confess that the robe of their image, with which some so officiously cover impenitent adulterers and murderers, is no more like the true wedding garment, than the imaginary appearances of armed men in the clouds, are like the multitude of the heavenly host.

While you try to defend this robe, and I to tear it off the back of Antinomian Jezebel, let us not neglect putting off the old man, putting on Christ Jesus; and walking *in him* as St. Paul, or *with him* as Enoch, arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, which is the righteousness imparted to the saints, when Christ is formed in their hearts by faith, and imputed to them so long as they walk in their measure as he also walked. That, notwithstanding our warm controversy, we may walk in



love with each other, and all the people of God,  
is the prayer of,

Honoured and dear Sir,  
Your obedient and devoted Servant  
in St. James's gospel,  
JOHN FLETCHER.

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## LETTER VII.

TO RICHARD HILL, ESQ.

HONOURED AND DEAR SIR,

THE Fourth Letter of your *Review* you produce as “a *full and particular answer*” to what I have advanced against Crisp’s scheme of *finished salvation*, and *finished damnation*. But, to my great surprise, you pass in profound silence over my strongest arguments. Had I been in your place, I would have paid some regard to my word, printed in capitals in my title-page: I would have tried to prove, that, upon Crisp’s scheme, St. Paul might, consistently with wisdom, exhort the Philippians, to work out their [finished] salvation with fear and trembling. And if I could not have made it appear, that our Lord has *finished* his work, as an interposing Mediator, a teaching Prophet, and a ruling King; I would either have given up the point, or endeavour to show, that he has finished it at least as a Priest.

But even this you could not do without setting aside two important parts of his Priestly office; for the same Jesus, who offered up himself as the true paschal Lamb, is now exalted at the right hand of God, to “bless” us as our Melchisedec, and “make intercession for us” as our Aaron, saying daily concerning a multitude of barren fig-trees in

his vineyard, "Let them alone this year also, till I shall dig about them; and if they bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut them down." Now, if he daily carries on his own personal work of salvation, not only as a Prophet and a King, but also as a Mediator and a Priest; common sense dictates, that "*his personal work*" is no more finished than *our own*; and that the doctrine of *finished salvation* is founded upon a heap of palpable mistakes, if by that expression you mean any thing more than a *finished atonement*.

But, overlooking these insurmountable difficulties, you open your "*full and particular answer*" by saying, p. 62, 63, "*Finished Salvation* is the grand fortress, against which all your artillery is played, and at which your heavy bombs of bitter sneer and cutting sarcasm are thrown:—Yet this very expression, in its full extent, I undertake to vindicate, and in so doing shall fly to the sword of the Spirit; and the Lord enabling me to wield it aright, I doubt not I shall put to flight the armies of the aliens." Let us now see how you manage your sword, put us to flight, and establish finished salvation.

I. Page 63. "When the Lord of Glory gave up the ghost, he cried, 'It is finished.' And what was finished? Not merely his life; but *the work which was given him to do*. And what was this work, but the salvation of his people? One would have imagined, that the Lord's own use of the expression might have silenced every cavil."

The Lord's own use of this *contested* expression, *Finished Salvation*! Pray, Sir, where does he use it? Certainly not in the two passages you quote. "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do," previously to my entering on my passion; and, "It is finished;" that is, all the prophecies relative to what I was to do, teach, and suffer *before* my death, are accomplished. These Scriptures do not in the

least refer to the work of *salvation* on our part ; nor do they even take in the most important branches of *salvation's* work on Christ's part. To assert it, is to take a bold stride into Socinianism, and maintain, it was not needful to our salvation that Christ should *die*, and *rise again*. For when he said, "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do," he was not yet entered upon his passion ; nor had he *died* for our sins, much less was he yet *risen* for our justification, when he said upon the cross, "It is finished." To suppose, then, that salvation's work on Christ's part was *finished*, not only before his resurrection, but also before his death, is to set aside some of his most important works ; in direct opposition to the Scriptures, which testify, that "He *died* the just for the unjust ;" and affirm, that if "He is not *raised*, our faith is vain," we are yet in our sins. Thus, Sir, you have so unhappily begun to wield your sword, as to cut down, at the first stroke, the two grand articles of the Christian faith, the *death* and *resurrection* of Jesus Christ.

II. Page 33. To mend the matter, you have recourse to the mysterious doctrine of the decrees ; and because "all events are present unto God, and were so from eternity to eternity," you affirm, that "the glorification of the elect is as much *finished* as their predestination." By the same rule of Geneva logic, I may say, that because God has decreed, the world shall melt with fervent heat, the general conflagration is as much finished as the deluge. Were ever more strange assertions obtruded upon mankind ?

If this illustration does not convince you of your mistake, I turn the tables, and make your blood run cold with the dreadful counterpart of your own proposition. "The *damnation* of the *non-elect*," born or unborn, "is as much *finished* as their predestination." And are these the "good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people ?" And is this

the comfortable Gospel of free grace, which we are to “preach to every creature?” Alas! Sir, you wield your sword so unskilfully, as absolutely to cut down all hopes and possibility of mercy for millions of your fellow-creatures; even for the poor reprobates on the left side of the ship, who, “from eternity to eternity,” were irresistibly enclosed in the net of *finished damnation*!

III. Page 63. To support your unscriptural assertion, you produce Rom. viii. 29, “Whom he did predestinate, them he called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” Indeed, Sir, the Apostle no more meant to insinuate by these words, that David was *justified* and *glorified* when he wallowed in the filth of adultery and murder; than that Judas was *condemned* and *damned* when he left all to follow Christ. He only lays before us an account of the method, which God follows in the eternal salvation of obedient, persevering believers; who are the persons that, as such, he predestinated to life, according to his foreknowledge, and the counsel of his holy will. These *he called*, but not these alone. When they made their calling sure, by believing in the light of their dispensation, these *he also justified*. And when they made their justification sure, by “adding to their faith virtue,” &c., these *he also glorified*; for the souls of departed saints are actually *glorified* in Abraham’s bosom; and living saints are not only *called* and *justified*, but also in part *glorified*; for, by the Spirit of *glory* and of God, which rests upon them, they are changed into the Divine image from *glory* to *glory*; yea, they are already *all glorious* within.

How much more reasonable and scriptural is this sense of the Apostle’s words, than that you fix upon them, by which you would make us believe, that, on the one hand, Solomon’s salvation (including his justification and glorification) was *finished* “in the

*full extent of the expression,*” when he worshipped the abomination of the Zidonians, and gloried in his shame ; while, on the other hand, Demas’s damnation was finished, when he was St. Paul’s zealous “companion in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ?” O, Sir, have you not here also inadvertently used the sword of the Spirit, to oppose the mind of the Spirit, and make way for barefaced Antinomianism? You proceed,

IV. Page 63. “The same Apostle in his epistle to the Ephesians, speaking to believers, addresses them as already (virtually) ‘seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus,’” hence you infer, that their salvation was finished, “in the full extent of the expression.” But your conclusion is not just ; for the Apostle, instead of supposing their salvation finished, exhorts them not to steal, not to be drunk, and not to give place to the devil, by fornication, uncleanness, filthiness, or covetousness : “For this ye know,” adds he, “that no unclean person, &c. hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ ;” so far is he from being “already virtually seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

What need is there of darkening counsel by a word without knowledge, by the dark word “virtually?” While the Ephesians kept the faith, did they not set their affections on things above? Were not their hearts in heaven with Christ, agreeably to our Lord’s doctrine, “Where your treasure is, there will your hearts be also?” And by a lively faith, which is the substance of things hoped for, did they not already share the glory of their exalted Head? Will you still endeavour to persuade the world, that, when David defiled his neighbour’s bed, he was “seated in heavenly places in Christ?” Is it not evident, that these, and the like expressions of St. Paul, must not be understood of idle, Antinomian speculations ; but of such a real change, as our Church mentions in her Collect for Ascension-day?



“Grant, that as Christ ascended into the heavens ; so we may also in *heart* and *mind* thither *ascend*, and continually *dwell*.” Such powerful exertions of faith, hope, and love, as are described in the seventy-seventh hymn of Mr. Madan’s collection :

By *faith* we are come  
To our permanent home ;  
By *hope* we the rapture improve ;  
By *love* we still rise,  
And look down on the skies—  
For the heaven of heavens is *love* !

But this is not all : If the elect, whether they be drunk or sober, chaste or unclean, “are already virtually seated in heavenly places in Christ,” according to the doctrine of *finished salvation* ; are not poor reprobates, whether they pray or curse, repent or sin, already virtually seated in hellish places in the devil, according to the doctrine of *finished damnation* ? O Sir, when you use the sword of the Spirit to storm the New Jerusalem, and cut the way through law and Gospel before an adulterer in *flagrante delicto*, that he may “virtually,” that is, I fear, comfortably and securely, “sit in heavenly places in Christ,” do you not dreadfully prostitute God’s *holy* word, inadvertently fight the battle of the rankest Antinomians, and secure the foundation of Sandiman’s as well as Crisp’s increasing errors ? But you have an excuse ready :—

V. Page 63. “Christ has purchased the Spirit, to work mortification of sin, &c., in the hearts of his children ; and in this respect their sanctification is really as much *finished* as their justification.” I reply, 1. If their *justification* by works is not *finished* before the day of judgment, as our Lord informs us, Matt. xii. 37, your observation proves just nothing. 2. The Scriptures, in direct opposition to your scheme, declare, that the Spirit strives with, and consequently was purchased for,



*all*; those who quench it, and sin against the Holy Ghost, not excepted. Therefore, neither the sanctification nor salvation of sinners, is absolutely secured by the purchase you mention. If it were, all the world would be saved. But, alas! many deny the Lord that *bought* them, and, by doing “despite to the Spirit of grace” purchased for them, “bring upon themselves *swift destruction*,” instead of *finished salvation*. Here, then, the sword which you wield, flies again to pieces by clashing with the real sword of the Spirit, brandished by St. Peter and St. Paul.

VI. Page 64. You bring in “the immutability of God’s counsel confirmed by an oath,” and add, “The will and testament is signed, sealed, and properly attested—*The whole affair is finished*. There remains nothing to do but to take possession.” I thank you, dear Sir, for this concession; something then “remains to do;” we must, at least, “take possession;” and if we neglect doing it, farewell *finished salvation*: We shall as much fall short of the *heavenly*, as the Israelites, who perished in the wilderness, because they refused to take possession, fell short, of the *earthly Canaan*.

Again: We grant that God’s “will and testament is finished, and sealed by Christ’s most precious blood;” and that “the everlasting covenant is ordered in all things, and sure.” But if part of that *will* and *covenant* runs thus: “Ye are saved by grace through *faith*:—You are kept by the power of God through *faith*:—*If ye continue in the faith:—Faith without works* is dead:—Wherefore *work out* your own salvation with fear and trembling:—For him that sinneth, I will blot out of my book:—If ye walk contrary to me, I will walk contrary to you:—I will cut my staff, *beauty*, asunder, that I may break my covenant which I have made with all the people.” (Zech. xi. 10.) “And ye shall know my breach of promise.” (Numbers xiv. 34.) “I

will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord having *saved* the people out of the land of Egypt, afterwards *destroyed* them that *believed not*:—Although through *faith* they kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest the destroyer should touch them; and did *all* drink the same spiritual drink: (For they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them; and that rock was Christ:)—Now all these things happened to them for examples; and they are written for our admonition. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.” If part of God’s *will* and *covenant*, I say, runs thus, is it not absurd to suppose, that any man’s *salvation is finished*, while he not only does not comply with the gracious terms of God’s “sure covenant,” but notoriously incurs the dreadful threatenings recorded in his unalterable “will and testament.” Here, then, instead of “turning to flight the armies of the aliens,” you have given us weapons to beat you out of the field. But you soon come back again to say,

VII. Page 64. “Certain it is, that the salvation of every soul given by the Father to the Son, in the eternal covenant of Redemption, is as firmly secured as if those souls were already in glory.” “The *certainty* which you speak of, exists only in your own imagination. Judas was *given* by the Father to the Son, and yet Judas was lost. If the *salvation* of some people “was as firmly secured from the beginning, as if they had already been in glory,” all the Ministers of the Gospel who have addressed them at any time as “children of wrath,” have been preachers of lies, and the Holy Spirit witnesses to an untruth when he testifies, to the unregenerate elect, that they are in danger of hell. But this is not all; upon your dangerous scheme, the foundations are thrown down; man is no more in a state of trial; the day of judgment will be a mere farce;

and the Scriptures are a farrago of the most absurd cautions, and the most scandalous lies, for they perpetually speak to believers, as to persons in danger of *falling*, and *being cut off*, if they do not walk circumspectly ; and they assert, that some “ perish for whom Christ died,” and that others, by “ denying the Lord who bought them, bring upon themselves swift destruction.”

But pray, Sir, when you tell us, “ The salvation of every soul given by the Father to the Son, in the eternal covenant of redemption, is as firmly secured as if those souls were already in glory ; ” do you not see the cloven foot on which your doctrine stalks along ? Permit me to uncover it a moment and strike my readers with salutary dread, by holding forth the inseparable counterpart of your dangerous opinion : “ Certain it is, that the *damnation* of every soul given by the Father to the *devil*, in the eternal covenant of *reprobation*, is as firmly secured, as if those souls were already in *hell*.” Shame on the man that first called such horrid tenets the doctrines of *grace*, and the *free* Gospel of Jesus Christ ! Confusion on the lying spirit, who broke out of the bottomless pit, thus to blaspheme the Father of mercies, delude good men, and sow the tares of Antinomianism ! O Sir, when you plead for such doctrines, instead of wielding aright “ the sword of the Spirit,” do you not plunge it in muddy, Stygian waters, till it is covered with sordid rust, and reeks with poisonous error ? But you pursue :

VIII. Page 64. “ To scruple the use of that expression, *finished salvation*, argues the greatest mistrust of the Mediator’s power, and casts the highest reflection upon his infinite wisdom, by supposing that he did not count the cost before he began to build, and therefore that either his own personal work or that which he does in his members, (for they are only parts of the same salvation,) is left *unfinished*.” If we do not admit your doc-

trine, it is not because we mistrust the Mediator's "power," and have low thoughts of his "wisdom," but because we cannot believe, that he will use his *Power* in opposition to his *Wisdom* and *Truth*, in taking the elect by main force into heaven, as a strong man takes a sack of corn into his granary; much less can we think that he will use his *Omni-potence* in opposition to his *Mercy* and *Justice*, by placing millions of his creatures in such forcible circumstances, as *absolutely necessitate* them to sin and be damned according to the horrible doctrine of *finished damnation*.

Nor do we suppose that Christ unwisely forgot to "count the cost." No; from the beginning he knew, that some would abuse their liberty, and bury their talent of good-will, and gracious power to come unto him, "that they might have more abundant life." But far from being disappointed, as we are when things fall out contrary to our fond expectation, he declared beforehand, "I have laboured in vain, yet surely my work is with my God." (Isa. xlix. 4.) As if he had said, "If I cannot rejoice over the obstinate neglecters of my great salvation; if my kindly dying for their sins, excepting that against the Holy Ghost; and my sincerely calling upon them to turn and live, prove useless to them, through their doing despite to the Spirit of grace, and committing the sin unto death; yet my work will not be lost with respect to *my God*. For my impartial, redeeming love will effectually stop every mouth, and abundantly secure the honour of all the Divine perfections, which would be dreadfully sullied, if, by an absolute decree, that *all* should *necessarily* fall in Adam, and that millions should *never* have it in their power to rise by me, I had set my seal to the horrible doctrine of *finished damnation*."

Here then, in flourishing with your sword, you have *beaten the air*, instead of *turning to flight the*

*armies of*—"those who are not clear in the doctrine of absolute predestination, whom you call"—"*aliens*;" and in a quotation, p. 37, "absolutely place among the numerous hosts of the Diabolonians, who by the best of laws must die as election-doubters."

IX. Page 64. "If any thing is left unfinished, Christ would never have said, 'He that believeth hath everlasting life;' it is already *begun* in his soul." Well, if it is but *begun*, it is not yet *finished*. But you add, "It is so certain in reversion, that nothing shall deprive him of it."—True, *if* he continues in the faith, and abides in Christ, hearing his voice, and following him: For who shall pluck you out of the Redeemer's hand?—"Who shall harm you if ye be followers of that which is good?" But if the believer makes shipwreck of his faith, and ends in the flesh, after having begun in the Spirit, with all apostates he shall of the flesh reap destruction. Again,

*Everlasting life*, in the passage you quote, undoubtedly, signifies a *title* to eternal bliss, as it appears from these words of our Lord, "He that has left brethren, &c., for my sake, shall receive in the world to come *eternal life*;" and from these words of St. Paul, "Ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end *everlasting life*:" Now, if we give over following after holiness, and do not continue to leave all for Christ's sake, may we not forfeit our *title* to glory, as the servant who had ten thousand talents forgiven him, forfeited his pardon, and the privilege annexed to it, by taking his fellow-servant by the throat, and arresting him for a hundred pence? But supposing the expression *everlasting life*, means, as you intimate, "the life of God already begun in the soul," agreeably to these Scriptures: "The life that I live, I live by faith in the Son of God; for the just shall live by faith;" how can you infer, that the life of faith is inamis-



sible? If you can believe that every child quickened in the womb, grows up to be a *man*, because he has *human* life in embryo; I will grant, that no soul, quickened by the seed of grace, can miscarry, and that the seed of the word brings forth fruit to maturity in every sort of ground.

Should you reply, that "the life of faith, or spiritual life, *cannot* be lost, because it is of an *eternal* nature;" I deny the consequence. Suppose I have lost an everlasting jewel, do I not quibble myself out of my invaluable property if I say, "I have not lost it, for it is *everlasting*?" Did not Satan and Adam lose their spiritual life? Do not all apostates lose it also? Is there a damned soul but what has lost it twice,—once in Adam, and the second time by his own personal transgressions? Are not all men who burn in fire unquenchable, trees plucked up by the roots; not because they *died in Adam*, but because they are *twice dead*; because they personally *destroyed themselves*, and when Christ gave them a degree of life, *would not* come to him that they might have it more abundantly? Thus, by *resisting* to the last the quickening beams of the Spirit that *strove with them*, they *quenched* him in themselves, and became apostates. If Christ is the light and the life of men, and if he enlightens every man that comes into the world, are not all the damned, apostates? Have they not all fallen from some degree or other of quickening grace? Have they not all buried one or more talents? And is it not Satan's master-piece of policy, to make good men assure quickened sinners, that they cannot lose their life, no not by plunging into the whirlpools of adultery, murder, and incest? The ancient serpent deceived our first parents by saying, "Ye shall not surely die," if ye eat of the forbidden fruit; but now, it seems, he may take his rest, for, O astonishing! Gospel Ministers do his work, they inadvertently deceive the



very elect, and overthrow the faith of some, by making them the very same false promise.

I have already observed, that he who believeth is said to have everlasting life; not only because, while he keeps the faith he has a title to glory, but because living faith always works by *love*, the grace that *never faileth*, the grace that lives and abides for ever; not indeed in this or that individual, during his state of probation, but in the kingdom of heaven, among the spirits of just men made perfect in love, and confirmed in glory. However, you still urge, "To say that everlasting life can be lost, is a contradiction in terms: If it is *everlasting*, how can it be forfeited or lost?" How! Just as the Jews forfeited the land which God gave to Abraham for an "everlasting possession." (Gen. xvii. 8.) Just as the seed of Phineas lost "the everlasting Priesthood." (Num. xxv. 13.) Just as the Israelites "broke the everlasting covenant." (Isa. xxiv. 5.) Just as Hymeneus and Philetus forfeited the everlasting privileges of believers, that is, by "making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience." Here, then, the edge of your own sword is again blunted, and the stroke given to the "aliens," easily parried with the unbroken sword of the Spirit, I mean, the word of God illustrated by itself, and taken in connexion with itself. However, you proceed:—

X. Page 64. "The chosen vessel, Paul, tells his beloved Timothy, that God *hath* saved us, and called us with a holy calling," &c. Hence you conclude, that if we are elect, our salvation is *finished*. I grant, that God *hath* saved us from hell, placed us in a state of salvation *begun*, and "called us with a holy calling *to work out* our salvation with fear and trembling;" under some dispensation of that "grace which was given us in Christ before the world began; according to God's own purpose," that Christ should be "the Saviour of all men, especially of them that believe." But, alas! though

many are thus called, yet but few are chosen, because few walk worthy of their high vocation, few make their calling and election sure. Numbers, like David and Solomon, Demas and Sapphira, believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away ; some of whom, instead of rising again, draw back unto perdition.

Hence “ the chosen vessel, Paul,” himself cries to halting believers, “ How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation ? ” So far was he from imagining that the salvation of some, and the damnation of others, “ were as firmly secured ” as if the one “ were already in heaven,” and the other in hell ! So little did he think, that to preach the gospel was to present the elect with nothing but the cup of *finished salvation*, even when they take away the wives and lives of their neighbours ; and to drench the reprobates with the cup of *finished damnation*, even while they ask, seek, knock, and endeavour to make their *mock calling* sure !

Certain it is, that if the Apostle spoke of your *finished salvation*, when he said, “ God hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling,” reprobated myriads may reasonably give over wrestling with almighty, everlasting wrath, and cry out, “ He hath *damned* us, and called us with an *unholy*, hypocritical, and lying calling, according to his own purpose and wrath, which was given in Adam before the world began.” O Sir, by this frightful doctrine, you give a desperate thrust to the hopes which millions entertain, that God is not yet absolutely merciless towards them, and that they may yet repent and be saved ; but, happily for them, it is with the dagger of error, and not with “ the sword of the Spirit.”

XI. Page 65. “ But farther. Believers are said to be saved by faith, and to be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. Now, true faith and salvation are here inseparably linked

by the Apostle." Inseparably linked ! Pray Sir, where is the inseparable link ? I see it not. Nay, when I consult the Apostles, on whose strained words you raise your argument, they rise with one consent against your doctrine. The one says, Some branches in Christ "were broken off because of unbelief; thou standest by faith; (undoubtedly true faith) "nevertheless, fear lest he also spare not thee. Behold his goodness towards thee, *if* thou continue in his goodness: Otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." The other declares, "If after they" (fallen believers, whom he does not call "pleasant," but cursed children) "have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," (that is, through true faith,) "they are again entangled therein, and overcome; the latter end is worse with them than the beginning." (2 Pet. ii. 20, compared with 2 Pet. i. 2, 8, 9, 10.) Thus, Sir, St. Paul and St. Peter, whom you call to your assistance, agree to wrench your sword out of your own hand. But you soon take it up again.

XII. Page 64. "Christ being styled not only the Author, but the *Finisher* of our faith, he must be, consequently, the *Finisher* of our *salvation*." So he undoubtedly is, when we are workers together with him; that is, when, using the gracious talent of will and power, which he freely gives us, we work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. But if we bury that talent, do despite to the Spirit of grace, forget that we were washed from our sins, and wallow again in the mire of iniquity; Christ, the Author of the faith which we destroy, profiteth us nothing: We are fallen from grace.

Is it right to rock feeble believers in the cradle of carnal security, by telling them, they can never lose the faith; when part of St. Paul's triumphant song, just before he received the crown of

martyrdom, was, "I have kept the faith?" What wonder was it, that *he* should have *kept* what even the carnal, incestuous Corinthian could *never lose*? When the Scriptures mention, not only those who have kept the faith, but those who have made shipwreck of it, and of a good conscience,—those who believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away,—and those who one day believe, another day have little faith, and by-and-by have no faith;—are we not wise above what is written, and sow we not Antinomian tares, when we give lukewarm Laodiceans to understand, they can never lose what, alas! they have already lost?

If Christ was to believe in his own blood for us, I grant that the work of faith and salvation could not miscarry. But what ground have we to imagine that this is the case? Did the Apostles charge Christ, or sinners, to believe, under pain of damnation? If believing is entirely the work of Christ, why did he marvel at the unbelief of the Jews? Did you ever marvel at the Sessions, that the constables in waiting did not act as magistrates? Did you ever send them to jail for not doing *your* work, as you suppose Christ sends unbelievers to hell for not believing, that is, upon your scheme, for not doing *his own work*?

While we readily grant you, that the talent of *faith*, like that of *industry*, is the *free gift of God*, together with the time, opportunity, and power to use it; should you not grant us, that God treats us as rational, accountable creatures; that he does not use the gift of faith for us; that we may bury our talent of faith, and perish; as some bury their talent of industry, and starve; and that it is as absurd to say, "The faith of every individual in the Church is inamissible, because Christ is the author and finisher of our faith;" as to affirm that "no individual ear of corn can be blasted,

because Christ (who upholds all things by the word of his power) is the unchangeable author and *finisher* of all our harvests?"

Once more permit me, honoured Sir, to hang the millstone of reprobation about the neck of your Diana, to cast her back with that cumbrous weight into the sea of error, from whose scum she, like another Venus, had her unnatural origin. If the salvation of the elect is *finished*, because "Christ is the author and finisher of their faith," it necessarily follows, that the *damnation* of the reprobates is also *finished*, because "Christ is the author and finisher of their unbelief." For he that absolutely withholds faith, causes unbelief as effectually as he that absolutely withholds the light causes darkness.

If, in direct opposition to the words of our Lord, John iii. 18, you say with some Calvinists, that "Christ does not damn men for *unbelief*, but for their *sins* ; I reply : That is mere trifling. If Christ absolutely refuses them power to believe in the light of their dispensation, how can they but sin ? Does not St. Paul say, that "without faith it is impossible to please God ?" Is not unbelief at the root of every sin ? Did not even Adam eat the forbidden fruit through unbelief ? And is not *this our only victory, even our faith ?*

An illustration will, I hope, expose the emptiness of the pleas which some urge in favour of *unconditional reprobation*, or, if you please, *non-election*. A mother conceives an unaccountable antipathy to her sucking child. She goes to the brink of a precipice, bends herself over with the passive infant in her bosom, and, withdrawing her arms from under him, drops him upon the craggy side of a rock, and thus he rolls down from rock to rock, till he lies at the bottom beaten to pieces, a bloody instance of *finished destruction*. The judge asks the murderer, what she has to say in



her own defence. "The child was mine," replies she, "and I have a right to do what I please with my own. Besides, I did neither throw him down, nor murder him: I only withdrew my hands from under him, and he fell of his own accord." In mystic Geneva, she is honourably acquitted; but in England, the executioner is ordered to rid the earth of the cruel monster. So may God give us commission to rid the earth of your Diana, who teaches, that he, the *Father of mercies*, does by *millions* of his passive children, what the barbarous mother did by *one* of her's; affirming that he unconditionally withholds grace from them; and that, by absolutely refusing to be "the author and finisher of their faith," he is the absolute author and finisher of their unbelief, and consequently of their sin and damnation.

XIII. However, without being frightened at these dreadful consequences, you conclude as if you had won the day: Page 65. "Now, I appeal to my candid judges, whether I have not brought sufficient authority, from the best of authorities, God's unerring word, for the use of that phrase, *finished salvation*," which, page 63, "in its full extent, I undertook to vindicate." I cordially join in your appeal, Sir, and desire our unprejudiced readers to say, if you have brought one *solid* proof from God's unerring word, in support of your favourite scheme, which centres in the doctrine of *finished damnation*; and if that expression, when taken "in its full extent," is not the stalking horse of every wild Nicolaitan ranter; and the dangerous bait, by which Satan, transformed into an angel of light, prevails upon unstable souls to swallow the silver hook of *speculative*, that he may draw them into all the depths of *practical*, Antinomianism.

XIV. I do not think it worth while to dwell upon the lines you quote from Mr. Charles Wes-



ley's Hymns. He is yet alive to tell us what he meant by, "'Tis finished, 'tis past," &c. And he informs me, that he meant, "The sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, which Christ made upon the cross for the sins of the whole world, except doing despite to the Spirit of grace, or the sin against the Holy Ghost." The *atonement*, which is a considerable part of the Redeemer's work, is undoubtedly *finished*; and if by a figure of poetry, that puts a part for the whole, you choose to give the name of *finished salvation* to a *finished atonement*, I have already observed in the Third Check, that we will not dispute about the expression. We only entreat you so to explain and guard it, as not to give sanction to "Antinomian dotages," and charge the God of love with the blasphemy of *finished damnation*.

XV. The Calvinistical passage which you produce from the Christian Library, is unguarded, and escaped Mr. Wesley's or the printer's attention. One sentence of it is worthy of a place in the *Index expurgatorius*, which he designs to annex to that valuable collection. Nevertheless, two clauses of that very passage are not at all to your purpose: "Christ is now thoroughly furnished for the carrying on of his work;—He is actually at work." Now if Christ is actually *at work*, and *carrying on his work*, that work is not yet *finished*. Thus, even the exceptionable passage which you, or the friends who gave you their assistance, have picked out of a work of fifty volumes, shows the absurdity of taking the expression, "finished salvation, in its full extent."

Should you say, "Christ is thoroughly furnished for his work, (namely, the salvation of the elect,) therefore that work is as good as finished:" I once more present you with the frightful head of the Geneva-Medusa, and reply, "Christ is thoroughly furnished for his work, (namely, the *damnation*

of the reprobates,) therefore the work is as good as finished." Thus all terminates still in uncovering the two iron-clay feet of your great image, absolute election and absolute reprobation, or which is all one, *finished salvation* and *finished damnation*.

O Sir, the more you fight for Crisp's scheme of *free-grace*, the more you expose his scheme of *free-wrath*. I hope my judicious readers are shocked at it, as well as myself. Your "sword" really "puts us to flight."—We start back,—we run away: but it is only from *the depth of Satan*, which you help us to discover in *speculative Antinomianism* and *barefaced Calvinism*.

XVI. If you charge me with "calumny" for asserting, that speculative Antinomianism and barefaced Calvinism are one and the same thing; to clear myself, I present you with the CREED of an honest, consistent, plain-spoken Calvinist. Read it without prejudice, and say, if it will not suit an abettor of speculative Antinomianism, and, upon occasion, a wild Ranter, wading through all the depths of practical Antinomianism, as well as an admirer of "the doctrines of grace."

*Five Letters*, First Edition, pages 33, 34, 27. "I most firmly believe, that the grand cause of so much lifeless profession is owing to the sheep of Christ being fed in the barren pastures and muddled waters of a *legalized* gospel. The doctrines of grace are not to be kept out of sight, for fear men of corrupt minds should abuse them. I will no more be so fearful to trust God with his own truths, as to starve his children and my own soul. I will make an open confession of my faith.

1. "I believe in God the Father Almighty, who from all eternity, unconditionally predestinated me to life, and absolutely chose me to eternal salvation. Whom he once loved, he will love for ever; I am therefore persuaded, (p. 28, 31,) that, as he did not

set his love on me at first for any thing in me, so that love, which is not at all dependent upon any thing in me, can never vary on account of my miscarriages; and for this reason when I miscarry, (suppose by adultery or murder,) God ever considers me as one with his own Son, who has fulfilled all righteousness for me. And as he is *always well pleased* with him, so with me, who am absolutely *bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh*. (P. 26, 31.) There are no lengths, then, I may not run, nor any depths I may not fall into, without displeasing him; as I see in David, who, notwithstanding his repeated backslidings, did not lose the character of the man after God's own heart. I may murder with him, worship Ashtaroth with Solomon, deny Christ with Peter, rob with Onesimus, and commit incest with the Corinthian, without forfeiting either the Divine favour, or the kingdom of glory. 'Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?' to the charge of a believer? to my charge? For,

2. Pages 26, 27, 32. "I believe in Jesus Christ, that 'by one offering has for ever perfected' me, who am *sanctified* in all my sins:—*In him I am complete* in all my iniquities. What is all sin before his atoning blood? Either he has fulfilled the whole law, and borne the curse, or he has not: If he has not, no soul can be saved: If he has, then all debts and claims against his people and me, be they more (suppose a thousand adulteries, and so many murders) or be they less, (suppose only one robbery) be they small, or be they great, be they before or be they after my conversion, are for ever and for ever cancelled. I set up no more mountainous distinctions of sin, especially sins after conversion. Whether I am dejected with Elijah under the juniper-tree, or worshipping Milcolm with Solomon; whether I mistake his voice of the Lord for that of his Priest as Samuel, or defile my neighbour's bed as David; I am equally accepted

in the Beloved. For in Christ I am chosen, loved, called, and unconditionally preserved to the end. All trespasses are forgiven me,—I am justified from all things,—I already have everlasting life. Nay, I am now (virtually) set down in heavenly places with Christ; and as soon shall Satan pluck his crown from his head, as his purchase from his hand.

P. 27, 28. “Yes, I avow it in the face of all the world; no falls or backslidings can ever bring me again under condemnation; for Christ hath made me free from the law of sin and death. Should I out-sin Manasses himself, I should not be a less pleasant child; because God always views me in Christ, and in him I am without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. Black in myself, I am still comely through the comeliness put upon me: And therefore he ‘who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity,’ can, in the midst of all adulteries, murders, and incest, address me with, ‘Thou art all fair, my love, my undefiled; there is no spot in thee!’ And,

3. “I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of grace, against whom I can never sin, (p. 26,) whose light and love I can never quench, to whom I can never do despite, and who, in his good time, will *irresistibly* and *infallibly* (Review, p. 38) work in me to will and to do. In the mean time, I am perfectly secure; for I can never perish, my *salvation* being already *finished* in the full extent of the expression. (Review, p. 63, &c.)

“Once, indeed, I supposed, that the wrath of God came, at least for enormous crimes, upon the children of disobedience; and I thought it would come upon me, if I committed adultery and murder: But now I discover my mistake, and believe, (p. 28 and 25,) it is a *capital error* to confound me and my actions. While *my murders*, &c., certainly displease God, *my person* stands always absolved, always complete, always pleasant in the everlasting

righteousness of the Redeemer. I repeat it, (2d edit. p. 37,) it is a *most pernicious error* of the Schoolmen, to distinguish sins according to the *fact*, and not according to the *person*. He that believeth hath as great sin as the unbeliever; nay, his sins, (p. 32,) for the matter of them, are perhaps *more heinous and scandalous* than those of the unbeliever; but although he daily sinneth, perhaps as David and the Corinthian, by adultery, murder, and incest, he *continueth godly*.

“Before I was acquainted with the truth, I imagined that sin would dishonour God, and injure me: But since the preachers of *finished salvation* have opened my eyes, I see how greatly I was mistaken. And now I believe that God will over-rule my sin, (whether it be adultery, murder, or incest,) for his glory and my good.

1. P. 26, 30, 31, 32. “*For his glory*. God often permits his own dearest children to commit adultery, robbery, murder, and incest, to bring about his purposes. He has always the same thing in view, namely, *his own glory and my salvation*, together with that of the other elect. This Adam was accomplishing when he put the whole world under the curse;—Onesimus, when he robbed Philemon his master;—Judah, when he committed incest with Tamar;—and David, when he committed adultery with Bathsheba.—How has many a poor, faithless soul even blessed God for Peter’s denial! As for the incestuous Corinthian, the tenderness shown him after his crime, has raised many out of the mire, and caused them to recover their first love.

2. P. 32. “*For my good*. God has promised to make ‘all things work for good’ to me; and if all things, then my very sins and corruptions are included in the royal promise. Should I be asked, What particular good sin will do me in time and in eternity? I answer: A grievous fall (suppose into adultery, murder, or incest) shall serve to make



me know my place, to drive me near to Christ, to make me more dependent upon his strength, to keep me more watchful, to cause me to sympathize with the fallen, and to make me sing louder to the praise of free, sovereign, restoring grace, throughout all the ages of eternity. Thus, although I highly blame (p. 33) those who roundly say, 'Let us sin that grace may abound,' I do not legalize the Gospel, but openly declare, (p. 27,) that if I commit adultery, murder, or incest, before or after my conversion, grace shall *irresistibly* and *infallibly* abound over these, and all my other sins, be they small or be they great, be they more or be they less. My foulest falls will only drive me nearer to Christ, and make me sing (p. 32) his praises *louder* than if I had not fallen. Thus (to say nothing of the *sweetness* and *profit* which may now arise from sin) adultery, incest, and murder shall, upon the whole, make me holier upon earth, and merrier in heaven."

I need not tell *you*, Sir, that I am indebted to you for all the doctrines, and most of the expressions, of this dangerous Confession of Faith. If any one doubts of it, let him compare this Creed and your Letters together. Some clauses and sentences I have added, not to "misrepresent and blacken," but to introduce, connect, and illustrate your sentiments. You speak, indeed, in the *third* person, and I in the *first*, but this alters not the doctrine. Besides, if the privileges of a lean believer belong to me, as well as to David; I do not see why I should be debarred from the fat pastures you recommend, (p. 34,) which, I fear, are so very rich, that if the leanest sheep of Christ do but range, and take their fill in them, they will, in a few days, wax wanton against him, *butt* at the sheep which do not bleat to their satisfaction, attack the under-shepherds, and grow so excessively fat as to out-kick Jeshurun himself.



XVII. Some half-hearted Calvinists, who are ashamed of their principles, and desirous to conceal their Diana's deformity, will probably blame you for having uncovered the less frightful of her feet, and shown it naked to the wondering world. But to the apology which you have already made about it, I hope I may, without impertinence, add one or two remarks.

1. Whoever believes either the doctrine of *unconditional election*, or that of *righteousness absolutely imputed* to apostatizing believers, or that of the *infallible perseverance* of all who were *saints* yesterday, and to-day commit adultery, murder, or incest; and, in a word, whoever believes the doctrine of *finished salvation*, implicitly receives two thirds of the Antinomian creed which you have helped me to. And those who have so strong a faith, and so large a conscience, as to swallow *so much*, (together with the doctrine of *finished damnation*, *eternal wrath* flaming against myriads of unborn creatures, and *everlasting fire* prepared for millions of passive, sensible machines, which have only fulfilled God's *secret* and *irresistible* will,) might, one would think, receive the *whole creed*, without any difficulty. For why should those who could swallow five or six camels as a glib morsel, strain at three or four gnats, as if they were going to be quite choked? Again:

2. If Calvinism is true, you are certainly, Sir, the honest and consistent Calvinist, so far as consistency is compatible with the most inconsistent of all schemes. Permit me to produce one instance, which, I hope will abate the prejudices which some unsettled Calvinists have conceived against you, for speaking quite out, with respect to the excellent effects of sin in believers.

If man is not a *free* agent, (and undoubtedly he is not, if from all eternity he has been *bound* by ten thousand chains of irresistible and absolute decrees,)

it follows that he is but a curious machine, superior to a brute, as a brute is superior to a watch, and a watch to a wheel-barrow. Upon Calvin's principles, this wonderful machine is as much guided by God's invisible hand, or rather by his absolute decrees, as a puppet by the unseen wire which causes its seemingly spontaneous motions. 'This being the case, it is evident that God is as much the author of our actions, good or bad, as a show-man is the author of the motions of his puppets, whether they turn to the right or to the left. Now, as God is infinitely wise, and supremely good, he will set his machines upon doing nothing but what, upon the whole, is *wisest* and *best*. Hence it appears, that if the doctrine of absolute decrees, which is the fundamental principle of Calvinism, is true, whatever sin we commit, we only fulfil the absolute will of God, and do that which, upon the whole, is *wisest* and *best*; and that you have not unadvisedly pleaded for Baal, but rationally spoken for God, when you have told us what great advantages result from the commission of the greatest crimes. In doing this strange work, then, you have acted only as a consistent predestinarian; and though some thoughtless Calvinists may, yet none that are judicious will, blame you for having spoken agreeably to the leading principle of "the doctrines of grace."

I have observed, that speculative Antinomianism, or barefaced Calvinism, stalks along upon the doctrine of *finished salvation*, and *finished damnation*, which we may consider as the two feet of your great Diana; and the preceding creed, which is drawn up for an *elect*, uncovers only her *handsome* foot, *finished salvation*. To do my subject justice, I should now make an open show of her *cloven* foot, by giving the world the creed of a *reprobate*, according to the dreadful doctrine of *finished damnation*. But as I flatter myself, that my readers are already as tired of Calvinism as myself, I think

it needless to raise their detestation of it, by drawing before their eyes a long chain of blasphemous positions, capable of making the hair of their heads stand up with horror. I shall, therefore, with all wise Calvinists, draw a veil over the hideous sight; and conclude by assuring you, few people more heartily wish you delivered from speculative Antinomianism, and possessed of *salvation truly finished* in glory, than, Honoured and dear Sir,

Your affectionate and obedient Servant,

In the bonds of what you call

the "*legalized Gospel*,"

JOHN FLETCHER.

## LETTER VIII.

TO RICHARD HILL, ESQ.

HONOURED AND DEAR SIR,

HAVING endeavoured in my last to convince you out of your own mouth, that undisguised Calvinism, and speculative Antinomianism, exactly coincide; before I turn from you to face your brother, I beg leave to vindicate *good works* from an aspersion, which zealous Calvinists perpetually cast upon them; for as *practical* Antinomianism *destroys* the fruits of righteousness, as a wild boar does the fruit of the vine; so *speculative* Antinomianism besprinkles them with filth, as an unclean bird does the produce of our orchards.

Hence it is, that you charge me (*Review*, page 69) with "vile slander," for insinuating that our free-grace preachers do not raise the superstructure in good works. Page 41, as if you wanted to demonstrate the *truth* of my "vile slander," you say, "Though we render the words *καλα εργα*, *good works*, yet the exact translation is *ornamental works*; and truly, when brought to the strictness of the

law, they do not deserve the name of *good*. But, however grating the expression may sound to those who hope to obtain a second justification by their works, yet we have Scripture authority to call them ‘dung, dross, and filthy rags.’”

Now, Sir, if Scripture authorizes us to call them thus, they are undoubtedly very useless, loathsome, and abominable; and the Minutes, which highly recommend them, are certainly *dreadfully heretical*. I must then lose all my controversial labour, or once more take up the shield of truth, and quench this fiery (should I not say, this “filthy?”) dart, which you have thrown at St. James’s *undefiled* religion. I begin with your criticism:

I. “Though we render the words *καλα εργα*, *good works*, yet the exact translation is *ornamental works*.” I apprehend, Sir, you are mistaken; the Greek word *καλος*, exactly answers to the Hebrew, טוב, which conveys the joint ideas of *goodness* and *beauty*. Before there was any “filthy rag” in the world, “God saw every thing that he had made, and behold, it was טוב מאד, *very good*,” which the Septuagint very exactly renders *καλα λιαν*. Fully to overthrow your criticism, I need only to observe, that *good works* are called *good*, with the very same word, by which the *goodness* of the law, and the *excellence* of the Lawgiver, are expressed: For St. Paul, speaking of the law, (Rom. vii. 16.) says, that *it is καλος*, *good*; and our Lord, speaking of himself says, “I am, ο ποιμην ο καλος, the *good Shepherd*.” Now, Sir, as you are too pious to infer from the word *καλος*, that neither the law nor Christ “deserve to be called *good*,” I hope you will be candid enough to give up your similar inference concerning *good works*.

Inconsistency is the badge of error. You give us, if I mistake not, a proof of it, by telling us with one breath, that “good works do not deserve the name of *good*, but that of “*ornamental* ;” and with

the next that the Scripture authorizes us to call them *dung*, *dross*, and *filthy rags*." Are then *dung*, *dross*, and *filthy rags*, ORNAMENTAL things? Or did you try to render Geneva criticism as famous as Geneva logic? But,

II. You have recourse to divinity as well as to criticism; for you say, "When *good works* are brought to the strictness of the law, they do not deserve the name of *good*!" I answer, If our Lord himself called them *good*, it does not become us to insinuate, that in so doing he passed a wrong judgment, and countenanced "proud justiciars" in their legal error. With respect to the "strictness of the law," which you so frequently urge, your frightful notions about it cannot drive us into Antinomianism; because we think that Christ and St. Paul were better acquainted with the law than Calvin and yourself. If all the law and the Prophets hang on the grand commandment of love, as our Lord informs us; and if he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law, as the Apostle declares; we see no reason to believe, that the law condemns as "*dung*," the labour of that love by which it is fulfilled; and rejects as *filthy rags*, works which Christ himself promises to crown with eternal rewards. You probably reply,

III. "Many Pharisees go to church without devotion, and many fornicators give alms without charity, fancying that *such good works* make amends for their sins, and merit heaven." *Good works* do you call them? The Scriptures never gave them that honourable name. They are the hypocritical righteousness of unbelief, and not "works meet for repentance," or the "fruits of the righteousness of faith." Treat *them* as you please, but spare *good works*. It is as unjust to asperse good works on their account, as to hang the honest men who duly carry on the king's coinage at the mint, because the villains who counterfeit his majesty's coin, evidently deserve the gallows.



IV. Should you object, that “the best works have flaws, blemishes, and imperfections, and therefore may properly be called *dung*, *dross*, and *filthy rags*,” I deny the consequence. The best guineas may have their flaws; nay, some dust or dirt may accidentally cleave to them; but this does not turn them into *dross*. As therefore a good guinea is gold, and not *dross*, though it has some accidental blemishes; so, God himself being judge, a good work is a *good work*, and not a *filthy rag*, though it is not free from all imperfections.

