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A
SECOND CHECK
TO
ANTINOMIANISM;

OCCASIONED BY

A LATE NARRATIVE,
IN THREE LETTERS,
To the Hon. and Rev. Author.

BY

The VINDICATOR of the Reverend
Mr. WESLEY'S Minutes.

“ 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 found in the*
“ *faith; but let brotherly love continue.*”
Tit. i. 13. Heb. xiii. 1.

L O N D O N :

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MDCCLXXI.

[Price 10 d.]

P R E F A C E.

THE publication of the Vindication of Mr. Wesley's Minutes having been represented by some persons as an act of injustice, the following letter is published to throw some light upon that little event, and serve as a preface to the *Second Check to Antinomianism*.

To the Rev. Mr. John Wesley.

Rev. and dear Sir,

As I love open dealing, I send you the substance, and almost the very words of a private letter I have just written to Mr. Shirley, in answer to one, in which he informs me he is going to publish his Narrative. He is exceedingly welcome to make use of any part of my letters to Mr. I—d concerning the publication of my Vindication, and you are equally welcome to make what use you please of this. Among friends all things are, or should be common. I am,

Rev. and dear Sir,

Yours, &c.

Madeley, 11th Sept.

1771.

To the Hon. and Rev. Mr. Shirley.

Rev. and dear Sir,

It is extremely proper, nay, it is highly necessary, that the public should be informed, how much like a minister of the Prince of Peace, and a meek, humble, loving brother in the gospel of Christ you behaved at the conference. Had I been there, I would gladly have taken upon me to proclaim these tidings of joy to the lovers of Zion's peace. Your conduct at that time of love, is certainly the best excuse for the hasty step you had taken, as my desire of stopping my Vindication upon hearing of it, is the best apology I can make for my severity to you.

I am not averse at all, Sir, to your publishing the passages you mention out of my letters to Mr. I—d. They shew my peculiar love and respect for you, which I shall at all times think an honor, and at this juncture shall feel a peculiar pleasure, to see proclaimed to the world. They apologize for my calling myself a *lover of quietness*, when I unfortunately prove a *son of contention*: And they demonstrate that I am not altogether void of the fear, that becomes an awkward, unexperienced surgeon, when

when he ventures to open a vein in the arm of a person for whom he has the highest regard. How natural is it for him to tremble, lest by missing the intended vein, and pricking an unseen artery, he should have done irreparable mischief, instead of an useful operation.

But while you do me the kindness of publishing those passages, permit me, Sir, to do Mr. W. the justice of informing him, I had also written to Mr. I—d, that, “ whether my letters were suppressed or not, the Minutes *must* be vindicated,—that Mr. W. owed it to the Church, to the *real Protestants*, to all his societies, and to his own aspersed character,—and that after all, the controversy did not seem to me, to be so much whether the Minutes should stand, as whether the antinomian gospel of Dr. Crisp should prevail over the practical gospel of Jesus Christ.”

I must also, Sir, beg leave to let my vindicated friend know, that in the very letter where I so earnestly intreated Mr. I—d to stop the publication of my letters to you, and offered to take the whole expence of the impression upon myself, though I should be obliged to sell my last shirt to defray it, I added that, “ If they were published, I must look upon it as a *necessary evil* or *misfortune*,” which of the two words I used I do not justly recollect:

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A *misfortune* for you and me, who must appear inconsistent to the world; you, Sir, with your Sermons; and I with my Title-page; and nevertheless *necessary* to vindicate misrepresented truth, defend an eminent minister of Christ, and stem the torrent of Antinomianism.

It may not be improper also, to observe to you, Sir, that when I presented Mr. W. with my Vindication, I begged he would correct it, and take away whatever might be unkind or too sharp: urging that though I meant no unkindness, I was not a proper judge of what I had written under peculiarly delicate and trying circumstances, as well as in a great hurry; and did not therefore dare to trust either my pen, my head, or my heart. He was no sooner gone, than I sent a letter after him, to repeat and urge the same request, and he wrote me word, he had "expunged every tart expression." *If he has*, (for I have not yet seen what alterations his friendly pen has made,) I am reconciled to their publication; and *that he has*, I have reason to hope from the letters of two judicious London-friends, who calmed my fears, lest I should have treated you with unkindness.

One of them says, "I reverence Mr. Shirley for his candid acknowledgment of his hastiness in
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judging.

judging. I commend the Calvinists at the conference for their justice to Mr. W. and their acquiescence in the declaration of the preachers in connection with him. But is that declaration however dispersed a remedy adequate to the evil done not only to Mr. W., but to the cause and work of God? Several Calvinists, in eagerness of malice, had dispersed their calumnies through the three kingdoms. A truly excellent person herself, in her mistaken zeal, had represented him as *a papist unmasked, an heretick, an apostate*. A clergyman of the first reputation informs me, *a Poem on his apostacy* is just coming out. Letters have been sent to every serious churchman and dissenter through the Land together with the Gospel Magazine. Great are the shoutings, *and now that he lieth, let him rise up no more!* This is all the cry. His dearest friends and children are staggered and scarce know what to think. You, in your corner, cannot conceive the mischief that has been done and is still doing. But your letters, in the hand of Providence, may answer the good ends you proposed by writing them. You have not been too severe to dear Mr. Shirley, moderate Calvinists themselves being judges; but very kind and friendly to set a good mistaken man right, and probably to preserve him from the like rashness as long as he lives. Be not troubled therefore, but cast your care upon the Lord."

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My other friend says, " Considering what harm the circular letter has done, and what an useless satisfaction Mr. Shirley has given by his vague acknowledgement, it is no more than just and equitable, that your letters should be published."

Now, Sir, as I never saw that *Acknowledgment*