V. “Not so,” do you say: “We have Scripture authority to call good works *filthy rags*.” You build, it seems, your mistake upon Isaiah lxiv. 6, “All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags:” A passage which, upon mature consideration, I beg leave to rescue from the hands of the Calvinists. The Jews were extremely corrupted in the days of Isaiah; hence he opens the prophecy by calling the rich, “Ye rulers of Sodom,” and the poor, “Ye people of Gomorrah.” And what says he to them? “How is the faithful city become a harlot! Righteousness lodged in it, but now murderers!” Yet these murderers hypocritically went on keeping their sabbaths and new moons. They *fasted*, but it was *for strife*, and to *smite with the fist of wickedness*. They made many prayers, and offered multitudes of sacrifices, but *their hands were full of blood*. Nor did they consider, that he, who under these circumstances *sacrifices an ox, is as if he slew a man*.

This corruption of the Jews, though general, was not universal: For the Lord of Hosts had left to them a remnant, though very small. Now, Isaiah, one of that very little flock, being humbled at the sight of the general wickedness of the people, confesses it in the first person, (*we*,) as Ministers always do on such occasions; and he uses the word *all*, because the *small remnant* of the righteous was as



lost in the multitude of the wicked. The verse, taken in connexion with the context, runs thus: "Thou meetest him that rejoiceth, and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy ways." But, alas! we are not the people. "Behold, thou art wroth, for we have sinned. We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Therefore, instead of meeting us, as thou dost the righteous, thou hast hid thy face from us, and hast consumed us because of our iniquities. "We all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away:" So far are we from resembling the righteous, who "are like a tree planted by the water side, whose leaf does not wither." Who does not see that the Prophet here opposes the happiness of the righteous, to the misery of the wicked? and that it is the hypocritical righteousnesses of the ungodly, and not the precious obedience of believers, which he compares to "filthy rags?"

VI. However, "We have Scripture authority to call good works *dross*." Your mind, I suppose, runs upon Isaiah i. 22, 25, where God expostulates with the obstinate Jews, by saying, "Thy silver is become *dross*," thy righteousness is all hypocrisy; "yet, if thou returnest, I will purge away thy *dross*," I will make thee truly righteous. Is it not evident that it is hypocrisy and *bad* works, not *good* works, which God here calls *dross*? Will he, think you, purge away *good* works from his people? Is it not enough, that armies of Antinomians do the devil that service? Must we also suppose that God promises to be his drudge?

VII. But, "We have Scripture authority to call good works *dung*." Not at all: For the two passages you probably think of are against you. In the first, God speaks to the disobedient Jews, and says, "If ye will not hear, and give glory unto my name, I will send a curse upon you; yea, I have

cursed your blessings already. Behold, I will spread upon your faces the dung of your solemn feasts." (Mal. ii. 2, 3.) Now, Sir, who does not see by the context, that festivals kept by *cursed* hypocrites are called *dung*, and not the solemn worship performed by penitent believers?

If you quote Philippians iii. 8, it will be to as little purpose. Do you rightly understand that passage, "I count all things as loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but *dung*, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ?" You know, Sir, that the Apostle once made far too much of his privileges as a Jew, his morals as an honest man, and his observance of the law as a strict disciple of Moses. And you remember, that, when he wrapped himself up in that kind of external righteousness, his heart breathed nothing but contempt towards Christ, and slaughter against his people: What wonder is it that he should count such a righteousness, together with all earthly, perishing things, *loss* and *dung* for Christ? Who does not see, that it was not the precious righteousness of faith, which consists in pardon, acceptance, and power to do good works; but the paltry righteousness of an unbeliever, a blasphemer, a murderer?

Should you say, that "when the Apostle declares, he counts *all* things but *dung*, that he may be found in Christ, he certainly includes *good works*, and counts them *dung*;" I reply, You have as good reason to say, that he certainly includes repentance, faith, obedience, grace, and glory, and counts them *dung* also!

Some gentlemen invite you to go a hunting, or play at cards, to keep you from the Sessions; and you answer, "I am determined to do my duty.

Once your sports were gain to me, but now I account them but loss of time ; yea, doubtless, I count *all* things that stand in competition with my office vile and contemptible as *dung* : They no more tempt me to pursue them, than yonder dung-hill tempts me to take my rest ; I am ready to trample upon them as filthy dust, rather than not be found upon the bench, doing my duty as a magistrate ; not according to my own former mistaken notions of justice, but according to the equitable laws of my country." Now, Sir, should I not very much wrong you, if I inferred, from your very generous answer, that you call doing justice *dung* ? And do you not greatly wrong St. Paul, when, upon a pretence equally frivolous, you insinuate that he gave to *good works* such an injurious name ? that he called the will of God, done in faith by the Spirit of Christ, *dung* ?

Again : When the Apostle prayed to be found in Christ, not having his own pharisaic righteousness, which was of the letter of the law, but the righteousness which is of God by faith ; is it not evident that (besides the desire of being pardoned and accepted through faith in Christ) he wished to be found to the last, a branch grafted in the true vine, by faith ? a living branch, filled with the righteous sap of the root that bore him ? a branch made fruitful by the principle of all acceptable righteousness, which is Christ in us, the hope of glory ? and, to use his own words in this very Epistle, a branch filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ to the glory of God ? (Phil. i. 11, compared with iii. 9.)

Let men of reason and religion say, if this sense is not more agreeable to the letter of Scripture in general, and the Apostle's word in particular, than the fantastic imputation of righteousness, which Calvinists build upon them : An imputation this, which constitutes a man righteous, while he commits

adultery, murder, or incest. Is it not deplorable, that such an unscriptural and unnatural idea should ever have entered the minds of pious men? especially when St. John says, "Little children, let no man deceive you: He that *does* righteousness," and not barely he for whom Christ hath done righteousness, "is righteous." Is it not lamentable, that good men, influenced by prejudice, should be able to persuade thousands, that St. John meant, "*Let not* Mr. Wesley *deceive* you; he that actually liveth with another man's wife, worships abominable idols, and commits incest with his father's wife, may not only be *righteous*, but *complete in imputed righteousness*;—in a righteousness which exceeds, not only the righteousness of the Pharisees, but the personal righteousness of converted Paul, and of the brightest angel in glory!"

O Sir, if you have told it in Paris, tell it not in Constantinople, lest the daughters of the Mahometans bless God, that, lewd and bloody as their prophet was, he never so far lost sight of morality and decency, as to give Mussulmen a *cloak*, under the specious name of a "*robe of righteousness*," under which they can curse, swear, and get drunk; commit adultery, robbery, murder, and incest; without being less *righteous*, than if they had kept all the commandments of God; less in favour with the Most High, than if they had personally abounded in all the works of piety, mercy, and self-denial, which adorned the life of Jesus Christ; and less interested in *finished salvation*, than if they were already in glory. O Sir, is not this doctrine more dangerous than that of transubstantiation? Is it not more dishonourable to Christ, more immoral, and, consequently, more pernicious to society? And would it not absolutely destroy the morals of all those who receive it, if our Lord, for his name's sake, did not in mercy deny, to thousands of them, *sense* or *attention* to draw a dreadful conclusion

from these dreadful premises ; while he graciously gives, to thousands more, hearts infinitely better than their immoral principles ?

Having thus endeavoured to rescue the passages on which you found your assertion concerning good works, and proved, that there is not one scripture which gives you the least authority to call them either *dung*, *dross*, or *filthy rags* ; to convince you, that a heap of impious absurdities lies concealed under that doctrine, permit me to produce some of the scriptures where good works are mentioned ; and to substitute for that phrase the hard names, which, you tell us, the Scripture authorises you to call them.

“ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works,” that is, your *dung*, “ and glorify your Father who is in heaven.—She has wrought a good work,” that is, a *filthy rag*, “ upon me against my burial.—Dorcas was full of good works,” that is, of *dung* and *rags*.—“ God make you to abound in every good work,” that is, in every sort of *dung* and *dross*.—“ We are created in Christ Jesus to good works,” that is, to *filthy rags*, “ which God hath prepared for us to walk in.—Walk worthy of the Lord, being fruitful in every good work,” that is, in every *filthy rag*.—“ God establish you in every good work,” that is, in *dung* of every sort.—“ Provoke one another to love and good works,” that is, to *dross* and *rags*.—“ Be zealous of good works,” that is, of *filthy rags*.—“ Be rich in good works,” that is, in *dross*.—“ Be a pattern in good works,” that is, in *filthy rags*.—“ Be careful to maintain good works,” that is, *dung*.—“ Let the Gentiles by your good works,” that is, your *dung*, “ which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.—Be thoroughly furnished to every good work : Be perfect in every good work,” that is, in *dung* and *dross* of every kind.—“ Blessed are they that die in the Lord ; for their works,” that is,



their *dung* and *rags*, “follow them.—God is not unrighteous, to forget your work,” that is, your *dung*, “that proceedeth of love.—The Gentiles should do works,” that is, *dung*, “meet for repentance.—Esteem Ministers highly in love for their work’s,” that is, their *dung’s* “sake.—If he have not works,” that is, *dung*, “can faith save him? Faith without works,” that is, without *filthy rags*, “is dead.—By works,” that is, *dung*, “was Abraham’s faith made perfect.—He and Rahab were justified by works,” by *filthy rags*.—He that believeth in me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these,” that is, *filthier rags*, and more *ornamental dung*,” shall he do.—This is the work,” that is, *dung*, “of God, that you believe,” &c.

Indeed, Sir, I am almost ashamed to take up the “filthy rag” of this bad divinity, though it is only with the point of my pen, to hold it out a moment to public view, that the world may be sick of barefaced Antinomianism. I drop it again into the sink of defiled religion, out of which Crisp raked it; and beg for the honour of Christ and your own, that you will no more recommend it as *pure* gospel.

And now, Sir, permit me to expostulate a moment with you. Against whom have you employed your pen, when you have taught the world to call good works *dung*, *dross*, and *filthy rags*; pretending to have authority from the Scripture thus to revile the best thing under heaven? Is it only against the “proud justiciars?” Is it not also indirectly, though I am persuaded undesignedly, against the adorable Trinity? Has not the Father “created us to *good works*?” Did not the Son “redeem us, that we might be a people zealous of *good works*?” And does not the Holy Ghost sanctify us, that “all our *works* being begun, continued, and ended in him, we may glorify God’s holy name,” and cause it to be glorified by all around us?



What harm did good works ever do you, or any one, that you should decry them in so public a manner as you have done? Did you ever duly consider their nature and excellence? Or have you condemned them in a hurry, without so much as casting an attentive look upon them? Permit me to bring them to you, as God brought the beasts of the field to Adam, that he might give them names according to their nature; and tell me which of them you will call *dung*, which *dross*, and which *filthy rags*.

First, then, What objection have you against the *good works* of the *heart*? against the *awaking* out of sin, *returning* to God, *repenting*, offering the sacrifice of a contrite spirit, and *believing* unto righteousness? What objection against *trusting* in the Lord Jehovah, in whom is everlasting strength; *casting* the anchor of our hope within the veil; *loving* God for himself, and all mankind for God's sake? Do you see any of *these* good works of the heart, that look like a "filthy rag?"

No sooner is the inward man of the heart truly engaged in any one of the preceding works, than the outward man is all in motion. The candle of the Lord is not lighted in the soul to be put under a bushel, and extinguished; but to be set as on the candlestick of the body, that it may give light to all around, and that men, seeing our light, may glorify our heavenly Father. Hence arise several classes of external good works.

Consider the man of God as he is clothed with a corruptible body, which must be nourished without being pampered. He keeps it under by moderate fasting or abstinence. He daily denies himself, and takes up his cross. He works with cheerful diligence. He eats, drinks, or sleeps, with gladness and singleness of heart; and if he is sick, he bears his pain with joyful resignation, doing or suffering all to the glory of God, in

the spirit of sacrifice, and in the name of the Lord Jesus.

View him in his own family. Not satisfied with mental prayer, he bends the knee to his Father who sees in secret ; and, not contented with private devotions, he reads to his assembled household select portions of God's word, and solemnly worships him with them in spirit and in truth. Nor does he think, that doing his duty towards God excuses him from fulfilling it towards his neighbour. Just the reverse. Because his soul is all reverence to his heavenly Father, it is all respect to his earthly parents. Because he ardently loves the Bridegroom of souls, he feels the warmest regard for his wife, he bears the tenderest and yet the most rational affection to his children. Nor is he less desirous his servants should serve God and work out their salvation, than he is, that they should serve him and do his own work. Hence arise his familiar instructions, mild reproofs, earnest intreaties, encouraging exhortations. His strict honesty and meekness of wisdom, his moderation and love of peace, are known to all around him : And even those who despise his piety, are forced to speak well of his morals.

Behold his works as a member of society in general. In his little sphere of action he makes his star to shine upon the just and the unjust ; his charity is universal. To the utmost of his ability he opposes vice, countenances virtue, promotes industry, and patronizes despised piety. Humble faith kindles him into a burning and shining light ; he is a minister of the God of all mercies, he is a flaming fire. He feeds Christ in the hungry, gives him drink in the thirsty, clothes him in the naked, entertains him in strangers, attends him on sick-beds, visits him in prisons, and comforts him in the mournful apartments, where the guilty are stretched on the rack of despair, or where the godly, for-

saken of their friends, pledge their dying Lord with the dregs of the cup of sorrow.' How easily does he overlook the unkindness of his neighbours! How readily does he forgive injuries! How cordially he heaps coals of melting fire upon the heads of his enemies! How sincerely does he pray for all his slanderers and persecutors! and how ardently desire to grow in grace, and endeavour to adorn more and more the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things!

Consider him as a member of a religious society. How excellent, how divine, are his works! He respectfully holds up the hands of his Minister, and kindly bears the burdens of his brethren. He watches over them for good, rejoices with those that rejoice, and mourns with those that mourn. He compassionately sympathizes with the tempted, impartially reproves sin, meekly restores the fallen, and cheerfully animates the dejected. Like undaunted Caleb, he spirits up the fearful; and, like valiant Joshua, he leads them to the conquests of Canaan; and goes on from conquering to conquer.

And suppose he went on even unto perfection, and took the kingdom of heaven by violent faith, and humble, patient, and importunate prayer; would you call him a *filthy rag*-man, and insinuate, that he had only done a *dung*-work? O Sir, if you can so publicly call good works *dross*, *dung*, and *filthy rags*; and (what is worse still) assert that the Holy Ghost in the Scriptures authorizes you so to do; who will wonder to see you represent the doctrine of Christian Perfection as a pernicious Popish heresy, which turns men "into *temporary monsters*?" Would you be consistent, if you did not rise against it with the collected might of credulous uncharitableness, and bare-faced Antinomianism? For,

What is, after all, the perfection that Mr.

Wesley contends for ? Nothing but two *good works*, productive of ten thousand more ; or, if you please, two large *filthy rags*, in which ten thousand other *filthy rags* are wrapped ; that is, “ loving God with all our hearts, and our neighbour as ourselves.” It is nothing but “ perfect love shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us,” making us “ steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, always *zealous in good works*,” always the reverse of the easy elect, who, by means of Calvin’s contrivance, are “ *all fair and undefiled*,” while they wallow in the adulterer’s mire, and the murderer’s gore. Or, in other terms, it is nothing but Christ through the Holy Spirit, dwelling in our hearts by faith, and making us always zealous of good works. Now, if good works are “ dross, dung, and filthy rags ; it is evident that perfection is a rich mine of *dross* ; a heap of *dung*, as immense as that which Hercules got out of Augeas’s stables ; and a vast storehouse of *filthy rags*, spun by “ proud justiciars,” as cobwebs are by venomous spiders.

In this wrong view of Christian perfection, I no more wonder to see multitudes of careless professors agree, like Pilate and Herod, to destroy it out of the earth ; nor am I surprised to hear even good, mistaken people, cry out, *Down with it ! Down with it !* While I complain of their want of candour, I commend their well-meant zeal, and wish it may flame out against objects worthy of their detestation ; against *perfection* itself, suppose it is what they imagine. Yes, if it is a *mine of “ dross,”* let them drown it ; I give my consent ; but let them do it with the floods of Scripture and argument. If it is a *dunghill* in the Church, let them carry it out, and permit even the swine, which come from the wallowing in the mire, to shake themselves upon it ; I will not say it is improper. If it is a repository of “ filthy rags,” more infectious than

those which convey the jail-distemper and the plague ; let them agree to set fire to it, and burn it down to the ground ; but let them do it with fire from the altar, and not with tongues set on fire of prejudice or malice.

But if Christian perfection is (next to Angelic perfection) the brightest and richest jewel which Christ purchased for us by his blood ; if it is the internal kingdom of God ruling over all ; if it is Christ fully formed in our hearts, the full hope of glory ; if it is the fulfilment of the promise of the Father, that is, “ the Holy Ghost given unto us, to make us abound in righteousness, peace, and joy, through believing ; ” and, in a word, if it is the *Shekinah*, filling the Lord’s human temples with glory ; is it right, Sir, to despise it, as some do, or to expose it as you have frequently done ?

Should you apologize for your conduct, by saying, “ I have only treated your *perfection*, as you have treated our *finished salvation*, and our *imputed righteousness* : ” I reply, The case is widely different. I hope I have made it appear, that you have not one single text in all the Bible, to prove, that a bloody adulterer (*in flagrante delicto*) stands complete in imputed righteousness ; and that the *salvation* of idolatrous and incestuous apostates, who now work out their damnation with both hands, is actually *finished, in the full extent of the expression*. The whole stream of God’s word runs counter to these “ Antinomian dotages.” Nor are they less repugnant to conscience and common sense, than to the law and the Prophets. But you cannot find one word in all the Scriptures, against the pure love of God and our neighbour, against *perfect love*, which is all the perfection we encourage believers to press after. The law and the Gospel, the Old and the New Testament, are equally for it. All who are filled with the Spirit, sweetly experience it. A Heathen, that fears God and



regards man, cannot speak evil of it, but through misapprehension. And even while, through the amazing force of prejudice, you write against it with so much severity, it recommends itself to your own reason and conscience. Are you not then under a mistake, when you think you may take the same liberty with God's undeniable truth, which I have taken with Crisp's indefensible error?

Permit me to state the case more fully still. Mr. Wesley cries to believers, "It is your privilege, so to believe in Christ, and receive the Spirit, as to love God with all your hearts, and your neighbours as yourselves." And you say to them, "Mr. Wesley is blinder than a Papist; regard not his heretical words. Your *salvation is finished*. Whatever lengths you go in sin, you are as sure of heaven as if you were already there. It is your privilege to commit adultery, murder, and incest, not only without fearing that the Lord will be displeased with you; but conscious that, black as ye are in yourselves by the actual commission of these crimes, through Christ's comeliness put upon you, God can address each of you with, 'Thou art all fair, my love, my undefiled, there is no spot in thee!'" (Five Letters, p. 28.) Now, Sir, are not you a partial judge, when, by way of retaliation, you serve the holy doctrine maintained by Mr. Wesley, as I have served the unholy tenet propagated by Calvin and yourself?

Think you really, that because a judge, after a fair trial, justly condemns a notorious robber to be hanged; another judge, to retaliate, has a right to quarter a good man, after a mock trial, or rather without any trial at all? And do you suppose, that because Jchu deservedly made the house of Baal a draught-house; or because Josiah burned dead men's bones upon the unhallowed altar in Bethel, to render it detestable to idolaters; Antiochus had a right to turn the temple of the Lord



into a sty, and to pollute the altar of incense by burning "dung and filthy rags" upon it, that true worshippers might abominate the offering of the Lord, and loathe the holy of holies? Thus have you (inadvertently, I hope) treated *good works* and *Christian perfection*, which are ten thousand times more sacred and precious in the sight of God, than the holy and the most holy place in the temple of Jerusalem.

And now, Sir, please to look at the preceding list of good works, which adorn the Christian's breast, or blazon his shining character; and tell us, if there is one, which, upon second thoughts, you object against as a *nuisance*; one, which you would put away like "DROSS;" one, which you would have carried out of his apartment as "DUNG," or remove from his pious breast as a "FILTHY RAG."

Methinks I hear you answer, "Not one; may they all abound more and more in my heart and life; in the hearts and lives of all God's people!" Methinks that all the Church militant and triumphant, cry out, *Amen!* A divine power accompanies their general exclamation. The veil of prejudice begins to rend. Your honest heart relents. You acknowledge that Calvinism has deceived you. You retract your unguarded expressions. The Spirit of holiness, whom you have grieved, returns. The heavenly light shines. The Antinomian charm is broken. "*Dross*" is turned into fine gold; "*dung*," into savoury meat, which every believer loves next to the bread of life; and "*filthy rags*," into the fine linen, white and clean, which is the righteousness of the saints, and the robe made white in the blood of the Lamb. Far from pouring contempt, through voluntary humility, upon this precious garment, you give praise to God, and in humble triumph put it on, together with the Lord Jesus Christ.

In this glorious dress you walk with Christ in white, and in love with Mr. Wesley. Paris, and the convent of Benedictine monks, disappear. The New Jerusalem, and the Tabernacle of God, come down from heaven. Leaving the things that are behind, you solemnly hasten unto the day of the Lord. Following peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord, you daily perfect it in the fear of the Lord. You feel the amazing difference there is between a real and an imaginary imputation of righteousness. You tear away with honest indignation, the pillow of *finished salvation* from under the head of Laodicean backsliders, who sleep in sin; and of bloody murderers, who defile their neighbour's bed. You set fire to the fatal canopy, under which you have inadvertently taught them to fancy that the holy and righteous God calls them, "My love! my undefiled!" even while they wallow in the poisonous mire of the most atrocious wickedness. And, to undo the harm you have done, or remove the offence you have given, by your letters, you show yourself reconciled to St. James's *pure* religion; you openly give Mr. Wesley the right hand of fellowship, and gladly help him to provoke believers to uninterrupted *love and good works*, that is, to CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

Such is the delightful prospect which my imagination discovers through the clouds of our controversy; and such are the pleasing hopes, that sometimes soothe my polemical toil, and even now make me subscribe myself, with an additional pleasure,

Honoured and dear Sir,

Your affectionate and obedient Servant,

In the bonds of a pure Gospel,

JOHN FLETCHER.

## LETTER IX.

TO MR. ROWLAND HILL.

HONOURED AND DEAR SIR,

YOUR uncommon zeal for God, so far as it is guided by knowledge, entitling you to the peculiar love and reverence of all that fear the Lord ; I should be wanting in respect to you, if I took no notice of the arguments with which you are come from Cambridge to the help of your pious brother. In the *Friendly Remarks* that you have directed to me, you say, with great truth, page 31, “The principal cause of controversy among us, is the doctrine of a second justification by works. Thus much you vindicate throughout, that a man is justified before the bar of God a second time by his own good works.”

So I do, Sir ; and I wonder how any Christian can deny it, when Christ himself declares, “In the day of judgment by *thy* words shalt thou be justified,” &c. Had he said, “By *my* words *imputed* to thee thou shalt be justified,” you might indeed complain ; but now, what reason have you to assert, as you do, that I “have grossly misrepresented the Scriptures,” and “made universal havoc of every truth of the Gospel ?” The first of these charges is heavy, the second dreadful ; let us see by what arguments they are supported.

After throwing away a good part of your book, in passing a long Calvinian, juvenile sentence upon my spirit as a writer, you come at last to the point, and attempt to explain some of the Scriptures, which you suppose I have “misrepresented.”

I. Page 32. “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father. (Matt.

vii. 21. And what is this," say you, "more than a description of those who are to be saved?"

What, Sir, is it nothing but a description? Is it not a solemn declaration, that no practical Antinomian shall be saved by faith in the last day; and that Christ is really a Lord and a King, who has a law which he will see obeyed? Had he not just before (verse 12) admitted the Law and the Prophets into his Gospel dispensation, saying, "All things which ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them, for this is the Law and the Prophets?" Are we not under this Law to him? And will he not command his subjects, who obstinately violate it, to be brought and slain before him?

Again: When he declares they who "hate a brother, and call him, *Thou fool!* are in danger of hell-fire as murderers," do we not expose his legislative wisdom, as well as his paternal goodness, by intimating, that, without having an eye to the murder of the heart or the tongue, he only describes certain wretches, whom he unconditionally designs for everlasting burnings?

What I say of a punishment threatened is equally true of a reward promised; as you may see by the following illustration of our controverted text. A General says to his soldiers, as he leads them to the field of battle, "Not every one that calls me, *Your honour, Your honour!* shall be made a captain; but he that fights manfully for his King and country." You say, "What is this more than a description of those that shall be promoted?" And I reply, "If warlike exploits have absolutely nothing to do with their promotion; and if the General's declaration is only a description of some favourites, whom he is determined to raise at any rate; could he not as well have described them by the colour of their hair, or height of their stature? And does he not put

a cheat upon all the soldiers, whom he is absolutely determined not to raise, when he excites them to quit themselves like men, by the fond hope of being raised?" Apply this simile to the case in hand; and you will see, dear Sir, how frivolous, and injurious to our Lord, is your intimation, that one of his most awful royal proclamations is nothing but an empty description. O Calvinism! is this thy reverence for Jesus Christ? Hast thou no way of supporting thyself, but by turning the Lord of glory into a Virgil; the supreme Lawgiver of men and angels, into a maker of descriptions?

II. Much of the same nature is the observation which you make, (page 37,) upon these words of our Lord, "They that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil, into everlasting punishment." You say, "What does this text prove more than has been granted before? What does it more than characterize those that shall be saved?" Nay, Sir, it undoubtedly characterizes also those that shall be damned; and this too by as essential a character, as that according to which the King would appoint some of his servants for a gracious reward, and others for a capital punishment, if he said to them, "They that serve me faithfully shall be richly provided for; and they that rob me, shall be hanged." If such characterizing as this passes at Geneva for a bare description of persons, whom royal humour irrespectively singles out for reward, I hope the time is coming when, at Cambridge, it will pass for a clear declaration of the reason why some are rewarded, or punished, rather than others; and for a proof that the King is no more a capricious dispenser of rewards, than a tyrannical inflicter of punishments.

III. Page 33. After mentioning these words of St. Paul, "Without holiness no man shall see the



Lord ;” and those words which St. James wrote to believers, “ Be ye *doers* of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves ;” you say, “ What is this to the purpose, respecting a second justification ? Just about as much as, ‘ Now an omer is the tenth part of an ephah.’ ” Now, Sir, although I do not immediately rest the cause upon such scriptures, I maintain that they are much more to the purpose of our second justification by works, than Moses’s definition of an omer.

Will you dare to say, that impious Jezebel, and unconverted Manasses, were persons “ just about as ” properly qualified for justification in the great day, because they had an “ omer ” in their palace, as pious Deborah, and holy Samuel, who had holiness in their hearts, and were doers of the word in their lives ? And when the Apostle declares that “ Christ is the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him,” does he mean, that to *obey* is a thing just about as important to eternal salvation, as to know that a bushel holds four pecks, and an ephah ten omers ? Were ever holiness and obedience inadvertently set in a more contemptible light ? For my part, if “ by our words we shall be justified in the day of judgment,” I believe it shall be by our words springing from holiness of heart ; and therefore I cannot but think that holiness will be more to the purpose of our justification by works in the great day, than all the omers and ephahs, with all the notions about imputed righteousness and finished salvation, in the world.

IV. Page 33. After quoting that capital passage, “ Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers shall be justified,” (Rom. ii. 13,) you say, “ This certainly proves that the doers of the law shall be justified.” Well, then, it directly proves a justification by works. But you



immediately insinuate the "impossibility of salvation by the law." I readily grant, that, in the day of conversion, we are justified by faith, not only without the deeds of the ceremonial law, but even without a previous observance of the law of love: But the case is widely different in the day of judgment; for then, "by thy *words* shalt thou be *justified*." Now, Sir, it remains for you to prove, that the Apostle did not speak of the text under consideration, with an eye to our final justification by works.

In order to this, (page 33,) you appeal to "the place which this text stands in, and the connexion in which the words are found." I answer,

1. This text stands in the Epistle to the Romans, to whom the Apostle says, "Love is the fulfilling of the law:—He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law." (Rom. xiii. 8, 10.) Now, if he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law, you must show, that it is impossible to love another; or acknowledge, that there are persons who fulfil the law; and consequently, persons who can be justified as doers of the law. Nay, in the very chapter, such persons are thus mentioned, "If the uncircumcision keep the righteousness of the law, and fulfil the law, shall it not judge thee who dost transgress the law?" that is, Shall not a Cornelius, an honest Heathen that fears God and works righteousness, rise in judgment against thee who committest adultery; vainly supposing that Abraham's chastity is imputed to thee? (Rom. ii. 22, 27.) But,

2. Going back to the beginning of the chapter where our controverted text stands, I affirm that "the connexion in which it is found" establishes also justification by works *in the great day*; and to prove it, I only lay the Apostle's words before my judicious readers: "Thou art inexcusable, O Jew, whosoever thou art that *judgest*," or con-

demnest the Heathens “that do such things, and doest them thyself. The *judgment* of God is according to *truth*,” and not according to thy Antinomian notions, that thou wast unconditionally elected in Abraham; that thou standest complete in his righteousness; and that thy salvation was finished when he had offered up Isaac. Be not deceived: “God will render to every man according to his *deeds*,” and not according to his *notions*: “To them who by patient continuance in *well doing*, seek for immortality, he will render eternal life; anguish to every man that *doeth* evil; but glory to every man that *worketh* good;—for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the *doers* of the law shall be *justified*,—in the day when he shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel.” (Rom. ii. 1, 16.)

Now, Sir, is it not evident from “*the connexion*” to which you appeal, that Mr. Henry did not pervert the text, when he had the courage to say upon it, “It is not hearing but *doing* that will save us” in the great day? Hearing, mixed with faith, saves us indeed *instrumentally* in the day of conversion; but in the day of judgment, neither hearing nor faith will do it; but patient continuance in well-doing, from the principle of a living faith in Christ, will have that honour.

V. Page 34. After criticising, in the same frivolous manner as your brother, on Rev. xxii. 14, “Blessed are they they that keep his commandments,” &c., you add, “This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ;” and omitting what immediately follows, “and love one another as he gave us commandment,” you ask, “What then is the conclusion? To believe is the great New-Testament command of God.” No, Sir, according to 1 John iii. 23, the text you have quoted by halves, that

commandment is to believe and to love, or to believe with “a faith working by love.” Our Lord informs us, that “on the grand commandment of love, hang all the Law and the Prophets.” St. Paul says, “Though I have *all faith*, yet if I have not love, I am nothing.” “Devils believe,” says St. James. To believe, then, without loving, is not “doing God’s commandments,” but doing the devil’s work. Because the word *commandments*, being in the plural number, denotes more than *one*, and therefore is incompatible with solifidianism.

To add, as you do, “They that believe *will* and *must* obey,” as if they could not help it, is supporting one mistake by another. That they *may*, *can*, and *should* obey, we grant; but that they *will* and *must*, are two articles of Calvin’s creed, to which we cannot subscribe; for, to say nothing of daily experience, we read in the Scripture dismal accounts of those fallen believers, who, instead of “adding to their faith virtue,” &c., proceeded so far in wilful disobedience, as to worship the abomination of the Zidonians, shed innocent blood, forswear themselves, and defile their fathers’ bed.

It follows then still from Rev. xxii. 14, that although “upon believing, not for obeying, we are initiated into all the new-covenant blessings” in the day of conversion; yet in the great day, only upon persevering in faith and obedience shall we have right, or, if you please, “privilege, power, and authority, through our Surety, to partake of the tree of life.” For, “he that *endureth* unto the end, the same shall be saved;” and “Christ is the author of eternal salvation to none but them that obey him.”

VI. Page 36. “You quote against yourself, Rev. xiv. 13, ‘Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord.’ Their blessedness arises from their dying

in the Lord." Granted. But how shall it be known they died in the Lord? The Spirit says, "Their works," not their faith, "do follow them," namely, in order to their final justification. To this you reply, "Their works do not go *before* them,—but *follow after*, to *prove* that they were in the Lord, whose prerogative alone it is to *justify the ungodly*." I answer,

1. When you grant, that *works* prove that we are in the Lord, if they are good, or in the wicked one if they are evil, you give up the point.

2. Do you not confound truth and error? Because in the day of conversion God justifies the ungodly, who renounces his ungodliness to believe in Jesus, does it follow that Jesus will justify the ungodly in the day of judgment? Is not the insinuation as unscriptural as it is dangerous? Does not our Lord himself say, that, far from justifying them, he will bid them depart from him into everlasting fire?

3. Your observation, that works *follow* the righteous, and "do not go before them," is frivolous; for what matters it, whether the witnesses, by whose evidence a prisoner is to be acquitted, follow him to the bar, or are there before him? Is their *following* him a proof that he is not justified by their instrumentality? To support your cause by such arguments will do it no service.

VII. Page 37. You think to set aside these words of Solomon, "Keep God's commandments, for this is the whole" duty "of man; for God shall bring every work into judgment, whether it be good or bad," by just saying "This passage asserts, that we are to be accountable for our actions." Then it asserts the very thing for which it was produced; for how can those be really accountable for their actions, who can never be justified or condemned by their words, never

be rewarded or punished according to their works? Here then again you grant what we contend for.

VIII. Page 38. 1 Cor. vii. 19: "Circumcision is nothing,—but the keeping the commandments of God." "This passage," say you, "would equally as well prove the supremacy of the Pope, as your doctrine of a second justification by works."

I answer, 1. If you compare this text with Eccles. xii. 13, 14; Rev. xxii. 14; and Matt. xii. 37; you will see it is very much to the purpose. 2. Love is the keeping of the commandments. If I have not love, which is the *keeping of the commandments*, I am only a tinkling cymbal. Now, Sir, you must prove that God will justify "tinkling cymbals" by imputed righteousness in the great day, or acknowledge that the keeping of the commandments, or, which is the same, love, makes more towards our final justification than towards placing his holiness the Pope in the pretended chair of St. Peter. 3. If the doers of the law shall be finally justified, and none but they; and if keeping the commandments is the same thing as being a doer of the law; you boldly hoist the Geneva flag when you insinuate, that the keeping of the commandments has no more to do with our final justification, than with the supremacy of the Pope. Lastly, if keeping the commandments will have nothing to do with our justification in the last day, by a parity of reason, breaking of them will have nothing to do with our condemnation. Thus we are insensibly come to the dreadful counterpart of your comfortable doctrine, that is, absolute reprobation, free wrath, and finished damnation. And when the Apostle says, "God shall judge the world in righteousness," should he not rather, according to your plan, have said, *in unrighteousness*?

IX. Instead of answering such passages as these, "Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with



me, to give to every man as his work shall be:—He that knoweth the heart, shall render to every man according to his works:—We shall all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad:—The Father, without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work:—The dead were judged out of the things written in the books, according to their works:” Instead, I say, of answering such passages, you leap over fifty pages of my book, to blame me (page 35) for saying after St. Peter, Acts ii. 40, “*Save yourselves* from this unto-ward generation !”

Granting you, Sir, that the Greek word means literally, *Be ye saved*; yet you wrong our translation when you say, that its language is “glaringly inconsistent.” The words that immediately precede, “He exhorted them, saying, *Save yourselves*,” &c., convinced our translators of the absurdity of exhorting people to be saved, that could absolutely do nothing in order to salvation. And you make Calvinism ridiculous before all Cambridge, when (page 36) you make *σωθητε*, *Be ye saved*, or when spoken in a way of exhortation, *Save yourselves*, to mean, “Know, that ye cannot save yourselves.”

Page 35. You say, “Let the context illustrate this: ‘Thousands were pricked to the heart;’ they ask, what they shall do, doubtless meaning, to be saved. The Apostle directs them immediately to Jesus for salvation.” What! Without doing any thing towards it? No such thing. To the overthrow of your criticism, and of Calvinism, he sets them immediately upon doing. Their question was, “What shall we do to be saved?” And the immediate answer is, “Repent and be baptized.” Just as if he had said, *Be ye saved*, or *save yourselves*, by repenting and coming to Christ: Or, to use the words of Christ to the people of Capernaum,



and those of St. Paul to the jailor of Philippi, "Do the work of God," that is, the work which God first calls for: "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved."

You add, "This language" (Save yourselves) "ill becomes the mouth of inspiration." I am sorry, Sir, you should be so exceedingly positive. I rather think that your "language ill becomes the mouth of" *modesty*. Does not St. Jude say, "*Save some with fear?*" Does not St. Paul mention his endeavours to "*save some* of his own flesh;" (Rom. xi. 14;) and his "becoming all things to all men, that he might *save some?*" (1 Cor. ix. 22.)

Does he not speak of a husband saving his wife, and of a wife saving her husband? (1 Cor. vii. 16.) Does he not write to the Philippians, "Work out your own salvation;" and to Timothy, "In doing this thou shalt *save thyself*, and them that hear thee?" (1 Tim. iv. 16.) You are too good a scholar, Sir, to say, that σωσεις σεαυτον "is passive;" and too modest a Divine to insinuate, upon second thoughts, that St. Paul speaks like a heretic, and you like an Apostle.

X. After opposing our doctrine of justification by the evidence of works in the last day, as warmly as your pious brother; you give your public assent to it as well as he. Page 34, speaking of the day that shall declare every man's work, and the fire that shall try of what sort it is, you say, "Who that reads the Bible denies, that every man's works shall be examined as a proof of his faith, and that upon their evidence the Judge will pass sentence?" Undoubtedly you mean sentence of absolution or condemnation, according to our Lord's words, "By thy words shalt thou be justified or condemned." (Matt. xii. 37.)

Now, Sir, this is the very doctrine which we maintain,—as you may see, Second Check, pages 128 and 139,—the very doctrine for which you

represent me to the world as a Papist, and fierce enemy to the Gospel. Gentle reader, take notice of my capital crime. I have dared to vindicate a truth, which (my opponent himself being judge) "no man that reads the Bible denies." Is this a dreadful heresy? O Sir, when this shall be known in our Universities, will not Oxford cry to Cambridge, and Cambridge echo back to Oxford, the substance of your book, and the title of mine, *Logica Genevensis*?

XI. Now that you have granted the doctrine of justification by the evidence of works in the day of judgment, let us see how you endeavour to keep your system in countenance. Page 34, you say, contrary to your own concession, "Though works have not the least to do in justifying our persons, yet they will appear to the justifying of that faith, as sound, by which alone we are to be saved."

To cut you off from this last subterfuge, I observe, 1. That works will have as much "to do" in justifying our persons in the last day, as faith in justifying them at our conversion. 2. This doctrine, of faith being justified by works in the day of judgment, is irrational; for faith shall then be no more; and common sense dictates, that Christ, the Wisdom of God, will not lose time in justifying or condemning a grace which shall not exist. 3. It is quite unscriptural: Our Lord says, "By thy words shalt thou (not thy faith) be justified." St. Paul says, "The doers of the law (not their faith) shall be justified." And St. James declares, that "Rahab (not her faith) and Abraham (not his faith) were justified by works" in the day of trial. 4. Your scheme fathers nonsense upon that Apostle; for if faith is justified by works, and not a man, it follows, that when St. James says, "Ye see then how that by works *a man* is justified, and not by faith only," it is just as if he had said, "Ye see then how that by works *faith* is justified,

and not by faith only." 5. If the believer's faith is justified in the last day, and not the believer himself; by a parity of reason, the unbeliever's unbelief will be condemned, and not the unbeliever himself. 6. We have as good ground to assert, that the faith of believers shall be saved in the last day, and not their persons; as you to maintain, that the faith of believers shall be justified, and not their persons. Thus, according to your curious doctrine, faith, not believers, shall go to heaven; and unbelief, not unbelievers, shall depart into hell.—Lastly, if "works have not the least to do in justifying our persons" in the great day; it follows, they will not have the least to do in condemning them. Thus are we come again to the doctrine of finished damnation; and thus you point-blank contradict your own scriptural concession, "Upon the evidence of works the Judge will pass sentence."

From the preceding pages it appears, (if I am not mistaken,) that justification by works, that is, by the works of faith in the last day, is a solid anvil, which the twelve strokes of your hammer have settled more than ever upon its firm basis, "The Word of God, that abideth for ever." To this anvil I shall, by and by, bring Calvinian Antinomianism, and endeavour to work it in meekness of wisdom, with a hammer, I hope, a little heavier than your own.

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HAVING answered your objections to what you justly call "the principal cause of controversy among us," I may make one or two observations upon the friendliness of your *Friendly Remarks*.

Candid reader, if thou hast read my Checks without prejudice, and attentively compared them with the word of God, wouldest thou ever think that the following lines contain an extract from the *friendly* sentence which my young opponent passes upon them? "Hard names,—banter,—sarcasm,—

sneer,—abuse,—bravado,—low arts of slander,—slandrous accusations,—opprobrious names,—ill-natured satire,—odious, deformed, detestable colours,—unfair and ungenerous treatment,—terms void of truth,—unmerciful condemnations,—false humility,—irritating spirit,—provoking, uncharitable style,—continual sneers,—most odious appellations,—abusive words,—notorious scandalizing,—lines too dreadful to be transcribed, unworthy of an answer, beneath contempt,—most indecent ridicule,—a wretched conclusion, as bitter as gall,—*and*, slanders which ought even to make a Turk blush.”

If thou canst not yet see, gentle reader, into the nature of Mr. Rowland Hill's *Remarks*, peruse the following *friendly* sentences: “In regard to the fopperies of religion, you certainly differ from the Popish priest of Madeley :—You have made universal havoc of every truth of the Gospel :—You have invented dreadful slanders :—You plentifully stigmatize many with the most unkind language :—You have blackened our principles, and scandalized our practice :—You place us in a manner among murderers :—It shocks me to follow you :—Our characters lie bleeding under the cruelty of your pen, and complain loudly against your great injustice :—Blush for the characters you have injured by the rashness and bitterness of your pen :—You have invented a set of monsters, and raised a hideous ghost by your own spells and incantations of banter and contempt :—Numberless sneers, taunts, and sarcasms dreadfully decorate the whole of your performance ; they are nothing better than infernal terms of darkness, hateful to transcribe :—Your Second Check, I fear, must prove the concluding bar of separation,” that is, of excommunication.

When I cast my eye upon this extract, I cannot help crying out, If this is my antagonist's *friendliness*, alas! what will be his *displeasure*! And

what have I done to deserve these tokens of Calvinian benevolence? Why are these flowers of Geneva rhetoric so plentifully heaped upon my head? And why?—But I must not complain; for my friendly opponent has patiently stayed till the publication of the Second Check, to talk of a “concluding bar of separation:” But if I am a reprobate, upon his scheme of unconditional election and gratuitous reprobation, Calvin’s God put the concluding bar of separation between me and himself, not only before I wrote the Second Check, but thousands of years before I drew my first breath. When I consider this, far from feeling the least resentment against Mr. Hill, I see it my duty to thank him for showing much greater patience towards me than the God whom he worships; and I wonder that his severe principles should not be productive of more *unfriendly remarks*, than those which he is pleased to call *friendly*.

Yes, Sir, though I thought at first, that the title of your book was ironical, I now believe it literal, and am persuaded you really meant to show me much *friendliness*. For a temporary excommunication, yea, a “concluding bar of separation,” must appear an act of grace, to one who truly relishes the doctrine of limited grace and unprovoked wrath.

I do not hereby intimate, that I have done nothing displeasing to you. Far from insinuating it, I shall present my readers with a list of the manifold, but well-meant, provocations which have procured me your public correspondence. I say, well-meant provocations; for all I want to *provoke* any one to, is *love and good works*. And may not a Minister use even the *rod* for that purpose? If you think not, please to inform me what the Apostle meant, when he said, “What will ye? Shall I come unto you with the *rod*, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?”



1. I have written my Checks with the confidence with which the clear dictates of reason, and the full testimonies of Scripture, usually inspire those who love what they esteem truth more than they do their dearest friends.

2. After speaking most honourably of many Calvinists, even of all that are *pious*, I have taken the liberty to insinuate, that the schemes of finished salvation and imputed righteousness, will no more save a Calvinist guilty of practical Antinomianism, than the doctrine of general redemption will save an ungodly Remonstrant. Thus I have made no difference between the *backsliding elect* of the Lock, and the *apostates* of the Foundery, when death overtakes them in their sins and in their blood.

3. I have maintained, that our Lord did not speak an untruth, when he said, "In the day of judgment, by thy words shalt thou be justified;" and that St. Paul did not propagate heresy when he wrote, "Work out your own salvation."

4. I have sprinkled with the salt of irony \* your

\* If I make use of *irony* in my Checks, I can assure thee, reader, it is not from *spleen* but *reason*. It appears to me, that the subject requires it, and that *ridiculous error* is to be turned out of the temple of Truth, not only with scriptural argument, which is "the sword of the Spirit;" but also with *mild irony*, which is a proper scourge for a glaring and obstinate mistake. I have already observed, that our Lord himself used it with his Apostles, when he came out of his agony and bloody sweat. Some other remarkable instances of it we find in Scripture, 1 Kings xxii. 15. Micajah, a Prophet of the Lord, being requested by King Ahab, and pious King Jehoshaphat, to tell them whether Israel should go against Ramoth-Gilead to battle; he *ironically* answered, "Go and prosper: For the Lord shall deliver it into the hands of the King!" Well known is that solemn, though ironical, or, as Mr. Hill would call it, *sarcastic*, reproof of Solomon to a young prodigal: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, let thine heart cheer thee, and walk in the way of thy heart, and in the sight of thy eyes." (Eccles. xi. 9.) From these examples I conclude, that an irony, dictated by love, not only is no sign of "a bad spirit," but is an useful figure of speech, especially where the rapid progress of a preposterous error calls for the *sharp rebukes* mentioned by St. Paul in my motto.



favourite doctrine, (*Friendly Remarks*, page 39,) "Salvation wholly depends upon the purpose of God according to election, without any respect to what may be in them," that is, *the elect*. Now, Sir, as, by the doctrine of undeniable consequences, he who receives a guinea with the King's head on the one side, cannot but receive the lion's on the other side; so he that admits the preceding proposition, cannot but admit the inseparable counterpart, namely, the following position, which every attentive and unprejudiced person sees written in blood upon that side of Calvin's standard which is generally kept out of sight, "Damnation wholly depends upon the purpose of God according to reprobation, without respect to what may be in the reprobates." Here is no "inventing a monstrous creed," but merely turning the leaf of your own, and reading what is written there, viz., *damnation finished*, evidently answering to *finished salvation*.

5. You have done more, says my opponent, (page 47,) "You scarce write a page without unjust reflections; to follow you through all your accusations would be endless. One passage, however, which seems to me to shine conspicuous among the rest for calumny and falsehood, as the moon does among the stars, shall be the last we will notice."

I say, in the Second Check, "How many intimate, that Christ has fulfilled all righteousness, that we might be the children of God with hearts full of unrighteousness!" And you reply, "How many? There are a generation, it seems, of these black blasphemers." (I would say, of these mistaken Calvinists.) "Produce but a few of them."

Well, Sir, I produce first the author of *Pietas Oxoniensis*, next yourself, and then all the Calvinists who admire your brother's Fourth Letter, where he not only insinuates, but openly attempts to prove, that David was "a man after God's own heart," a "pleasant child" of God, and that he

“stood absolved and complete in the everlasting righteousness of Christ,” while his eyes were full of adultery, and his hands full of blood ; consequently, while his heart was full of all unrighteousness. Now, if this was the case of David, it *may* not only be that of *many*, but of *all*, the elect. They may all be the children of God, not only with hearts full of unrighteousness, but even while they cloak adultery with deliberate murder.

Now, pray, Sir, do you not show yourself completely master of Geneva logic, when you assert, that what is so abundantly demonstrated by your brother's letters, and the well-known principles of all “sound” Calvinists, is a “a calumny and a falsehood” as conspicuous as the luminary that rules the night ? This imaginary moon of “calumny,” which you discover through the telescope of Calvinian prejudice, will help my judicious readers to guess at the magnitude of the stars of “falsehood,” with which, you say, almost all the pages of my book are bespangled.

I conclude, by entreating you not to put any longer a wrong construction upon the Helvetic bluntness, with which I continue to expose barefaced Antinomianism. Do not account me an enemy, because I tell you the truth as it is in the Epistle of St. James ; and deprive me not of an interest in your valuable friendship, merely because I follow the word of God, and the dictates of my conscience.

I can with truth assure you, that your groundless charges of “calumny, falsehood, bitterness, injustice,” &c., instead of “putting a concluding bar of separation” between us, only give me an opportunity of fulfilling delightfully that precept of the evangelical law, according to which we shall be justified in the great day : “Forgive one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.” I confirm my love towards *you*, by rejoicing

in all your *pious* labours, and sincerely wishing you the most unbounded success, whenever you do not give up the right “foundation,” or substitute Crisp to St. James, and Calvin’s narrow election to the free Gospel of Jesus Christ. And if I may trust the feelings of my own heart, which continues quite open towards you, I remain, just as if you were not my opponent,

Dear, Sir,

Your affectionate friend, and obedient  
servant in a pure Gospel,

JOHN FLETCHER.

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## LETTER X.

TO MR. RICHARD AND MR. ROWLAND HILL.

HONOURED AND DEAR OPPONENTS,

Do you hate that foul monster Antinomianism? I know you cordially hate *practical*, and would cheerfully oppose *doctrinal*, Antinomianism, if it were not inseparably connected with the favourite doctrines you have embraced. Yes, your true regard for holiness would make you wish me success, if (while I attack *sin*, our common adversary) Calvinism, which passes with you for Christianity, did not justly appear to you to be sapped in its very “foundation.” For, to my great astonishment, I find that Calvin’s doctrine of unconditional election, and Crisp’s doctrine of finished salvation, are now substituted to Jesus Christ, and openly made the “foundation” of the present Calvinists. “Finished salvation and electing love,” says Mr. Hill, (*Friendly Remarks*, p. 19,) “is their foundation.” Is it indeed? Alas! I really thought, that all the Calvinists still maintained, with Mr. W., that “other foundation can no man lay than that is laid,

which is, JESUS CHRIST ; ” ( 1 Cor. iii. 11 ; ) but I now fear the breach between us is wider than I imagined : For it seems we disagree no less about the “ foundation,” than about the superstructure ; and my younger opponent does me justice when he adds, “ Surely you never mean to praise the Calvinists for guarding ‘ this foundation.’ ” No indeed, Sir, no more than I would praise them for placing two of Rachel’s teraphim upon the Mediator’s throne.

You are both conscious, that your two favourite doctrines will appear empty dreams, if the doctrine of the justification of *all* infants without faith is true ; much more if the doctrine of the justification of adult persons by works, both in the day of trial and in the day of judgment, is scriptural. You agree, therefore, to bear your public testimony against the Third Check, where these doctrines are set in a clearer point of view than in my preceding publications. Permit me to remind my readers of the reasonableness of the assertions which have so greatly excited your surprise.

In the Third Check, to make my readers sensible that Calvinism has confusion, and not Scripture, for its foundation, I made a scriptural distinction between the four degrees that constitute a saint’s eternal justification ; and each of these degrees I called a *justification*, because I thought I could speak as the oracles of God, without exposing the truth of the Gospel to the smiles of Christian wits.

I. From Rom. v. 18, I proved the justification of infants : “ As by the offence of Adam,” says the Apostle, “ judgment came upon *all* men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of Christ, the free gift came upon *all* men to *justification* of life.” In support of this justification, which comes upon *all* men in their infancy, I now advance the following arguments :—

1. The Scripture tells us, that "Christ in all things hath the pre-eminence:" But if Adam is a more public person, a more general representative of mankind, than Jesus Christ, it is plain, that, in this grand respect, Adam hath the pre-eminence over Christ. Now, as this cannot be, as Christ is at least equal to Adam, it follows, that, as Adam brought a general condemnation, and an universal seed of death upon *all* infants; so Christ brings upon them a general justification, and an universal seed of life.

2. I never yet saw a Calvinist who denied that Christ died for Adam. Now, if the Redeemer died for our first parent, he undoubtedly expiated the original sin, the first transgression of Adam. And if Adam's original sin was atoned for, and forgiven to him, as the Calvinists, I think, generally grant, does it not follow, that, although all infants are by nature "children of wrath," yet through the redemption of Christ they are in a state of favour or justification? For how could God damn to all eternity any of Adam's children for a sin which Christ expiated? a sin which was forgiven almost six thousand years ago to Adam, who committed it in person?

3. The force of this observation would strike our Calvinist brethren, if they considered that we were not less in Adam's loins, when God gave his Son to Adam in the grand, original, Gospel promise, than when Eve prevailed upon him to eat of the forbidden fruit. As all in him were included in the covenant of perfect obedience, *before* the fall; so all in him were likewise interested in the covenant of grace and mercy, *after* the fall: And we have full as much reason to believe, that some of Adam's children never fell with him from a state of probation, according to the old covenant; as to suppose, that some of them never rose with him to a state of probation, upon the terms of

the new covenant, which stands upon *better promises*.

Thus if we *all* received an unspeakable injury, by being seminally in Adam when he fell, according to the first covenant; we *all* received also an unspeakable blessing, by being in his loins when God spiritually raised him up, and placed him upon Gospel ground. Nay, the blessing which we have in Christ is far superior to the curse which Adam entailed upon us; we stand our trial upon much more advantageous terms than Adam did in paradise. For, according to the first covenant, "judgment was by *one* offence to condemnation." One sin sunk the transgressor. But according to the free gift, or second covenant, provision is made in Christ for repenting of, and rising from, *many* offences unto justification. (Rom. v. 16.)

4. Calvinists are now ashamed of consigning infants to the torments of hell; they begin to extend their election to them all. Even the translator of Zanchius believes that all children who die in their infancy are saved. Now, Sir, if all children, or any of them, are saved; they are unconditionally justified according to our plan; for they cannot be "justified by faith," according to St. Paul's doctrine, (Rom. v. 1,) as it is granted, that those who are not capable of understanding, are not capable of believing. Nor can they be *justified by works*, according to St. James's doctrine; (ii. 24;) for they are not accountable for their works who do not know good from evil, nor their right hand from their left. Nor can they be *justified by words*, according to our Lord's doctrine, (Matt. xii. 37,) because they cannot yet form one articulate sound. It follows, then, that all infants must be damned, or justified without faith, words, or works, according to our first distinction. But as you believe they are saved, the first degree of an adult saint's justification is not less founded



upon your own sentiments, than upon reason and Scripture.

II. When infants grow up, they are called to "believe in the light" of their dispensation; and, till they do, their personal sins condemn them. Here appears the absolute need of justification by the instrumentality of faith. This justification we preach to Jews and Heathens, to Pharisees and Publicans; upon it we chiefly insist, when we address penitent prodigals, and mourning backsliders. This the Apostle chiefly defends in his Epistles to the Romans and Galatians. Our Church strongly maintains it in her Eleventh Article; and, as we are all agreed about it, I shall only refer to some passages where it is evidently mentioned. (Rom. v. 1; Gal. ii. 16; Acts xiii. 39.)

III. Whoever hath present access unto that grace wherein they who are justified by faith do stand, is also justified *by works*. *True* justification by faith is then inseparable from justification by works; for "faith works by love," so long as it is "living;" and love is productive of good works. In the Apostolic age, as well as in ours, "the love of many grew cold, and concerning faith they made shipwreck, by not adding to it brotherly kindness, godliness, and charity." But as they still professed the saving *faith of God's elect*, which "works by love," St. James was directed by the Holy Ghost to enforce the justification of a *believer* by works.

Now, before you can reasonably explode *this* justification, you must execute the Antinomian wish of Luther, and tear St. James's Epistle out of *your* Bible. But, as we can never give you leave to take this liberty with *ours*, we shall still oppose the justification of evil workers, or practical Antinomians, in the day of trial, by such Scriptures as these: "Know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead:—Rahab was justified by works:—Abraham

was justified by works ;” and so are all his legitimate children : “ For by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.”

IV. As for the last degree of an adult saint’s justification, it is so fully established upon the words of our Lord, “ In the day of judgment by thy words shalt thou be justified,” that Dr. Owen and multitudes of the Puritan Divines, as I have made it appear from their own writings, avowed it as the *Gospel truth*, in opposition to Crisp’s *Antinomian error*. Nay, during our controversy, truth has prevailed ; for, notwithstanding the strong resistance you have made against it, you have both granted all that we contend for ; witness the two first letters of this Check.

Now, instead of attempting to prove, at least by one argument, that these distinctions are contrary either to Scripture or reason, Mr. Hill, sen., says, in his *Remarks*, (pp. 5, 6,) “ What really surprises me beyond all the rest, is, your having brought out two new justifications since the Second Check ;—no apologies can excuse you for having concealed the matter so long.” Mr. Hill, jun., adds, in the postscript to his *Friendly Remarks*, (pp. 65—67,) “ Your doctrine is a mysterious jumble. Your three publications contain a farrago :—You are quite become unanswerable :—In your First Check, we hear but of one justification ; in your Second, you treat us with two ; two more are lately invented, and shoved in among the rest :—These four justifications may be *doubled* and *doubled* till they amount to *four-score* :—Your imagination is fertile, you can invent them by dozens.”

1. Before I answer these witticisms, permit me to trouble you with a simile. I maintain, that the age of man, in general, may properly, and at times necessarily must, be considered as made up of four different stages :—Infancy, youth, ripe years, and old age. Two masters of arts, who would make

the world believe that youth and old age are the same, smile at the absurdity of this four-fold distinction. "How inconsistent are you!" say they: "Some time ago, you spoke of the age of man in general, and told us, it was three-score years and ten. Yesterday you treated us with a dissertation upon youth and old age. To-day two more ages, infancy and ripe years, are invented, and shoved in among the rest. Your fertile imagination may double and double these four ages till they amount to four-score; nay, you can invent them by dozens." This humorous answer highly delights thousands, and in mystic Geneva such wit passes for argument; but some in England begin to ask, "Shall we be for ever the dupes of Geneva logic?"

2. It is a very great mistake, that, "in the First Check we hear but of one justification;" for though I there treat principally of *justification by faith*, because Mr. Wesley principally meant it in the Minutes; yet p. 47, the justification of infants is thus described: It is "that general benevolence of our merciful God towards sinful mankind, whereby, through the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, he casts a propitious look upon us, and freely makes us partakers of the 'light that enlightens every man who comes into the world.' This general loving-kindness is certainly previous to any thing we can do to find it; for it always prevents us, saying to us in our very *infancy*, *Live*, (and) in consequence of it our Lord says, 'Let little children come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.'" This is not all: Pp. 47 and 48, I particularly describe "justification by faith" in the day of conversion, and expressly mention "justification by words" or works "in the day of judgment;" and common sense dictates, that none can be justified by works in the day of judgment, but those who, according to St. James's doctrine, have been justified by works in this life.

How rash, then, is the assertion, that I have *invented* any new justification since the First Check ! How weak is that cause which a Master of Arts cannot support but by witticism, founded upon as palpable a mistake as that “*one and three do not make more than one !*”

And is the doctrine of a glorified saint's complete justification changed in the Second Check ? No ; for the author of *Pietas Oxoniensis*, in his answer to that book, (*Review*, page 12,) upbraids me with saying, (Second Check, p. 118,) “ By faith a man is justified at his conversion ; but by works he is justified ” on earth “ in the hour of trial, as Abraham when he offered up Isaac,” [or] in a court of judicature, as St. Paul at the bar of Festus.” [And again:] “ By works he is justified before the judgment-seat of Christ, as every one will be, whose faith, when he goes hence, is found working by love.” I grant, however, that I did not mention the justification of infants in the Second Check ; but this does not prove that I “ concealed a matter of such importance.” For I had plainly mentioned it in the Vindication ; and Mr. Shirley not having opposed it in his Narrative as he had done “ justification by works in the great day,” it would have been absurd to spend time in establishing it.

If you ask, why I have distinguished between justification by works *to-day*, and justification by works *in the day of judgment* ; I answer, For two reasons : First, St. James and Mr. Hill, jun., do so : “ Rahab was justified by works, *at the time when she received the spies.*” (*Friendly Remarks*, p. 38.) Secondly. The propriety and importance of this distinction appear from the following consideration : Many may be justified by works *to-day*, who shall be condemned by works *in the day of judgment.*

Take an instance : When St. Paul chose Demas

to be his fellow-labourer, Demas was undoubtedly justified by works, and not by faith only ; for the Apostle would not have been unequally yoked with an evil worker, any more than with an unbeliever. Nevertheless in the day of judgment, if we may believe John Bunyan, Demas shall be condemned by his *latter*, instead of being justified by his *former*, works.

But I have said in the Second Check, that “a man is justified by faith when his backslidings are healed,” as well as at his first conversion. And as he may fall from and return to God ten times, a facetious opponent is ready to charge me with holding ten, perhaps “three-score justifications” by faith. Witty, but groundless is the charge ; for supposing I lose and find the same guinea *ten* times, am I not mistaken if I fancy that I have found *ten* guineas ? Or if you draw back *sixty* times from a bright sun-shine into a dark cave, and *sixty* times come into the sun-shine again, do I not offer violence to reason, if I maintain that you have got into “three-score” sun-shines ? Here you say, “Illustrations are no proof at all.” I grant it ; nevertheless, when the proofs are gone before, just illustrations wonderfully help many readers to detect the fallacy of a plausible argument.

But supposing I had not mentioned the different degrees of an adult saint’s justification either in the First or Second Check, would you not, gentlemen, have exposed Geneva logic, as you have now done your inattention, if you had hoped to set plain Scripture aside by saying, “It comes too late : You placed it in the Third Check ; it should have been produced in the First ?” Does not such an argument hurt your cause more than a prudent silence would have done ?

However, if you cannot put out the candle with which we search the streets of mystic Geneva, and examine the foundation of its towers, you both



agree to amuse the Calvinists, by bringing Mr. Wesley upon the stage of controversy.\* He said, above twenty years ago, in one of his Journals, "I cannot but maintain, at least till I have clearer light, that the justification which is spoken of by St. Paul to the Romans, and in our Articles, is not two-fold; it is one, and no more." Here Mr. Hill, jun., particularly triumphs: "By your four degrees of a glorified saint's justification, you have thrown your own friend into the dirt," says he; "help him out, if you can."

To this I answer, that if Mr. Wesley, by the

\* The prejudice of my opponents against Mr. Wesley makes them catch at every shadow of opportunity to place him in a contemptible light before the world. Witness their exclaiming against him, for having suffered me to make an honourable mention of his labours in the Vindication, to counterbalance a little the loads of contempt poured upon him on all sides. Those gentlemen do not consider that there are times when a grey-headed, useful, and yet slighted, insulted Minister of Christ may not only suffer another to speak honourably of his labours, but when he ought to magnify his own office in person.

St. Paul certainly did so, when he said, "In nothing am I behind the very chiefest Apostles. I have laboured more abundantly than they all. Are they Ministers of Christ? I am more: In labours more abundant," &c. After the Apostle's example, might not Mr. Wesley himself say, (giving, like him, all the glory to divine grace,) "I am nothing behind the chief of the Gospel Ministers; I have laboured more abundantly than they all?" Nay, might he not add, "I have broken the ice, and stood in the gap for them all?" Now, if, instead of answering for himself, he has permitted me to vindicate his aspersed character, and despised ministry, where is the harm? If Timothy was to let no man despise his *youth*, is Mr. Wesley guilty of an unpardonable crime, because he has permitted me to bear my testimony against the impropriety of despising his *old age*? And does not even *young* Mr. Hill say much more for himself, than I have done for Mr. Wesley *the aged*? The whole of what I have advanced in his favour centres in this assertion, "He has *done much* for God." But my opponent addresses me thus before the public, (*Friendly Remarks*, p. 69,) "You know my character, that I have *suffered much, very much* for God." And yet this very gentleman takes Mr. Wesley to task, and accuses him of self-importance! O Partiality, how long wilt thou blind and divide us? And how long wilt thou cause the astonished world to say, "See how these sheep 'bite and devour one another!'"



justification spoken of by St. Paul to the Romans, meant that which the Apostle *purposely* maintains in that Epistle, and which our Church *explicitly* asserts in her Eleventh Article, my vindicated friend speaks a great truth when he says, that *this* justification is one and no more; for it is evidently justification by faith. But supposing he had not properly considered either the justification of infants without faith and works, or the justification of believers by works in the day of trial, and in the day of judgment; what would you infer from thence? that the Scriptures which speak of such justifications are false? The conclusion would be worthy of Geneva logic! Weigh your argument in the balance of English logic, and you will find it is wanting. Twenty-three, or, if you please, three years ago, Mr. Wesley wanted clearer light, to distinguish between the justification of a sinner by faith, and the justification of a believer by works: But two years ago, God gave him this clearer light, and he immediately called his friends to "review the whole affair," and help him to make a firm stand for St. James's pure religion, against Crisp's defiled Gospel. Therefore, say my opponents, St. James's and Jesus Christ's justification of a believer by works is a "dreadful heresy," and Mr. Wesley is "thrown in the dirt." Is the conclusion worthy of two Masters of Arts? May I not more reasonably draw a contrary inference, and say, Therefore, Mr. Wesley shakes the very dust, or, if you please, the very "dirt," of Geneva from off his feet, and exhorts his flocks to do the same through the three kingdoms?

II. As our controversy centres in the point of justification by works, both in the day of trial of faith, and in the day of judgment; whatever my opponents advance against this, I shall endeavour to answer.

“The Scriptures,” says Mr. Hill, sen., (*Remarks*, page 5,) “always speak of justification as perfect, full, and complete.” For an answer to this bold, unscriptural assertion, I refer the reader to the preceding pages, where he will easily see, that although God’s work is always perfect, so far as it goes; yet as final justification depends upon perseverance in the faith, and as perseverance in the faith is inseparably connected with patient continuance in well-doing, it is unscriptural and absurd to assert, that final justification is complete, before we can say with St. Paul, “I am ready to be offered up; I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith;” or rather, before Christ himself says to us, “Well done, good and faithful servants, enter into the joy of your Lord.”

III. Page 4. “You do us great injustice in supposing that we believe, or assert, any souls may strive, reform, and pray, without any possibility of escaping hell. When you made the above assertion, did you not know in your own conscience, that you charged us wrongfully?”

In the presence of God, I answer in the negative. If you maintain that Christ never died for a certain, fixed number of men, you must of consequence believe, that those whom he never died for, can never flee from the “wrath to come,” though they should strive, reform, and pray ever so much.

If you are consistent, you *must* be persuaded, that though Mr. Wesley, for example, has prayed, strove, and reformed for above forty years, yet if he is not one of what you call “the happy number,” he shall inevitably be damned.

IV. Page 8. You refer me to your “striking quotation of Luther, concerning the distinction between a believer and his actions.” I answer, 1. Luther’s bare assertions go for nothing with us,

when they stand in direct opposition to St. James's Epistle, which, in one of his Antinomian fits, he wanted to burn out of the way. 2. This assertion contradicts common sense and daily experience, which agree to depose, that, excepting the case of lunatics and delirious persons, men are like their actions, when those actions are taken together with their principle and design.

V. You add, in the same page, "It was happy for David, that, when he fell so grossly, he had a merciful, gracious, promise-keeping God to deal with; and that he fell not into the hands of Arminians and Perfectionists." I retort, "It was happy for Clodius, that, if he turned from his wicked way, he had not an unmerciful, ungracious, and promise-breaking God to deal with, and fell not into the hands of an inexorable Moloch, before whom poor reprobated Heathens can find no place for repentance, though they should seek it carefully with tears." As for your insinuation, that Arminians and Perfectionists (as such) are merciless to backsliders, it is groundless: We are taught to restore the fallen in the spirit of meekness, as well as you. And (to the praise of divine wisdom I write it) we are enabled to do it without encouraging them to return to their "wallowing in the mire" of sin, by dangerous insinuations, that relapses into it will "work for their good."

VI. While we speak of David and Clodius, it may be proper to dwell a moment upon their case. Clodius, a young Heathen, forsakes his one wife, and David, an elderly Jew, forsakes his seven wives and ten concubines, to commit the crime of adultery with women whose husbands they have just murdered. I maintain that David is *more* guilty than Clodius, and that his crime is so much the more atrocious than that of the noble Heathen, as he commits it against greater light and know-

ledge, against greater mercies and more solemn vows, perhaps with more deliberation, and certainly with less temptation from the ferments of youthful blood, and the want of variety.

But you still dissent from me, and persist to say, (p. 9,) that "David remained absolved from the curse of the law, whilst Clodius lay under it." And how can you prove it? "David," say you, "was a believer." I reply, No, he was an impenitent adulterer, and a treacherous murderer; and these characters are as incompatible with that of a believer, as heaven is irreconcilable with hell, and Christ with Belial. If a man can be a believer, that is, a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, while he wallows in the filth of adultery, and imbrues his hands in innocent blood, farewell Christianity, farewell heathen morality, farewell common decency; we are come to the *non plus ultra* of Antinomianism: Truth and virtue, law and Gospel, natural and revealed religion, are buried in a common grave. Alas! my dear Sir, what have you advanced? What can the wildest ranter, what can Satan himself, desire more?

A Deistical gentleman lately observed, that all religion consisted in morality; and that nevertheless *revelation* was a useful contrivance of wise politicians, to keep the vulgar in awe, and enforce the practice of moral duties among the populace. But, alas! the unhappy turn which you give to revelation does not even leave it the poor use which a Deist will allow it to have. Nay, your scheme, far from enforcing morality, sets it aside at a stroke. For, if a man that actually commits adultery, treachery, and murder, is a pleasant child of God; why should not a drunkard, a swearer, a thief, or a traitor, be also accomplishing God's holy decrees? Why should he not prove his pleasant child, as well as a wanton adulterer and a perfi-

dious murderer? Is not this stripping *the woman*, the Christian Church, of the glorious garment of holiness, in which she came down from heaven? Is it not exposing her to horrid derision, without so much as a scrap, I shall not say, of exalted piety, but even of heathen morality, to keep herself decent before a world of mocking Infidels? Hath not this doctrine driven Geneva headlong into Deism? And is it not likely to have the same effect upon all who can draw a just inference from your dangerous premises?

Hitherto Protestants in general have granted to the Papists, that although good works are not *meritorious*, (if any higher idea than that of *rewardable* is fixed to that word,) yet they are *necessary* to salvation: But since the doctrine of finished salvation pours in upon us like a flood; since good men do not scruple to tell the world, that the salvation of a bloody adulterer, *in flagrante delicto*, is finished, and that he is a pleasant child of God, fully accepted and completely justified, what have good works to do with salvation? We may not only dispense with them, but do the most horrid works. Yea, “the wheel” of adultery, treachery, and murder, may “run round and round again,” for ten months, without interrupting the finished salvation of the elect, any more than praying, weeping, and reforming for ten years, will prevent the finished damnation of the reprobates.

But lest you should say I “blind the eyes of the readers with deceitful dust,” I meet you on the solid ground where St. James stood, when he opposed the primitive Antinomians; and, taking that holy Apostle’s Gospel-trumpet, I sound an alarm in Laodicea, and cry out to the drowsy world of Nicolaitan professors, whether they hear the word at the Lock-chapel, or at the Foundery, “Awake, ye that sleep, and arise from the dead.

Show your faith by your works. Know ye not, O vain men, that faith *without works* is *dead* ;” that it is a putrifying, ill-smelling corpse ? Help, ye men of God, help us to bury it out of the way of good works. Let frightened Morality dig a grave ; let indignant Piety cast the horrid nuisance into it. And, while we commit it to hell, whence it came, while the devils who believe, feed upon the noisome carcase, let Bishop Cowper himself, attended by the author of *Pietas Oxoniensis*, say over the grave, “ Justifying faith, whereby we are saved, *cannot be* without good works. Dead and damnable is the faith which is consistent with adultery and murder.” And let all the Church say “ Amen,” and contend for “ the faith of God’s elect,” the faith maintained by St. Paul and St. James, the faith recommended in Mr. Wesley’s Minutes, the living faith that works by obedient love.

VII. Page 10. In defence of your cause, you produce those words of our Lord to the proud Pharisees : “ Publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before you.” Surely, Sir, you would not insinuate, that God takes extortioners and strumpets into heaven, as such ; and that adultery and whoredom are a ready way to glory ! I know you start from the horrid insinuation. And, nevertheless, I fear this doctrine naturally flows from the manner in which the passage is quoted. I always thought those words of our Lord meant, that publicans and harlots could sooner be reclaimed from their execrable courses of life, than self-hardened Pharisees from their diabolical pride ; and that, while Christ would admit a penitent Magdalen into heaven, he would thrust an impenitent Pharisee into hell. But what is this to the purpose ? Does this make the case of David, or any other sinner, better, while they remain in a state of impenitency ?



VIII. Page 9. You have answered this question: "David in Uriah's bed," you say, "in a sense, was not impenitent. The grace of repentance, &c., did lie like a spark covered with ashes." To this I reply,

1. If by a spark or seed of repentance, you understand a ray of that quickening light which enlightens every man who comes into the world, and endues him with a gracious capacity of repenting during the day of salvation, we are agreed; supposing you grant us, that, while Clodius defiled his neighbour's bed in Rome, he was such a penitent as David when he committed the same crime in Jerusalem.

2. We deny that a capacity of repentance is in a sense repentance, any more than a capacity of obeying is in a sense obedience. According to your idea of that sort of repentance, which David had when he committed murder, the most abandoned profligates, who have not yet filled up the measure of their iniquities, are all in a sort penitent; and Adam, when he ate the forbidden fruit, was in a sort obedient.

3. Your assertion is unscriptural. You cannot produce one passage to prove, that a murderer, or an adulterer, *in flagrante delicto*, is a penitent in any sense. If David was a penitent, because repentance lay in his heart as a spark buried under ashes, I may say, in direct opposition to the words of our Lord, that "the wicked and slothful servant" was in some sense good and diligent, because his master's talent lay buried in his napkin.

4. You insinuate, that the ashes which covered the spark of David's repentance were "his sin." The comparison is not very fortunate; for ashes frequently preserve the spark which they cover; but the commission of murder always tends to quench the Spirit. If you say that David repented

in some sort while he sinned, because he undoubtedly sinned with remorse of conscience ; I reply, (1.) That he seems to have enjoyed his crimes, at least, with as much carnal security as Clodius could possibly do. (2.) If remorse is confounded with repentance, hell is filled with penitents ; and most drunkards and murderers are in a sort penitent ; for when they sin, they do it frequently with much reluctance.

5. This scheme of a sort of repentance, covered as a spark in the heart of those whose eyes are full of adultery, and hands full of blood, is attended with the most fatal consequences. It tends to breed negligence in the heart of believers, and carnal security in the breast of apostates ; for how can the former be careful not to lose what is inadmissible ? And how can the latter endeavour to recover what they have not lost ? Again : It supersedes the distinction there is between the righteous and the wicked, and opens the door to the most horrid confusion in the moral world. Has not a traitor as much right to plead the spark of loyalty, a drunkard the spark of sobriety, and a highwayman the spark of honesty, covered under the ashes of his sin ; as you have to plead the spark of repentance, chastity, and brotherly love, that lay covered in the heart of David during his long apostasy ?

6. But this is not all : If your doctrine is true, that of Christ and his Apostles is evidently false. For St. Paul says to the Corinthians, "Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith." And he gives them this rule of examination, "Be not deceived ; neither fornicators, adulterers, &c., have *any* inheritance in the kingdom of Christ." Now, if a man who commits adultery and murder may have a spark of grace and repentance, which actually constitutes him a pleasant child of God, how in the world can he know, by the Apostle's rule,

whether he is in the faith or not? St. John says, with apostolic bluntness, "He that committeth sin is of the devil." "Yes, in Rome," replies one who is versed in your Divinity; "but in Jerusalem, he that committeth adultery and murder may be in a sort penitent, consequently a man after God's own heart." Again: "By their fruit ye shall know them," says our Lord, when he speaks of wolves in sheep's clothing. Now, it is clear, that if your doctrine is true, even when they commit adultery and murder, it cannot be known whether they are wolves, because the spark of chastity and charity that constituted David a pleasant child during his dreadful fall, may be concealed under all their debaucheries and barbarities.

IX. Page 13. To enforce your doctrine of a two-fold, and, as it appears to me Jesuitical, will in God, you again produce God's forbidding murder to free agents; and to this prohibition you oppose the murder which the Jews committed as free agents, when "by wicked hands they crucified Christ, who was delivered to them by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." I hope, Sir, you would not insinuate, that God solemnly forbids murder by *revealed*, and forcibly enjoins it by his *secret, will*! To what I have already said on the point in the Third Check, (page 325,) I now add, 1. God never instigated the Jews to murder Christ. On the contrary, he frequently restrained them from the commission of their intended crime. "Ye seek to kill me," said Jesus to them many months before they actually did it. They even made open attempts to stone him, and cast him down a precipice, before the time foretold. 2. When that time was come, God being about to give his Son a ransom for the many, by his determinate counsel, that one should die for all; and seeing by his foreknowledge, that the

Jews, who thirsted for his blood, would put him to death, he no longer hindered them from taking him. Then Jesus went to meet their malicious band in the garden of Gethsemane, and said, "I am he whom ye seek." 3. This only shows, that Divine Providence sometimes suffers moral agents to commit, outwardly, the sins which they have already committed in their own breast; and he suffers it, that they may come to condign punishment, or that other wicked men may be punished; sometimes also, that good men may be tried, hypocrites detected, and the godly made perfect by sufferings, like their Lord.

X. Page 13. In support of the same mistake, you add, "You believe it to be God's *revealed will*, that every man should love his brother as himself; yet it was certainly according to the *secret will* of God, that Joseph's brethren should sell" (why do you not say, *should hate*?) "him, and that he should go into Egypt; otherwise Joseph must have told a gross untruth, when he said, "God did send me to preserve life;—it was not you that sent me hither, but God."

To vindicate what I beg leave to call God's honesty, permit me to observe, 1. That I had rather believe, Joseph told once a "gross untruth," than suppose that God perpetually equivocates. 2. You must not raise a doctrine upon two sentences which Joseph spake as a fond brother, rather than as a judicious Divine. When he saw his brethren confounded, and when in a cordial embrace he mixed his tears of joy with their tears of shame and repentance, how natural it was for him to draw a veil over their crime, and to comfort them, by observing with what providential wisdom God had over-ruled a circumstance that attended their sin! 3. All that you can therefore infer from Joseph's case is, that God would have his brothers love him as free agents; and

that when, as free agents, they chose to hate and murder him, the Lord, to save his life and bring about his deep designs, excited some compassion in their breast; hence they thought it less cruel, while the providential appearance of the Ishmaelites made it appear more profitable, to sell him as a slave, than to starve him to death in a pit. Thus God, contrary to their intention, but not contrary to his own law, sent him into Egypt to preserve life. But what is this to the purpose? Was it God's secret, effectual will, that Joseph's brethren should hate him, while his revealed will commanded them to love him, under pain of eternal damnation? Before you can establish this doctrine, you must prove that man is a mere machine, and God is a mere Moloch.

XI. But to excuse yourself, you ask, (page 12,) "By speaking of the secret and revealed will of God, do I suppose that God has two contrary wills?" Undoubtedly you do, Sir, if you are consistent. God's revealed will, for example, is, that "all the families of the earth should be blessed in Christ, with the grace that bringeth salvation to all men:" But by his secret will, if we may believe Calvin, most families of the earth are absolutely cursed; a decree of preterition eternally excludes them from an interest in Christ, and from the least degree of saving grace.

Again: It is God's revealed will, that "all men every where should repent," under penalty of destruction; but, upon your plan of doctrine, it is his secret, effectual will, that most men, even all the reprobates, shall never repent. And, indeed, how should they, if he hardens them either from their mother's womb, or from the loins of their first parent? Once more: It is God's revealed will, that all men should believe the Gospel, and be saved as free agents, if they submit to his gra-



cious and easy terms; but according to your scheme, it is his secret, indefectible will, either that there shall be no Gospel, or only a lying Gospel for most men; and that there shall be no conditions or terms in the Gospel. Hence we are openly told, that God does not treat with the sons of men in a way of condition; his language being absolute, like himself, *I WILL*, and *You SHALL*; that is, “Ye elect, *I WILL* that ye believe and be saved, and *you SHALL* believe and be saved: And ye reprobates, *I WILL* that you sin and be damned, and *you SHALL* sin and be damned.” If you do not hold those propositions, you are with reason ashamed of Calvinism; if you hold them, you certainly maintain that there are two contrary wills in God, whether you suppose that you do so or not.

XII. One more observation, and I have done: In your Five Letters, you have opposed this proposition, “Believing is previous to justification,” and said, “I deny that believing precedes justification” in the day of conversion. I have observed in my reply, that this assertion sets aside justification by faith; because, if believing does not precede justification, there is no need of believing in order to be justified. “This is disingenuous:” say you: (*Remarks*, page 10:) “Where do I assert that justification precedes believing? I believe that true faith and justification are as inseparable as fire and heat.”

To this I answer, 1. Your comparison is not just. Fire is not the instrument by which heat is apprehended, but the very fountain of heat itself; whereas faith justifies, not as being the very fountain of justification, but merely as an instrument that apprehends the truth of Him who justifies the ungodly that believes in Jesus. Here, then, you indirectly give to justifying faith the honour due to none but the heavenly Justifier.



2. We grant you, that as, in the very instant in which we open our eyes, we receive the light, and see ; so in the very moment in which we believe, we receive Christ the Truth and are justified. But still you must grant us, that believing is as much previous to justification, as opening the eyes is previous to seeing. We are justified by faith ; and common sense dictates, that the instrument by which a thing is apprehended, must exist before it can be apprehended.

Having thus endeavoured to follow you in your retreat, to cut you off from your various subterfuges ; and having exposed, with my usual bluntness, the hard shifts you have been obliged to make, in order to keep your doctrine the least in countenance, permit me to assure you, that I still remain, with brotherly love and respect,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant in the  
whole Gospel of Christ,

JOHN FLETCHER.

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## LETTER XI.

*TO MR. RICHARD AND MR. ROWLAND HILL.*

HONOURED AND DEAR SIRS,

HAVING answered the arguments which each of you has advanced against the doctrine of justification by works in the great day, permit me to consider what may farther be advanced against it.

I. We cry to sinners, "By grace shall ye be saved through faith," in the day of your conversion ; but to believers we say, "By grace shall ye be saved," through works, in the day of judg-

ment. Turn therefore, ye sinners ; and ye saints, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

“ *Saved by grace, through works, in the day of judgment !* What a farrago of Popery and Gospel ! Faith and works, what a shocking mixture ! *Geminantur tigribus agni.* You have undoubtedly the full consent of ‘ Bellarmine and the scarlet whore ’ for such a match. But with what detestation would St. Paul enter his protest against it ! Does he not declare, that faith and works reciprocally exclude each other ? Says he not, ‘ If by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace ; but if it be of works, then it is no more grace, otherwise work is no more work ? If Abraham was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory ; for to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace but of debt : But Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.’ And David also describeth the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness *without works*. Hence the Apostle concludes, ‘ By grace ye are saved, through faith ; not of works, lest any man should boast.’ And again : ‘ Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but of his mercy he saved us,’ &c. Now, how does this doctrine of justification and salvation without works, agree with your doctrine of justification and salvation by works, in the last day ? And how can you reconcile St. Paul with Bellarmine, Mr. Wesley, and yourself ? ”

ANSWER.—Should you not rather ask, how we can reconcile St. Paul with Jesus Christ, St. James, and himself ? Is not the second chapter to the Romans as strong for works as the Minutes, the Epistle of St. James, and our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount ? Have we not observed, that, even in the Epistles, where the Apostle purposely main-

tains the doctrine of justification by faith in the day of conversion, he writes of works in such a manner as flatly to contradict himself, if they have nothing to do with our final justification in the last day?

Says he not to the believers at Rome?—"If ye live after the flesh," or, if ye do not "cast off the works of darkness, rioting and drunkenness, strife and envying," &c., "ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live." And again: "Be ye subject to the higher powers; for they that resist them, shall receive to themselves damnation!"

And says he not to the Galatians, "All the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself?" And let no Antinomian persuade you, that the law of obedient love is only a rule of life. No, it is also a rule of punishment; for "I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past," (see how plainly and constantly the Apostle preached the law of Christ!) "that they who do such things," they who are guilty of "adultery, fornication, hatred, wrath, strife, envying, murder, drunkenness, and such like, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Fulfil therefore the law of Christ. Let every man prove his own work; for every man shall bear his own burden. Be not deceived; whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap; for he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption," or rather, *φθοραν*, *perdition*: "But he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

When St. Paul, even in his Epistles to the Romans and Galatians, preaches so evidently justification and condemnation by works in the great day, do we not suppose him deprived of common sense, when we represent him as perpetually saying and unsaying, as building up one hour what he pulls down the next?

But as this general answer, though it vindicates our doctrine, does not vindicate the Apostle from the charge of contradiction, I beg leave once more to carry the candle of the Lord into the tower of Calvinian confusion ; thus shall we see the farrago made at Geneva with the words, *justification, salvation, works, righteousness of the law, and righteousness of faith.*

It is evident that every degree of justification is attended with a degree of salvation. Hence, when St. Paul preached to the Jews justification by faith, he said, “ To you is the word of this salvation sent ; ” and when he wrote to those who were justified, he says, “ By grace are ye saved through faith. ” This holds with regard to the justification of infants, for of such is the kingdom of heaven ; and, by the same rule, eternal salvation answers to final justification.

This being premised, we may observe, that, when the Apostle excludes works from having any hand in our justification or salvation, it is only when he speaks of the justification of sinners, whether we consider them as infants or adults. For if he excluded works from the justification of believers, either in the day of trial, or in the day of judgment, he would grossly contradict himself ; but now he is quite consistent. Mr. Wesley and I, through grace, gladly join him and Titus, when they say, “ Not by works of righteousness which we have done, ” either in our infancy, or before the day of our conversion, “ but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration ; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. ”

But what does the Apostle mean here by “ the hope of eternal life ? ” Is it the hope of a Laodicean believer, who makes his boast of “ imputed righteousness, and finished salvation, ” while he goes on in strife and envying, perhaps in adultery and

murder? Certainly no: This is the hope of the hypocrite, which shall perish. The hope according to which we are made heirs of eternal life in glory, is a hope, which if any man hath, he will purify himself even as God is pure; and this hope, far from being contrary to our doctrine of justification by works in the last day, is inseparably connected with "the labour of love," by which persevering believers shall then be justified.

Inquire we now, what are those works which St. Paul opposes to faith and free grace; and I observe,

1. That it is not absolutely every work; or else he would oppose faith to itself; for believing is as much a work of the heart, as walking to church is a work of the feet.

2. Neither does the Apostle oppose to faith, works meet for repentance; for he strongly recommended them himself. (Acts xxvi. 20.) Nor the works of upright Gentiles, that fear God, and believe he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. If St. Paul represented these works as "dung and filthy rags," he would contradict the angel, who said to Cornelius, "Thy prayers and alms," far from being rejected, "are come up for a memorial before God."

3. Much less did it ever come into the Apostle's mind, to oppose the work of faith, and the labour of love, to faith and free grace; for they are no more contrary to each other, than the stalk and the ear are contrary to the root that bears them. Far from despising these works, see how honourably he speaks of them: "We give thanks always for you, remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love in our Lord Jesus Christ.—God is not unrighteous, to forget your work and labour that proceedeth of love.—Always abound in the work of the Lord.—Charge the rich, that they be rich in good works, laying up for themselves a

good foundation, that they may lay hold on eternal life."

For want of attending to this, some have preposterously opposed the righteousness of faith to personal holiness. The latter they look upon as the "righteousness which is of the law," and which the Apostle explodes, Phil. iii. 9. Thus they suppose, that St. Paul formed the horrid wish of not being found clothed with "holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:" Not considering, that the pardon of sins and true holiness, the two inseparable fruits of a living faith, constitute "the righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:" A righteousness this, that far exceeds the outside righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, with which the Apostle had too long been satisfied, and which he so justly despised after his conversion.

One mistake makes way for another; those who imagine, that the Apostle would not be found in his own inherent righteousness, flowing from Christ formed in his heart by faith, insinuate, that he desired to be *found* clothed with the personal actions of our Lord, put upon his soul by as irrational and unscriptural an imputation, as if God had fed Peter, when he was hungry, by imputing to his empty stomach the meals which Christ ate in the days of his flesh; or as if he had clothed St. Paul when he was naked, by laying to his account our Lord's being wrapped up in swaddling clothes in the stable at Bethlehem.

But, to return: The works which St. Paul excludes, are,

1. The works of the ceremonial law of Moses, generally called "the works of the law." On these works most Jewish converts still laid a very great stress, and some of them went so far in this error, as to say to their Gentile brethren, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot



be saved." (Acts xv. 1.) Hence the Apostles wrote, "Certain men, subverting your souls, have troubled you, saying, ye must be circumcised and keep the law." (Verse 24.) Hence also it is said, that when St. Paul shaved, and was at charges to purify himself in the temple, he "walked orderly and kept the law." (Acts xxi. 24.)

2. The Apostle likewise opposes to faith those hypocritical deeds of the moral law, those external works of partial piety and ostentatious mercy, by which proud Pharisees think to atone for their sins, and purchase the kingdom of heaven. Such works of unbelief and spiritual pride cannot be too much decried. They do infinite mischief; they draw a veil over our apostasy; they breed self-complacence, generate self-conceit, and feed the opposition of Pharisees against the Gospel. Hence their contempt of Christ, their enmity against his people, their ridiculing the atonement, despising others, and boasting of their own goodness. St. Paul was the more zealous in bearing his testimony against these fruits of self-righteousness, as he knew by fatal experience, that they are the reverse of "fruits meet for repentance," and of "the righteousness which is of God by faith;" and that they stood yet in the way of the Jews, as much as they once did in his own.

3. The Apostle excludes also all the works of impious moralists, who make no scruple of robbing God, because they are just to man; all the works of Antinomian believers, who, like the Galatians, pray to the Lord, and devour their neighbours; or, like the Jews, fast to-day, and to-morrow strike with the fist of wickedness; all the works which are not ultimately referred to the glory of God through Jesus Christ; and all the works whose gracious rewardableness is not acknowledged to flow from the original and proper merit of the Redeemer. These works the Apostle justly dis-

cards, as contrary to the doctrine of grace, because they do not spring from the grace of God, but from the pride of man. He explodes them as opposite to the righteousness of faith, because they are not the works of humble faith, but of conceited unbelief; the constant language of faith being, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us! but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy and for thy truth's sake."

Let the judicious reader say, if by thus distinguishing between the justification of a sinner, in the day of conversion, and the justification of a saint in the great day; and by making a proper difference between the works of a humble believer, which the Apostle justly extols; and the works of a proud Pharisee, which he justly decries; we do not perfectly reconcile him to himself, and sufficiently secure the honour of free grace.

Is it possible to make larger concessions, without sacrificing St. James's Epistle to Geneva logic, and our Lord's invaluable Sermon on the Mount to antinomian obstinacy? If we continue to assert that no sort of works have any thing to do with any sort of justification and salvation, shall we not justly shock the moral and rational part of mankind? Is it not of the Lord, that the contempt which unconverted men show to religious people rises no higher than it does? And do we not deserve that our candour or good sense should be suspected, when we go about to persuade the world, that half a dozen strained verses of St. Paul, put in the favourite scale of a Geneva balance, are sufficient to outweigh fifty plain texts of the Apostle, and the best half of the Bible, which testifies, directly or indirectly, that, though the final justification and eternal salvation of adult persons are not by the merit, yet they are by the evidence or instrumentality, of good works?

SECOND OBJECTION.—"There is some plausibility in your answer, but we are still afraid that this

doctrine of justification or salvation by works in the last day robs the Lord Jesus Christ of his glory."

ANSWER.—Just the reverse: It delivers him from the shame of saving men by unaccountable humour, or damning them with unparalleled cruelty. —But how do you prove your assertion? Of what glory does our doctrine rob the Redeemer? Does it rob him of the glory of atoning for our sins, as our "High Priest;" or leading us into all the truth necessary to salvation as our "Great Prophet?" Does it rob him of the glory of pardoning our sins, and esteeming us righteous when we believe, as the "Lord our righteousness?" Does it rob him of the glory of making us fruitful branches in him as "the true Vine;" or of rendering to every one according to his works, as "an impartial Judge?" On the contrary, is it not the opposite doctrine, which refuses him the glory of maintaining the honour of his crown, as the "King of kings and Lord of lords?"

Yes, we affirm, that to reject the doctrine of justification by works in the great day, is to set Christ at nought in the most glorious of his offices. Is it not enough, that, in the days of his flesh, he was chiefly derided and crucified as the King of the Jews? Must he also in the days of his Spirit, be everywhere put to open shame in his regal office? How useless is his sceptre, and contemptible his government, if he gives his subjects only shadows of laws, which amount to no laws at all! and if, leaving his immense dominions in a lawless condition, he saves the happy number of his favourites, and damns the rest of mankind, merely according to Calvin's notions of free grace and free wrath, or according to Dr. Crisp's scheme of salvation and damnation finished!

To this Mr. Rowland Hill answers before-hand, (*Friendly Remarks*, pages 45, 46,) "You slander

the Calvinists.—We grant, that in the point of justification,” and, of course, of condemnation “we have nothing to do with the law:” But “though we boldly say, We are not under the law as a covenant of works, yet we were never so ignorant and daring as to say, We are not under *the law to Christ as a rule of life.*”

Pardon my freedom, if I tell you without ceremony, that, like thousands more, you have learned to say *Shibboleth*, before you have properly considered the sense of the expression. If you mean any thing by “being under the law to Christ” only “as a rule of life,” you probably mean, with Crisp, that Christ has indeed a law; but that with regard to believers, who are the subjects of his kingdom, “this law has no more the divine sanction of a blessing for those who observe it, and of a curse for its violaters.” And is not this saying, in ambiguous words, that Christ’s subjects are absolutely lawless? Let little children pompously give the name of *laws* to rules of play, or rules of grammar; but let not men of sense imitate their mistake by giving that name to directions of conduct, or rules of life, which are no longer enforced by rewards and penalties.

You decry “illustrations,” and I do not wonder at it; for they carry light into Babel, where it is not desired. The father of errors begets darkness and confusion. From darkness and confusion springs Calvinism, who wrapping himself up in some garments which he has stolen from the truth, deceives the nations, and gets himself revered in a dark temple, as if he were the pure and free Gospel.

To bring him to a shameful end, we need not stab him with the dagger of “calumny,” or put him upon the rack of persecution. Let him only be dragged out of his obscurity, and brought unmasked to open light, and the silent beams of

truth will pierce him through ! Light alone will torture him to death, as the meridian sun does a bird of night, that cannot fly from the gentle operations of its beams.

May the following illustration dart at least one luminous beam into the profound darkness in which your venerable Diana delights to dwell ! And may it show the Christian world, that we do not “slander you,” when we assert, you inadvertently destroy God’s law, and cast the Redeemer’s crown to the ground ; and that when you say, “In point of justification,” and consequently of condemnation, “we have nothing to do with the law ; we are under the law as a rule of life, but not a rule of judgment ;” you might as well say, “We are under no law, and consequently no longer accountable for our actions.”

“The king,” who I will *suppose* is in love with your doctrines of free grace and free wrath, by the advice of a predestinarian council and parliament, issues out a Gospel proclamation, directed “to all his dear subjects, and *elect* people, the *English*.” By this evangelical manifesto they are informed, “That in consideration of the Prince of Wales’s meritorious intercession, and perfect obedience to the laws of England, all the penalties annexed to the breaking of those laws are now abolished with respect to *Englishmen* : That His Majesty freely pardons all his subjects, who have been, are, or shall be guilty of adultery, murder, or treason ; that all their crimes, ‘past, present, and to come, are for ever and for ever cancelled :’ That, nevertheless, his loving subjects, who remain strangers to their privileges, shall still be served with sham warrants according to law, and frightened out of their wits, till they have learned to plead, *they are Englishmen*, that is, *elect* ; and then they shall also set at defiance all legalists, that is, all those who shall dare to deal with them according to law ; and



that, excepting the case of the above-mentioned false prosecution of his chosen people, none of them shall ever be molested for the breach of any law.

“ By the same supreme authority it is likewise enacted, that all the laws shall continue in force against foreigners, (that is, reprobates,) whom the King and the Prince hate with everlasting hatred, and to whom they have agreed never to show mercy ; that accordingly they shall be prosecuted to the utmost rigour of every statute, till they are all hanged or burned out of the way ; and that, supposing no personal offence can be proved against them, it shall be lawful to hang them in chains for the crime of one of their forefathers, to set forth the King’s wonderful justice, display his glorious sovereignty, and make his chosen people relish the better their sweet distinguishing privileges as *Englishmen*.

“ Moreover His Majesty, who loves order and harmony, charges his loving subjects to consider still the statutes of England, which are in force against foreigners, as very good rules of life for the English, which they shall do well to follow, but *better* to break ; because every breach of those rules will work for their good, and make them sing louder the faithfulness of the King, the goodness of the Prince, and the sweetness of this Gospel proclamation.

“ Again, as nothing is so displeasing to the King as legality, which he hates even more than extortion and whoredom ; lest any of his dear people who have acted the part of a strumpet, robber, murderer, or traitor, should, through the remains of their inbred corruption, and ridiculous legality, mourn too deeply for breaking some of their rules of life, our gracious monarch solemnly assures them, that though he highly disapproves of adultery and murder, yet these breaches of rules are not worse in his sight than a wandering thought in speaking to him, or a moment’s dulness in his ser-



vice ; that robbers, therefore, and traitors, adulterers and murderers, who are free-born *Englishmen*, need not at all be uneasy about losing his royal favour ; this being utterly impossible, because they always stand complete in the honesty, loyalty, chastity, and charity of the Prince.

“ Moreover, because the King changes not, whatever lengths the English go on in immorality, he will always look upon them as his pleasant children, his dear people, and men after his own heart ; and that, on the other hand, whatsoever lengths foreigners go in pious morality, his gracious Majesty is determined still to consider them as hypocrites, vessels of wrath, and cursed children, “ for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever ; ” because he always views them completely guilty, and absolutely condemned in a certain robe of unrighteousness, woven thousands of years ago by one of their ancestors. This dreadful *sanbenetto* \* His Majesty hath thought fit to put upon them by imputation ; and, in it, it is his good pleasure that they shall hang in adamantine chains, or burn in fire unquenchable.

“ Finally, as foreigners are dangerous people, and may stir up His Majesty’s subjects to rebellion, the English are informed, that if any one of them, were he to come over from Geneva itself, shall dare to insinuate, that this most gracious Gospel proclamation is not according to equity, morality, and godliness, the first Englishman that meets him shall have full leave to brand him as a Papist, without judge or jury, in the forehead or on the back, as he thinks best ; and that, till he is farther proceeded with, according to the utmost severity of the law, the chosen people shall be informed, in the Gospel Magazine, to beware of him, as a man ‘ who scatters firebrands, arrows, and deaths,’ and makes

\* A frock, painted with flames and devils, in which heretics are burned by the Inquisition.

universal havoc of every article of this sweet gospel proclamation.

“Given at Geneva, and signed by four of His Majesty’s principal Secretaries of State for the Predestinarian Department.

“JOHN CALVIN

DR. CRISP.

THE AUTHOR of P. O. ROWLAND HILL.”

What would wise men think of such a manifesto? Who does not see, His Majesty might as well have informed us at once, that all the laws of the land are now repealed; that, instead of being laws, they shall be only moral finger-posts, directing men in the narrow way of righteousness, or in the broad way of iniquity, if the one pleases them better than the other!

Suppose a courtier asserted, that “we are still under the laws of the land as rules of life;” would not thinking men answer, “No: We are now absolutely lawless; for statutes according to which no Englishmen can be prosecuted, much less executed, are no laws at all for Englishmen; they are only directions, which every one is at full liberty to follow or not, as he pleases. It is not less absurd to give the name of laws to rules, which are not enforced with the sanction of proper rewards or penalties, than to call Baxter’s *Directory* a code of laws, because it contains excellent rules of life.”

O ye abettors of Crisp’s mistakes, how long will you regard vain words, and inadvertently pour contempt upon the King of kings? How long will you rashly charge us with robbing him of his glory, because we cannot join you, when, under the plausible pretence of advancing the honour of his *priesthood*, you explain away the most awful protestations which he made as a *Prophet*; and rob him of the royal glory of punishing his rebellious and rewarding his faithful subjects according to law as a righteous King?

Alas ! Even while you seem zealous for God's sovereignty, do you not unawares represent Jesus as the weakest of princes, or fiercest of tyrants ? Do you not inadvertently, (for I know you would not do it deliberately for the world,) do you not, I say, inadvertently crown him with the sharpest thorns that ever grew in the territory of mystic Geneva ? Instead of the sceptre of his kingdom, which is a right sceptre, do you not at one time put in his hand a reed, which the Antinomian elect may insult with more impunity than the frog in the fable did the royal log sent by Jupiter to reign over them ? And at another time, while you give him Nimrod's iron sceptre, do you not put upon him Nero's purple robe ; and even slip into his loving bosom a black book of horrible decrees, more full of the names of unborn *reprobates*, than the Emperor Domitian's fatal pocket-book was full of the names of the poor wretches, to whom, in a gloomy day, he took an unaccountable dislike, and whom, on this account, as well as to maintain his dreadful sovereignty, he tyrannically appointed for the slaughter ? Never, no, never shall you be able to do justice to the Scripture, and our Lord's kingly office, till you allow, that, agreeable to the evangelical law, he will one day reward every man according to his works ; and the moment you allow this, you give up what you unhappily call your *foundation*, that is, unconditional election and finished salvation : In a word, you allow justification by works in the great day, and are as heretical (should I not say, as orthodox ?) as ourselves.

I am, honoured and dear Sirs,

Your's, &c.

JOHN FLETCHER.

## LETTER XII.\*

IN which the Author shews how far the Calvinists and the Remoustrants agree, wherein they disagree, and what makes the latter dissent from the former, concerning the famous doctrine of IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS.

TO RICHARD HILL, ESQ.

HONOURED SIR,

ALTHOUGH I reserve for two separate tracts, my answer to your objections against "the monstrous doctrine of perfection," and my reply to the argument which you draw from our Seventeenth Article, in favour of the doctrine of unconditional election; the already exorbitant length of this Check calls for a speedy conclusion; and I hasten towards it, by laying before my readers the present state of our controversy; enlarging chiefly upon imputed righteousness and free will, two points which I have not yet particularly discussed in this piece.

IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS, as it is held by the Calvinists, I have endeavoured to expose in the Second Check, by the most absurd, and yet (upon your plan) most reasonable, plea of a bare-faced Antinomian, who expects to be justified in the great day, by Christ's imputed righteousness without works. To this you have answered, (*Review*, page 68, &c.,) by exclaiming, "Shocking slander, slanderous banter," &c.; and I might reply only by crying out, *Logica Genevensis*! But, as honest inquirers after truth would not be benefited, for their sake I shall in this letter show how far we agree, wherein we disagree, and what makes us dissent from you, about the doctrine of imputed righteousness.

\* This letter was added after the Contents were printed off.

We agree, that all the righteousness which is in the spiritual world is as much Christ's righteousness, as all the light that shines in the natural world at noon is the light of the sun. And we equally assert, that, when God justifies a sinner who believes in Christ, he freely pardons his past sins, graciously accounts him righteous, and, as such, admits him to his favour, only through faith in the Redeemer's meritorious blood and personal righteousness.

To see clearly wherein we disagree, let us consider both your doctrine and ours ; touching, as we go along, upon the capital arguments by which they are supported.

Consistent Calvinists believe, that if a man is elected, God absolutely imputes to him Christ's personal righteousness ; that is, the perfect obedience unto death which Christ performed upon earth. This is reckoned to him for obedience and righteousness, even while he is actually disobedient, and before he has a grain of inherent righteousness. They consider this imputation as an unconditional and eternal act of grace, by which, not only a sinner's past sins, but his crimes, present and to come, be they more or be they less, be they small or be they great, are for ever and for ever covered. He is eternally justified from all things. And therefore, under this imputation, he is perfectly righteous before God, even while he commits adultery and murder. Or, to use your own expressions, whatever length he runs, whatever depths he falls into, "he always stands absolved, always complete in the everlasting righteousness of the Redeemer." (*Five Letters*, pages 26, 27, 29.) In point of justification, therefore, it matters not how unrighteous a believer actually is in himself ; because the robe of Christ's personal righteousness, which, at his peril, he must not attempt to patch up with any personal righteousness of his own, is more than sufficient to adorn him from head to foot ; and he

must be sure to appear before God in no other. In this rich garment of finished salvation, the greatest apostates shine brighter than angels, though they are "in themselves black" as the old murderer, and filthy as the brute that actually wallows in the mire. This "best robe," as it is called, is full trimmed with such phylacteries as these, "Once in grace, always in grace:—Once justified, eternally justified:—Once washed, always fair, undefiled, and without spot." And so great are the privileges of those who have it on, that they can range through all the bogs of sin, wade through all the puddles of iniquity, and roll themselves in the thickest mire of wickedness, without contracting the least spot of guilt, or speck of defilement.

This scheme of imputation is supported, 1. By scriptural metaphors, understood in a forced, unscriptural sense. Thus when a sound Calvinist reads about the breast-plate of righteousness, and the garment of salvation; or about putting on Christ, walking in him, being in him, being found in him, or being clothed with righteousness, his prepossessed mind directly runs upon his imputation. And if he reads in the Psalms, "I will make mention of thy righteousness, and thine only," he immediately concludes that the Psalmist meant the *personal* righteousness of the man Christ; as if David really made mention of no other righteousness but that in all the Psalms! or God had had no righteousness before the Virgin Mary brought forth her first-born Son!

2. By the parable of the man who was bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness, because he had not on a wedding garment; that is, upon your scheme, because Christ's personal righteousness was not imputed to him: As if the Prince of Peace, the mild Jesus, who says, "Learn of me, for I am meek," had kindly invited a man to a feast, and then commanded him to be thrust



into hell, merely because he had not on a garment, which he never could procure; a robe, which none but God could clothe him with; and which God determined should never be for him, when he decreed, that Christ should never work out an inch of righteousness for one single reprobate. Does not this exceed Ovid's description of the iron age? *Non hospes ab hospite tutus*. The bare mention of such a dreadful reflection, cast upon God's goodness and our Lord's hospitality, will amount to a strong argument against your imputation, with those who are yet concerned for God's adorable perfections, and our Lord's amiable character.

3. By the parable of the Prodigal Son, who, it is supposed, was clothed with the "best robe" of Christ's personal righteousness. But this notion is overturned by the context itself; for the father had met, forgiven, and embraced his returning son in his own ragged garment, before the "best robe" was called for, and put upon him. Whence it would follow, that a sinner may be forgiven without the garment of righteousness; and as completely accepted out of Christ, as the Prodigal was without the "best robe."

4. By the goodly raiment of Esau, in which Jacob got his father's blessing. But Moses's account of the cheat put upon short-sighted Isaac, entirely overthrows the scheme of the Calvinists. The robe which they recommend, is made of Christ's complete and personal righteousness; it is long and wide enough perfectly to cover even a giant in sin; nor must it be patched with any thing else. But Jacob's dress, far from being all of a piece, was a mongrel sort of human and beastly garment. For, when Rebekah had clothed his body with Esau's raiment, "she put goat-skins upon his hands, and upon the smooth of his neck," to make them feel like Esau's hairy hands and

shaggy neck. And the worst is, that the goat-skins, and not Esau's borrowed dress, deceived the aged Patriarch, and got the blessing. Hear the historian : " Jacob went near to his father, and he felt him, and said, The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau ; and he discerned him not, because his hands were hairy ; so he blessed him." (Genesis xxvii. 22.) Thus the skin of a goat, the emblem of a reprobate, unfortunately comes in to patch up your best robe. And I doubt not but, as the typical garment was too scanty to cover Jacob's hands and neck, so the fancied antitype will prove too short to cover the hands of those, who, like Onesimus, rob their masters ; and the neck and heels of those who, like David, are swift to shed blood, and climb up into their neighbour's bed ; if they do not get a more substantial righteousness than that, in which you suppose they stand complete, while they commit their enormous crimes.

5. Plain Scripture is also brought to support this imputation. David says, " Blessed is he whose sin is covered : Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." (Psalm xxxii. 1, 2.) But, alas for your scheme ! it is thrown down by the very next words, " And in whose spirit there is no guile." Thus, although you would make us believe the contrary, David's own doctrine shows, that he was not the blessed man whose sins are covered by non-imputation of iniquity, when his spirit was full of guile, adultery, and murder. And, indeed, he tells us so himself in this very Psalm : " When I kept silence," says he, when I harboured guile and impenitency, " day and night thy hand was heavy upon me ; but when I acknowledged my sin unto thee," when I parted with my guile, " thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."

6. However, if David's words are flatly against

your imputation, it is supposed, that, as prefaced by St. Paul, Rom. iv. 6, they make greatly for it, "David describeth the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works." I have already observed, that as the Apostle cannot contradict David and himself, he only means without the works of the law, as opposed to faith and to the work of faith. That this is the true meaning of St. Paul's words, is evident by those which introduce them: "To him that worketh not, but believeth, his faith is counted for righteousness." Who does not see here, that believing, which is the good work that begets all others, is opposed to the faithless works, about which the Pharisees made so much ado to so little purpose? Who does not perceive that a man must believe, that is, do the work of God, before his faith can be counted for righteousness; and consequently, that righteousness is imputed to him who believes, not absolutely without any sort of works; but only without the works of the law, emphatically called by the Apostle, works or deeds of the law, when he contradistinguishes them from faith, and the work of faith?

7. To the preceding scriptures our Calvinist brethren add a plausible argument. "God," say they, "may as well impute to us Christ's perfect righteousness in all our sins, and account us completely righteous without one grain of inherent righteousness, as he imputed the horrid crimes of the elect to Christ in all his obedience, and accounted him completely guilty without one single grain of inherent sin. To deny, therefore, that God imputes righteousness to an elect, while he is full of unrighteousness; or to suppose that he imputes sin to an apostate, who is sold under sin, is but a decent way of denying the imputation of our personal sins to Christ, and the vicarious satisfaction which he made on the cross."

To detect the fallacy of this argument, we need only observe, 1. That God never accounted Christ "completely guilty." Such expressions as these, "He made him sin for us: He laid upon him the iniquities of us all," &c., are only Hebrew idioms, which signify that God appointed Christ a sacrifice for sin; and that the chastisement of our forfeited peace was upon him; which no more implies, that God put on his back, by an absolute imputation, a robe of unrighteousness, woven with all the sins of the elect, to make him completely guilty; than St. Luke, when he informs us, that the Virgin Mary offered two young pigeons for her purification, supposes her ceremonial uncleanness was, some how, woven into a couple of little garments, and put upon the back of the two young pigeons, which, by that means, were made completely unclean.

I hope the following illustration will convince you, Sir, that such refinements as these are as contrary to sober reason, as to Scripture duly compared with itself. Gallio gets drunk; and, as he reels home from his midnight revels, he breaks thirty-six lamps in the streets, and sends out volleys of curses, to the number of two hundred. He is brought before you, and you insist on his going to the house of correction, or paying so much money to buy three dozen of lamps, beside the usual fine for his profane language. As he is not worth a groat, his sober brother Mitio kindly offers to lay down the sum for him. You accept of the "vicarious satisfaction," and binding the rake to his good behaviour, you release him at his brother's request. Now, Sir, would you be reasonable, if you reckoned Mitio completely guilty of getting drunk, swearing two hundred oaths, and breaking thirty-six lamps? Far from supposing him guilty of breaking one lamp, or swearing one oath, even while he makes satis-

faction for his brother's wildness, do you not esteem him according to his own excellent character ?

And will you defend a doctrine which charges God with a mistake ten thousand times more glaring, than that you would be guilty of, if you really reckoned Mitio an abandoned rake, and Gallio a man of an exemplary conduct ? Will you indeed recommend still, as Gospel, an opinion which supposes, that the God of everlasting, unchangeable love, once loathed and abhorred his beloved Son ? and that the God of inviolable Truth could once say to the Holy Jesus, "Thou art all foul, O thou defiled object of my hatred, there is no purity in thee ;" while he addresses a bloody adulterer with, "Thou art all fair, my love, my undefiled, there is no spot in thee ?"

A variety of scriptural and rational arguments have been, directly or indirectly, advanced in every Check, against that capital doctrine of yours, "the absolute imputation of Christ's personal righteousness to believers ;" whether they live chastely with their own wives, or entice away other men's wives ; whether they charitably assist their neighbours, or get them treacherously murdered. All those arguments centre in this : If that doctrine is true, the Divine perfections suffer a general eclipse ; one half of the Bible is erased ; St. James's Epistle is made void ; defiled religion justly passes for "pure Gospel ;" the Calvinian doctrine of perseverance is true ; and barefaced Antinomianism is properly recommended as "the doctrine of grace."

Having thus considered your doctrine of imputed righteousness, permit me to submit to your inspection, the harmonizing views that we have of God's perfections ; while we see him impute righteousness to a man, (that is, reckon a man righteous,)



so long as he actually believes with a faith working by obedient love ; and impute iniquity to an apostate, (that is, reckon him unrighteous,) as soon as he departs from the faith, to work iniquity, and walk in the ways of unrighteousness.

We firmly believe, that God's imputation, whether of sin or righteousness, is not founded upon sovereign caprice, but upon indubitable truth. As we are partakers by generation of Adam's original pollution, before God imputes it to us, that is, before he accounts us really polluted ; so are we partakers by regeneration of Christ's original righteousness, before God imputes righteousness to us, that is, before he accounts us really righteous. And therefore a positive and substantial communication of Christ's righteousness apprehended by faith, no less precedes God's imputation of righteousness to a believer, than Bartimeus's receiving his sight, and admitting the light, were previous to God's reckoning that he actually saw.

Although we grant, that the Almighty calls the things that are not as though they were ; and that, according to his foreknowledge, he frequently speaks of them in the prophetic style, as if they were now, or had been already ; yet, when he reckons what is, in order to pass sentence of absolution or condemnation, he cannot deny his truth, and reckon a man actually chaste and charitable that actually commits adultery and murder. We dare not impute this flagrant unrighteousness to God. And as no guile was found in the Lord's mouth while he was upon earth, we cannot admit the most distant thought of his being full of guile in heaven ; which we apprehend would be the case, if he reckoned that a man, who actually falls from adultery into murder, is actually undefiled, and completely righteous.

Again : As Christ bore no manner of vicarious



punishment for us ; or, which is the same, as our iniquities were not actually laid upon him, till he partook of our frail nature, and was positively interested in our corruptible blood ; so by a parity of reason, we are not indulged with the pardon and acceptance which he merited for us, till we partake of his light and righteousness. Hence appears the weakness of that argument, " Righteousness may as well be imputed to us without any participation of the divine nature, as sin was imputed to Christ without any participation of our fallen nature." We absolutely deny the fact on which this argument is founded ; and assert with St. Paul, that Christ " was made sin for us," (that is, a proper sacrifice for our sins,) not by an imaginary robe of unrighteousness put upon him according to your imputation ; but by being really made of a fallen mortal woman, and " sent in the likeness of sinful flesh," that he might suffer and die for us ; which he could not have done, if he had not assumed our fallen nature ; unfallen man being quite above the reach of pain and death. It is not less certain, therefore, that " he was made in the likeness of sinful flesh," than it is indubitable that " he was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

As sure then, as Christ was " made sin," that is, a sin-offering, " for us," not by a speculative imputation of our personal sins ; but by being actually " made flesh," clothed with our mortality, and " sent in the likeness of sinful flesh ;" so sure are " we made the righteousness of God in him," not by a speculative imputation of his personal good works, but by being made partakers of the divine nature, begotten of God, and clothed with essential righteousness ; which is the case when we " put on the new man, who after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Thus it appears to us, that your

imputation may be demolished, only by retorting 2 Cor. v. 21, the Scripture with which it is chiefly supported ; and, if we are not mistaken, the venerable fabric raised upon that passage, like Mahomet's venerable tomb, hangs in the air without one single prop.

That the seed of righteousness, by which we are first interested in Christ, is universal in all infants, appears to us evident from St. Paul's words, "As by one man's," Adam's, "disobedience, the many," the multitudes of mankind, "were made sinners," by a seed of sin ; "so by the obedience of one," Christ, "shall the many," the multitudes of mankind, "be made righteous," by a seed of righteousness, to the end of the world. (Rom. v. 19.) Hence it is, that righteousness is imputed to all infants ; and that, as I have proved, Letter X, they stand justified before God, according to the inferior dispensation they are under.

When they grow up, and hold the truth in unrighteousness, by sinning against their light, personal iniquity is imputed to them ; and till they believe again in the light, and renounce the evil deeds which it reprove, they are condemned already. But the moment they truly repent, and unfeignedly believe the Gospel belonging to their dispensation, condemnation vanishes ; God again imputes righteousness to them ; that is, for Christ's sake he again pardons their sins, accepts their persons, and considers them as branches, that admit the righteous sap of the true Vine, and bear the fruits of righteousness.

Once more : If these branches do not believingly abide in Christ the Vine, they become such branches in him, as bear not fruit. Nay, they bear the poison of unrighteousness ; iniquity therefore is again imputed to them ; and so long as they continue in their sin and unbelief, they are every moment liable to be taken away, cast into the fire,

and burned. (John xv.) Nevertheless, through the Redeemer's intercession, God bears long with them ; and, if they despise not to the last the riches of his forbearance and long-suffering, duly considering how his goodness leadeth them to repentance, their backslidings are healed ; they believe again with the "heart unto righteousness ;" the righteous sap of the true Vine has again a free course in their hearts ; they again receive Christ, who is the end of the law, and the sum of the Gospel for righteousness, to every one that believeth ; and their faith, which once more admits the beams of the Sun of Righteousness, is once more imputed to them for righteousness.

This is the holy imputation of righteousness, which we read of in the oracles of God ; and we prefer it to yours for three reasons : 1. It hath truth for its foundation ; but your imputation stands upon a preposterous supposition, that Christ, the righteous, was an execrable sinner, and that an elect is perfectly righteous, while he commits execrable iniquity. 2. Because it perfectly agrees with St. James's "undefiled religion," which your scheme entirely overthrows. And, 3. Because it is supported by the plainest scriptures.

The Popes have at least the letter of one passage to countenance their monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation. They save appearances, when they make their dupes believe, that a bit of bread is the real body of Christ ; for, say they, Christ took bread, and declared, "THIS is my body." But, O, tell it not in Paris, lest the advocates of the triple crown triumph over us in their turn ! the personal righteousness of Christ is not so much as once mentioned in all the Bible, with the doctrine of imputation ; and yet some Divines can make whole congregations of men, who protest against the impious absurdities of the Church of Rome, believe, that the imputation of Christ's per-

sonal righteousness is a scriptural doctrine, and the very marrow of the Gospel! This garment of their own weaving they cast over adulterers and murderers, and then represent the filthy, bloody wretches, as complete in Christ's obedience, perfect in righteousness, and "undefiled" before God!

If I had a thousand tongues, could I employ them more to the glory of Christ, and the good of souls, than by crying to the thousands who are still "sold under sin," and still take their "carnal" ease in that imaginary garment of righteousness, "Awake to" true "righteousness, and sin not?" "Search the Scriptures:" Where is it said, that Christ's personal righteousness was ever imputed to either man or angel? And where is it written, that righteousness was ever imputed to any one, farther than he was possessed of, and actuated by, a living, powerful, inherent principle of righteous faith?

"To the law and the testimony!" Can any thing be plainer than the two following positions, on which all *our* doctrine of imputation is founded? 1. Faith is a powerful, quickening, justifying, sanctifying, working, victorious, saving grace. 2. This faith, as it springs from, and receives Christ, and his righteous power, "is imputed to us for righteousness."

Does not the first of these propositions stand unshaken upon such scriptures as these?—"Faith is the evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for:—All things are possible to him that believeth:—Whosoever believeth is born of God:—All that believe are justified:—Purifying their hearts by faith:—Sanctified through faith that is in me:—This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith:—Ye are saved through faith:—Faith worketh by love:—Remembering your work of faith:—Faith without works is dead:—He that believeth hath everlasting life:

—Holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience, which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck," &c. Is it not evident from these Scriptures, that all who have a living faith, have not only a pardon, but *works*, especially *love*, which is "the fulfilling of the law;" love, the most excellent "fruit of righteousness," in which all others are contained? And surely, if they have a pardon, and true, inherent righteousness, in their Christ-accepting, loving, and obedient faith; that "faith" may well be "imputed to them for righteousness," or, God may well account them righteous.

Nor is the second proposition, upon which our imputation stands, less clearly laid down in the Scriptures: "Abraham believed in the Lord, and he counted,"\* or imputed "it to him for righteousness." (Gen. xv. 6.) "What says the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness," that is, for preceding righteousness, through the remission of his past sins; for present acceptance in the Beloved, whom he received; and for present righteousness, through the righteous exertions of a faith that worketh by love. Again: "To him that believeth, his faith is imputed for righteousness:—We say that faith was imputed to Abraham for righteousness:—That he might be the father of all them that believe, that righteousness might be imputed to them also:—He was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness:—Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed if we believe." (Gal. iii. 6; Rom. iv. 5.) &c.

As Moses has led the van of these testimonies in favour of our scriptural imputation, and St. Paul the

\* There is but one word in the original which our translators indifferently render, *impute*, *count*, or *reckon*.

main body, permit St. James to bring up the rear. "Seest thou," says he, "how faith wrought with Abraham's works, and by works was faith made perfect ; and the Scripture was fulfilled, which says, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness." (James ii. 23.) The whole is thus summed up by the great defender of free grace: "The Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to it. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith ; but as it were by" the faithless "works," which they did in self-righteous obedience to the letter of the law ; trampling under foot the righteousness of faith, which speaketh on this wise, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. ix. and x.)

Who does not see, in reading these words, that we must do something "unto righteousness," as well as "unto salvation?" Is it not evident, that we must now "believe with the heart," in order to the former, and "make confession with the mouth," as we have opportunity, in order to the latter ; and consequently, that righteousness imputed, as well as salvation finished, without any thing done on our part, is a doctrine that is not less contrary even to St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans fairly taken together, than to that strong rampart of "undefiled religion," the Epistle of St. James?

However, a cloud of objections arises, to keep the light from a prejudiced reader: And as he thinks that three of them are remarkably strong, I beg leave to consider them with some degree of attention.



FIRST OBJECTION.—“Your doctrine of justifying, sanctifying, and working ‘faith imputed to us for righteousness,’ I bear my loud testimony against; because it confounds *righteousness* with *sanctification*, two Gospel blessings which are clearly distinguished. (1 Cor. i. 30.)”

ANSWER.—It would be much better to confound, than to *destroy* them both, as I fear you do, when you cast a robe of finished salvation, that is, of complete righteousness and finished holiness, over impenitent adulterers and murderers. But be that as it will, your objection is groundless. I have already observed, and I once more declare, that when we speak of “the righteousness of faith,” we understand three things: 1. The non-imputation, or “forgiveness of the sins that are *past*.” (Rom. iii. 25.) 2. Present “acceptance in the Beloved.” (Eph. i. 7.) And 3. A principle of universal righteousness, by which we are interested in Christ’s righteousness; just as a branch is interested in the excellence of the vine, that is, by the generous sap which it actually derives from it; and not by an imaginary imputation of the fine grapes which the vine bore seventeen hundred years ago. Let no man deceive you; he that *does* righteousness, is a righteous branch; even as Christ is a righteous vine. (1 John iii. 7; John xv. 5.)

On the other hand, when we speak of sanctification, we understand the wonderful change, wrought in us by the working of the above-mentioned principle of righteousness; and the internal fruits which it produces, till, by “growing up into Christ in all things, we come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. It is evident, therefore, that, considering righteousness and sanctification even in their most intimate union, we do not confound them at all; but maintain as clear a distinction between

them, as that which subsists between the *sap* derived by a wild branch from the good olive tree, and the *change* produced in that branch upon such a derivation.

SECOND OBJECTION.—“Your doctrine is Popery refined. By paying *saving* honours to a Christian grace, and taking the crown from *Christ*, to set it upon *faith*, you shake the very foundation of the Mediator’s throne. If this is not high treason against him, what crime deserves that name?”

ANSWER.—Your fears are laudable, though absolutely groundless. 1. *Faith*, the humble grace that will know nothing but Christ, for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, can never dishonour his person, claim his crown, or shake the foundation of his throne. Is it not ridiculous to make so much ado about *faith* robbing Christ of *saving* honours, when Christ himself says, “Thy *faith* hath saved thee;” and when the Apostle cries out, “*Believe*, and thou shalt be saved?” Were then Christ and St. Paul two refined Papists, and guilty of “high treason” against the Redeemer?

2. If some will be “wise above what is written,” we dare not. If they are ashamed of the oracles of God, we are not; therefore, whatever they think of us, we must say, with the evangelical Apostle, “*Faith* was imputed to Abraham for righteousness, and to him that believeth *his faith* was imputed for righteousness.”

3. Should you say, that Abraham’s faith, or his believing God, signifies either Christ’s person, or his personal righteousness; we reply, *Credat Judæus Apella!* There was indeed a time when Calvinist Divines could make simple Protestants believe it, as easily as the Pope can make credulous Papists believe that a wafer of the size of half-a-crown is the identical body of our Lord; but as many Romanists begin to shake off the yoke of Popish

absurdities, so many Protestants will cast away that of Calvinian impositions. And as our fathers taught us to protest, that the hocus pocus of a Popish Priest cannot turn bread into flesh ; so will we teach our children to protest, that the bare assertion of a Calvinist Minister cannot turn Abraham's faith into Christ's person, or into his personal righteousness ; which must however be the case, if these words, " Abraham's faith," or his believing God, " was imputed for righteousness," do only mean, as we are confidently told, that " Christ, or his personal righteousness, was imputed to Abraham for righteousness."

4. Does it reflect any dishonour upon Christ, to say with St. Paul, that "*faith* is imputed to us for righteousness ;" when *believing* includes its *object*, (" Christ the way, the truth, and the life,") as necessarily as eating supposes food, and drinking, liquor ? Is it not as impossible to " believe in the light," without Christ the light ; or to " believe in the truth," without Christ the truth ; as it is to breathe without air, and hear without sounds ? Again : If you affirm, that " we warm ourselves by going to the fire," do *you* sap the foundation of natural philosophy, because you do not say ten times over, that the warming power comes from the fire, and not from our motion towards it ? And do *we* destroy the foundation of Christianity, when we assert that " faith working by love " instrumentally saves us, because we do not spend so much time as you in saying over and over, that the saving merit and the saving power flow from the Saviour, and not from our own act of believing ? Is not this as clear as it is that the light flows in upon us from the sun, and not *from*, though it is *through*, the opening of our eyes ?

Lastly, would not physicians make themselves appear very ridiculous, if they distressed their patients, when they were going to take a medicine,

with the fear of ascribing their recovery to their taking the remedy, that is, to "their own doing," rather than to the virtue of the remedy itself? And are those Divines alone partakers of heavenly wisdom who puzzle sinners who come to Christ, and place a lion in their way, by perpetually injecting into their minds a fear lest they should ascribe their salvation to *faith*, rather than to the *Saviour* whom faith receives? Where does the Apostle, whose evangelical sentiments they so deservedly extol, set them the example of such refinements? Is it in Romans iv., where he says, directly or indirectly, seven times, that "FAITH is imputed for righteousness?" Is it not strange, that at last "orthodoxy" should fairly consist in setting aside or explaining away the doctrine of St. Paul, as well as that of St. James?

THIRD OBJECTION.—"Your mind is full of carnal reasonings. You do not know either Christ or yourself. If you did, you would never set up the inherent righteousness of faith, which is nothing but our own righteousness, in opposition to imputed righteousness. If you were not quite blind, or 'very dark,' you would see, that 'all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;' and you would humbly acknowledge, that the holy breast-plate and robe of righteousness, in which we may with safety and honour appear before God, are the breast-plate and robe of Christ's *personal* righteousness freely imputed to us, without any of our doings. This *best robe*, which you so horribly bespatter, we must defend against all the Arminians, Pelagians, and Papists in the world."

ANSWER.—To do this grand objection justice, it will be proper to consider it in its various parts, and give each a full answer.

1. We acknowledge that we cannot think nonsense is any more compatible with the wisdom of God, and flat contradiction with his sacred oracles,

than adultery is compatible with his undefiled religion, and murder with common morality. If these sentiments are "carnal reasonings," we beg leave to continue carnal reasoners, till you can recommend your spiritual reasonings, either by common sense or plain Scripture.

2. You confound, without reason, the inherent righteousness of faith with Pharisaic self-righteousness. I have already proved that the latter, which is the partial, external, and hypocritical righteousness of unbelieving formalists, is the only righteousness which the Prophet compares to "filthy rags." With respect to the former, that is, our own righteousness of faith, far from setting it up in opposition to imputed righteousness, rightly understood, we assert, that it is "the righteousness of God," the very thing which God imputes "to us for righteousness;" the very righteousness which has now the stamp of his approbation, and will one day have the crown of his rewards.

3. You affirm, that the breast-plate of righteousness, which St. Paul charges the Ephesians to have on, is Christ's *personal* righteousness imputed to us; and *we prove* the contrary by the following arguments: The Apostle, who is the best illustrator of his own expressions, exhorts the Thessalonians to "put on the breast-plate of faith and love." Now, as we never heard of soldiers having two breast-plates on; the imaginary breast-plate of their General, which they wear by imputation; and the solid plate of metal which actually covers their breast; we conclude, that the "breast-plate of righteousness," which St. Paul recommends to the Ephesians, together with the "shield of faith," is nothing but the "breast-plate of faith and love," which he recommends to the Thessalonians.

To help my readers to see your doctrine in a proper light, I might say, if the breast-plate of our Lord's personal obedience has no more



to do with our breasts, than the personal dinner which he took in the Pharisee's house has to do with our empty stomachs, and the personal garment in which he shone upon Mount Tabor has to do with our naked shoulders; the judicious Apostle would probably have called it a *brain-plate*, rather than a *breast-plate*, as having far less to do with the breast and heart, than with the brain and imagination. But as this argument would rather turn upon our translation than upon the original, I drop it, and present you with one that has more solidity.

If the breast-plate of a Christian warrior is as far from him in time and place, as the personal righteousness wrought by our Lord in Judea one thousand seven hundred and sixty years ago, his shield may be at the same distance; and so undoubtedly may his helmet and sandals, his belt and sword. Thus, by Calvin's contrivance, you have a soldier of Christ armed cap-a-pie, without one single piece of armour from head to foot. And will you say of these imaginary accoutrements, in which the elect can with all ease commit adultery and incest, that they are "the armour of righteousness," on the right hand and on the left, in which St. Paul fought his battles, and subdued so many kindreds and nations to his Lord's triumphant cross? O! if that champion were yet alive, who said in the midst of Corinth, "The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power," how would he cry in the midst of mystic Geneva, "The armour of God is not a Calvinian notion, but a divine reality!"

What we are persuaded he would thunder out through the world, we are at last determined to proclaim on the walls of Jerusalem: "Soldiers of Christ, have on the *true* breast-plate of righteousness. Put on the *solid* breast-plate of inherent faith and love. If Satan's temptations are not idle



imputations of his dreadful assaults upon Christ ; if his *darts* are really *fiery* and terrible, throw away Calvinian imputation : Cast off the works of darkness, and put on the *real* armour of righteousness, the armour of light, the whole armour of God ; so shall you be able to stand in the evil day ; and having *done all* to stand with safety in judgment, and with honour in the congregation of the *righteous*."

4. We apprehend, that you are not less mistaken about the *ROBE*, than about the *breast-plate of righteousness*. And we think, we can prove it by the testimony of the three most competent judges in the universe,—an Apostle, an Elder before the throne, and the Lamb in the midst of it. Hear we the Apostle first :—

1, If all the saints were clothed with the robe of Christ's *personal* righteousness, they would all be clothed exactly like Christ. But when St. John had a vision of the Redeemer's glory, he "saw Him clothed with a vesture *dipped in blood* ; and the armies which were in heaven, followed him clothed in fine linen, *white* and clean." (Rev. xix. 13, 15.) Now, as the *white* robes worn by the soldiers that compose an army cannot be the *red* robe worn by the General at the head of the army, we so far give place to what you call "carnal reasonings," as to conclude, that so sure as *white* is not *red*, the robes of the saints are not the robes of our Lord's *personal* righteousness. Nay, we, who throw off the veil of prejudice, would be guilty of the very crime you charge us with, were we to entertain that daring idea. Christ's personal righteousness is the obedience of the Son of God, who, by living and dying for us, became the propitiation for the sins of the whole world ; now, if we pretended that this identical all-meritorious obedience of Christ unto death, this active and passive righteousness, which made an atonement for all

mankind, is fairly made over to, and put upon, us; would it not be pretending to merit with Christ, not only our own salvation, but the salvation of all mankind? O, Sir, it is you, we are afraid, who affect the Saviour; for by presuming to put on his robes, you claim his mediatorial honours: For after all your fears lest we should make humble *faith* share the Saviour's glory, or his *glorious apparel*; you not only put it on yourself without ceremony, but throw it also over the shoulders of ten thousand elect, without excepting even those who add drunkenness to thirst, and cruelty to lust.

You will, I hope, see the great impropriety of this conduct, if you consider, that the Redeemer's personal and peculiar righteousness is his *personal* and *peculiar* glory; and that those who fancy themselves clad with it, (if they do not sin ignorantly,) are as guilty of *ridiculous*, not to say *treasonable*, presumption before God, as country Clergymen would be before the Archbishop of Canterbury and the King, if they seriously gave it out, that the sleeves of their surplices are the very lawn sleeves of his Grace; and their gowns and cassocks, the identical coronation robes of His Majesty.

The fanciful parsons would no doubt be pitied by all men of sense; and so are we by all our Calvinist brethren; but, alas! for a very different reason. They wonder at, and kindly pity us, because we cannot fancy ourselves clothed with robes a thousand times more sacred than those which Aaron wore on the great day of atonement:—With robes ten thousand times more incommunicable than the King's coronation robes:—With a divine garment that, in the very nature of things, can absolutely suit none but Him “on whose head are many crowns, and who hath *on his vesture*, and on his thigh, a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords;—the child born unto

us of a virgin, the only-begotten Son of the Father, given to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself ;— the Wonderful Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”

O ye sons of men, how long will you become so “vain in your imaginations,” as to put on robes on which the very finger of God has embroidered such incommunicable names with adamant and gold ! If you are “saviours of the world,” and “mediators between God and man ;” if you are “emmanuels” and “gods over all blessed for ever !” wear them ; they fit *you*, and they are *your* right. But if “ye shall all die like men,” who cannot atone for one sin ; and if the *flesh* of every one of you *shall see corruption*, touch them not, unless it be with the reverential faith of the infirm woman : Like her you may indeed steal a cure through them ; but O ! do not steal them, as those who come in the Redeemer’s dress, and say, “I am Christ ;” or those who tell you, “I am carnal, sold under sin, but no matter ! I am safe ; in the robes of Christ’s righteousness, I am as righteous as Christ himself.” If nevertheless you are bent upon putting them on by self-imputation, at the peril of your souls throw them not over the shoulders of *impenitent* sinners ; lest you “turn the truth of God into a” flagrant “lie ;” lest “professing yourselves wise” to salvation, “you become fools, and change the glory,” the glorious robe, “of the incorruptible God”-man, into the infamous cloak of an incestuous murderer !

2. Supposing that still despising the “white robes,” that is, the evangelical righteousness of the saints, you aspire at being clothed in the Redeemer’s “vesture dipped in blood ;” permit me to oppose to your error the testimony of one of the twenty-four Elders who stand nearest the throne, and therefore know best in what robes the saints can stand before it with safety and honour.

“I beheld,” says the beloved disciple, “and lo, a great multitude which no man can number, of all nations, people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with *white robes*.” (Rev. vii. 9.) By comparing the verse with Rev. xix. 7, 8, it is evident that “great multitude” was the Church triumphant, the wife of the Lamb, who has made herself ready. She is composed of souls who have fulfilled those awful commands, “O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from iniquity, that thou mayest be saved: Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes: Come, and let us reason together; though your sins be red as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.” They continued instant in prayer, that God would “wash them thoroughly from their iniquity, and cleanse them from their sin:” Nor did they give over pleading his gracious promises, till the “living water,” the “cleansing blood, the “fuller’s soap,” and the “refiner’s fire,” had had their full effect upon them. Therefore, “to them it was granted, that they should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints.”

Now the question between us is, whether the “fine linen clean and white,” and the “white robes” mentioned by St. John, are the evangelical, personal righteousness of the saints, or the mediatorial, personal righteousness of their Lord: But who shall help us to decide it? One of the Elders before the throne, who advances, and says unto John, “These who are arrayed in white robes, are they who came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.” (Rev. vii. 14.) Does not this information, given by one to whom the beloved disciple had just said, “Sir, thou knowest,” make it indubitable, that the righteousness in which

these saints appear before God, is a righteousness which was once defiled, and therefore stood in need of *washing*? Now, what Christian will assert, that the personal righteousness of the immaculate Lamb of God had even *one* spot of defilement?

Again: Those robes were “washed and made white” by the saints: “THEY have washed their robes.” It is evident, therefore, that if those robes were the personal righteousness of Christ, the saints had washed it. And who is the good man, that, upon second thoughts, will dare to countenance a preposterous doctrine, which supposes, that the saints have “washed” the defiled righteousness of the Lord, “and made it white?”

Once more: These robes are “washed in the blood of the Lamb,” that is, “in the fountain open for sin, and for uncleanness.” Now, if they were the robes of Christ’s *personal righteousness*, does it not necessarily follow, that Christ opened a fountain to wash *his own* spotted and sinful righteousness? Is it not strange, that those who pretend to a peculiar regard for the Redeemer’s glory should be such great sticklers for an opinion which pours such contempt upon him and his *glorious apparel*?

2. If the testimony of St. John, and that of one of the twenty-four Elders is not regarded, let our Lord’s repeated declaration, at least, be thought worthy of consideration. All our righteousness flows from him, as all the sap of the branch flows from the vine. Therefore, speaking of righteousness, he says, “Buy of *me* white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.” (Rev. iii. 18.) But that this “white raiment” cannot be *his personal* righteousness, we prove, first, from his own words mentioned in the same chapter, “Thou hast a few names in Sardis, which have not defiled their gar-



ments." (Rev. iii. 4.) Now, if these "garments" were the robes of Christ's *personal* obedience, which neither man nor devil can defile, how came our Lord to make it matter of praise to *a few names*, that they had not *defiled* them? If David could not in the least bespatter them by all his crimes, was it a wonder that some persons should have kept them clean? Is it not rather surprising, that *any names in Sardis* should have *defiled garments*, which remain "undefiled and without spot," even while those who wear them welter in the mire of adultery, murder, and incest?

Once more: Our Lord says, "Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments; lest he walk naked and they see his shame." (Rev. xvi. 5.) Who does not see here, that the *garments*, which we are to keep with *watchfulness*, are garments which may be spotted or stolen? garments of which we may be so totally stripped, as to be seen *walking naked*? two particulars, that perfectly suit our personal righteousness of faith; but can never suit the personal righteousness of Christ; that "*best robe*," which neither man nor devil can steal, neither adultery nor murder defile.

Having spent so much time with my objector, I beg leave to return to you, honoured Sir, and to conclude this Essay upon *imputed righteousness*, by summing up the difference that subsists between us on that important subject; and inviting men of candour to determine, who of us have reason, conscience, and Scripture on their side.

You believe, that the uninterrupted good works and the atoning sufferings of Christ, which made up his personal righteousness while he was upon earth, are imputed to the elect for complete and eternal righteousness, be their own personal righteousness what it will; insomuch that as you express it, (*Five Letters*, p. 27—29,) "All debts and



claims against them, be they more or be they less, be they small or be they great, be they before or be they after conversion, are for ever and for ever cancelled; they always stand absolved, always complete in the everlasting righteousness of the Redeemer." And you think, that *this* imputed righteousness composes the robes of righteousness, in which they stand before God, both in the day of conversion and in the day of judgment.

On the other hand, we believe, that, for the alone sake of Christ's atoning blood and personal righteousness, our personal faith, working by obedient love, is imputed to us for righteousness. And we assert, that this living faith working by obedient love, together with the privileges annexed to it, (such as pardon through, and acceptance in, the Beloved,) makes up the robe of righteousness washed in the blood of the Lamb, in which true believers now walk humbly with their God, and will one day triumphantly enter into the glory of their Lord.

I hope, Sir, that when we speak of *personal* faith, love, and righteousness, you will do us the justice to believe, we do not mean that we can have either faith, love, or righteousness, of ourselves, or from ourselves. No; they all as much flow to us from Christ, the true Vine, and the Sun of Righteousness, as the sap and fruit of a branch come from the tree that bears it, and from the sun that freely shines upon it. Without him we have nothing but helplessness, we can do nothing but sin; but with him we can do all things. If we call any graces personal or inherent, it is not then to take the honour of them to ourselves; but merely to distinguish them from imputed righteousness, which is nothing but the imputed assemblage of all the graces that were in our Lord's breast seventeen hundred and fifty years ago.

As some of my readers may desire to know exactly wherein the difference between personal and imputed graces consists, I shall just help their conception by three or four scriptural examples. Joseph struggling out of the arms of his tempting mistress, has personal chastity, a considerable branch of personal righteousness; and David sparing his own flock, and taking the ewe-lamb that lay in Uriah's bosom, is complete in imputed chastity, which is a considerable part of imputed righteousness. Solomon choosing wisdom, and dedicating the temple, has inherent wisdom and piety; but when he chooses pagan wives, and with them worships deformed idols, he has imputed wisdom and piety. Again: When Peter confesses that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, he personally wears the girdle of truth; but when he denies his Lord with oaths and curses, saying, "I know not the man," he wears it only by imputation. Once more: When David killed proud Goliah with his own sword, he stood complete in the personal righteousness we plead for; but when he killed brave Uriah with the sword of the children of Ammon, he stood complete in what our opponents extol as "the best robe."

And now, unprejudiced servants of the most high God, ye men of candour and piety, scattered through the three kingdoms, to you, under God, we submit our cause. Impartially weigh the arguments on both sides; and judge whether the robe recommended by our brethren deserves to be called "the *best* robe," because it is really better than the robes of "righteousness and true holiness," which we recommend; or only because it is best calculated to pervert the Gospel, dishonour Christ, disgrace undefiled religion, throw a decent cloak over the works of darkness, render Antinomianism respectable to injudicious Pro-

testants, and frighten moral men from Christianity, as from the most immoral system of religion in the world.

By this time, you are perhaps ready to turn objector yourself, and say, "You slander our principles. 'The doctrines of grace' are doctrines according to godliness. Far from opposing inherent righteousness in its place, we follow after it ourselves, and frequently recommend it to others. Imputed righteousness is highly consistent with personal holiness."

To this I answer: I know a mistaken man, who believes that he has a right to all his neighbours' property, because St. Paul says, "All things are yours;" and nevertheless he is so honest, that you may trust him with untold gold. Just so it is with you, Sir. You not only believe, but publicly maintain, that an elect who seduces his neighbour's wife, stands complete in the everlasting, personal chastity of Christ; and that a fall into adultery will "work for his good;" and yet, I am persuaded that, if you were married, you would be as true to your wife as Adam was to Eve before the fall. But can you in conscience apologize for your errors, and desire us to embrace them, merely because your conduct is better than your bad principles?

Again: "You frequently recommend holiness," and perhaps give it out, that the shortest way to it is, to believe your doctrines of imputed righteousness and finished salvation. But this, far from mending the matter, makes it worse. As fishes would hardly swallow the hook, if a tempting bait did not cover it, and entice them; so the honest hearts of the simple would hardly jump at imputed righteousness, if they were not deceived by fair speeches about personal holiness: Thus good food makes way for poison, and the right robe decently wraps fig-leaves and cobwebs.

Once more : Every body knows, that bad guineas are never so successfully put off, as when they are mixed with a great deal of good gold ; but suppose I made it my business to pass them, either ignorantly or on purpose, would not the public be my dupes, if they suffered me to carry on that dangerous trade, upon such a plea as this : “ I am not against good gold ; I pass a great deal of it myself ; I have even some about me now ; I frequently recommend it to others ; neither did I ever decry His Majesty’s coin ? ” Would not every body see through such a poor defence as this ? And yet, poor as it is, you could not, with any show of truth, urge the last plea ; for, in order to pass your notions about imputed righteousness, you have publicly spoken against inherent righteousness and all its fruits. In the face of the whole world you have decried the coin that bears the genuine stamp of our Lord’s goodness ; you have called good works, “ dung, dross, and filthy rags ; ” and, what is still worse, you have given it out, that you had “ Scripture authority ” so to do.

Should you, to the preceding objection, add the following question, “ If you were now dying, in which robe would you desire to appear before God ? that of Christ’s *personal* righteousness imputed to you without any of your good works, or that of your own self-righteousness and good works without the blood and righteousness of Christ ? ” my answer is ready :

I would be found in neither, because both would be equally fatal to me ; for the robe of an Antinomian is not better than that of a Pharisee ; and all are foolish virgins who stand only in the one or in the other. Were I then come to the awful moment you speak of, I would beg of God to keep me from all delusions, and to strengthen my heart-felt faith in Christ ; that I might be found clothed, like a wise virgin, with “ a robe

washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb ;” that is, with the righteousness of a living “faith working by love ;” for such a faith is the blessed reality, that stands at an equal distance from the Antinomian and Pharisaic delusion. And, I say it again,\* This righteousness of faith includes, 1. A pardon through the blood and righteousness of Christ ; 2. Acceptance in the Beloved ; and, 3. An universal principle of inherent righteousness : “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink,” much less whim and delusion ; but “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

But perhaps you ask, “Which would you depend upon for pardon and acceptance in a dying hour? your own inherent righteousness of faith, or the atoning blood and meritorious righteousness of Jesus Christ ?” If this is your question, I reply, that it carries its own weight along with it. For if I have the inherent righteousness of a living faith, and if the very nature of such a faith is (as I have already observed) to depend upon nothing but Christ for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption ; is it not absurd to

\* I have on purpose been guilty of several such repetitions, not only because the same answers frequently solve different objections ; but because I should be glad to stop the mouths of some of my readers, if I may give that name to prejudiced persons, who cast a careless and perhaps a malignant look over here and there a page, and without one grain of candour condemn me for not saying in *one* Letter, what I have perhaps already said in *half-a-dozen*. In these *perilous times* we must run the risk of passing for *fools* with men of unbiassed judgment, that we may not pass for *heretics* with some of our brethren. And it is well, if, after all our repetitions, we are not charged with not holding what we have so frequently asserted. For alas ! what repetitions, what Scriptures, what expostulations can reach breasts covered with a shield of prejudice, which bears such a common motto as this, “*Non persuadebis etiamsi persuaseris ?*” I could wish, that such readers as will not do justice to the arguments of our opponents, as well as to our own, would never trouble themselves with our books.



ask, whether I would depend on any thing else? Suppose I have "faith working by" humble "love," do not I know, that the moment I rely upon myself or my works, as the meritorious cause of my acceptance, I put off the robe made white in the blood of the Lamb, and put on the spotted robe of a proud Pharisee?

However, it is by such self-contradictory objections, and false dilemmas, that the hearts of the simple are daily deceived; as well as by fair speeches, which carry an appearance of great self-abasement, and of a peculiar regard for the Redeemer's glory. Who can tell how many pious souls are driven by the tempter upon one rock, through an excessive fear of dashing against the other? Every judicious moderate man,

*Auream quisquis mediocritatem  
Diligit,*

sees their well-meant error, and can say to each of them,—

*Procellus  
Cautus horrescis, nimium premendo  
Littus iniquum.*

Lest you should be found in the odious apparel of a Pharisee, you put on unawares the modish dress of an Antinomian.

But, O thou man of God, whosoever thou art, have nothing to do with the one or the other; except it be to decry and tear them both. In the mean time, be thou really found in Christ, not having thine own Pharisaic righteousness, which is of the letter of the law; nor yet notions about righteousness imputed to thee in the Antinomian way; but the substantial, evangelical righteousness, which is through the faith of Christ;—the righteousness which is of God by faith;—the true armour of righteousness, with which St. Paul cut



in pieces the forces of Pharisaism on the right hand, and St. James those of Antinomianism on the left.

Rejoicing, dear Sir, that, if our arguments strip you of what appears to us an *imaginary* garment, you shall not be found naked; and, thanking the God of all grace for giving you, and thousands of pious Calvinists, a more substantial robe than that for which you so zealously plead; in the midst of chimerical imputations of “calumny,” I remain, with *personal* and *inherent truth*,

Honoured and dear Sir,  
Your affectionate brother, and obedient servant  
in our common Lord,  
JOHN FLETCHER.

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### LETTER XIII.

Containing a view of the present state of the controversy, especially with regard to *Free-will*, and a Conclusion, descriptive of the loving, apostolic method of carrying on controversy—expressive of brotherly love and respect for all pious Calvinists—and declarative of a desire to live with them upon peaceable and friendly terms.

TO RICHARD HILL, ESQ.

HONOURED AND DEAR SIR,

HAVING so fully considered in my last the state of our controversy with respect to imputed righteousness, I proceed to the doctrine of Free-will, which I have not discussed in this Check, because you seem satisfied with what we grant you, and we are entirely so with what you grant us, concerning it. Let us, however, just cast three looks, one upon our concessions, another upon yours, and a third upon the difference still remain-

ing between us, with regard to that capital article of our controversy.

I. We never supposed, that the natural will of fallen man is free *to good* before it is more or less touched or rectified by grace. All we assert is, that, whether a man chooses good or evil, his will is free, or it does not deserve the name of will. It is as far from us to think, that man, unassisted by divine grace, is sufficient to will spiritual good; as to suppose, that, when he wills it by grace, he does not will it freely. And therefore, agreeable to our Tenth Article, which you quote against us without the least reason, we steadily assert, that “we have no power to do good without the grace of God preventing us,” not that we may have a free will, for this we always had in the above-mentioned sense, but that we may have a *GOOD* will; believing that as confirmed saints and angels have a free will, though they have no *EVIL* will, so abandoned reprobates and devils have a free will, though they have no *GOOD* will.

Again: We always maintain, that the liberty of our will is highly consistent with the operations of divine grace, by which it is put in a capacity of choosing life. We are therefore surprised to see you quote in triumph, (*Review*, page 33,) the following paragraph out of the Second Check: “Nor is this freedom derogatory to free grace; for as it was free grace that gave an upright free will to Adam at his creation; so, whenever his fallen children think or act aright, it is because their free will is mercifully prevented, touched, and so far rectified by free grace.”

At the sight of these concessions, you cry out, “Amazing! Here is all that the most rigid Calvinist ever contended for, granted in a moment. Your words, Sir, are purely evangelical.” Are they indeed? Well then, Sir, I have the pleasure

to inform you, that, if this “is *all* you ever contended for,” you need not contend any more with us; since Mr. Wesley, Mr. Sellon, J. Goodwin, and Arminius himself, never advanced any other doctrine concerning free will. For they all agree to ascribe to the free grace of God through the Redeemer, *all* the freedom of man’s will to good. Therefore, you yourself being judge, their sentiments, as well as my “words, are purely evangelical.”

II. You cannot be more satisfied with our concessions, than we are with yours; for you grant us as much freedom of will, as constitutes us free-willers, or moral agents; and, in so doing, you expose the ignorance and injustice of those who think, that, when they have called us free-willers, they have put upon us one of the most odious badges of heresy.

We are particularly pleased with the following concessions: (*Review*, page 38:) “Grace may not violate the liberty of the will.—God forceth not a man’s will to do good or ill.—He useth no violence.—The freedom of the regenerate is such, that they may draw back to perdition if they will.”

We are yet better satisfied with what you say, page 35: “Still it is your own opinion, that, to the end of the world, this plain peremptory assertion of our Lord, *I would, and ye would not*, will throw down and silence all the objections, which can be raised against free-will—it proves, that those to whom it was addressed, might have come if they would. Granted.” And (page 43,) you add: “I have granted Mr. Fletcher his own interpretation of that text, *I would, and ye would not*.” Now, Sir, if you stand to your concession, you have granted me, that Christ had eternal life for the Jews, who rejected it; that he had a strong desire to bestow it upon them; that he had made them so far willing and able to come to him for it, as to

leave them inexcusable if they did not ; and that his saving grace, which they resisted, is by no means irresistible :—Four propositions that sap the foundation of your system, and add new solidity to ours.

However, you try to make your readers believe, that “ still we are but just where we were. The fault yet remains in the corruption of the will :” Giving us to understand, that, because the Jews *would not* be gathered by Christ, he had never touched and rectified their will. Thus you suppose, that their choosing death is a demonstration, that they could not have chosen life ; that is, you suppose just what you should have proved.

You imagine, that a wrong choice always demonstrates the previous perverseness of the will that makes it ; but we show the contrary by matter of fact. Satan and his legions, as well as our first parents, were created perfectly upright. Their will was once as free from corruption as the will of God himself. Nevertheless, with a will perfectly capable of making a right choice ; with a will, that a few moments before had chosen life, they all chose the ways of death. Hence appears the absurdity of concluding, that a wrong choice always proves the will was so corrupted previously to that choice, that a better choice was morally impossible. Take us right, however. We do not suppose that the will of the obstinate Jews had not been totally corrupted in Adam. We only maintain, that they made as free and fatal a choice, with their free-will, which free grace had rectified, as Adam, Eve, and all the fallen angels once made with the *upright* free will with which free grace had created them.

But I return to your concessions. That which pleases us most of all, I find, *Review*, page 39 : “ For my own part,” say you, “ I have not the least objection to the expression *free will*, and find it used in a very sound sense by St. Augustine, Luther,

and Calvin, the great patrons for the doctrine of man's natural inability to do that which is good since the fall. God does not force any man to will either good or evil; but man, through the corruption of his understanding, naturally and freely wills that which is evil; but by being wrought upon and enlightened by converting grace, he as freely wills that which is good, as before he freely willed the evil.—In this sense the Assembly of Divines speak of the natural liberty of the will, and affirm, that *it is not forced.*"

These, Sir, are our very sentiments concerning free will. How strange is it then, when you have so fully granted us the natural and necessary freedom of the will, to see you as flushed with an imaginary victory, as if you had just driven us out of the field! How astonishing to hear you cry out, (page 34,) "Jesus Christ on the side of free will! What!—The Gospel on the side of free will? What!" Yes, Sir, "Jesus Christ and the Gospel on the side of free will!" and if that is not enough, appeal to the 34th page of the *Review*, to show, that the *Assembly of Divines*, and yourself, are on the side of free will also.

III. Consider we now the difference still remaining between us. From our mutual concessions, it is evident, we agree, 1. That the will is always free. 2. That the will of man considered as fallen in Adam, and unassisted by the grace of God, is only free to evil;—free to live in the element of sin, as a sea-fish is only free to live in salt water. And 3. That when he is free to good, free to choose life, he has this freedom from redeeming grace.

But although we agree in these material points, the difference between us is still very considerable; for we assert, that, through the Mediator promised to all mankind in Adam, God, by his free grace, restores to *all mankind* a talent of free will to good; by which they are put in a capacity of choosing

life or death, that is, of acquitting themselves well or ill, at their option, in their present state of trial.

This you utterly deny, maintaining that man is not in a state of probation; and that, as Christ died for none but the elect, none but they can ever have any degree of saving grace, that is, any will free to good. Hence you conclude, that all the elect are in a state of finished salvation, and necessarily, infallibly, and irresistibly choose life; while all the reprobates are shut up in a state of finished damnation, and necessarily, infallibly, and irresistibly choose death. For, say your Divines, God has not decreed the infallible end either of the elect or the reprobates, without decreeing also the infallible means conducing to that end. Therefore, in the day of his irresistible power, the fortunate elect are absolutely made willing to believe and be saved; and the poor reprobates, to disbelieve and be damned.

I shall conclude this article by just observing, that we are obliged to oppose this doctrine, because it appears to us a doctrine of wrath, rather than a doctrine of grace. If we are not mistaken, it is opposite to the general tenor of the Scriptures, injurious to all the divine perfections, and subversive of this fundamental truth of natural and revealed religion, "God shall judge the world in righteousness." It is calculated to strengthen the carnal security of Laodicean professors, raise horrid anxieties in the minds of doubting Christians, and give damned spirits just ground to blaspheme to all eternity. Again: It withdraws from thinking sinners, and judicious saints, the helps which God has given them, by multitudes of conditional promises and threatenings, designed to work upon their hopes and fears. And, while it unnecessarily stumbles men of sense, and hardens infidels, it affords wicked men rational excuses to continue in their sins; and gives desperate offenders full room to



charge not only Adam, but God himself, with all their enormities.

I shall now be shorter in the review of the state of our controversy. Free will to good is founded upon general free grace, and general free grace upon the perfect oblation which Christ made upon the cross for the sins of the whole world. General redemption, therefore, I have endeavoured to establish upon a variety of arguments, which you decline answering.

Justification by (the evidence of) works in the last day, is the doctrine which you and your brother have most vehemently attacked. You have raised against it a great deal of dust, and some objections, which I hope you will find abundantly answered in the three first Letters of this Check, and in the Ninth. But suppose I had not answered them at all, you could not have won the day; because, after all your joint opposition against our doctrine, both you and your brother bear your honest testimony to the indubitable truth of it, as our readers may see in the First, Fifth, and Ninth Letters.

I need not remind you, Sir, that upon this capital doctrine, the Minutes in general stand as upon a rock. If you doubt it, I refer you to the Fifth and Sixth Letters.

The doctrine of a fourfold justification appears monstrous to your orthodoxy. Both you and your brother, therefore, have endeavoured to overturn it. But as you had neither Scripture nor argument to attack it with, you have done it by some witticisms, which are answered in the Tenth Letter.

Calvinian *everlasting love*, according to which the elect were never children of wrath, and apostates may go any length in sin without displeasing God, is a doctrine which I have attacked in all the Checks. You cannot defend it, and yet you will not give it up. You just intimate, that when the elect commit adultery and murder, they are in a

sense penitent. This frivolous plea, this last shift, is exposed, Letter X.

*Finished salvation*, which you call your “grand fortress,” and which your brother styles “the foundation of the Calvinists,” you have endeavoured to support by a variety of arguments, answered, I trust, Letter VII., in such a manner, that our impartial readers will be convinced your foundation is sand, and your grand fortress by no means impregnable.

*The oneness* of speculative Antinomianism and of barefaced Calvinism, is the point into which our controversy insensibly terminates. I will not say, that what we have advanced upon this subject is unanswerable ; but I shall wonder to see it answered to the satisfaction of unprejudiced readers. In the mean time I confess, that I cannot cast my eyes upon the Calvinian Creed in the VIIth Letter, and the Gospel proclamation in the XIth, without being astonished at myself, for not seeing sooner, that there is no more difference between Calvinism and speculative Antinomianism, than there was between the disciple who betrayed our Lord, and Judas surnamed Iscariot.

Such is, I think, the present state of our controversy ; but what is that of our hearts ? Do we love one another the better, and pray for each other the oftener, on account of our theological contest ? Alas ! if we sell love to buy the truth, we shall be no gainers in the end ; witness these awful words of St. Paul, “ Though I have all knowledge, and all faith, if I have not charity, I am nothing but a tinkling cymbal.” O sir, we stand in great danger of being carried away by our own spirits, beyond the sacred lines of truth and love, which should bound the field of Christian controversy. Permit me then to propose to our common consideration, and future imitation, the most perfect patterns in the world.

Let us consider Him first, who in all things has the pre-eminence. With what wisdom and fortitude, with what a happy mixture of rational and scriptural arguments, does Christ carry on his important controversy with the Pharisees! He stands firm as a rock against all the frothy billows of their cavils and invectives. With astonishing impartiality he persists in telling them the most gall-ing truths; and condemning them out of their own mouths, consciences, and sacred records. In so doing, he loses indeed their love and applause; but he maintains a good conscience, and secures the praise which comes from God. Nor does he give over bearing his testimony against them by day, and praying for them by night, till they shed his innocent blood; and when they have done it, he revenges himself by sending them the first news of his pardoning love: "Go," says he to the heralds of his grace, "preach forgiveness of sins among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem," the city of my murderers. O, Sir, if the Lord of glory was so ready to forgive those who, for want of better arguments, betook themselves to pitiful sophisms, and groundless accusations, and then to the nails, the hammer, and the spear; how readily ought we to forgive each other the insignificant strokes of our pens!

Let St Paul be our pattern next to Jesus Christ. Consider we with what undaunted courage, and unwearied patience, he encounters his brethren the Jews, who engrossed the election to themselves, and threw dust into the air when they heard that there was salvation for the Gentiles. In every city he mightily convinces them out of the Scriptures. They revile him, and he entreats them; they cast him out of the temple, and he wishes himself accursed from Christ for their sake. And yet, when they charge him with crimes of which he is perfectly innocent, he scruples not to appeal to

the Gentiles, from whose candour he expected more justice than from their bigotry.

Fix we our eyes also upon the two greatest Apostles, encountering each other in the field of controversy. Because St. Peter is to blame, St. Paul withstands him to the face, with all the boldness that belongs to truth. He does not give place to him for a moment, although Peter is his superior in many respects; and he sends to the Churches of Galatia, for their edification, a public account of his elder brother's mistakes. But does Peter resent it? Does he write disrespectfully of his opponent? Does he not, on the contrary, call him his "beloved brother Paul," and make honourable mention of his wisdom?

When I behold these great patterns of Christian moderation and brotherly love, I rejoice to have another opportunity of recommending to the love and esteem of my readers, the two pious brothers whom I now encounter, and all those who were more or less concerned in the Circular Letter; in particular the Countess of Huntingdon, and my former opponent the Rev. Mr. Shirley, who are less *honourable* and *right honourable* by the noble blood that flows in their veins, than by the love of Christ which glows in their hearts, and the zeal for God's glory which burns in their breasts; being persuaded, that their hasty step was intended to defend the first Gospel-axiom, which, for want of proper attention to every part of the Gospel, they imagined Mr. Wesley had a mind to set aside, when he only wanted to secure the *second* Gospel axiom.

Once more, I profess also my sincere love and unfeigned respect for all pious Calvinists; protesting I had a thousand times rather be an inconsistent Antinomian with them, than an inconsistent legalist with many who hold the truth in practical unrighteousness. I abhor, therefore, the very idea of

“dressing them up in devil’s clothes, as the Papists did John Huss ; and burning them for heretics in the flames of hell.” (*Review*, page 92.) If I have represented an Antinomian in practice, as standing on the left hand with wicked Arminians, it was not to condemn the mistaken persons who lead truly Christian lives, though their heads are full of Antinomian opinions ; but to convince my readers, that it is much better to be really a *sheep*, than to have barely a *sheep’s clothing* ; and that our Lord will not be deceived, either by a *goat*, who imputes to himself the clothing of a sheep, or by a *wolf*, who tries to make his escape, by insolently wrapping himself up in the shepherd’s garment.

Should it be objected, that, after all the severe things which I have said against the sentiments of the Calvinists, my professions of love and respect for them cannot possibly be sincere ; I answer, that, although we cannot in conscience make a difference between a man and his actions, candour and brotherly kindness allow and command us to make a difference between a man and his opinions ; especially when his exemplary conduct is a full refutation of his erroneous sentiments.

This, I apprehend, is the case with all pious Calvinists. They talk much, I grant, about finished salvation ; but consider them with attention, and you will find a happy inconsistency between their words and their actions ; for they still work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. Again, they make much ado about a robe of imputed righteousness ; but still they go on washing their own robes, and making them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore their errors, which they *practically* renounce, do not endanger their salvation ; and it would be the highest degree of injustice to confound them with abandoned Nicolaitans.

Fantasticus tells us, he is possessed of an immense estate in the territories of Geneva ; where, by-the-



by, he has not an inch of ground. But though he talks much of his fine estate abroad, he wisely considers, that he stands in need of food and raiment; that he cannot live upon a chimera; and that he must work or starve at home. To work therefore he goes, though much against his will. In a little time, by the Divine blessing upon his labour and industry, he gets a good estate, and lives comfortably upon it. And though he frequently entertains you with descriptions of the rich robes which he has at Geneva, he takes care to have always a good decent coat upon his back. Now, is it not plain, that though *Fantasticus* would be a mere beggar, for all his great estate near Geneva, yet as matters are at present you cannot justly consider him as burdensome to his parish, unless you can make it appear, that his trusting to his imaginary property abroad has lately made him squander away his goods personal, and real estate, in England.

This simile needs very little explanation. A *pious* Calvinist does not so dream about his imaginary imputation of Christ's personal obedience and good works, as to forget, that he must personally believe, or be damned; yea, and believe too with the heart unto personal righteousness, and good works. Therefore he cries to God for the living faith which works by love. He receives it; Christ dwells in his heart by faith; and this faith is imputed to him for righteousness, because it really makes him righteous. Thus while he talks about the false imputation of righteousness, he really enjoys the true; he has inherent righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. When he speaks against good works, he is so happily inconsistent as to do them. If he ignorantly builds up the Antinomian Babel with one hand, he sincerely tries to pull it down with the other; and while he decries the perfection of holiness, he goes on perfecting holiness in the fear



of God. Thus his doctrinal mistakes are happily refuted by his godly conversation.

Hence it is, that, although we severely expose the mistakes of godly Calvinists, we sincerely love their persons, truly reverence their piety, and cordially rejoice in the success which attends their evangelical labours. And although we cannot admit their logic, while they defend a bad cause with bad arguments, we should do them great injustice if we did not acknowledge, that there have been and still are among them, men eminent for good sense and good learning ;—men as remarkable for their skill in the art of logic, as for their deep acquaintance with the oracles of God. How they came to embrace doctrines which appear to us so unscriptural and irrational will be the subject of a peculiar dissertation.

In the mean time, I observe again, that as many, who have right opinions concerning faith, holiness, and good works, go great lengths in practical Antinomianism ; so many Antinomians in principle distinguish themselves by the peculiar strictness and happy legality of their conduct. Both are to be wondered at ; the one for doing the works of darkness in the clearest light ; and the other for walking as children of light under the darkest cloud. The former we may compare to green wood, that is always upon the altar, and never takes the hallowed fire. The latter to the bush which Moses saw in the wilderness. The flames of Antinomianism surround them and ascend from them ; and yet they are not consumed ! Would to God I could say, They are not singed !

Nay, what is a greater miracle still, the love of Christ burns in their breasts, and shines in their lives. They preach him, and they do it with success. “ Some, indeed, preach him of envy and contention, and some of love and good-will. What then ? Notwithstanding every way, whether in pre-

tence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and we therein do rejoice; yea, and will rejoice." Add to this, that some are prudent enough to keep their opinions to themselves. You may hear them preach most excellent sermons, without one word about their peculiarities; or, if they touch upon them, it is in so slight a manner as not to endanger either the foundation or superstructure of undefiled religion. Nay, what is a greater blessing still, sometimes their hearts are so enlarged, and their views of the Gospel so brightened, that they preach free grace as well as we; and, in the name of God, seriously "command *all men everywhere* to repent."

Far be it from us, therefore, to "cut off all intercourse and friendship" with such favoured servants of the Lord. On the contrary, we thank them for their pious labours; we ask the continuance or the renewal of their valuable love. Wherein soever we have given them any just cause of offence, we entreat them to forgive us. Upon the reasonable terms of mutual forbearance, we offer them the right hand of fellowship, together with our brotherly assistance. We invite them to our pulpits; and assure them, that if they admit us into theirs, we shall do by them as we would be done by; avoiding to touch there, or among their own people occasionally committed to our charge, upon the points of doctrine debated between us; and reserving to ourselves the liberty of bearing our full testimony in our own pulpits, and from the press, against Antinomianism and Pharisaism in all their shapes.

With these pacific sentiments towards all pious Calvinists, and in particular towards your brother and yourself; and with my best thanks for the condescending manner in which you have closed your Remarks upon the Third Check, I conclude this; assuring you, that (notwithstanding the repeated proofs, which I find in your *Review*, of your

*uncommon* prejudice against the second Gospel axiom, and against Mr. Wesley, who is set for the defence of it) I remain, with all my former love, and a considerable degree of my former esteem,

Honoured and dear Sir,

Your affectionate companion in tribulation,  
and obedient servant in Christ,

JOHN FLETCHER.

M<sup>A</sup>DELEY,  
Nov. 15, 1772.

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### POSTSCRIPT.

CONTAINING an account of the reasons which engage us to make, at last, a firm stand against our pious opponents; and of the hope we entertain, that in so doing our labour will not be in vain in the Lord.

SOME persons think our controversy will offend the world; and, indeed, we were once afraid of it ourselves. Of this ill-judged fear, and of the voluntary humility which made us reverence the very errors of the good men from whom we dissent, the crafty, diligent tempter has so availed himself, as to sow his Antinomian tares with the greatest success. Mr. John and Charles Wesley, and Mr. Sellon, have indeed made a noble stand against him; but an impetuous torrent of triumphant opposition still rolls and foams through the kingdom, bent upon drowning their works and reputation in floods of contempt and reproach. And some good, mistaken men warmly carry on still the rash design of publicly turning the second Gospel axiom out of our Bibles, and out of the Church of England, under the frightful names of "Arminianism and Popery." The question with us is not so much, whether Mr. Wesley shall be ranked with heretics; as whether the undefiled religion particularly described in the Epistle of St. James,

and in our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, shall pass for a *dreadful heresy*, while barefaced Antinomianism passes for *pure Gospel*.

Now, we apprehend, that to debate such a question in a fair and friendly manner, will rather edify than offend, either the religious or the moral world. Fair arguments, plain Scriptures, honest appeals to conscience, and a close pursuit of ridiculous error, hunted down to its last recesses, will never displease inquirers after truth; and, among the by-standers, few besides these will trouble themselves with our publications. If we offend our readers, it is only when we take our leave of Scripture and argument, to cry out, without rhyme or reason, "Disingenuity! Slander! Falsehood! Calumny! Forgery! Heresy! Popery!"

Bad as we are, the moral world regards yet a good argument, and the religious world still shows some respect for Scripture quoted consistently with the context. Fight we then lovingly with such weapons, for what we esteem to be the truth; and be the edge of our controversial swords ever so keen, we shall be sure to wound nobody but the bigots of the opposite party, and such as are so great a disgrace to Christianity, that we shall do the cause of religion service by stumbling them out of their profession of it, if they are above learning the lessons of moderation.

Undoubtedly we are severely condemned by some good people, who forget that Moses was once obliged to oppose, not only Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, who styled themselves the Lord's people; but his own dear elect brother Aaron himself: And that St. Paul was forced by peculiar circumstances, at all hazards, to withstand St. Peter himself. Well-meaning Elihus also, who do not consider consequences, and love to enjoy their own ease, rather than to make a vigorous resistance against error and sin, will be very apt to conclude, that our

opposition springs from mere obstinacy and party spirit. But should such hasty judges read attentively the Epistle of St. Jude, that of St. James, the first of St. John, and the second of St. Peter, which are all levelled at Antinomianism, they will think more favourably of the stand we make against our pious brethren, who inadvertently countenance the Antinomian delusion.

However, it is objected, "This controversy will hurt the men of the world, and set them against all religion." Just the contrary. There are, indeed, Gallios, men that care for no religion at all, who, upon hearing of our controversy will triumph, and cry out, "If these men do not agree among themselves, how can they desire that we should agree with them?" As if we had ever desired them to agree with us, any farther than the plain letter of Scripture, and the loud dictates of conscience, invite them so to do! But such prepossessed judges will not be hurt by our controversy, though they should pretend they are; for they have their stumbling-block in their own breast. They would not have wanted pretences to ridicule religion, if our controversy had never been set on foot; nor would they entertain more favourable thoughts of it, if we dropped it without coming to a proper eclaircissement.

But these, however numerous, are not all the world. There are in our universities, and throughout the kingdom, hundreds, and we would hope thousands, of judicious and candid men, who truly fear God, and sincerely desire to love him. These, we apprehend, are offended at the first Gospel axiom, and driven farther and farther from it by the mixture of "Antinomian dotages," which renders it ridiculous. They are tempted to throw away the marrow of the Gospel, on account of the luscious, fulsome additions made to it, to make it richer. And to these, we flatter ourselves, that our contro-



versy will prove useful, as well as to our candid brethren.

We hope it will open to the view of these Gamaliels and Obadiah's, the confused heap of truth and error, at which they so justly stumble; and help them precisely to separate the precious from the vile; that while they abhor that which is evil, they may cleave to that which is good. This is not all: When they see, that some of those men, whom they accounted wild enthusiasts, candidly take their part, where they are in the right; and fight their battles in a rational and scriptural manner, their prejudices will be softened, the light will imperceptibly steal in upon them, and, by divine grace, convince them, that they go as far out of the way to the left hand, as our opponents do to the right.

The truth which we maintain lies between all extremes; or rather, it embraces and connects them all. The Calvinists fairly receive only the first Gospel axiom, and the Moralists the second. If I may compare the Gospel truth to the child contended for in the days of Solomon; both parties, while they divide, inadvertently destroy it. We, like the true mother, are for no division. Standing upon the middle scriptural line, we embrace and hold fast both Gospel axioms. With the Calvinists, we give God in Christ all the glory of our salvation; and with the Moralists, we take care not to give him in Adam any of the shame of our damnation. We have need of patience with both, for they both highly blame us, because we follow the poet's direction, *Inter utrumque tene; medio tutissimus ibis*. Both think hard of us, because we do not so maintain the particular Gospel axiom which they have *justly* espoused, as to exclude that which they *rashly* explode. But if we can use, with meekness of wisdom, the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the



left, and give our opposite adversaries, on every side, a scriptural and rational account of the hope that is in us, moderate Calvinists and evangelical Moralists will at last kindly give us the right hand of fellowship. Discovering that the advantages of both their doctrines join in ours, they will acknowledge that the "faith working by love," which we preach, includes all the privileges of Solifidianism and Morality; that we do justice to the Gospel, without "making void the law through faith;" that we establish the law, without superseding free grace; and that we extol our High Priest's cross, without pouring contempt upon his throne. In a word, they will perceive, that we perfectly reconcile St. Paul with St. James, and both with reason, conscience, and all the oracles of God.

Thus shall all good men of all denominations agree at last among themselves, and bend all their collected force against pharisaic unbelief, which continually attacks the first Gospel axiom; and against Antinomian contempt of good works, which perpetually militates against the second. The Father of lights grant, that this may be the happy effect of our controversy! So shall we bless the hour when a variety of singular circumstances obliged us to come to a full *eclaircissement*; and to lay, by that means, the foundation of a solid union, not only with each other, but also with all good and judicious men, both in the religious and in the moral world.

LOGICA GENEVENSIIS CONTINUED:

OR,

THE FIRST PART OF THE  
FIFTH CHECK TO ANTINOMIANISM.

CONTAINING

AN ANSWER TO THE "FINISHING STROKE"

OF

*RICHARD HILL, ESQ.*

IN WHICH SOME REMARKS UPON MR. FULSOME'S ANTINOMIAN CREED, PUBLISHED BY THE REV. MR. BERRIDGE, ARE OCCASIONALLY INTRODUCED.

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WITH AN APPENDIX,

*Upon the remaining difference between the Calvinists and the Anti-Calvinists, with respect to our Lord's doctrine of JUSTIFICATION BY WORDS, and St. James's doctrine of JUSTIFICATION BY WORKS, AND NOT BY FAITH ONLY.*

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Tenth Edition.

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"As deceivers, and yet true.—In meekness instructing them that oppose themselves. 2 Cor. vi. 18: 2 Tim. ii. 25.



## AN ANSWER

TO THE

“FINISHING STROKE” OF RICHARD HILL, ESQ.

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HONOURED AND DEAR SIR,

I HAVE received your *Finishing Stroke*, and return the following Answer to you, or (if you have quitted the field) to your pious Second, the Rev. Mr. Berridge, who, by a public attack upon “sincere obedience,” and upon the doctrine of a believer’s “justification by works, and not by faith only,” has already entered the lists in your place.

I. Page 6. You complain, that I represent you as fighting the battles of the rankest Antinomians: “Because,” say you, “we firmly believe and unanimously assert, that the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin, and that, ‘if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father,’ &c., and that this advocacy prevails.” Not so, Sir: I apprehend you give your readers totally wrong ideas of the question. You know I never opposed you for saying, that “the blood of Christ cleanseth a penitent believer from all sin.” On the contrary, this I insist upon in a fuller sense than you do, who, if I mistake not, suppose that death, and not the blood of Christ applied by the sanctifying Spirit, is to be our cleanser from all sin. The point which we debate is not, then, whether Christ’s blood cleanses from all sin, but whether it actually

cleanses from all guilt an impenitent backslider, a filthy apostate; and whether God says to the fallen believer, that commits adultery and murder, "Thou art all fair, my love, my undefiled, there is no spot in thee!" This you affirm in your Fourth Letter; and this I expose as the very quintessence of Ranterism, Antinomianism, and Calvinistic perseverance.

The second part of your mistake is yet more glaring than the first. The question is not, as you inform your readers, whether, "if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father," &c. You know, Sir, that far from denying this comfortable truth, I maintain it in full opposition to your narrow system, which declares that if any man who is passed by, or non-elected, sinneth, there is *no* Advocate with the Father for *him*; and that there are thousands of *absolutely* reprobated wretches, born to have the devil for a tempter and an accuser, without any help from our Redeemer and Advocate.

Nor yet do we debate whether Christ's advocacy prevails, in the full extent of the word, for all that know the day of their visitation: 'This is a point of doctrine in which I am as clear as yourself. But the question about which we divide, is, 1. Whether Christ's advocacy never prevails, when he asks that barren fig-trees, which are at last cut down for persisting in their unfruitfulness, may be spared this year also. 2. Whether it prevails in such a manner for all those who once made ever so weak an act of true faith, that they shall never make shipwreck of the faith, never deny the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. 3. Whether Aaron and Korah, David and Demas, Solomon and Hymeneus, Peter and Judas, Philetus and Francis Spira, with all that fall from God, shall infallibly sing louder in heaven for their grievous falls on earth.

In a word, whether the salvation of some, and the damnation of others, are so finished, that, during the day of their visitation, it is absolutely impossible for one of the former to draw back to perdition from a state of salvation; and for one of the latter to draw back to salvation from a state of perdition.

These important questions you should have laid before your readers as the very ground of our controversy. But instead of this you amuse them with two precious scriptures, which I hold in a fuller sense than yourself. This is a stroke of your logic, but it is not the finishing one, for you say,

II. Page 6. "We cannot admit the contrary doctrine, (that of the Checks,) without at once undermining both law and Gospel. For the law is certainly undermined by supposing, that any breach of it whatever is not attended with the curse of God."—What law do I undermine? Is it the law of innocence? No: For I insist upon it as well as you, to convince unhumiliated sinners, that there can be no salvation but in and through a Mediator. Is it the Mediator's law, the law of liberty? Certainly not; for I defend it against the bold attacks you make upon it; and shall now ward off the dreadful blow you give it in this argument.

O Sir, is it right to confound, as you do, the law of paradisaical innocence, with the evangelical law of liberty, that in point of personal sincere obedience you may set both aside at one stroke? Is not this Calvinistic stroke as dangerous as it is unscriptural? "There is no law but one, which damns for want of absolute innocence; all those that are under *any* law, must be under *this* law, which curses for a wandering thought as well as for incest. But believers are not cursed for a wandering thought. Therefore they are



under no law ; they are not cursed even for incest ; they may break their “rule of life” by adultery as David, or by incest as the unchaste Corinthian, without falling under the curse of *any* divine law in force against them ; in a word, without ceasing to be men after God’s own heart.”

Now, whence arises the fallacy of this argument ? Is it not from overlooking the Mediator’s law, the law of Christ ? Can you see no medium between being under “a rule of life,” the breaking of which shall work for our good, and being under a law that curses to the pit of hell for the least want of absolute innocence ? Betwixt those two extremes, is there not the evangelical law of liberty ?

O, Sir, be not mistaken ; the Gospel has its law. Hear St. Paul : “God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel.” (Rom. ii. 16.) Hear St. James ; “So speak ye,” believers, “and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty ; for he,” the believer, “shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy.” James ii. 12—15, illustrated by Matt. xviii. 23—35.

Christ is neither an Eli, nor a Nero, neither a dolt, nor a tyrant ; but a priestly King, a Melchisedec. If he is a King, he has a law ; his subjects may, and the disobedient shall, be condemned by it. If he is a priestly King, he has a gracious law ; and if he has a gracious law, he requires no absolute impossibilities. Thus the covenant of grace keeps a just medium between the relentless severity of the first covenant, and the Antinomian softness of the covenant trumpeted by some Calvinists.

Be not then frightened, O Sion, from meditating in Christ’s law day and night ; for it is the law of thy gracious King, who cometh unto thee meek, and sitting upon the foal of a mild, pacific ani-

mial ; and not of thy fierce and fond monarch, O Geneva, who comes riding upon the wings of storms and tempests, to damn the reprobates for the pre-ordained unavoidable consequences of Adam's pre-ordained, unavoidable sin ; and to encourage fallen believers, that climb up into their neighbours' beds, by saying to each of them, "Thou art all fair, my love, my undefiled, there is no spot in thee." But more of this to Mr. Berridge. When you have given us a wrong idea of the Mediator's law, you proceed to do the same by the Gospel, with which that law is so closely connected ; for you say,

Page 6. "The Gospel is certainly undermined by supposing, that there is provision made in it for some sins, and not for others." Well, then, Sir, Christ and the four Evangelists have "certainly undermined the Gospel ;" for they all mention the sin against the Holy Ghost, the sin unto death, or the sin of final impenitency and unbelief ; and they not only *suppose*, but expressly declare, that is a sin for which "no provision is made," and the punishment of which obstinate unbelievers and apostates must personally bear. Is it not strange, that the capital doctrine by which our Lord *guards* his own Gospel should be represented as a capital error, by which "the Gospel is certainly undermined."

III. Page 6. To show that your scheme is different from speculative Antinomianism, you ask : "Is the experience of David, Lot, and Solomon, that of all those who abide by those doctrines ?"—I answer : It may be that of thousands, for ought you know, and if it is not that of myriads, no thanks to you, Sir, for you have given them encouragement enough ; (though I still do you the justice to say, you have done it undesignedly ; ) and lest they should forget your former innuendo, in this very page you say, that "the covenant of grace,"

including no doubt finished salvation, “standeth sure in behalf of the elect, under *every trial, state, and circumstance* they can possibly be in; which, if I mistake not, implies, that they may be in the impenitent “state” of drunken Lot, and adulterous David; or in the dangerous “circumstances” of idolatrous Solomon, and the incestuous Corinthian, without being less interested in finished salvation than if they served God with Noah, Job, and Daniel. To this answer I add Flavel’s judicious observation: “If the principle will yield it, it is in vain to think our corrupt nature will not catch at it, and make a vile use and dangerous improvement of it.” But you say, (page 7,) “You know in your conscience, that we detest and abhor that damnable doctrine and position of real Antinomians, ‘Let us sin that grace may abound.’”—I believe, Sir, that all pious Calvinists, and consequently *you*, abhor that horrible tenet practically, so far as you are saved from sin. And yet, to the great encouragement of practical Antinomians, you have made an enumeration of the good that *sin*, yea, *any length* in sin, unto adultery, robbery, murder, and incest, does to the pleasant children. You have assured them that sin shall work for their good; and you have closed the strange plea by saying, that “a grievous fall will make them sing louder the praises of free restoring grace to all eternity in heaven.” Now, Sir, pardon me if I tell you my own mind; really, to this day, I think, that if I wanted to make Christ publicly “the minister of sin,” and to poison the minds of my hearers by preaching an Antinomian sermon from these words, “Let us sin, that grace may abound,” I could not do it more effectually than by showing, according to the doctrine of your Fourth Letter: 1. That, upon the whole, sin can do us no harm: 2. That far from hurting us, it will work for our good: And 3. That even a grievous fall

into adultery and murder, will make us sing louder in heaven ; “all debts and claims against believers, be they more or be they less, be they small or be they great, be they before or be they after conversion, being forever cancelled by Christ’s fulfilling the law for them.” In the name of reason, I ask, Where is the difference between publishing these unguarded tenets, and saying roundly, “Let us sin, that grace may abound?”

Do not reply, Sir, that this objection was brought against St. Paul as well as against you, and therefore the Apostle’s doctrine and your’s exactly coincide ; for this would be impeaching the innocent to screen the guilty. The charge of indirectly saying, “Let us sin, that grace may abound,” is absolutely false when it is brought against St. Paul ; but, alas ! it is too true when produced against the author of *Pietas Oxoniensis*. Where did that holy Apostle ever say, that *sin* works for our good ? When did he declare, that the Lord over-rules sin, even adultery and murder, for the good of his backsliding people ; and that grievous falls in this world will make us more joyful in the next ? But you know, Sir, who has published those maxims, and who stands to them even in a *Finishing Stroke* ; intimating still, that it is God’s “secret will” to do good to his people by the abominable thing which his soul hateth. (Page 55, line 36, &c.) O, Sir, hell is not farther from heaven, than this doctrine is from that of the Apostle ; for while you absolutely promise fallen believers *louder songs* in heaven, he conditionally threatens them with “much sorer punishment” in hell. (Heb. x. 29.) And Christ says, “Go, and sin no more, lest a worse thing happen unto thee.” But your scheme says, Go any length in sin, and a more excellent thing shall happen unto thee : “A grievous fall will drive thee nearer to Christ.”

Leaving you to reconcile yourself with holy

Paul and our blessed Lord, I beg leave to account for the warmth with which you sometimes plead *for* and sometimes *against* sin. As a good man, you undoubtedly “detest and abhor” this dangerous maxim of the great Diana of the Antinomians: “Sin works for good to believers;” but as a sound Calvinist, you plead for it, yea, and you father it upon the Apostle too. (See Third Check, p. 319.) This contrariety in your sentiments may be illustrated by Judah’s inconsistent behaviour to Tamar:

As Tamar was an agreeable woman, Judah took an Antinomian fancy to her, gave her his signet, bracelet, and staff for a pledge; and faithfully sent her a kid from the flock. But as she saw his disgraced daughter-in-law big with a bastard child, though he himself was the father of it, he rose against her with uncommon indignation, and said, in a fit of *legality*, “Bring her forth that she may be burnt!” O! that instead of calling me “a spiritual calumniator,” and accusing me of “vile falsehood and gross perversion,” for bearing my testimony against a similar inconsistency, you would imitate the undeceived Patriarch, take your signet and bracelets again; I mean, call in your Fourth Letter, that fatal pledge sent me from the press of your great Diana, and from this time “know her again no more!” (Gen. xxxviii. 26.)

IV. But you are not put out of countenance by your former mistakes, for (pp. 8, 9) speaking, it seems, of those mistaken good men, “who say more *at times* for sin than against it,” or of those who traduce obedience, and make void the law through faith; representing it as a bare rule of life, the breaking of which will in the end work for the believer’s good; you say, “Though I have begged you so earnestly in my *Review*, to point out by name who these wretches,” you should say these *persons*, “are; though I have told you that with-



out this the charge of slander must be for ever at your door ; still neither they nor their converts are produced, no, nor one quotation from their writings, in order to prove these black charges upon them." Here is a heap of gross mistakes. I have not only produced *one quotation*, but *many* both from Dr. Crisp's writings and your own.—See Second Check, from p. 191 to p. 194 ; and Third Check, from p. 298 to p. 324.—Again : That " neither they nor their converts are produced," is a capital oversight. Turn to the Fourth Check, p. 132 : " Produce a few of them," says our brother ; to which I answer : " Well, Sir, I produce, first, the author of *Pietas Oxoniensis*, next yourself, and then all the Calvinists who admire your brother's Fourth Letter, where he not only insinuates, but openly attempts to prove, that David, &c., *stood absolved and complete in the everlasting righteousness of Christ*, while his eyes were full of adultery, and his hands of blood. Now, Sir, if this was the case of David, it *may* not only be the case of *many*, but of *all* the elect : " For the imaginary covenant of finished salvation stands as sure for fallen believers, who cheat, swear, and get drunk ; as for those who commit adultery, murder, and incest.

But since you press me *still* to produce witnesses, I promise you to produce, by-and-by, the Rev. Mr. Berridge, your second, together with his Antinomian pleas against sincere obedience. In the mean time I produce " Mr. Fulsome," together with a quotation from *The Christian World Unmasked*. It contains a ludicrous description of a consistent Antinomian, brought over to the doctrines of grace by, I know not which of our Gospel Ministers. (Second Edition p. 191.)

" His name," says Mr. Berridge, " was Mr. Fulsome, and his mother's maiden name was Miss Wanton. When the cloth was removed, and some



few tankards had gone round, Mr. Fulsome's face looked like the red lion painted on my landlord's sign, and his mouth began to open. He talked swimmingly about religion, and vapoured much in praise of [*Calvinistic*] perseverance. Each fresh tankard threw a fresh light upon the subject, &c. 'No sin,' he said, 'can hurt me. I have had a call, and my election is safe. Satan may pound me, if he please; but Jesus must replevy me. What care I for drunkenness or whoredom, for cheating, or a little lying? These sins may hurt another, but they cannot hurt me. Let me wander where I will from God, Jesus Christ must fetch me back again. I may *fall* a thousand times, but I shall *rise* again; yes, I may fall exceeding foully.' And so he did, for instantly he pitched with his head upon the floor, and the tankard in his hand."—*Christian World Unmasked*.

Thus fell the Antinomian champion of Calvinistic perseverance. "The tankard," adds Mr. Berridge, "was recovered, but no one thought it worth their while to lift up Mr. Fulsome."—And what does Mr. Fulsome care for it, if Jesus Christ *himself* is *absolutely* engaged to raise him up, though he had spilt, not only some of my landlord's ale, but all my landlord's blood? Let Mr. Fulsome take a peaceful nap upon the floor, till he can call for another tankard; it will never hurt him, for Mr. Hill declares that "the covenant of grace standeth sure in behalf of the elect under every trial, state, and circumstance they can possibly be in; and that God over-rules sin *for their good*."—*Finishing Stroke*, p. 6, and p. 55.

Upon the principles of Calvinism, no logician in the world can, I think, find a flaw in the following arguments of Mr. Fulsome: "If I am unconditionally elected, irresistible grace will certainly save me at last; nay, my salvation is already finished; and for this tankard and twenty more, I shall only

‘sing louder’ in heaven the praises of free, distinguishing, restoring grace, which, passing by thousands, viewed me with unchangeable love, and determined to save me with an everlasting salvation, without any regard to that ‘jack-o’lanthorn, sincere obedience.’ If, on the other hand, I am unconditionally reprobated, I shall absolutely be damned. Again: Supposing Christ never died for me, not only all my faith, but also all my endeavours and works, (were they as many as those of Mr. J. W.,) like a ‘jack-o’lanthorn’ will only dance before me to the pit of hell. Once more, if I am absolutely justified, it is not all the tankards and harlots in the world that can blot my name out of the book of life. And if I am in the black book, my damnation is as good as finished. My sincere obedience will never reverse a personal, absolute decree, older and firmer than the pillars of heaven. Nay, it may be the readiest way to hell; for our Vicar, who is one of the first Gospel Ministers in the kingdom, tells us, that ‘the devil was surely the author of the condition of sincere obedience,’ and that ‘thousands have been lost by following after it.’ Landlord! bring in another tankard. Here is the health of all who do not legalize the Gospel!”

Mr. Berridge is too good a logician to attempt proving, that Mr. Fulsome’s creed is not quite rational upon the principles of Calvinism. He only says, (page 192,) “Such scandalous professors are found at all times, in our day, and in St. Paul’s day, yet St. Paul will not renounce the doctrine of perseverance.” True; he will not renounce *his own* doctrine of *conditional* perseverance, because it is the very reverse of the doctrine of absolute, or Calvinistic perseverance, from which Mr. Fulsome draws his horrible, and yet just inferences.

But says Mr. B., (page 178,) “A believer’s new

nature makes him hunger for implanted righteousness ;” insinuating that a believer’s holy nature puts him upon such spontaneous obedience to his “rules of life,” that he needs not the help of a law as a rule of rewards and punishments, to encourage him in the path of duty, and to keep him from the broad way of disobedience. As this is one of the grand arguments by which pious Calvinists defend the Antinomian Babel, I shall answer it first as an Anti-Calvinist, and Mr. Fulsome next as a Calvinist.

1. Experience shows, that, to secure the creature’s obedience, or the Creator’s honour, the curb of a law is necessary for all *free-agents* who are yet in a state of probation ; and that so long as we are surrounded with so many temptations to faint in duty, and to leave the thorny way of the cross for the flowery paths of sin, the spur and bridle of a promising and threatening law are needful, even with respect to those duties which natural or supernatural inclination renders in general delightful ; such as for mothers to take care of their own children, and believers to do good to their neighbour. Now as the civil law, that condemns murderers to death, does not except mothers who destroy the fruit of their womb, because natural affection makes them in general glad to preserve it ; so the penal law of Christ makes no exception in favour of believers, who fall into adultery and murder, under the Calvinistic pretence, that their new nature makes them in general hunger after purity and love. (See 1 Cor. vi. 8, 9.)

Again : All sophisms fly before matter of fact. Fallen angels and our first parents once naturally “hungered after righteousness,” more than most believers do ; and yet they grossly apostatized. And if you object to these instances, I produce David and the incestuous Corinthian ; both had a “new nature” as *believers* ; and yet, as *fallen*

believers; the one could thirst after Uriah's blood, and the other hunger after his father's wife, far more than after "implanted righteousness." But,

2. Mr. Fulsome may answer Mr. Berridge as a Calvinist, thus: "My new nature will make me hunger for implanted righteousness 'in the day of God's power;' God will do his own work: In the mean time, I am 'in a winter season;' 'I am carnal and sold under sin,' as well as St. Paul, and I thirst after my tankard as David did after Bathsheba's beauty and Uriah's blood:" Thus the Antinomian gap remains as wide as ever.

It is true also, that Mr. Berridge says, (page 173,) "Cheats will arise; and how must we deal with them? *Deal with them*, Sir! Why, hang them when detected; as Jesus hanged Judas." I thought that Judas, and not Jesus, was the hangman. But I let that pass, to observe, that Mr. Fulsome may justly ask, "Why will you hang me? Does not our Lord, speaking of his elect, say, 'He that touches you, touches the apple of mine eye?'" If Mr. Berridge answers, "You are no elect; you are a hypocrite; you never had grace:" Mr. Fulsome may justly reply, upon the plan of the Calvinistic doctrines of grace, "I have had a call, and my election is safe. 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?—Whom he called, them he also justified; yea, they are justified from *all* things.' You have no more right to condemn me as a hypocrite, because you see me with a tankard in my hand, than to pass a sentence of hypocrisy upon all backsliders. How will you prove that I have not as much right to toss my tankard, as David to write a sanguinary letter; Solomon, to worship devils; and the incestuous Corinthian, to invade the rights of his father's bed? I will maintain the privileges of God's children against all the legalists and the Wesleys in the world: I will fight

for free grace to the last drop in my tankard.—My service to you !”

If Mr. Fulsome's arguments are *conclusive* as well as *Calvinistical*, how can he be brought to give up his Antinomian creed? Undoubtedly, by being brought to give up Calvinism. Till then it is evident that he will still hold *his* doctrines of grace in theory or in practice; indirectly and with mental reserves, as all pious Calvinists do; or openly and without shuffling, as he does in his Confession of Faith. Thus has Mr. Berridge presented the world with an Antinomian creed, as horrid as that which I have composed with the unguarded principles of your Fourth Letter. And by acknowledging, that “such scandalous professors as Mr. Fulsome are found at all times,” he has confirmed the necessity of my Checks, shown they are really Checks to *Antinomianism*, and not “Checks to the Gospel,” silenced those who have accused me of *misrepresentation*, and helped me to give the world a just idea of Calvinistic principles. I say *principles*, because many, very many Calvinists, like Mr. Berridge, are too moral not to reject in their *practice*, and not to explode as detestable in their *discourse*, the immoral inferences consistent Antinomians justly draw from their doctrines of grace.

V. Having thus complied with your request, Sir, by producing “a quotation” from an eminent Calvinist Divine, to show that I do not fight against a shadow when I oppose Mr. Fulsome; and having described a rational “convert” to your doctrines of grace; I return to the *Finishing Stroke*, where, to ward off the blow given to your system by the orthodoxy and bad conduct of the Fulsomes,

Page 9. You offer to show me “a long black list of deluded creatures [some of whom have been principal leaders in Mr. W.'s classes, &c.] who have been carrying on abominations and wicked



practices under the mask of religion." And you tell us they "are some of the fruits which the doctrines" of Mr. Wesley "have produced." But you have forgot the proof, unless you think that your bare assertion is quite sufficient. Suppose that one out of twelve of Mr. W.'s class-leaders had actually turned out "a temporary monster," what could you infer from it against Mr. W.'s doctrine, but what the Pharisees could with equal truth, or rather with equal injustice, have inferred against the doctrine of our Lord?

By what plain and easy consequence, or by what scriptural argument, will you make it appear, that even the most abhorred of all Mr. W.'s doctrines, that of *Christian Perfection*, (or, which is all one, that of believing in Christ with a penitential faith, till we love God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves,) has any more tendency to turn his hearers into "temporary monsters," than our Lord's Sermon upon the Mount had to turn his Apostles into covetous traitors? But how can you free your doctrine from the dangerous consequences which flow from it as naturally as a river does from its source? Have I not just proved, I hope to the satisfaction of judicious readers, that Mr. Fulsome's practice perfectly agrees with your Calvinistic principles? O Sir, that vapourer in favour of *your* perseverance fairly and consistently builds upon what your brother calls "the foundation of the Calvinists," that is, unconditional election and finished salvation; he is a wise master builder. Apply the most exact plummet of reason to the walls of his antinomian Babel, and you will find them straight. They do not project a hair's breadth from your doctrines of grace, which are the foundations laid in most of our celebrated pulpits, for him and all the clan of the Fulsomes to build upon. He is a *judicious* monster; he has reason and your orthodoxy on his side. But the



monsters of your long black list (supposing it to be a true one) are barefaced hypocrites, equally condemned by their reason and profession: For so far as they adhere to Mr. W.'s doctrine, their *principles* are diametrically opposed to their *practice*, and therefore he is no more accountable for their "abominations" than our Lord was for Judas's treason.

VI. Pages 12 13. You leave me in full possession of the scriptures, arguments, and quotations from our Homilies and Liturgy, which I have advanced in the Fourth Check; supposing that when you have called them "the novel chimeras of the Fourth Check," or a "mingle-mangle;" and that when you have referred your readers to "the faith of Mr. Ignorance," you have given my sentiments a *finishing* stroke. To such forcible arguments I can make no better and shorter reply than that of my title-page, *Logica Genevenis*. However,

Page 11. You decide that my illustration of the woman dropping her child down the precipice "is totally foreign to the purpose;" that is, does not at all prove that Calvinism fathers "unprovoked wrath" upon the God of love. But how do you make it appear? Why, you insinuate, that "man has forfeited all right and title to the favour of God by his fall in Adam; and therefore God has been justly provoked to drop the reprobates down the precipice of sin into hell, by an eternal, unconditional, absolute decree of non-election.

The argument is specious, and has deceived thousands of simple souls into Calvinism: But can it bear examination? Who or what provoked God to make, from all eternity, a decree of absolutely dropping Adam down the precipice of sin, and the reprobated part of his posterity down the precipice of damnation? Was it the sin of reprobates? No; for millions of them are as yet unconceived, and therefore *sinless*; for what has not yet

a *substance*, cannot yet have a *mode*; what does not yet exist, cannot yet be sinful. Was it a *fore-sight* of their sin? No; for, upon the Calvinistic plan, God *certainly foresees* what *will* happen, only because he has *absolutely decreed* what *SHALL* happen. Was it Adam's sin, as you insinuate? No; for Adam's sin was committed *in time*, and therefore could not influence an *absolute* decree of personal reprobation made *before* time, yea, from all eternity. But you add:

Pages 11, 12. "If you believe that the transgression of our first parent entailed no condemnation upon his posterity, why did you subscribe to the Ninth Article of our Church, which says, that 'in every man born into the world it deserves God's wrath and damnation?'" I apprehend, you mistake, Sir; that Article says no such thing. What it affirms of a derivation of Adam's corruption, or of "the fault and corruption of the nature of every man," you represent as spoken of Adam's personal transgression; which is absolutely confounding the cause and the effect. Every Anti-Calvinist may, and I, for one, do believe, that, "in every man born into the world," and considered according to the first covenant, original corruption (not Adam's transgression) *deserves* God's wrath and damnation at the hands of a holy and righteous God; without dreaming that any man shall ever be damned for it, seeing that, according to God's mercy and goodness, displayed in the second covenant, Christ, the Second Adam, is come to taste death for *every* man, and to be the Saviour of *all* men; so that for his sake the free gift is come upon *all* men to justification of life. See the Fourth Check, &c. Thus, by looking at our Divine compass, the word of God, we sail through the straits of error, keeping at an equal distance from the rocks against which Calvinists run on the right hand, and Pelagians on the left.

I have warded off the *stroke* which you have attempted to give my sentiments with our Ninth Article ; and now it is but just, you should suffer me to return it. If I am not mistaken, that Article is repugnant to Calvinism, in two respects: 1. It says not one word about the *imputation* of the demerits of Adam's first transgression ; but makes original sin to consist only in the "*infection of our nature* ;" which saps the foundation of your imaginary imputation of Adam's personal sin, and consequently ruins its counterpart, namely, your imaginary imputation of Christ's personal good works, distinct from some actual participation of his holiness. 2. It affirms, that this infection in every person *born into the world* deserves God's wrath,—a strong intimation this, that it did not actually *deserve* that wrath *before* we are actually defiled by a sinful birth or conception. Now this, if I mistake not, implies, that of all the men now living upon the earth not one actually *deserved* God's wrath and damnation two hundred years ago. So that if God *absolutely* reprobated one man now living, three hundred, much more, six thousand years, ago, much more from *all* eternity, he did it according to Calvin's doctrine of rich, free, unprovoked, gratuitous, *undeserved* wrath. O ye considerate Englishmen, stand to your Articles, and you will soon shake off Geneva impositions !

VII. Page 12. You say in your moral creed about faith and works:—"Faith, when genuine, will always manifest its reality by bringing forth good works, and all the fruits of a holy life:" Now, Sir, if you stand to this, without secret reserves about a "winter state," in which a *genuine believer* (so called) may commit adultery, murder, and incest, for many months, without losing the character of a man after God's own heart, and his title to heaven ; you make up the Antinomian gap, you set your seal to St. James's Epistle, you ratify

the Checks, and consequently you give up the Fourth Letter; which contains the very marrow of Calvinism; unless by some salvo of Geneva logic you may reconcile these two propositions, which, upon the rational and moral plan of the Gospel, appear to me utterly irreconcilable: 1. Faith, when genuine, *always* brings forth *all* the fruits of a *holy* life. 2. A man's faith may be genuine while he goes *any length in sin*, and brings forth *all* the fruits of an *unholy* life; adultery and murder unexcepted.

VIII. My quotation from Dr. Owen, which sets Calvinistic contradiction in a most glaring light, seems to embarrass you much. (Page 14, &c.) You produce passage upon passage out of his writings, to show that he explodes "the distinction of a double justification." But you know, Sir, the Doctor had as much right to contradict himself in his writings, as you to militate against yourself in your *Review*. (See Fourth Check, First Letter.) Besides, I have already observed, that "a volume of such passages, instead of invalidating the doctrine I maintain," or the quotation I produce, "would only prove that the most judicious Calvinists cannot make their scheme hang tolerably together." However, you say,

Pages 13, 14. "He," Dr. Owen, "drops not the least intimation of any fresh act of justification, which is then to pass upon a believer's person." What, Sir, has not the Doctor said, in his treatise upon justification, (page 222,) "Whenever this inquiry is made, not how a sinner, &c., shall be justified, which is," as we are all agreed, by faith, or, to use the Doctor's unscriptural phrase, "by the righteousness of Christ alone imputed to him; but how a man that professes evangelical faith in Christ shall be tried and judged, and whereon as such," that is, as a believer, "he shall be justified; we grant that it is, and must be, by his own personal

obedience." Now, Sir, if the Doctor has said this, (and you dare not deny it,) has he not said the very thing which I contend for?

When you affirm, that he makes no mention of a fresh act of justification, do you not betray your inattention? Does he not declare, that a sinner is justified by imputed righteousness, and that a believer as such shall be tried and justified by his own personal obedience? Now if justification is the act of justifying, are you not greatly mistaken, when you represent the justification of a sinner by Christ's imputed righteousness, and the justification of a believer or a saint by his own personal obedience, as one and the same act? Permit me, Sir, to refer you to the argument contained in the Fourth Check, on which, next to the words of our Lord, (Matt. xii. 37,) I chiefly rest our controversy about justification: An argument, the answering of which (if it can be answered) would have done your cause more honour and service, than what you are pleased to insinuate next concerning Mr. Wesley's honesty and mine.

D. Williams, out of whose book I copied my quotation from Dr. Owen, being a Calvinist, and as clear about a sinner's justification by faith as Dr. Owen himself, for brevity's sake left out what the Doctor says about it under the Calvinistic phrase of "Christ's imputed righteousness." Here, as if D. Williams's wisdom was duplicity in me, (page 14,) you triumph not only over me, but over Mr. Wesley, thus: "I never dare trust to Mr. Wesley or Mr. Fletcher in any quotations, &c.—More words expunged by Mr. Fletcher out of the short quotation he has taken from Dr. Owen." But suppose I had *knavishly expunged* the words which D. Williams *wisely left out* as useless to his point, what need was there of reflecting upon Mr. Wesley on the occasion? O ye doctrines of free grace and free wrath, how long will ye mislead

good men? How long will ye hurry them into that part of practical Antinomianism, which consists in *rash* accusations of their opponents, in a lordly contempt of their gracious attainments, and in repeated insinuations that they pay no regard to common honesty?

When a combatant is too warm, he frequently gives an unexpected advantage to his antagonist. You are an instance of it: Your eagerness to reflect upon Mr. W. and me, has engaged you to present the world with a clause, which, though it was useless to the question debated by D. Williams, is of singular use to me in the present controversy, and, in a manner, decides the point. For in the passage left out by D. Williams, Dr. Owen speaks of the justification of a sinner, and says, as I have observed, that he is "justified by the righteousness of Christ alone imputed to him;" and this justification he evidently opposes to that of a believer, which, says he, "is and must be by his own personal obedience." So that the world (thanks be to your controversial heat!) \* sees now, that even your champion, in one of those happy moments when the great Diana did not stand in his light, saw and held forth the important distinction between St. Paul's and St. James's justification, that is, between the justification of a sinner by Christ's proper merits, according to the first Gospel axiom; and the justification of a saint by his own personal obedience of faith, or by Christ's derived merits, according to the second Gospel axiom.

Nor is this a new distinction, you would say, a "novel chimera," among Protestants: For looking lately into a *Treatise upon Good Works*, written by La Placette, that famous Protestant champion and

\* The second instance of this heat, so favourable to my cause, may be seen in the Appendix. (No. 10.)



confessor abroad, who, after he had left his native country for righteousness' sake, was Minister of the French Church at Copenhagen, (page 272, Amsterdam Edition, 1700,) I fell upon this passage: *Les Protestans de leur côté distinguent une double justification, celle du pécheur, et celle de juste, &c.* That is, "Protestants, on their part, distinguish a two-fold justification, that of the sinner and that of the righteous," &c. Then, speaking of the latter, he adds, "The justification of the righteous, considered as an act of God, implies three things: 1. That God acknowledges for righteous him that is actually so: 2. That he declares him such: And 3. That he treats him as such." How different is this three-fold act of God from that which constitutes a sinner's justification! For this justification, being also considered as the act of God, implies, 1. That he pardons the sinner: 2. That he admits him to his favour: And 3. That, under the Christian dispensation, he witnesses this double mercy to the believing sinner's heart, by giving him a sense of the peace which passes all understanding, and a taste of the glory which shall be revealed. However, as if all this was a mere "chimera," you say,

Page 17. "Having fully vindicated Dr. Owen from the charge you have brought against him of holding two justifications," &c.—Nay, Sir, you have not vindicated him at all in this respect; all that you have proved, is, that he was no stranger to your logic; and that his love for the great Diana of the Calvinists made him inconsistently deny, at one time, what at another time his hatred of sin forced him to confess. Nor is this a new thing in mystic Geneva: You know a pious gentleman, who, after militating, in a book called the *Review*, against the declarative justification by works, which I contend for, drops these words, which deserve to be graven in brass; as an eternal monument of Calvinistic contradiction: "Neither Mr. Shirley, nor I, nor

any Calvinist that I ever heard of, deny that a sinner" (should you not have said *a believer*?) "is declaratively justified by works, both here and at the day of judgment." (*Review*, page 149.) Now, if no Calvinist you ever heard of denies, in his luminous intervals, the very justification which I contend for in the Checks, do you not give a *finishing stroke* to Calvinistic consistency when you say, (page 18,) "I am determined to prove my former assertion against you, viz., that you cannot find one Protestant Divine among the Puritans, &c., till the reign of Charles II., who held your doctrines?" You mean those of a sinner's justification by faith, and of a saint's justification by works, according to Galatians ii. 16, and Matthew xii. 37. Is it not granted on all sides, that they held the former justification? And do you tell the world, No Calvinist that you ever heard of denied the latter? However, while you thus candidly confess, that all Protestant Divines held those capital doctrines of the Checks, I should not do you justice, if I did not acknowledge, that few, if any of them, held them uniformly and consistently in England, till Baxter began to make firm stand against "Antinomian dotages."

IX. Page 20. You produce these words of mine, taken from the Fourth Check: "Your imputation stands upon a preposterous supposition, that Christ the righteous was an execrable sinner." To this you reply with the warmth of a gentleman who has learned politeness in mystic Geneva: "I tell you, Reverend Sir, with the bluntness and honesty of an Englishman, that this is execrable Swiss slander." Now, Sir, that that which you call "execrable Swiss slander" is "sterling English truth," I prove by these quotations from your favourite Divine, Dr. Crisp, who, as quoted by D. Williams, says, (page 328,) "God makes Christ as very a sinner as the creature himself was."—Again, (page

270,) "Nor are we so completely sinful, but Christ, being made sin, was as completely sinful as we."— And it is well known, that Luther, in one of his unguarded moments, called Christ the *greatest*, and consequently, the most execrable sinner in the world. Now, Sir, if "Christ was so completely sinful as we," (to use the words of your oracle,) does it not follow, that he was a *sinner as completely execrable* as we are? and that you deviate a little from brotherly kindness, when you call Crisp's Calvinistic mistake, an execrable slander of mine?

X. Pages 21, 22. You find fault with my saying, "Is this" (Christ's praying for Peter) "a proof that he never prayed for Judas?" And you declare, that this "*assertion*" (you should have said *query*) "does little honour to the advocacy of Christ." Permit me, Sir, to explain myself. Though I believe, with Bishop Latimer, that "Christ shed as much blood for Judas as for Peter," I never said nor believed, as you insinuate, "that Christ took more pains for the salvation of Judas than for that of Peter." You cannot justly infer it from my mentioning a matter of fact recorded in Scripture, viz., that once our Lord spoke to Judas, when he only looked at Peter; for he had explicitly warned Peter before. Therefore in either case, Christ showed himself void (not of a peculiar regard for Peter's peculiar sincerity, but) of Calvinistic partiality. Again, I am persuaded that, during the day of Judas's visitation, Christ prayed for him, and sincerely too; for if Christ had borne him a grudge, and, in consequence of it, had always made mental reserves, and excepted him when he prayed for his Apostles, would he not have broken the second table of the law? And might he not be proposed as a pattern of inveterate malice, rather than of perfect charity?

You reply, (page 22,) "If this were the case," (that is, if our Lord prayed for Judas,) "those

words of his, 'I know thou hearest me always,' must be untrue; for when he prayed for Judas, his prayer was rejected." But is your inference just? Christ always prayed with divine wisdom, and according to his Father's will. Therefore he prayed consistently with the eternal decree, that moral agents shall be invited, drawn, and gently moved, but not forced, to obey the Gospel. Now, if our Lord prayed conditionally for Judas, (as he certainly did for all his murderers, since they were not all forgiven,) he might say, "I know thou hearest me always;" and yet Judas might, by his perverseness, as a free agent, reject against himself the gracious counsel of God, till he was absolutely given up. Thus our scheme of doctrine, instead of dishonouring Christ's advocacy, represents it in a rational and scriptural light; while yours, I fear, wounds his character in the tenderest part, and fixes upon him the blot of cunning uncharitableness, and profound dissimulation.

XI. Page 25. You say: "Time would fail me to pretend to enumerate the many gross misrepresentations, &c. However, as you have actually represented me as saying, that the more a believer sins upon earth, the *merrier* he will be in heaven, I beg you will point out to me where, in the plain easy sense of my words, I have spoken any such thing; or where I have ever used so ludicrous an expression as *mirth*, &c., when speaking of those pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore."

I conclude my Antinomian creed thus, (Fourth Check: Page 111:) "Adultery, incest, and murder shall, upon the whole, make me holier upon earth and merrier in heaven."—Two lines below, I observe that "I am indebted to you for all the doctrines, and most of the expressions of this creed."—You have therefore no right to say, "Where have I used the expression *merry*?" for I never said you have used it, though our Lord has, Luke xv. 32. But as

you have a right to say, "Where is the doctrine?" I reply, In your Fourth Letter, where you tell us, that a grievous fall will make believers "sing louder in heaven to all eternity." Now as louder songs are a certain indication of greater joy, where nothing is done in hypocrisy, I desire even Calvinists to say, if I have wrested "the plain easy sense of your words," in observing that, according to your scheme, apostates shall be *merrier*, or, if you please, more joyful, in heaven for their grievous falls on earth.

Page 27. "Now, Sir, give me leave to pluck a feather out of your high-soaring wings, by asking you simply, Whence have you taken it?" (this quotation so called :) "Did I ever assert anything like this? &c. Prove your point, and then I will confess that you are no calumniator of God's people." I answer,

1. I did not produce as a quotation the words which you allude to; I put them in commas, as expressive of the sentiments of "many good men:" How then could you think, that you alone are *many* good men? 2. But you say that you, for one, understand the words of St. John, "He that does righteousness is righteous," of personal holiness: Now to prove me a "calumniator," you have only to prove that David *did* righteousness when he defiled Uriah's wife; for you teach us, directly or indirectly, that when he committed that crime he was "undefiled," and continued to be "a man after God's own heart," that is, a righteous man, for "the Lord alloweth the righteous, but the ungodly does his soul abhor." 3. However, if I have mistaken *one* of the scriptures on which you found your doctrine, I have not mistaken the doctrine itself. What are the words for which you call me "a calumniator," and charge me with "horrid perversion, falsehood, and base disingenuity?" Why, I have represented "many good men" as saying (by the general tenor of their doctrines of



grace, the absolute perseverance of fallen, adulterous, idolatrous, incestuous believers,) “ Let not Mr. W. deceive you ; he that actually liveth with another man’s wife, worships abominable idols, and commits incest with his father’s wife, may not only be righteous, but complete in imputed righteousness,” &c. This is the doctrine I charge upon many good men ; and if you, for one, say, “ Did I ever assert any thing like this ? ” I reply, Yes, Sir, in your Fourth Letter, which is a professed attempt to prove, that believers may, like adulterous David, idolatrous Solomon, and the incestuous Corinthian, go any length in sin without ceasing to *stand complete in*, what I beg to call, Calvinistic *righteousness*. Thus, instead of “ plucking a feather out of my wings,” you wing the arrow which I let fly at your great Diana.

XII. For brevity’s sake, I shall reduce my answer to the rest of your capital charges into plain queries, not doubting but my judicious readers will see their unreasonableness, without the help of arguments.

1. Is it right in Mr. Hill to call (pages 34, 35) my *extract* from Flavel, “ a citation,” and “ a quotation ; ” and to charge me with “ disingenuity, gross perversion, expunging,” &c., because I have not swelled my *extract* by transcribing all Flavel’s book, or because I have taken only what suits the present times, and what is altogether consistent ? Especially when I have observed, (Fourth Check, page 62,) that when Flavel encounters Antinomian errors as a disciple of Calvin “ his hands hang down, Amalek prevails, and a shrewd logician could, without any magical power, force him to confess, that most of the errors, which he so justly opposes, are the natural consequences of Calvinism ! ”

2. Is it right in Mr. Hill to charge me (page 57) with “ base forgeries ; ” and to represent me,



(page 56,) as “descending to the poor, illiberal acts of forgery and defamation,” because I have presented the public with a parable in the dress of a royal proclamation, which I produce as a mere “illustration,”—because I charge him with indirectly propagating tenets which as necessarily flow from his doctrines of grace as light does from the sun,—and because I have distinguished, by commas, a creed framed with his avowed principles? although I have added these words, to show that I took the composition of it upon myself: “You speak indeed in the third person, and I in the first; but this alters not the doctrine.—Some clauses and sentences I have added, not to misrepresent and blacken,” (for what need is there of blackening the sable mantle of midnight?) “but to introduce, connect, and illustrate your sentiments!”

3. Angry as the Pharisees were at our Lord, when he exposed their errors by parables, did they ever charge him with *base forgery*, because his “illustrations” were not true stories? Is it not strange, that this admirable way of defending “the truth” should have been found out by the grand defender of “the doctrines of grace?”—Again, if marking with commas a paragraph of our composing, to distinguish it from our own real sentiments, is a crime, is not Mr. Hill as criminal as myself? Does he not (page 31) present the public with a card of his own composing, in which he holds forth the supposed sentiments of many Clergymen, and which he distinguishes with commas, thus: “The Feathers’ Tavern fraternity present compliments to Messrs. J. Wesley and Fletcher,” &c.—Shall what passes for wit in the author of *Pietas Oxoniensis* be gross disingenuity and base forgery in the author of the *Vindication*?—O ye candid Calvinists, partial as your system is, can you possibly approve of such glaring partiality?

4. Is it right in Mr. Hill to take his leave of me

in this abrupt manner? (Pages 39, 40:) "The unfair quotations you have made, and the shocking misrepresentations and calumnies you have been guilty of, will for the future prevent me from looking into any of your books, if you should write a thousand volumes:" And this especially under pretence that I have "shamefully perverted and misrepresented the doctrines of Anthony Burgess," when I have simply produced a quotation from him, in which there is not a shadow of misrepresentation, as the reader will see by comparing Fourth Check, (pages 48, 49,) with the last paragraph of the Twelfth Sermon of Mr. Burgess on *grace and assurance*?

XIII. The perpetual noise about "gross misrepresentations, shameful perversions, interpolations, base forgeries," &c., becomes Mr. Hill as little as any man; his own inaccuracy in quotation equalling that of the most inattentive writer I am acquainted with. Our readers have seen on what a slender basis he rests his charge of "base forgeries:" I beg leave to show them now on what solid ground I rest my charge of uncommon inaccuracy; and, not to intrude too long upon their patience, I shall just produce a few instances only out of his *Finishing Stroke*.\*

\* To produce such instances out of the *Review*, would be almost endless. One, however, Mr. Hill *forces* me to touch upon a second time. This is the case. The sword of the Spirit which Mr. Wesley uses is two-edged. When he defends the *first* Gospel axiom against the Pharisees, he preaches *salvation, not by the merit of works, but by believing in Christ*: And when he defends the *second* Gospel axiom against the Antinomians, he preaches *salvation, not by the merit of works, but by works as a condition*. No sooner did the Calvinists see this last proposition at full length in the Minutes, than they took the alarm, fondly imagining that Mr. Wesley wanted to overthrow the Protestant doctrine of salvation by faith. To convince them of their mistake, I appealed to Mr. Wesley's Works in general, and to the Minutes in particular, two sentences of which evidently show, that he had not the least intention of setting aside *faith in Christ*, in order to make way for the Anti-Christian *merit of works*. Accordingly, I laid those sentences before my readers, taking special care to show by commas, that I produce two different

1. That performance does not do my sermon justice, for, (page 51,) Mr. Hill quotes me so:

parts of the Minutes, thus: "Not by the merit of works," but by "believing in Christ." Here is not a shadow of disingenuity, either as to the quotations, for they are fairly taken from the Minutes, or as to the sense of the whole sentences; for fifty volumes, and myriads of hearers can testify, that it perfectly agrees with Mr. W.'s well known doctrine. But what does Mr. Hill? Biassed by his system, he tampers with my quotations; he takes off the two commas after the word *works*; he overlooks the two commas before the word *believing*! he (inadvertently, I hope) throws my two distinct quotations into one; and by that means adds to them the words "but by," which I had particularly excluded. When he has thus turned my two just quotations into one that is false, he is pleased to put me into the Geneva pillery for *his own* mistake; and as his doctrines of grace teach him to kill two birds with one stone, he involves Mr. Wesley in my gratuitous disgrace, thus: "Forgeries of this kind have long passed for no crime with Mr. Wesley; I did not think you would have followed him in these ungenerous artifices." (*Review*, page 27.)

Upon the remonstrance I made about this strange way of proceeding, (see Note, Fourth Check, page 55,) I hoped that Mr. Hill would have hanged down his head a moment, and dropped the point for ever. But no; he must give a finishing stroke, and drive home the nail of his rash accusation, by calling my remarks upon his mistakes, "attempts to vindicate the most shameful false quotation, he (Mr. Fletcher) has twice made from the Minutes." (Log. Wesl. page 35.) And to prove my attempts have been unsuccessful, he produces passages out of a newspaper, which represent "His Majesty"—"stealing bread."—"Her Majesty"—"committed to the house of correction." To this I answer, that if such unconnected quotations (of which I only give here the substance) were properly distinguished by commas; if they were separated by intervening words; and if they did not in the least misrepresent the author's sense; it would be greater injustice to call them either "a most shameful quotation," or a "forgery." Now these three particulars meet in my two quotations from the Minutes: 1. They are both properly distinguished with commas: 2. They are parted by intervening words: And, 3. They do not in the least misrepresent Mr. Wesley's meaning: Whereas, (to say nothing more of my commas expunged in the *Review*,) no word intervenes between Mr. Hill's supposed quotations out of the papers; and they form a "shameful misrepresentation" of the publisher's meaning.

O! but as the quotations from the Minutes are *linked*, they "speak a language directly opposite to the Minutes themselves." So says Mr. Hill, without producing the shadow of a proof. But upon the arguments of the Five Checks, I affirm that the two Gospel axioms, or my linked quotations and the Minutes, agree

“They,” good works, “are declarative of our free justification ;” whereas my manuscript runs thus : “They are the declarative cause of our free justification,” viz., in the day of trial and of judgment. The word *cause* here is of the utmost importance to my doctrine, powerfully guarding the Minutes and undefiled religion. Whether it is left out because it shows at once the absurdity of pretending that my old sermon “is the best confutation of Mr. Wesley’s Minutes,” or because Mr. Hill’s copier omitted it first, is best known to Mr. Hill himself.

2. I say, in the Fourth Check, “To vindicate what I beg leave to call God’s honesty, permit me to observe first, that I had rather believe Joseph told once ‘a gross untruth,’ than suppose that God perpetually equivocates.” For, undoubtedly, of two evils I would choose the least, if a cogent dilemma obliged me to choose either. But this is not the case here ; the dilemma is not forcible ; for in the next lines I show, that Joseph, instead of “telling a gross untruth,” only spake the language of brotherly kindness. However, without paying any regard to my vindication of Joseph’s speech, Mr. Hill catches at the conditional words, “I had rather believe ;” just as if I had said, *I do actually believe*, he turns them into a peremptory

as perfectly with each other, as those positions of St. Paul, to which they answer : “By grace ye are saved through faith :”—Therefore, “work out your salvation with fear.”

From this *redoubled* stroke of Mr. Hill, I am tempted to think, that, like Justice, *Logica Genevensis* has a covering over her eyes ; but, alas ! for a very different reason.—Like her also she has a balance in her left hand ; but it is to weigh out and vend her own assertions as proofs. And like her, she holds a sword in her right hand ; but alas ! it is often to wound brotherly love, and stab evangelical truth. Bring her into the field of controversy, and she will at once cut down Christ’s doctrine as *dreadful heresy*. Set her in the judgment-seat to pass sentence over good works, and over honest men, that do not bow at her shrine ; and without demur she will pronounce that the former are *dung*, and that the latter are *knaves*.

declaration of my faith, and three times represents me as *asserting* what I never said or believed; thus: (Page 38 :) “Your wonderful *assertion*, that Joseph told his brethren a gross untruth:” Again: “Still you declare it to be your opinion, that Joseph told his brethren a gross untruth:” Once more: (Page 39 :) “The repeated words of inspiration you venture to call gross untruth.” Solomon says, “Who can stand before envy?” And I ask, Who can stand before Mr. Hill’s inattention? I am sure, neither I nor Mr. Wesley. At this rate he can undoubtedly find a blasphemy in every page, and a farrago in every book.

3. Take another instance of the same want of exactness. I say, in the Fourth Check, “I never thought Mr. Whitefield was clear in the doctrine of our Lord, ‘In the day of judgment by thy words shalt thou be justified;’ for if he had seen it in a proper light, he would instantly have renounced Calvinism.” This passage Mr. Hill quotes thus, in Italics and commas, page 23: “*You never thought him clear in our Lord’s doctrine; for, if he had, he would have renounced Calvinism.*” The inaccuracy of this quotation consists in omitting those important words of our Lord, “In the day of judgment,” &c. By this omission, that sense of the preceding clause is left indefinite, and I am represented as saying, that Mr. Whitefield was not clear in *any doctrine of our Lord*, no, not in that of the fall, repentance, salvation by faith, the new birth, &c. This one mistake of Mr. Hill is sufficient to make me pass for a mere coxcomb in all the Calvinistic world.

4. It is by the like inattention that Mr. Hill prejudices also against me the friends of Mr. Wesley. In the Fourth Check, after having answered an objection of the Rev. Mr. Hill against Mr. Wesley, I produce that objection again for a fuller answer, and say, “But, supposing that Mr.



Wesley had not properly considered, &c., what would you infer from thence? &c. Weigh your argument, &c., and you will find it is wanting." Then I immediately produce Mr. Hill's objection in the form of an argument, thus: "Twenty-three, or, if you please, three years ago, Mr. Wesley wanted clearer light," &c. Now, what I evidently produce as a supposition, and as the Rev. Mr. Hill's own argument unfolded in order to answer it, my opponent fathers upon me thus: "The following are your own words: 'Three years ago, Mr. Wesley wanted clearer light,'" &c. True, they are my own words; but to do me justice, Mr. Hill should have produced them as I do, namely, as a supposition, and as the drift of his brother's objection, in order to show its frivolousness. This is partly such a mistake as if Mr. Hill said, "The following are David's own words: 'Tush! there is no God.'"

However, he is determined to improve his own oversight; and he does it by asking, (page 17,) "What then is become of thousands of Mr. Wesley's followers, who died before this *clearer light* came?" An argument this, by which the most ignorant Papists in my parish perpetually defend their idolatrous superstitions: "What is become of all our forefathers," say they, "before Luther and Calvin? Were they all damned?" Is it not surprising, that Mr. Hill, not contented to produce a Popish Friar's conversation, should have thus recourse to the argument of every Popish cobbler, who attacks the doctrines of the Reformation? O *Logica Genevensis*! how dost thou show thyself the genuine sister of *Logica Romana*!

5. I return to the mistakes, by which Mr. Hill has supported before the world his charge of "calumny." I say, in the Second Check, "How few of our celebrated pulpits are there, where



more has not been said at times for sin than against it?" Mr. Hill (page 7) says, "The Ministers who preach in these (our most celebrated pulpits) are condemned without exception, as such pleaders for sin, that they say more for it than against it." Here are two capital mistakes: (1.) The question, *How few?* &c., evidently leaves room for *some exceptions*; but Mr. Hill represents me, as condemning our most celebrated pulpits, "without exception." (2.) This is not all; to mitigate the question, I add, *at times*,—words by which I give my readers to understand, that sin is, *in general*, attacked in our celebrated pulpits, and that it is only at times, that is, on some particular occasions, or in some part of a sermon, that the Ministers alluded to say more for sin than against it. Now, Mr. Hill leaves out of his quotation the word, *at times*, and by that means effectually represents me as a "calumniator of God's people." For what is true with the limitation that I use, becomes a falsehood when used without it. This omission of Mr. Hill is the more singular, as my putting the word, *at times*, in italics, indicates that I want my readers to lay a peculiar stress upon it on account of its importance. One more instance of Mr. Hill's inaccuracy, and I have done.

6. Pages 7, 8. He presents his readers with a long paragraph, produced as a quotation from the Second Check. It is made up of some detached sentences picked here and there from that piece, and put together with as much wisdom as the patches which make up a fool's coat. And among these sentences he has introduced this, which is not mine in sense, any more than in expression: "They," celebrated Ministers, "handle no texts of Scripture without distorting them;" for I insinuate just the contrary in the Second Check.

7. But the greatest fault I find with that para-

graph of Mr. Hill's book is the conclusion, which runs thus: "They," celebrated Ministers, "do the devil's work, till they and their congregations all go to hell together. [A] Second Check, p. 211—217." Now in neither of the pages quoted by Mr. Hill, nor indeed anywhere else, did I ever say so wild and wicked a thing. Nothing could engage my pious opponent to father such a horrid assertion upon me, but the great and severe Diana that engages him to father absolute reprobation upon God.

It is true, however, that, alluding to the words of our Lord, (Matt. xxv.) I say, in the Second Check, "If these shall go into everlasting punishment," &c. But who are these? "All celebrated Ministers, with all their congregations!" So says Mr. Hill; but, happily for me, my heart starts at the thought with the greatest detestation; and my pen has testified, that these condemned wretches are in general, "obstinate workers of iniquity," and, in particular, unrenewed Anti-Calvinists, and "impenitent Nicolaitans," page 217, the very page which Mr. Hill quotes. I describe the unrenewed Anti-Calvinists thus: "Stubborn sons of Belial, saying, Lord, thy Father is merciful; and if thou didst die for all, why not for us?" "Obstinate Pharisees, who plead the good they did in their own name, to supersede the Redeemer's merit." Impenitent Nicolaitans, or Antinomians, I describe thus: (Pages 211, 216 :) "Obstinate violators of God's law—who scorned personal holiness—rejected Christ's word of command—have gone on still in their wickedness—have continued in doing evil—have been unfaithful unto death—and have defiled their garments to the last." Is it possible that Mr. Hill should take this for a description of all celebrated Ministers, and of all their congregations; and that, upon so glaring a mistake, he should represent me as making them "all go to hell together?"

XIV. O ye pious Calvinists, whether ye fill our celebrated pulpits, or attend upon them that do, far from sending you "all to hell together," as you are told I do, I exult in the hope of meeting you all together in heaven: I lie not; I speak the truth in Him that shall justify us by our works; even now I enjoy a foretaste of heaven in lying at your feet in spirit; and my conscience bears me witness that though I try to detect and oppose your mistakes, I sincerely love and honour your persons. My regard for you, as zealous defenders of the first Gospel axiom, is unalterable. Though your mistaken zeal should prompt you to think or say all manner of evil against me, because I help Mr. Wesley to defend the second; I am determined to offer you still the right hand of fellowship. And if any of you should honour me so far as to accept it, I shall think myself peculiarly happy; for, next to Jesus and Truth, the esteem and love of good men is what I consider as the most invaluable blessing. A desire to recover the interest I once had in the brotherly kindness of some of you, has in part engaged me to clear myself from the mistaken charges of calumny and forgery, by which my hasty opponent has prejudiced you against me and my Checks. If you find that he has defended your cause with carnal weapons, hope with me, that precipitation and too warm a zeal for your doctrines have misled him, and not malice or disingenuity.

Hope it also, ye Anti-Calvinists, considering that if St. James and St. John, through mere bigotry and impatience of opposition, were once ready to command fire from heaven to come down upon the Samaritans, it is no wonder that Mr. Hill, in an unguarded moment, should have commanded the fire of the Calvinistic zeal to kindle against Mr. Wesley and me. As you do not unchristian now the two rash Apostles for a sin, of

which they immediately repented ; let me beseech you to confirm your love towards Mr. Hill, who has probably repented already of the mistakes into which his peculiar sentiments have betrayed his good-nature and good-breeding.

XV. I return to you, honoured Sir, and beg you would forgive me the liberty I have taken, to lay before the public what I should have been glad to have buried in eternal oblivion ; but your *Finishing Stroke* has been so heavy and desperate, as to make this addition to *Logica Genevensis* necessary to clear up my doctrine, to vindicate my honesty, to point out the mistaken Author of the *Farrago*, and give the world a new specimen of the arguments by which your system must be defended, when reason, conscience, and Scripture, (the three most formidable batteries in the world,) begin to play upon its ramparts.

You “earnestly entreat” me in your Postscript, to publish a manuscript sermon on Rom. xi. 5, 6, that I preached about eleven years ago in my church, in defence of the first gospel-axiom. You are pleased to call it three times, “excellent,” and you present the public with an extract from it, made up of some unguarded passages ; detached from those that in a great degree guard them, explain my meaning, confirm the doctrine of the Checks, and sap the foundation of your mistakes. As I am not less willing to defend free grace, than to plead for faithful obedience, I shall gladly grant your request, so far at least as to send my old sermon into the world with additions in brackets, just as I preached it again last spring ; assuring you that the greatest addition is in favour of free grace. By thus complying with your “earnest entreaty,” I shall show my respect, meet you half way, gratify the curiosity of our readers, and yet give them a specimen of what appears to me a free, guarded Gospel.

That discourse will be the principal piece of "An Equal Check to Pharisaism and Antinomianism," which I have prepared for the press. Upon the plan of the doctrines it contains, I do not despair to see moderate Calvinists, and unprejudiced Anti-Calvinists, acknowledge their mutual orthodoxy, and embrace one another with mutual forbearance. May you and I set them the example! In the mean time, may the brotherly love with which we forgive each other the real or apparent unkindness of our publications, continue and increase! May the charity that is not provoked, and hopeth all things, uniformly influence our hearts! So shall the words that drop from our lips, or distil from our pens, evidence that we are, or desire to be, the close followers of the meek, gentle, and yet impartial, plain-spoken Lamb of God. For his sake, to whom we are both so greatly indebted, restore me to your former benevolence, and be persuaded, that, notwithstanding the severity of your *Finishing Stroke*, and the plainness of my answer, I really think it an honour, and feel it a pleasure, to subscribe myself,

Honoured and dear Sir,

Your affectionate and obedient servant

in the Gospel of our common Lord,

J. FLETCHER.

MADELEY,

September 13, 1773.

## APPENDIX.

Upon the remaining difference between the Calvinists and the Anti-Calvinists, with respect to our Lord's doctrine of justification BY WORDS, and St. James's doctrine of justification by WORKS.

To force my opponents out of the last intrenchment in which they defend their mistakes, and from behind which they attack the justification by words and works peculiarly insisted on by our Lord and St. James, I only need to show how far we agree with respect to that justification ; to state the difference that remains between us ; and to prove the unreasonableness of considering us as Papists because we oppose an unscriptural and irrational distinction, that leaves Mr. Fulsome in full possession of all his Antinomian dotages.

On both sides we agree to maintain, in opposition to Socinians and Deists, that the grand, the primary and properly meritorious cause of our justification, from first to last, both in the day of conversion and in the day of judgment, is only the precious atonement, and the infinite merits, of our Lord Jesus Christ. We all agree likewise, that, in the day of conversion, faith is the instrumental cause of our justification before God. Nay, if I mistake not, we come one step nearer to each other ; for we equally hold, that after conversion the works of faith are, in this world, and will be in the day of judgment, the evidencing cause of our justification : That is, the works of faith (under the above-mentioned primary cause of our salvation, and in subordination to the faith that gives them birth) are now, and will be in the great day, the evidence



that shall instrumentally cause our justification as believers. Thus Mr. Hill says, (*Review*, page 149,) “Neither Mr. Shirley, nor I, nor any Calvinist that I ever heard of, deny, that, though a sinner be *justified in the sight of God by Christ alone*, he is *declaratively justified by works*, both here and at the day of judgment.” And Mr. Madan, in his *Sermon on Justification by Works, &c.*, stated, explained, and reconciled with *Justification by Faith, &c.* say,s (Page 29,) “By Christ only are we *meritoriously* justified, and by faith only are we *instrumentally* justified in the sight of God; but by works, and not by faith only, are we *declaratively justified before men and angels*.” From these two quotations, which could easily be multiplied to twenty, it is evident, that pious Calvinists hold the doctrine of a justification by the works of faith, or, as Mr. Madan expresses it, after St. James, “by works, and not by faith only.”

It remains now to show wherein we disagree. At first sight the difference seems trifling, but upon close examination it appears that the whole Antinomian gulf still remains fixed between us. Read over the preceding quotations; weigh the clauses which I have put in Italics; compare them with what Mr. Berridge says in his *Christian World Unmasked*, (page 26,) of “an *absolute* impossibility of being justified in *any manner* by our works,” namely, *before God*, and you will see, that, although pious Calvinists allow we are justified by works before men and angels, yet they deny our being ever justified by works before God, in whose sight they suppose we are for ever “justified by Christ alone;” that is, only by Christ’s good works and sufferings absolutely imputed to us, from the very first moment in which we make a single act of true faith, if not from all eternity. Thus works are still entirely excluded from having any hand either in our intermediate or final justification before

God ; and thus they are still represented as totally needless to our eternal salvation. Now, in direct opposition to the above-mentioned distinction, we Anti-Calvinists believe, that adult persons cannot be saved without being justified by faith as sinners, according to the light of their dispensation ; and by works as believers, according to the time and opportunities they have of working :—We assert, that the works of faith are not less necessary to our justification before God as believers, than faith itself is necessary to our justification before him as sinners :—And we maintain, that when faith does not produce good works, (much more, when it produces the worst works, such as adultery, hypocrisy, treachery, murder, &c.,) it dies, and justifies no more ; seeing it is a living, and not a dead faith, that justifies us as sinners ; even as they are living and not dead works that justify us as believers. I have already exposed the absurdity of the doctrine, that works are necessary to our final justification before men and angels, but not before God : However, as this distinction is one of the grand subterfuges of the decent Antinomians, and one of the pleas by which the hearts of the simple are most easily deceived into Solifidianism, to the many arguments that I have already produced upon this head, in the Sixth Letter of the Fourth Check, I beg leave to add those which follow :—

1. The way of making up the Antinomian gap by saying, that works are necessary to our intermediate and final justification before men and angels, but not before God, is as bad as the gap itself. “ If God is for me,” says judicious Mr. Fulsome, “ who can be against me ? If God has for ever justified me ‘ only by Christ,’ and if works have absolutely no place in my justification before him, what care I for men and angels ? Should they justify when God condemns, what would their

absolution avail? And if they condemn when God justifies, what signifies their condemnation? All creatures are fallible. The myriads of men and angels are as nothing before God. ‘He is all in all.’” Thus Mr. Fulsome, by a most judicious way of arguing, keeps the field of licentiousness, where the Solifidian Ministers have inadvertently brought him, and whence he is too wise to depart upon their brandishing before him the broken reed of an absurd distinction.

2. Our justification by works will principally, and in some cases entirely, turn upon the works of the heart, which are unknown to all but God. Again: Were men and angels in all cases to pass a decisive sentence upon us according to our words, they might judge as severely as Mr. Hill judges Mr. Wesley; they might brand us for forgery upon the most frivolous appearances; at least they might condemn us as rashly as Job’s friends condemned him. Once more: Were our fellow-creatures to condemn us decisively by our works, they would often do it as unjustly as the disciples condemned the blessed woman who poured a box of very precious ointment on our Lord’s head. They had indignation, and blamed as uncharitable *waste*, what our Lord was pleased to call “a good work wrought upon him,”—a good work, which shall be told for a memorial of her as long as the Christian Gospel is preached. To this may be added the mistake of the Apostles, who, even after they had received the Holy Ghost condemned Saul of Tarsus by his former, when they should have absolved him by his latter, works. And even now, how few believers would justify Phinehas for running Zimri or Cosbi through the body, or Peter for striking Ananias and Sapphira dead, without giving them time to say once, “Lord, have mercy upon us!” Nay, how many would condemn them as rash men, if not cruel murderers! In some cases

therefore, none can possibly justify or condemn believers by their works, but He who is perfectly acquainted with all the outward circumstances of their actions, and with all the secret springs whence they flow.

3. The Scriptures know nothing of the distinction which I explode. When St. Paul denies that Abraham was "justified by works," it is only when he treats of the justification of a sinner, and speaks of the "works of unbelief."—When Christ says, "By thy words thou shalt be justified," he makes no mention of angels. To suppose that they shall be able to justify a world of men by their words, is to suppose that they have heard and do remember all the words of all mankind, which is supposing them to be gods. Nay, far from being judged by angels, St. Paul says, that "we shall judge them;" not indeed as proper judges, but as Christ's assessors and mystical members; for our Lord, in his description of the great day, informs us, that he, and not men or angels, will justify the sheep, and condemn the goats, by their works.

4. St. Paul discountenances the evasive distinction which I oppose, when he says, "Thinkest thou, O man, who doest such things, that thou shalt escape the righteous judgment of God, who will render eternal life to them that, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, &c., when he shall judge the *secrets* of men by Jesus Christ?" For reason dictates, that neither men nor angels, but the "Searcher of hearts" alone, will be able to justify or condemn us by *secrets*, unknown possibly to all but himself.

5. If you say, "Most men shall have been condemned or justified long before the day of judgment; therefore the solemn pomp of that day will be appointed merely for the sake of a justification by men and angels:" I exclaim against the unrea-

sonableness of supposing that "the great and terrible day of God," with an eye to which the world of rationals was created, is to be only the day of men and angels: And I reply, —Although I grant, that judgment certainly finds us where death leaves us; final justification and condemnation being chiefly a solemn seal set, if I may so speak, upon the forehead of those whose consciences are already justified or condemned, according to the last turn of their trial upon earth; yet it appears, both from Scripture and reason, that mankind cannot properly be judged before the great day; departed spirits are not men; and dead men cannot be tried till the resurrection of the dead takes place, that departed spirits, and raised bodies, may form men again by their re-union. Therefore, in the nature of things, God cannot judge mankind before the great day; and to suppose that the Father has appointed such a day, that we may be finally justified by our works before men and angels, and not before Him, is to suppose that he has committed the chief judgment to the parties to be judged, that is, to men and angels, and not to Jesus Christ.

6. But, if I mistake not, St. James puts the matter out of all dispute, where he says: "You see then that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." (ii. 24.) This shows that a man is justified by works before the same Judge, by whom he is justified by faith; and here is the proof: Nobody was ever justified by faith before men and angels; because faith is an inward act of the soul, of which none but the "Trier of the reins" can be a judge. Therefore, as the Justifier by faith, alluded to in the latter part of the verse, is undoubtedly God alone; it is contrary to all the rules of criticism to suppose, that the Justifier by works, alluded to in the very same sentence, is men and angels. Nay, in the preceding verse God



is expressly mentioned, and not men or angels: "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness," that is, he was justified before God; so that the same Lord who justified him as a sinner by faith, in the day of his conversion, justified him also as a believer by works in the day of his trial.

7. But this is not all: Turning to Genesis xxii., the chapter which St. James had undoubtedly in view when he insisted on Abraham's justification by works, I find the best of arguments, matter of fact: "And it came to pass that God did tempt," that is, try, "Abraham." The Patriarch acquitted himself like a sound believer in the hard trial,—he obediently offered up his favourite son. Here St. James addresses a Solifidian, and bluntly says, "Wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead;" that is, that when faith gives over working by obedient love, it sickens, dies, and commences a *dead* faith? "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he offered up Isaac upon the altar?" If Mr. Hill answers: "Yes, he was justified by works before men and angels, but not before God:" I reply, Impossible! for neither men nor angels put him to the trial, to bring out what was in his heart. God tried him, that he might justly punish or wisely reward him; therefore God justified him. If a judge, after trying a man on a particular occasion, acquits him upon his good behaviour, in order to proceed to the reward of him, is it not absurd to say that the man is acquitted before the court, but not before the judge; especially if there is neither court nor jury present, but only the judge? Was not this the case at Abraham's trial? Do we hear of any angel being present but מלאך יהוה, the Angel Jehovah? And had not Abraham left his two servants with the ass at the foot of the mount? Is it reasonable then to suppose, that Abraham was



justified *before them* by a work, which as yet they had not heard of? for, says St. James, "When," which implies *as soon as*, "he had offered Isaac, he was justified by works." If you say that he was justified *before Isaac*; I urge the absurdity of supposing, that God made so much ado about the trial of Abraham before *the lad*; and I demand proof that God had appointed the youth to be the justifier of his aged parent.

8. But let the sacred historian decide the question: "And the Lord called to Abraham out of heaven, and said, Lay not thy hand upon the lad, for now I know" declaratively "that thou fearest God," that is, believest in God: *Now* I can praise and reward thee with wisdom and equity; "seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thy only son, from me." Upon Calvinistic principles, did not God speak improperly? Should not he have said, "Now angels and men, before whom thou hast offered Isaac, do know that thou fearest me?" But if God had spoken thus, would he have spoken consistently with either his veracity or his wisdom? Is it not far more reasonable to suppose, that, although God, as omniscient, with a glance of his eye "tries the heart, searches the reins," and foresees all future contingencies, yet, as a Judge and a wise dispenser of punishments and rewards, he condemns no unbelievers, and justifies no believers, in St. James's sense, but by the evidence of the tempers, words, and actions, which actually spring from their unbelief or their faith?

9. Was it not from the same motive, that God tried Job in the land of Uz; (i. 12;) Israel in the wilderness; (Deut. viii. 1, compared with Josh. xxii. 2;) and King Hezekiah in Jerusalem? (2 Chron. xxxii. 31.) "God," says the historian, "left him" to the temptation, "that He" (God) "might know" declaratively "all that was in his heart." It is true, Mr. Hill supposes, in the second edition of his Five

Letters, that the words, "HE might know," refer to Hezekiah; but Canne more judiciously refers to Genesis xxii. 1, where God tried Abraham; not that Abraham might know, but that He himself might declaratively know what was in Abraham's heart. If the word, "that HE might know," did refer to Hezekiah, should not the affix (ו) "he," or "him," have been added to רעה, thus, לרעתו, as it is put to the two preceding verbs, עזבו, "he left HIM," לנסותו, "to try HIM?"

10. Our Lord himself decides the question, where he says to his believing disciples, "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I also confess *before my Father* who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny *before my Father* who is in heaven." It was undoubtedly an attention to this scripture that made Dr. Owen say, "Hereby," by personal obedience, "that faith whereby we are justified" as sinners "is evidenced, proved, manifested *in the sight of God and man.*" And yet, astonishing! this passage, which indirectly gives up the only real difference there is between Mr. Hill's justification by works and *our's*,—this passage, which cuts him off from the only way he has of making his escape, (except that by which his brother tried to make his own, see Fourth Check,)—this very passage, which makes so much for my sentiment, is one of those concerning which he says, (*Finishing Stroke*, page 14,) "Words *prudently* expunged by Mr. Fletcher," when they are only words which for brevity's sake I very *imprudently* left out, since they cut down Solifidianism, even with Dr. Owen's sword.

To conclude: Attentive reader, peruse James ii., where the justification of believers by works before God is so strongly insisted upon: Observe what is said there of "the law of liberty;" of believers being judged by that law; of the judgment with-

out mercy, that shall be shown to fallen merciless believers, according to that law:—Consider that this doctrine exactly coincides with the Sermon upon the Mount, and the Epistle to the Hebrews; that it perfectly tallies with Ezekiel xviii & xxxiii; Matt. xii & xxv; Rom. ii.; Gal. vi. &c.; and that it is delivered to “brethren,” yea, to “the beloved brethren of St. James,” to whom he could say, “Out of his own will the Father of Lights begat us with the word of truth.” Take notice, that the charge indirectly brought against them, is, that they “had the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect to persons;” and that they “deceived their own selves,” by not being as careful “doers” as they were diligent “hearers of the word:” Then look round upon some of our most famous believers; see how foaming, how roaring, how terrible are the billows of their partiality. Read *An Address from Candid Protestants to the Rev. Mr. Fletcher*; read *The Finishing Stroke*; read *More Work for Mr. Wesley*; read *the Checks to Antinomianism*; and say, if there is not as great need to insist upon a believer’s justification by words and works, as there was in the days of our Lord and St. James; and if it is not high time to say to modern believers, “My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons.—So *speak* ye, and so *do*, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty; for he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath showed no mercy:—For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again,” by Him that “shall render to every one according to what he has done in the body, whether it be good or bad.” But “candid Protestants” have an answer ready in their *Address*: This is “the Popish doctrine of justification by works,” and “Arminian Methodism turned out rank Popery at last.” This is a mingle-mangle of “the

most high and mighty, self-righteous, self-potent, self-important, self-sanctifying, self-justifying, and self-exalting MEDLEY *Minister*."\*—The misfortune is, that amidst these witticisms of "the Protestants," (for it seems the Calvinists engross that name to themselves,) we "rank Papists" still look out for arguments; and when we find none, or only such as are worse than none, we still say, *Logica Genevensis!* and remain confirmed in our "dreadful heresy," or rather in our Lord's Anti-Calvinistic doctrine, "By thy words thou shalt be JUSTIFIED, and by thy words thou shalt be CONDEMNED."

\* See the above-mentioned *Address from Candid Protestants*.



LOGICA GENEVENSIENSIS CONTINUED:

OR,

*THE SECOND PART*

OF THE

FIFTH CHECK TO ANTINOMIANISM.

CONTAINING A DEFENCE

OF

“*JACK-O’-LANTERN,*” AND “*THE PAPER-KITE,*”  
*THAT IS, SINCERE OBEDIENCE;*

OF THE “*COBWEB,*” THAT IS, THE EVANGELICAL  
LAW OF LIBERTY;

AND THE “*VALIANT SERJEANT IF,*” THAT IS,  
THE CONDITIONALITY OF PERSEVERANCE;

Attacked by the Rev. Mr. Berridge, M. A., Vicar of Everton,  
and late Fellow of Clare Hall, Cambridge, in his Book called,  
*The Christian World Unmasked.*

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*Quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus.*

HOR.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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HAVING animadverted upon Mr. Hill's *Finishing Stroke*, I proceed to ward off the first blow which the Rev. Mr. Berridge has given to practical religion. But before I mention his mistakes, I must do justice to his person. It is by no means my design to represent him as a Divine who either leads a loose life, or *intends* to hurt the Redeemer's interest. His conduct as a Christian is exemplary; his labours as a Minister are great; and I am persuaded that the wrong touches which he gives to the ark of godliness are not only undesigned, but intended to do God service.

There are so many things commendable in the pious Vicar of Everton, and so much truth in his *Christian World Unmasked*, that I find it a hardship to expose the unguarded parts of that performance. But the cause of this hardship is the ground of my apology. Mr. Berridge is a good, an excellent man; therefore the Antinomian errors, which go abroad into the world with his letters of recommendation, speak in his evangelical strain, and are armed with the poignancy of his wit, cannot be too soon pointed out, and carefully guarded against. I flatter myself that this consideration will procure me his pardon, for taking the liberty of dispatching his "valiant Sergeant" with some doses of rational and scriptural antidotes for those who have drunk into the pleasing mistakes of his book, and want his piety to hinder them from carrying speculative into practical Antinomianism.

## SECTION I.

MR. Berridge advances the capital error of the Antinomian, when he says, that "Faith must *utterly* exclude *all* Justification by works;" and when he represents *the Passport of Obedience* as a *Paper-Kite*.

ONE of my opponents has justly observed, that "the principal cause of controversy among us," is the doctrine of our justification by the works of faith in the day of judgment." At this rampart of practical godliness Mr. Berridge levels such propositions as these, in his *Christian World Unmasked*: (Second Edition, pages 170, 171 :) "Final justification by faith is the capital doctrine of the Gospel. —Faith being the term of salvation, &c., must utterly exclude all justification by works."—And, page 26, we read of "an absolute impossibility of being justified in any manner by our works."

If these positions are true, say, reader, if St. James, St. Paul, and Jesus Christ, did not advance great untruths when they said, "By works a man is justified, and not by faith only." (James ii. 24.) "For not the hearers of the law" of Christ "are just before God, but the doers shall be justified, &c., in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ." (Romans ii. 13, 16.) "For," adds our Lord, when speaking of the day of judgment, "by thy words thou shalt be justified," &c. (Matthew xii. 37.) Christian reader, say, Who is mistaken? Christ and his Apostles, or the late Fellow of Clare Hall?

Mr. Berridge goes farther still. Without ceremony he shuts the gates of heaven against every man who seeks to be justified by works, according to our Lord's and St. James's doctrine. For when he has assured us, (page 171,) that "faith must utterly exclude all justification by works," he imme-

diately adds, "And the man who seeks to be justified by his passport of obedience, will find no passage through the city gates." Might not our author have unmasked Calvinism a little more, and told the Christian world, that the man who minds what Christ says shall be turned into hell?

See the boldness of Solifidianism ! \* In our Lord's days believers were to keep their mouths as with a bridle, and to abstain from every idle word, lest in the day of judgment they should not be justified. In St John's time they were to "do Christ's commandments, that they might enter through the gates into the city;" (Revelation xxii. 14;) but in our days, a Gospel Minister assures us, (page 171,) that the believer, who, according to our Lord's doctrine, seeks to be "justified by his passport of obedience, will find no passage through the city gates. He may talk of the tree of life, and soar up with his PAPER KITE to the gates of paradise, but will find no entrance."—I grant it, if an Antinomian Pope has St. Peter's key; but so long as Christ has the key of David, so long as he opens, and no Solifidian shuts, the dutiful servant, instead of being sent flying to hell after "the paper kite" of obedience, will, through his Lord's merits, be honourably admitted into heaven by the passport of good works, which he has about him. For though the remembrance of his sins, and the sight of his Saviour, will make him ashamed to produce it; yet he had rather die ten thousand deaths, than be found without it. The celestial Porter, after having kindly opened it for him, will read it before an innumerable company of angels, and say, "Enter

\* Solifidianism is the doctrine of the Solifidians; and the Solifidians are men who, because sinners are justified (*sola fide*) by sole faith in the day of conversion, infer, as Mr. Berridge, that "believing is the total term of all salvation," and conclude, as Mr. Hill, that the doctrine of final justification by the works of faith in the great day, is "full of rottenness and deadly poison." It is a softer word for Antinomianism.

into the joy of thy Lord; for I was hungry and thou gavest me meat," &c. (Mat. xxv. 35, &c.)

If the Vicar of Everton throws in an Antinomian caveat against this "passport of obedience,"† and ridicules it still as a "paper kite," Isaiah and St. Paul will soon silence him. "Open ye the gates," says the evangelical Prophet, "that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth" of the Gospel doctrines "may enter in:" For, adds the evangelical Apostle, "circumcision," including all professional faith, "is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God." Yea "though I have all faith and no charity, I am nothing." (Isaiah xxvi. 2; 1 Cor. vii. 19; xiii. 2.)

If I am at the city gates, when Mr. Berridge will exclaim against me, the "passport of obedience," I think I shall venture to check his imprudence by the following questions: Can there be a medium between "not having a passport of obedience," and "having one of disobedience?" Must a man, to the honour of free grace, take a passport of refractoriness along with him? Must he bring a certificate of adultery and murder to be welcome into the New Jerusalem? I am persuaded that, with the utmost abhorrence, Mr. Berridge answers, *No!* But his great Diana speaks louder than he, and says before all the world, "There is no need that he should have a testimonium of adultery and murder, but he may if he pleases; nay, if he is so inclined, he may get a diploma of treachery and incest, it will never invalidate his title to glory; for if David and the incestuous Corinthian had saving faith, inamissible eternal life, and finished salvation, when they committed their crimes; and if faith or *believing*," as Mr. Berridge affirms, (page 168,) "is

† I speak only of the obedience of faith. It is only for that obedience, and for the works of faith, that St. James pleads in his Epistle, Mr. Wesley in the Minutes, and I in the Checks; all other obedience is insincere, and all other works pharisaical.

the total term of all salvation," why might not every Christian, if he is so minded, murder his neighbour, worship idols, and gratify even incestuous lusts, as well as primitive backsliders, without risking his finished salvation? Upon this Antinomian axiom advanced by Mr. Berridge, "Believing is the total term of all salvation," I lay my engine, a grain of reason, and ask every unprejudiced person, who is able to conclude that two and two make four, whether we may not, without any magical power, heave morality out of the world, or Calvinism out of the Church.

If Mr. Berridge pleads that, when he says, (page 168,) "Believing is the total term of all salvation," he means a faith "including and producing all obedience:" I reply, Then he gives up Solifidianism; he means the very faith which I contend for in the Checks; and, pressing him with his own definition of faith, I ask, How can a "faith including all obedience," include murder, as in the case of David; idolatry, as in the case of Solomon; lying, cursing, and denying Christ, as in the case of Peter; and even incest, as in the case of the apostate Corinthian? Are murder, idolatry, cursing, and incest, "all obedience?"—If Mr. Berridge replies, "No:" Then David, Solomon, &c., lost the justifying faith of St. Paul, when they lost the justifying works of St. James; and so Mr. Berridge gives up the point together with Calvinism.—If he says, "Yes:" He not only gives up St. James's justification, but quite unmasks Antinomianism; and the rational world, who "come and peep," may see that his doctrine of grace is not a chaste virgin, but a *great Diana*, who pays as little regard to decency, as she does to Scripture.

If this is a sophism, I humbly entreat the learned Fellow of Clare Hall to convince the world of it, by showing where the fallacy lies. He can do it, if it can be done, "having consumed a deal of can-

dle at a noted Hall at Cambridge, in lighting up a good understanding," even after he was declared master of the art of logic. But if the dilemma is forcible, and grinds Calvinism as between an upper and nether mill-stone, I hope that he will no longer oppose the dictates of reason, merely to pour contempt upon our Lord's doctrine of a believer's justification by the works of faith; and to sport himself with obedience, rendered as ridiculous as Samson was, when the Philistines treated him as a blind mill-horse.

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## SECTION II.

CONTAINING an account of the doctrine of the Solifidians with respect to St. James's Gospel law, or Law of Liberty, which Mr. Berridge indirectly calls "a Cobweb;" and with respect to sincere obedience, which he directly calls a *Jack-o'-lantern*.

WE have already seen how Mr. Berridge gives the passport of obedience to the winds as a boyish trumpery. To render the "paper kite" more contemptible, (page 145,) he ties to it, instead of a tail, "a spruce new set of duties half a yard long, called *legally evangelical*, and *evangelically legal*, unknown to Christ and his Apostles, but discovered lately by some ingenious gentlemen." Just as if I, who have ventured upon those expressions, to indicate the harmony that subsists between the promises of the Gospel and the duties of the law of liberty, and Mr. Wesley, who has let those compounded words pass in the Second Check, were the first men who have taught, that believers "are not without law to God, but under a law to Christ." (1 Corinthians ix. 21.) Just as if nobody had said before us, "Do we make void the law through faith," or through the Gospel? "God forbid! Yea, we establish the law;" (Romans iii. 31 :) That is, by preach-



ing "a faith that worketh by love," we establish the moral law; for "love is the fulfilling of it, and he that loveth another, has fulfilled the law." (Rom. xiii. 8, 10.)—Not indeed the ceremonial law of Moses; for ceremonies and love are not the same thing: Nor yet the Adamic law of innocence; for if the Apostle had spoken of that law, he would have said, "He that has always loved another with perfect love, has fulfilled the law:" Therefore he evidently speaks of the evangelical law, preached thus by St. James to believers: "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty:" (James ii. 12:) A law, which is so called, not because it gives us the least liberty to sin; but because, during the day of salvation, it indulges us with the precious liberty to repent of our former sins, and come to Christ for pardon, and for stronger supplies of sanctifying grace.

However, Mr. Berridge, as if the Antinomians had already burned St. James's Epistle, says, (page 144,) after speaking of the law of innocence given to Adam before the fall, "All other laws," and consequently the law of liberty, "are cobwebs of a human brain." What, Sir, do you think that Moses was a spiritual spider, when he wove the ceremonial law? Can you possibly imagine that David's "blessed man, whose delight is in the law of the Lord," meditates day and night in a law which bids him "stand upon his own legs," and absolutely despair of mercy upon "a single trip?" Would you, on second thoughts, say, that St. Paul and St. James weave "cobwebs" in the brains of mankind, when they declare, that "the end of the commandment" or of Christ's law "is charity, from a pure heart, a good conscience, and faith unfeigned;" when they speak of fulfilling "the royal law, according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" or when they assure us, "that he who loveth another" hath ful-

filled it ;” and exhort us to “ bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ ?” (See 1 Timothy i. 5 ; James ii. 8 ; Galatians v. 13 ; and vi. 2.)

I shall not borrow here the rash expression, which Mr. Berridge uses when he confounds original worthiness, and derived merit, and reflects upon Christ, who evidently attributes the latter to believers : I shall not say, that my new opponent’s mistake “ is enough to make a devil blush ;” \* but

\* How strangely may prejudice influence a good man ! Mr. Berridge (page 164, &c.) raises a masked battery against the article of the Minutes, where Mr. Wesley hints, that the word *merit* might be used in a scriptural sense to express what Dr. Owen, by an uncouth circumlocution, calls “ the rewardable condescency, that our whole obedience, through God’s gracious appointment, has unto eternal life.”—“ O Sir,” says Mr. Berridge, “ God must abominate the pride, the insolence of human pride, which could dream of merit : It is enough to make a devil blush.”—There is great truth in these words, if Mr. Berridge speaks only of proper merit, or merit of condignness ; but if he extends them to the evangelical worthiness so frequently mentioned by our Lord ; if he applies them to improper merit, generally called merit of congruity, he indirectly charges Christ with teaching a doctrine so excessively diabolical, that the devil himself would be ashamed of it : And what is more surprising still, if I mistake not, he indirectly enforces the dreadful heresy himself by an illustration, which, in some degree, shows how God rewards us “ for ” our works, and “ according to ” our works :—“ A tender-hearted gentleman (says he) employs two labourers out of charity, to weed a little spot of four square yards. Both are old and much decrepit, but one is stronger than the other. The stronger weeds three yards, and receives three crowns ; the weaker weedeth one, and receives one crown. Now, both are rewarded for their labour, and according to their labour, but not for the merit of their labour.”—Granted, if merit is taken in the sense of proper merit, or merit of condignness and equivalence ; but absolutely denied, if it is taken in the sense of improper worthiness, or merit of congruity.—Let Thomas Aquinas, the most famous of all the Papist Divines, bring his standard of merit, and measure Mr. Berridge ; and if the Vicar of Everton (how loudly soever he may exclaim against the word) is not found holding the doctrine of merit of congruity as much as Mr. Baxter, let me for ever forfeit all pretensions to a grain of common sense. “ The angelic Doctor ” defines merit thus : *Dicitur aliquis mereri ex condigno, quando invenitur æqualitas inter præmium et meritum secundum æstimationem ; ex congruo autem, tantum quando*

I may venture to affirm, that before he can prove the law of liberty is a "cobweb," he must not only burn St. James's Epistle, but sweep away the Epistles of St. Paul to the Romans and to the Galatians; together with the law, the Prophets, and the Psalms. While he considers whether the tree of Antinomianism will yield a besom strong enough for that purpose, I beg leave to dwell a moment upon another of his mistakes. It respects obedience and good works, against which Solifidians indirectly wage an eternal war. It runs through several pages, but centres in the following unguarded propositions:—

Page 35, line 18. "Sincere obedience is nowhere mentioned in the Gospel as a condition of salvation." And page 36, line 4: "Works have no share in the covenant of grace as a condition of life." I grant it, if by *salvation* in the first proposition, and by *life* in the second, Mr. Berridge means initial salvation, and life begun in the world of grace. For undoubtedly the "free gift is come upon all men to justification," or salvation from the damning guilt of original sin, and consequently to some interest in the Divine favour previous to all obedience and works. Again and again have I observed, that, as "by one man's disobedience many"

*talis æqualitas non invenitur; sed solum secundum liberalitatem dantis munus tribuitur quod dantem decet:*"—That is, "a man is said to merit with a merit of condignness, (that is, to merit properly,) when upon an average there appears an equality between the reward and the merit. But he is said to merit only with a merit of congruity, (that is, to merit improperly,) when there is no such equality; and when a benefactor, out of mere liberality, makes a present, which it becomes him to make."—Now let candid men compare Mr. Berridge's illustration with the definition that the most renowned Papist Doctor has given us of merit; and let them say if Mr. Berridge, instead of splitting the hair, does not maintain and illustrate the doctrine of merit of congruity; and if one of the blushes which he supposes our Lord's doctrine of worthiness, or merit, would bring upon the face of some modest devil, does not become the author of the *Christian World Unmasked*, more than the author of the Minutes!

(οἱ πολλοί, the multitudes of men) “were made sinners; so by the obedience of one, many” (οἱ πολλοί, the multitudes of men) shall, to the end of the world, be made righteous, that is, partakers of the above-mentioned justification, in consequence of Christ’s atonement, and the talent of free grace, and supernatural light, which “enlightens every man that comes into the world.” (Compare Rom. v. 18, 19, with John i. 4, 5, 9.) Far from opposing this initial life of free grace, this salvation unconditionally begun, I assert its necessity against the Pelagians, and its reality against the Papists and Calvinists, \* who agree to maintain, that God has

\* Some of my readers will wonder at my coupling the Calvinists and the Romanists, when I speak of those who hold absolute reprobation; but my observation is founded upon matter of fact. We are too well acquainted with the opinion of the Calvinists concerning the vessels of wrath. The sentiments of the Papists, not being so public, may be brought to light by the following anecdote: “Being some years ago at Ganges, in the south of France, I went with Mr. Pomaret, the Protestant Minister of that town, to recommend to Divine mercy the soul of a woman dying in child-bed. When he came out of the house, he said, Did you take notice of the person who was by the bed-side? He is a man-midwife, and a strenuous Papist. You see by the consequences that this poor woman had a very hard labour. As it was doubtful whether the child would be born alive, he insisted upon baptizing it in the womb, *avec une seringue*, according to custom. The Protestant women in the room, exclaimed against his intention of tormenting a woman in that extremity, by so ridiculous and needless an operation. ‘Needless!’ replied he, ‘how can you call that needless, which will save a soul? Do you not know, that if the child dies unbaptized, it will certainly be lost?’” The doctrine of the Romish Church is then free wrath, or free reprobation, for the myriads of infants who die without baptism all the world over.

I beg leave to confirm this anecdote by a public testimony. My opponents have frequently mentioned the agreement of my sentiments with those of the Popish champion, Bellarmine. This gave me a desire of looking into his works. Accordingly I procured them last winter; and, to my great surprise, before I had read a page, I found him a peculiar admirer of the great predestinarian St Augustine, whom he perpetually quotes. Nay, he is so strenuous an asserter of Calvinistic election, that, to prove, “We can give no account of God’s election on our part,” among the reasons advanced by Calvin, Coles, Zanchius, &c., in support

absolutely reprobated a considerable part of mankind. But Mr. Berridge's propositions are Antinomianism unmasked, if he extends their meaning (as his scheme does) to finished salvation, and to a life of glory, unconditionally bestowed upon adulterous backsliders; for sincere obedience, or the good works of faith, are a condition (or, to use Mr. Berridge's word, "a term") indispensably required of all that stay long enough upon the stage of life to act as moral agents. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away." (John xv. 2.) "Be not deceived; neither fornicators, &c., shall inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Corinthians vi. 9. See Ezekiel. xviii. and xxxiii.) "If the penitent thief had lived," says our Church, "and not regarded the works of faith, he should have lost

of unconditional election and reprobation, he proposes the following argument: *Tertia ratio &c. educitur a parvulorum diversitate, quorum aliqui rapiuntur statim a baptismo, alii paulò ante baptismum, quorum priores ad gloriam predestinatorum, posteriores ad pœnam reproborum pertinere non est dubium; nec possunt hic ulla merita previsa, ullusve bonus usus liberi arbitrii, aut gratiæ fingi.*—BELLARMINI Opera, *De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio*. c. v. *Antverpiæ*, 1611, page 776. That is, "The third reason is taken from the different lot of little children; some being snatched immediately after baptism, and others a little before baptism; the former of whom undoubtedly go to the glory of the elect, and the latter to the punishment of the reprobates. Nor can any desert foreseen, or any good use of free will or of grace, be here pretended." This argument is truly worthy of the cause which it supports. The very essence of Calvinism is an irreconcilable opposition to the second Gospel axiom. And as Bellarmine's argument demolishes that axiom, (it being impossible that the damnation of reprobated infants should be from themselves,) he necessarily builds up Calvinism, with all its gracious doctrines. I might here return my last opponent these words of his *Finishing Stroke*, page 15, which he writes in capitals, "So BELLARMINE."—"See, Sir, what company you are again found in:"—But I do not admire such arguments. Were Father Walsh and Cardinal Bellarmine in the right, it would be no more disgrace to Mr. Hill to stand between them both, than it is to me to believe with the Cardinal, that Christ has said, "In the day of judgment, by thy words thou shalt be justified."—For, as a diamond does not become a pebble upon the finger of a Papist, so truth does not become a lie under his pen.



his salvation again." As for the argument taken from these words, "He that believeth" (now, with the heart unto righteousness) "hath everlasting life," that is, has a title to it, and a taste of a life of glory, and shall have the enjoyment of it "if he continues in the faith rooted and grounded;" it is answered at large, Fourth Check, page 98, &c.

Page 38. Mr. Berridge unmask's Antinomianism in the following proposition: "I have gathered up my ends, respecting this matter; and I trust you see at length, that sincere obedience is nothing but a jack-o'-lantern, dancing here and there and everywhere: No man could ever catch him, but thousands have been lost in following him."

If I mistake not, Mr. Berridge here exceeds Mr. Hill. The author of *Pietas Oxoniensis* only supposes, that works have nothing to do before the Judge of all the earth in the matter of our eternal salvation, and that all believers shall "sing louder" in heaven for all their crimes upon earth; but the Vicar of Everton represents sincere obedience (which is a collection of all the good works of upright Heathens, Jews, and Christians) as a "*Jack-o'-lantern*; and thousands," says he, "have been lost by following him."—Here is a blow at the root!—What! thousands lost by following after sincere obedience to God's commands? Impossible!—Our pious author, I hope, means insincere obedience! But if he stands to what he wrote, he must not be surprised, if, with the "good folks east in a Gospel Foundery, I ring a fire-bell," and warn the Protestant world against so capital a mistake. That thousands have been lost by resting in faithless, superficial, hypocritical, insincere obedience, I grant. But thousands!—lost by following after sincere obedience, that is, after the obedience we uprightly perform according to the light we have!—this is as impossible, as that the Holy Spirit should lie when he testifies, "In every nation he



that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him," according to one or another of the Divine dispensations; he is accepted as a converted Heathen, Jew, or Christian.

Had I the voice of a trumpet I would shout upon the walls of our Jerusalem, "Let no man deceive you." Nobody was ever lost, but for not following after, or for starting from, sincere obedience; Christian faith itself being nothing but sincere obedience to this grand Gospel precept, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. We have received apostleship," says St. Paul, "for obedience to the faith among all nations." (Romans i. 5.) No adult children of Adam were ever eternally saved, but such as followed after sincere obedience, at least from the time of their last conversion, if they once drew back towards perdition. For "Christ," says the Apostle, "is the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him;" and he undoubtedly means, that obey him sincerely: "He will render eternal life to them who by patient continuance in well-doing," or by persevering in sincere obedience, "seek for glory."—"Has the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings," says Samuel, "as in obeying," and I dare say he meant sincerely obeying, "the voice of the Lord?—Behold!" whatever Solifidians may say, "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken, than the fat of rams; for rebellion," or disobedience, "is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness as idolatry." (Hebrews v. 9; Romans ii. 7; 1 Samuel xv. 22.)

God, to show the high value he puts upon sincere obedience, sent Jeremiah to the Rechabites with this message: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts, because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts; therefore Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever." His capital

charge against Israel is that of disobedience. St. Peter, who observes that the believing Jews had purified their souls by obeying the truth, asks, "What shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel?" And St. Paul answers, that "Christ will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them,"—and that "God will render tribulation and wrath to them that do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness:" And even that famous passage, "He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life," (John iii. 36,) is, in the original, a rampart against Solifidianism; for, in the last sentence of it, the word rendered *believeth not*, is not *οὐ πιστεύων*, in opposition to the first clause; but *ἀπειθων*, an expression, which, by signifying, equally, he who disobeyeth, and he who believeth not, guards the doctrine of obedience as strongly as that of faith.

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### SECTION III.

AN ANSWER to Mr. Berridge's capital Arguments against Sincere Obedience.

THE serious reader probably wonders at the pious Vicar of Everton, and asks, if he supports his assertions against sincere obedience by arguments. Yes, he does, and some of them are so plausible, that the simple can hardly avoid being deceived by them; nay, and some of the judicious too: For asking, last summer, a sensible Clergyman, what part of Mr. Berridge's book he admired most, he convinced me of the seasonableness of this publication by replying, "I think him most excellent upon sincere obedience." A glaring proof this, that the impossibility of deceiving the very elect is not absolute; and that our Lord did not

give them an impertinent caution when he said, "Take heed that no man deceive you." But let us hear Mr. Berridge.

Page 24. "Perhaps you think that Christ came to shorten man's duty, and make it more feasible by shoving a commandment out of Moses's tables, as the Papists have done; or by clipping and paring all the commandments as the moralists do. Thus sincere obedience, instead of perfect, is now considered as the law of works. But if Jesus Christ came to shorten man's duty, he came to give us a license to sin. For duty cannot be shortened without breaking commandments. And thus Christ becomes a minister of sin with a witness, and must be ranked at the head of Antinomian preachers."—To this specious argument I reply:

1. After the fall, Christ was given in the promise to mankind as a Mediator; and "help was laid upon him" to make man's duty (as a redeemed sinner) feasible. To deny it, is to deny man's redemption. At that first promulgation of the Gospel, what St. Paul calls "the law of faith," and St. James, "the law of liberty," took place. This gracious law has been in force under all the dispensations of the everlasting Gospel ever since. And according to its tenor, in the day of judgment, we shall be justified or condemned. (Matthew xii. 37.)

2. To assert that the law of liberty, or the law of faith, requires of us paradisaical innocence, and such a perfection of bodily and rational powers as Adam had before the fall, is to set Christ's mediation aside; and to suppose, that it leaves us just where it found us, that is, under the old Adamic Covenant. 3. The law of liberty "neither shoves out, pares nor clips" any moral commandment; for it condemns a man for the adultery of the eye, as well as for gross fornication; and for the murder of the tongue or heart, as well as for manual assassination; and it requires us to love God with

all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves, according to the light of our dispensation, and the talent of power we have received from above. He that keeps this whole law, and breaks it in one point, (as Saul did in the matter of Agag, David in the matter of Uriah, Judas in the matter of Mammon, some Corinthians and Galatians in biting one another, and some of the Christians to whom St. James wrote, in despising the poor, and showing a mean partiality to the rich,)—he, I say, that knowingly and wilfully breaks this law in one point, is guilty of all; and he remains under the curse of it, till he has repented, and resumed the obedience of faith. Therefore, when our Lord substituted the law of liberty for the law of innocence, he neither “gave us a license to sin,” nor “became a minister of sin with a witness,” as Mr. Berridge rashly affirms. 4. The fourth Mosaic commandment allows no manner of work, but the last edition of the law of liberty allows all manner of works of necessity and mercy, to be done on the Sabbath. Our Lord therefore dispenses with the uncommon rigour with which the Jews observed the sacred day; and if Mr. Berridge will call that indulgence “clipping, paring,” or altering the fourth commandment, he is at liberty; but if we break a commandment in availing ourselves of our Lord’s gracious dispensation, why does Mr. Berridge allow his man-servant, his maid-servant, or his horse, to work on the Saturday? Why does he not keep the seventh day holy “like the circumcised race?”

5. Innocent man with unimpaired powers could yield perfect obedience to the law of innocence; therefore that law made no allowance, no provision for any deficiency in duty. Not so the law of liberty; for although it allows no wilful sin, yet it does not reject sprinkled, though as yet imperfect, obedience. Nor does it, as some Divines would

persuade the world, curse the bud, because it is not yet the blossom, or the blossom because it is not yet the fruit, or the fruit because it is not yet ripe; provided it tends to maturity, and harbours not insincerity, the worm that destroys evangelical obedience. It declares, that our works of faith “are accepted according to what we have, and not according to what we have not.” It graciously receives from a Heathen, the obedience of a Heathen; and from a babe in Christ, the obedience of a babe. And instead of sentencing to hell the man whose pound has only gained five pounds, and in whom the seed of the word has only produced thirty-fold; it kindly allows him half the reward of him whose pound has gained ten pounds, or in whom the seed has brought forth sixty-fold. But it shows no mercy to the unprofitable servant, who buries his talent; and it threatens with sorer punishment the wicked servant, who “turns the grace of God into lasciviousness.”

6. “Thus sincere obedience is now considered as the law of works.” Not so; but it is considered, even by judicious Calvinists, as that obedience which “the law of liberty” accepts of, by which it is fulfilled, and through which believers shall be justified in the great day. I might fill a volume with quotations from their writings; but three or four will sufficiently prove my assertion.—Joseph Alleine, that zealous and successful Preacher, says, in his *Sure Guide to Heaven, or Alarm to the Unconverted*, (London, 1705, pp. 153, 154,) “The terms of mercy” (he should have said, *the terms of eternal salvation*) “are brought as low as possible to you. God has stooped as low to sinners, as with honour he can. He will not be thought a fautor of sin, nor stain the glory of his holiness; and whither could he come lower than he hath, unless he should do this? He has abated the impossible terms of the first covenant. (Acts xvi. 31, Proverbs



xxviii. 13.) He does not impose any thing unreasonable or impossible, as a condition of life." Alleine should have said, "as a condition of eternal life in glory;" for God in Christ most freely gives us an initial life of grace, before he puts us upon performing any terms, in order to an eternal life of glory. "Two things were necessary to be done by you according to the first covenant, &c. And for future obedience, here he is content to yield to your weakness and remit the rigour. He does not stand upon" legal "perfection, &c., but is content to accept of sincerity. Gen. xvii. 11."

Matthew Mead, in his treatise on *The Good of Early Obedience*, (London, 1693, page 332,) says, "It must be an upright and sincere obedience. 'Walk before me, and be thou perfect.' (Genesis xvii. 1.) In the margin it is, sincere or upright. So that sincerity and uprightness is new-covenant perfection. The perfection of grace in heaven is glory; but the perfection of grace on earth is sincerity." Mr. Henry perfectly agrees with Mr. Mead, when he thus comments upon Genesis vi. 9: *Noah was a just man and perfect:*" "He was perfect, not with a sinless perfection," according to the first covenant, "but a perfection of sincerity. And it is well for us, that, by virtue of the covenant of grace, upon the score of Christ's righteousness, sincerity is accepted as our Gospel perfection!" Hence it is that Dr. Owen says, "A believer, as such, shall be tried, judged, and justified, by his own personal sincere obedience."—*Of Justification*, page 111. By comparing these fair quotations with Mr. Berridge's argument, my reader, without having the sagacity of "an old fox," will see, that Antinomianism has lost all decency in our days, and is not ashamed to call *jack-o'-lantern*, &c., what the sober Calvinists of the last century called "Gospel perfection."

Lastly. To insinuate, as Mr. Berridge does, that



“Christ becomes a minister of sin with a witness, and must be ranked at the head of the Antinomian Preachers,” because he has substituted the law of liberty for the old Adamic covenant, is something so ungrateful in a believer, so astonishing in a Gospel Minister, that—but I spare the pious Vicar of Everton, and rise against thee, O Crispianity! Thou hast seduced that man of God, and upon thee I charge this dreadful mistake. However, he will permit me to conclude this answer to his shrewd argument by the following query: If “Christ becomes a minister of sin, and must be ranked at the head of Antinomian Preachers,” for placing us under the law of liberty, which curses a fallen believer that breaks it in one point, (though it should be only by secretly harbouring malice or lust in his heart,) what must we say of the Divines who give us to understand, that believers are not under the law preached by St. James, but under directions or “rules of life,” which they may break unto adultery and murder, without ceasing to be God’s pleasant children, and men after his own heart?—Must these popular men be ranked at the head, or at the tail, of the Antinomian Preachers?

Page 24. Mr. Berridge advances another argument. “If sincere obedience means any thing, it must signify, either doing what you can, or doing what you will.”—I apprehend it means neither the one nor the other, but doing with uprightness what we know God requires of us, according to the dispensation of grace which we are under; meekly lamenting our deficiencies, and aspiring at doing all better and better every day. “So we are” not “got upon the old swampy ground again,” but stand upon the Rock of Ages, and there defend the law of liberty against mistaken Solifidians.

Page 27. Mr. Berridge, instead of showing that our obedience is insincere, if we live in sin, and despise Christ’s salvation, goes on mowing down

all sincere obedience without distinction.—“ I perceive,” says he, “ you are not yet disposed to renounce sincere obedience :” And, to engage us to it, he advances another argument, which, if it were sound, would demolish, not only “ sincere obedience,” but true repentance, faith unfeigned, and all Christianity. To answer it, therefore, I only need to produce it; substituting the words *true repentance*, or *faith unfeigned*, for “ sincere obedience,” which Mr. Berridge ridicules thus :—

“ You might have reason to complain, if God had made sincere obedience ” (I say, true repentance, or faith unfeigned) “ a condition of salvation : Much talk of it there is, like the good man in the moon, yet none could ever ken it. I dare defy the Scribes to tell me truly what sincere ” repentance “ is ; whether it means ” leaving “ half my sins, or one fiftieth, or one hundredth part ; ” shedding “ half ” a score of tears, “ or fifty, or one hundred. I dare defy all the lawyers in the world to tell me whether ” faith unfeigned “ means ” believing “ half ” the Bible “ or three quarters, or one quarter, or one fiftieth, or one hundredth part ; or, whether it means ” believing with \* “ half ” a grain of the faith which removes a mountain-load of guilt, “ or one fiftieth, or one hundredth part ” of a grain ; or whether it implies believing with all our hearts, or with “ half, or three quarters, or one quarter, &c. Where must we draw the line ? It surely needs a magic wand to draw it.” (See page 27, &c.)

Mr. Berridge turns his flaming argument against obedience, like the cherub’s sword, “ every way.”

\* Mr. Berridge invites me thus to retort his bad argument against sincere obedience : (Page 94, line 18 :) “ I have been praying fifteen years for faith with some earnestness, and am not yet possessed of more than half a grain—Jesus assures you that a single grain, &c., would remove a mountain-load of guilt from the conscience,” &c.

Take two more instances of his skill ; still giving me leave to level at faith unfeigned, " the total term of all salvation," what he says against sincere obedience :—Page 28. " If God has made sincere obedience " (I retort, faith unfeigned) " the condition " or term " of salvation, he would certainly have drawn the line, and marked out the boundary precisely, because our life depended on it."—Page 28. " Sincere obedience " (I continue to say, faith unfeigned) " is called a condition," or a term, " and no one knows what it is, &c. O fine condition ! Surely Satan was the author of it."

Page 24. " It is Satan's catch-word for the Gospel."—Page 38. It is " nothing but a jack-o'-lantern, dancing here and there and everywhere," &c. For, (page 29,) " If God has drawn no boundary, man must draw it, and will draw it where he pleaseth. Sincere obedience " (I still retort, sincere repentance, or true faith) " thus becomes a nose of wax, and is so fingered as to fit exactly every human face. I look upon this doctrine as the devil's masterpiece," &c.

And I look upon these assertions, as the masterpiece of Antinomian rashness, and Geneva logic, in the mouth of the pious Vicar of Everton. Is it not surprising, that he who *unmasks the Christian World*, should be so hood-winked by Calvinism, as not to see, that there are as many false professors of sincere repentance and true faith, as there are of sincere obedience ; that even the Turks call themselves Mussulmen, or true believers ; and that he has full as much reason to call sincere repentance, or true faith, " a rotten buttress, a nose of wax, a paper kite, a jack-o'-lantern," &c., as sincere obedience ?

What a touch has this learned Divine given here to the Ark of God, in order to prop up that of Calvin ! And how happy is it for religion, that this grand argument against obedience, repentance,

and faith, is founded upon a hypothetical proposition, (page 29, line 8,) "If God has drawn no boundary!" This supposition Mr. Berridge takes for granted, though it is evidently false; the boundaries of sincere obedience being full as clearly drawn in the Scriptures, as those of true repentance, and faith unfeigned.

God himself, without "a magic wand," has "drawn the line," both in every man's conscience, and in his written word. The line of Jewish obedience is drawn all over the Old Testament, especially Exodus xx; Psalm xv; Ezekiel xviii; and Micah vi. 8. The line of Christian obedience is exactly drawn all over the New Testament, and most particularly in our Lord's Sermon on the Mount; and the line of heathen faith and obedience is, without the Scripture, drawn in every breast, by the gracious "light that enlightens every man who comes into the world." Through this light even Mahometans and Heathens may "believe that God is, and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him;" and by this faith they may "work righteousness," do to others as they would be done by, and so "fulfil the law of liberty," according to their dispensation; and that some do, is evident from these words of the Apostle: "When the Gentiles, who have not the" written "law, do by nature" in its present state of initial restoration, without any other assistance than that which Divine grace vouchsafes to all men universally, "the things contained in the law; these, having no" written "law, are a law unto themselves, and show the work" or precepts "of the law written in their hearts; their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts accusing or excusing one another." (Romans ii. 14, 15.) Therefore, the dreadful blow, inadvertently struck at all religion through the side of sincere obedience, is, happily, given with a broken reed:

Christianity stands; the important term of sincere obedience, with respect to adult persons, has not Satan, but God for its author; and Antinomianism is more and more "unmasked."

But these are not all Mr. Berridge's objections against sincere obedience: For, (page 30,) he says, "If works are a condition in the Gospel covenant, then works must make the whole of it." Why so? May not faith and repentance, so long as they continue true and lively, produce good works, their proper fruit? Why must the fruit "make the whole" of the tree? Besides, works being the evidencing cause of our salvation, according to the Gospel, you have no warrant from Scripture to say, They must make the whole cause of it. They agree extremely well with faith, the instrumental cause; with Christ's blood, the properly meritorious cause; and with God's mercy, the first moving cause. May I not affirm, that the motion of the fourth wheel of a clock is absolutely necessary to its pointing the hour, without supposing that such a wheel must make the whole of the wheel-work? O how have the lean kine, ascending out of the lake of Geneva, eaten those that fed so long near the river Cam!

But you add, (page 30,) "Sincere obedience as a condition will lead you unavoidably up to perfect obedience." And suppose it should, pray where would be the misfortune? Is it right to frighten the Christian world from sincere obedience, by holding out to their view Christian perfection, as if it were Medusa's fearful head? Are we not commanded to "go on to perfection?" Was not this one of our Lord's complaints against the Church of Sardis, "I have not found thy works perfect before God?" Does not St. Paul sum up all the law, or all obedience, in love? And does not St. John make honourable mention of perfect love, and excite those who are "not made perfect



in love, to have fellowship with him," and with those who could say, "Our love is made perfect?" (1 John iv. 17.) Why then should the world be driven from sincere, by the fear of perfect, obedience? especially as our Lord never required absolute perfection from archangels, much less from fallen man; the perfection which he kindly calls us to, being nothing but a faithful improvement of our talents, according to the proportion of the grace given us, and the standard of the dispensation we are under. So that, upon this footing, he whose one talent gains another, obeys as perfectly in his degree, as he whose five talents gain five more. Notwithstanding all the insinuations of those "fishers of men" who beat the streams of truth, to drive the fishes from Christian perfection into the Antinomian net, God is not an austere master, much less a foolish one. He does not expect to reap where he has not sown; or to reap wheat where he sows only barley. Those gracious words of our Lord, repeated four times in the Gospel, might alone silence them that discourage believers from going on to the perfection of obedience peculiar to their dispensation: "To every one that hath *to purpose*, shall be given, and he shall have abundance," he shall attain the perfection of his dispensation; "but from him that hath not," because he buries his talent, under pretence that his Lord requires unattainable obedience, "shall be taken away even that which he hath." (Compare Matthew xiii. 12, with Matthew xxv. 29, Mark iv. 24, and Luke viii. 18.)

The two last arguments of Mr. Berridge against sincere obedience may be retorted thus: 1. If faith is a condition (or term) in the Gospel covenant, then faith must make the whole of it. But if this be true, what becomes of Christ's obedience unto death? You reply, "Faith necessarily supposes it." But you cannot escape: I follow you step by step,



and say, The works I plead for, necessarily suppose, not only our Lord's obedience unto death, but faith, which you call, "the only term of all salvation." 2. You say, "Sincere obedience as a condition will lead you immediately up to perfect obedience." And I retort: Faith unfeigned, as a term or condition, will lead you unavoidably up to perfect faith: For if "the law of liberty" commands us to love God "with all our soul," it charges us also to believe in Christ "with all our heart." (Acts viii. 37.) Should you reply, "I am not afraid of being led up to perfect faith;" I return the same answer with regard to perfect obedience.

This argument against sincere obedience, taken from the danger of going on to the perfection of it, is so much the more extraordinary, when dropping from Mr. Berridge's pen, as it is demolished by the words of his mouth, when he sings,—

Thee we would be always blessing,  
Serve thee as thine hosts above,  
Pray and praise thee without ceasing,  
Glory in thy perfect love.

Finish then thy new creation;  
Pure and spotless may we be!  
Triumph in thy full salvation,  
Perfectly restored by thee!

See *A Collection of Divine Songs*, by J. Berridge, M. A., &c. page 178.

To conclude: Another argument is often urged by this pious author to render the doctrine of a believer's final justification by the evidence of works odious to humble souls. He takes it for granted, that it encourages boasting; still confounding the works of faith, which he at times recommends as well as I, with the pharisaical works of unbelief, which I perpetually decry as well as he. But even this argument, about which the Calvinists make so much noise, may be retorted thus: There is as much danger of being proud of one's faith, as of one's works of faith: And if Mr. Berridge presses me with

Rom. iii. 27, "Boasting is excluded by the law of faith;" I reply, that the works I plead for being the works of faith; his argument makes as much for me as for him; and I press him in my turn with Rom. xi. 18—20, "Boast not thyself against the branches. Thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear." Which shows, it is as possible to be proud of faith, as of the works of faith. Nor can a believer boast of the latter unless his humble faith begins to degenerate into vain fancy.

Such are the capital objections that Mr. Berridge, in his unguarded zeal for the first Gospel axiom, has advanced against the second. Should he attempt to exculpate himself, by saying, that all his arguments against sincere obedience are levelled at the hypocritical obedience which pharisaic boasters sometimes call sincere: I reply, 1. It is a pity he never once told his readers so. 2. It is surprising, that he who *unmasks the Christian world*, should so mask himself as to say just the reverse of what he means. 3. If he really designs to attack insincere obedience, why does he not attack it as insincere? And why does he advance no arguments against it, but such as would give the deepest wound to truly sincere obedience, if they were conclusive? 4. What would Mr. Berridge say of me, if I published an impious essay against Divine worship in general, and, to vindicate my own conduct, gave it out, some months after, that I only meant to attack the "worship of the Host," which makes a part of what the Papists call "Divine worship?" Would so lame an excuse clear me before the unprejudiced world? But, 5. The worst is, that if Calvinism is true, all Mr. Berridge's arguments are as conclusive against evangelical, sincere obedience, as against the hypocritical works of Pharisees: For, if Christians (who have time to add the works chiefly recommended by St. James, to the faith chiefly preached by St. Paul) have a

full, inamissible title to final justification without those works, nay, with the most horrid works, such as adultery and murder ; is it not evident that the passport of good works and sincere obedience is as needless to their eternal salvation, as “ a rotten buttress, a paper kite, or a jack-o’-lantern ? ”

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#### SECTION IV.

WHEN Mr. Berridge grants, “ that our damnation is wholly from ourselves,” he grants that our salvation is suspended upon some term, which through grace we have power to fulfil ; and in this case, Unconditional Reprobation, Absolute Election, and Finished Salvation, are false doctrines ; and Calvin’s whole system stands upon a sandy foundation.

WHEN a man grants me two and two, he grants me four ; he cannot help it. If he exclaims against me for drawing the necessary inference, he only exposes himself before men of sense. Mr. Berridge (page 190) fully grants the second Gospel axiom : “ Our damnation,” says he, “ is wholly from ourselves : ” Nevertheless, he declares, (page 26,) that there is “ an absolute impossibility of being justified,” or saved, “ in any manner by our works ; ” and part of his book seems levelled at the proposition of the Minutes, “ Salvation not by the merits of works, but by works as a condition.” Now, if I am not mistaken, by granting the above-mentioned Gospel axiom, as all moderate Calvinists do, he grants me Mr. Wesley’s proposition, together with the demolition of Calvinism. For,

1. If my damnation is wholly from myself,\* it is

\* By the word “ wholly,” Mr. Berridge cannot mean that our damnation may not have secondary causes, such as a tempting devil, an alluring world, wicked company, a bad book, &c. He is too wise to deny it. All I suppose he means, as well as myself,

not the necessary consequence of an absolute, efficacious decree of non-election ; for then my damnation would be wholly from God : Nor is it the necessary consequence of the devil's temptation, for then it would be from the devil : Nor is it (upon the Gospel plan) the necessary consequence of Adam's fall ; because, although I fell seminally into a state of damnation in the loins of Adam, yet the free gift came seminally upon me, as well as upon all men, unto initial justification ; for I was no less in Adam when God raised him up by the true promise of a Mediator, than when he fell by the lying promise of the tempter.

Now, if my damnation is neither from any unconditional decree of reprobation, nor from the fall of Adam, what becomes of Apollo, and his sister, the great Diana ? What becomes of absolute reprobation, and its inseparable companion, unconditional election ? What becomes of all the horrors that St. Paul is supposed to father upon the God of love ? (Rom. ix.) In a word, What becomes of Calvinism ?

Again : If " my damnation is wholly from myself," the just Judge of all the earth must damn me personally for something which he had put it in my power personally to do or to leave undone. My damnation then, and consequently my salvation, is necessarily suspended on some term or condition, the performance or non-performance of which is at my option. Nor is light more contrary to darkness, than these two propositions of Mr. Berridge are to each other : " Our damnation is wholly from ourselves ;" and, " St. Paul plainly shuts out all sin-

is, that every reprobate is the primary, meritorious cause of his damnation. Just as Divine grace in Christ is the primary, meritorious cause of our salvation ; although under that original, principal, leading cause, there are inferior, instrumental, evidencing causes, such as Bibles, Ministers, religious conversation, faith, good works, &c.

cere obedience as a condition" of eternal salvation. On the first, stand the Minutes and the Checks; on the second, Calvinism and Antinomianism. And as some of Mr. Berridge's readers cannot receive two incompatible propositions, they desire to know which we must give to the winds, with the paper-kite of sincere obedience.

I hope that gentleman will not endeavour to screen Calvinism by saying, that the reprobates are damned merely for their personal sins, and therefore "their damnation is wholly from themselves." An illustration will easily show the fallacy of this argument, by which Calvinism is frequently kept in countenance:—

A monarch, in whose dominions all children are naturally born *lame*, makes a law, that all who shall not walk *straight* before a certain day, shall be cast into a fiery furnace. The terrible day comes, and myriads of lame culprits stand before him. His anger smokes against them, and with a stretched-out arm he thunders "Depart from me, ye cursed, into that place of torment prepared for obstinate offenders; for when I bid you walk upright, ye persisted to go lame. Go, burn to all eternity, and as ye burn, clear my justice; and remember, that 'your misery is wholly from yourselves.' "

"Wholly from ourselves!" they reply with one voice: "Was it ever in our power not to be born lame; or to walk upright in our crippled condition? Wast not thou acquainted with our natural misfortune? When a wonderful man came into thy kingdom to heal the lame, didst thou not order that he should pass us by? If he and his servants have tantalized us with general offers of a free cure, dost thou not know, they were complimentary, lying offers? Hast thou forgotten, how thou orderedst the loving Physician who wept over us, never to prepare one drop of his purple tincture for us?"



and how 'thy secret will' bound us with the invisible chains of an efficacious decree of preterition, that we might never come at that precious remedy? In a word, was it not, from the beginning, thy fixed determination, that as we were born lame and helpless subjects to thy crown, so we should remain the lame and remediless victims of thy wrath? If therefore thou wilt show the boundless extent of thy grim sovereignty, by casting us into that flaming abyss, do it; for we cannot resist thee! But do not pretend that we have pulled down thy wrath upon us. Rob, O rob us not of the only alleviation that our deplorable case can admit of, viz., the comfort of thinking that our destruction is not from ourselves! If thou wilt be fierce as a lion, at least be not hypocritical as a crocodile."

"Hear, ye Heavens!" replies the absolute Monarch, "give ear, O earth! and judge of the justice of my proceedings against these lame culprits. In consequence of a permissive, efficacious decree of mine, five or six thousand years ago, one of their ancestors brought lameness upon himself and upon them; therefore their necessary lameness, and the fearful destruction with which I am going to punish their lame steps, are wholly from themselves. Are not my ways equal, and theirs unequal? And far from me being a crocodile towards them, am I not a lamb in whose mouth is no guile? or at least, a lion who, like that of the tribe of Judah, use my sovereign power only according to the clearest dictates of justice and equity?"

"Out of thine own mouth," reply the wretched culprits, "the world of rational beings will condemn thee, thou true King of terrors! Thou acknowledgest, that, thousands of years before we were born, one of our ancestors brought upon us the necessary lameness, in consequence of which we must be cast into that fiery furnace, without having ever had it in our power to take one straight step;



and yet thou sayest, that our destruction is wholly from ourselves ! If thou wert not lost to all sense of equity and regard for truth, thou wouldst say, that our condemnation is not from ourselves, but wholly from a man whom most of us never heard of : Unless thou wast the grand contriver of the fall, which brought on his lameness and ours ; and in that case our destruction is far less from him than from thyself. Besides, thou hast published a decree, in which thou declarest, ‘ They shall say no more, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge ; but every one shall die for his own iniquity. Behold, all souls are mine, as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine. The soul that sinneth it shall die’ the death thou designest us. Now iniquity that we could never personally help, an iniquity caused by one of our ancestors, can never be our own iniquity, contradistinguished from that of our fathers. If thou didst cast all the asses of thy kingdom into thy fiery furnace, because they do not bray as melodiously as the nightingale sings ; or all the ravens, because they are not as white as swans ; couldest thou with any truth say, ‘ Their torments are *wholly from themselves* ?’ And hast thou any more reason to say that our perdition is from ourselves, when thou burnest us merely for our natural, necessary lameness, and for the lame steps that it has naturally and necessarily occasioned ?”

The judicious reader will enter into this illustration, without being presented with a key of my own making ; and, trusting his candour and good sense with that business, I draw the following inferences from the second Gospel axiom, which Mr. Berridge has explicitly granted : 1. God does not prevaricate, but speaks a melancholy truth, when he says, “ O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself.” 2. Every reprobate is his own destroyer, not only because he has wilfully sinned away the justifica-

tion mentioned Romans v. 18, by which all infants are entitled to the kingdom of heaven, but also because he wilfully rejects the salvation really prepared for, and sincerely offered to, him in Christ.

3. According to the second covenant, we are never in a state of personal damnation, till we have personally buried the talent of that "grace which bringeth salvation, and hath appeared to all men."

4. Calvinism, which teaches the reprobates fully to exculpate themselves, and justly to charge God with shuffling, lying, injustice, cruelty, and hypocrisy, is a system that does the reprobates infinite honour, and the Divine perfections unspeakable injury. And, 5. When Mr. Berridge maintains that "our damnation is wholly from ourselves," he maintains indirectly, that the Minutes and Checks, which necessarily stand or fall with that Gospel axiom, are truly scriptural. Thus, like other pious Calvinists,\* he gives us an excellent dose of anti-

\*The warm author of a pamphlet entitled, *Dr. Crisp's Ghost, or a Check upon Checks: Being a Bridle for Antinomianism, and a Whip for Pelagian and Arminian Methodists*, with this motto, "Without are dogs, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie;" designed, it seems, to "whip" the Arminian "dogs." and to prove that Flavel, Baxter, Williams, and I, "make a lie," when we represent Dr. Crisp as an abettor of "Antinomian dotages." This warm author, I say, informs us, that even Crisp, overcome by the glaring evidence of truth, once said: "I must read the fearful doom of all who have not learned this lesson, [*denying ungodliness*,] and are not yet taught it of God. &c. They are yet in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity, and have not their part in this matter. I say, as yet, this is their fearful doom, and if they continue thus untaught their lesson, there can be no salvation by grace for them. 'Not every one that says, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he that *doeth* the will of my Father which is in heaven,' &c. Some licentious, ungodly wretches, I know, reply, though to their own ruin, &c., that Christ justifies the ungodly, and we are saved by faith without works: But, alas! they observe not how cunningly the devil equivocates to lull them asleep in their ungodly practices. It is true, indeed, that Christ justifies the ungodly, that is, he finds them ungodly when he imputes his righteousness to them; but he does not leave them ungodly after he has inspired them: 'He teacheth them to deny ungodliness.' He affords no cloak to

dote to expel Antinomian poison. But who shall recommend it to the Calvinistic world? Mr. Wes-

perseverance in ungodliness, 'but will come in flaming fire, with his mighty angels, to render vengeance unto such.' He that denies not ungodliness, him will Christ deny before his Father which is in heaven. Why then wilt thou be deluded with *gross sophistry*, in so clear a *sunshine* of the Gospel? Is not the light so bright that thine own heart checks thee? And if thine heart condemns thee, God is greater, and searches all things."

Hail! Crisp. Far from "checking my Checks," and "whipping" the Arminian dog, in a happy moment thou manfully fightest St. James's battle; thou callest the doctrine of the Checks "sunshine;" and whippest thine own speculative error out of the Church as "gross sophistry."

Dr. Crisp (as quoted by his opponent) almost discovered *once* the important difference between the salvation of a sinner previous to works, and the salvation of a believer consequent upon works.

His excellent words run thus: "It is true also, we are saved by faith without works: But here also Satan equivocates as grossly as in the other case; for though faith only saves without works efficiently, *yet not consequentially*, as I said before; that is, though faith only saves, yet that faith must not be alone that saves, but must be attended with its fruits, to wit, denying ungodliness; else it is so far from saving, that it is but a dead faith, and he is but a vain man that has no better, as St. James well affirms. The person believing must deny ungodliness, though this denial works not his salvation." This is very true, if it is understood either of initial salvation, or of the primary cause of eternal salvation. "Our Saviour speaks to the same purpose, 'A good tree bringeth forth good fruit:' He does not say the fruit makes it a good tree, yet the good fruit is inseparable. I speak not of quantities or degrees, &c., but of the truth, to wit, a real and sincere denial of ungodliness."—Excellent! To whip the dogs, the Rev. Mr. P—I need only prove, that when David robbed Uriah of the ewe-lamb that lay in his bosom, tried to kill his soul with drunkenness, and treacherously killed his body with the sword of the Ammonites, he "really and sincerely denied ungodliness;" and that his faith produced the "good fruit" which is INSEPARABLE from saving faith. The moment this is done, I promise the public to clear the pious Calvinists in general from the charge of "speculative Antinomianism," Dr. Crisp, in particular, from that of "glaring contradiction," and his zealous second, who accuses me with "gross falsities," from Calvinistic rashness.

We can no more exculpate warm Calvinists, when they betray holiness into the hands of practical Antinomians, because they now and then speak honourably of good works, than we can clear Pontius Pilate from the guilt of delivering the Messiah to the Jews, because he once solemnly "took water, and washed

ley they will not hear ; my Checks they will not read. Go then, "valiant Sergeant IF." Thou comest from Everton, therefore thou shalt be welcome. Thou knowest the way to the closets of Solifidians ; nay, thou art there already with *The Christian World Unmasked*.

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## SECTION V.

MR. BERRIDGE candidly grants the conditionality of Perseverance, and consequently of Election, by showing much respect to "Serjeant IF," who "guards the camp of Jesus : " But soon picking a quarrel with the valiant Sergeant, he discharges him as a Jew, opens the camp to the Antinomians, by opposing to them only a sham sentinel, and shows the foundation of Calvinism in a most striking light.

THE pious author of *The Christian World Unmasked*, speaking of the Calvinistic doctrine of unconditional perseverance, which he confounds with the evangelical doctrine of conditional perseverance, (page 194,) says, with great truth, provided he had spoken of the latter, It "affords a stable prop to upright minds, yet lends no wanton cloak to corrupt hearts. It brings a cordial to revive the faint, and keeps a guard to *check* the forward. The guard attending on this doctrine is Sergeant *IF* ; low in stature, but lofty in significance ; a very valiant guard, though a monosyllable. Kind notice has been taken of the Sergeant by Jesus

his hands before the multitude, saying, I find no fault in this just person ; I am innocent of his blood ; see ye to it." If the author of the *Whip for the Arminians* considers this, or if he turns to Check IV. page 45, where I produce D. Williams's observation concerning Crisp's inconsistency, he will probably be less forward in "checking Checks," that he has not candidly considered, and in making "whips" for the backs of his honest neighbours, lest some of them should take them from him, to lash his mistakes, and chastise his precipitation.

Christ and his Apostles ; and much respect is due unto him from all the Lord's recruiting officers, and every soldier in his army. Pray listen to the Sergeant's speech : ' IF ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. (John viii. 31.) IF ye do these things, ye shall never fall. (2 Peter i. 10.) IF what ye have heard shall abide in you, ye shall continue in the Son and in the Father. (1 John ii. 24.) We are made partakers of Christ, IF we hold steadfast unto the end. (Heb. iii. 14.) Whoso looketh and continueth,' that is, if he that looketh doth continue, ' in the perfect law of liberty, that man shall be blessed in his deed. (James i. 25.)' " And again, page 194 : " IF backsliders fancy, they must all be restored by repentance, because David was restored, and Peter was, they might as well suppose, they must all be translated into heaven without dying,\* because Enoch and Elijah were." (Page 199, line 17.)

Upon this plan of doctrine we are ready to lay by our controversial pens, and shake hands with our Calvinist brethren. All that we desire of them, in order to a lasting agreement, is,—1. To consider what is implied in the preceding concessions ; and not to gag Sergeant IF, when he honestly speaks the very words of the " Captain of our salvation," or those of the Apostles, his Lieutenant-Generals :—2. Not to call him a Galatian, or a Papist, when he is found in company with St. James :—3. Not to enter an action against him for disturbing the peace of those backsliders who having denied the faith, and lost their first love, now quietly hug a bosom sin, or take their Laodicean rest on the

\* Here Mr. Berridge, in a fit of legality, far exceeds the limits of the truth which I maintain in the Checks : For he insinuates, that the recovery of backsliders is as improbable as their bodily translation into heaven. For my part, severe as I am represented to backsliders, I believe their return is ten thousand times more probable, than their going to heaven as Enoch and Elijah did.



pillow of *self-election* :—4. Not to put him under arrest for heading a platoon of those whom some of the absolute elect call Diabolians, because they doubt the truth of unconditional election, or election without IF ; and choose to fire at sin, rather than at their Captain :—And 5. Not to say to him, “Hail ! Sergeant,” kissing him as if he were a good Christian, in order to betray him with some decency into the hands of the Antinomians, as a circumcised caittiff.

Whether my pious opponent has not treated the honest Sergeant in that manner, I leave the candid reader to determine. “ Yet take notice,” says he, (page 194,) “ that Serjeant IF is not of Jewish, but Christian, parentage ; not sprung from Levi, though a son of Abraham ; no sentinel of Moses, but a watchman for the camp of Jesus. He wears no dripping beard, like the circumcised race ; and is no legal blustering *condition* to purchase man’s salvation, but a modest Gospel *evidence* to prove the truth of grace. He tells no idle tales.” Enough, Rev. Sir, if “ he tells no idle tales,” he does not cavil and quibble, much less does he deny his proper name, and well-known meaning. Although he no more dreams of “ purchasing man’s salvation ” than you do, yet he is conditional IF,—Serjeant IF—a *very valiant guard* to the scriptural doctrine of perseverance, and an irreconcilable enemy to Calvinian election, and antinomian dotages.”

O ye opposers of the second Gospel axiom, “ Pray come and peep ! ”—See Calvinism “ unmasked ” by one of your principal leaders, who shows to the world the futile foundation of *your* doctrine of grace !—Thanks be to his humorous honesty, we see now that those famous doctrines stand upon the super-metaphysical difference there is, between IF, and IF ;—between Jewish IF, and Christian IF ;—legal IF, and evangelical IF ;—IF at Madeley, and IF at Everton. When IF,



the culprit, appears in the Foundery pulpit, "he tells idle tales," it seems! he slyly disguises himself! But when IF, the orthodox, shows himself at the desk at Everton, (for it is to be feared, that he he seldom appears in the pulpit *valiantly* to guard Bible perseverance,) he never equivocates! When he says to people that never stood, or to people that can never fall, "IF ye do these things, ye shall never fall," &c., he is not a *condition*, and yet he never shuffles! These are strange hints indeed!

Patient reader, permit me to try, by the following questions, the solidity of the Calvinistic distinction between IF and IF, which supports the amazing weight of the great Diana. 1. When the Gospel said to David, "IF thou doest these things thou shalt never fall," and he fell into adultery, was "Serjeant IF a *modest* Gospel evidence to prove the truth of his grace?" And supposing he was such a *modest* evidence, did he "lend no wanton cloak to a corrupt heart?" 2. When our Lord said to the young ruler, "IF thou wilt be perfect, sell all," was Serjeant IF "of Jewish," or "Christian, parentage?" 3. How shall I know when a Serjeant is "a sentinel of Moses," or when he is "a watchman of the camp of Jesus?" Should you answer, "A Jewish IF wears a dripping beard," you may indeed by such an argument convince and entertain some Calvinists, but you leave me quite in the dark; and with "some very honest folks, who are cast in a Gospel foundery," instead of "ringing a fire-bell," I smile at your wit and orthodoxy; but can no more understand what you mean by an IF "with a dripping beard," than you could conceive what I would be at, if I spoke of a *Yes with a long tail*, or a *Perhaps with dreadful horns*! 4. How shall I distinguish a "legal" from an evangelical IF? Should you say, that the "legal, blustering" Serjeant wears an halbert, but the evangelical mild IF has no weapon at all: I ask, What business has an

unarmed IF in the "camp of Jesus?" Why do you call him Sergeant? Is he not a sham sentinel, a ridiculous scare-crow, to deceive the simple, rather than "a very valiant guard to check the forward?"

5. How shall I make a difference between the Everton IF and a Madeley IF? When I have read my Bible in both places, I have always found the Sergeant exactly of the same stature; he always appeared in the same black regimentals; and to this day a Madeley IF exactly answers to the description that the pious Vicar of Everton gives of him: He is "a monosyllable, low in stature, but of lofty significance:" Whereas the Everton IF is yet *lower in significance* than *in stature*, since you make it signify just nothing. Should you reply, that a Madeley IF is "like one of the circumcised race;" I answer, that, although about eleven years ago I circumcised him with an Antinomian knife, yet I did not mutilate him. But I could name a Gospel Minister, who has "served more than three apprenticeships at a noted hall of physic," by whom the unhappy Sergeant had not only been "circumcised," but quite emasculated, yea, deprived of his very vitals. For when IF, in the above quoted scriptures, is absolutely divested of conditionality, and turned into an unnecessary evidence of grace, which the elect can do without, as well as David and Solomon; may it not be compared to a dead Sergeant, whose lungs and heart are pulled out; and whose ill-smelling remains, far from being a "valiant guard" against the forward, prove an enticing lure to unclean birds, who fly about in search of a carcase.

Excuse, reader, this prolix and ludicrous defence of the Sergeant. The subject, though treated in so queer a manner, is of the utmost importance; for the Minutes, the Checks, and the Second Gospel axiom, stand or fall with Sergeant IF. If he is a coward, a knave, or a cypher, Antinomianism

will still prevail; but if he recovers his true and "lofty significance," he will soon rid the Church of Antinomian dotages. As "much respect is due unto him," and to St. James's undefiled religion, which the ingenious book I quote indirectly undermines, I thought it my duty to "open my bag" also, and let out a ferret, or, to speak exactly the language of Everton, "a fox," to chase "a straggling goose hard at hand." Take notice, however, that, by the "goose," I do not mean the reverend author of *The World Unmasked*, for he has wit enough, and to spare; but the "waddling dame," Calvinistic contradiction, *alias*, *Logica Genevensis*. And now, reader, I lay her before thee, not to make thee "sup" upon her "amidst a deal of cackling music," but that thou wouldest help me to nail her up to the everlasting doors of the temple of truth, as sportsmen do cranes and foxes to the doors of their rural buildings.

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## CONCLUSION.

WERE I to conclude these strictures upon the dangerous tenets, inadvertently advanced, and happily contradicted in *The Christian World Unmasked*, without professing my brotherly love and sincere respect for the ingenious and pious author, I should wrong him, myself, and the cause which I defend. I only do him justice when I say, that few, very few of our elders equal him in devotedness to Christ, zeal, diligence, and ministerial success. His indefatigable labours in the word and doctrine entitle him to a double share of honour; and I invite all my readers with me to "esteem him highly in love for" his Master's and "his works' sake;" entreating them not to undervalue his vital piety, on account of his Antinomian opi-

nion ; and beseeching them to consider, that his errors are so much the more excusable as they do not influence his moral conduct, and he refutes them himself, far more than his favourite scheme of doctrine allows him to do. Add to this, that those very errors spring in a great degree from the idea, that he honours Christ by receiving, and does God service by propagating, them.

The desire of catching the attention of his readers has made him choose a witty, facetious manner of writing, for which he has a peculiar turn ; and the necessity I am under of standing his *indirect* attack, obliges me to meet him upon his own ground, and to encounter him with his own weapons, I beg that what passes for evangelical humour in him may not be called indecent levity in me. A sharp pen may be guided by a kind heart ; and such, I am persuaded, is that of my much-esteemed antagonist, whom I publicly invite to my pulpit ; protesting that I should be edified, and overjoyed, to hear him there enforce the “ guarded ” substance of his book, which, notwithstanding the vein of Solifidianism I have taken the liberty to open, contains many great and glorious truths.

THE END.









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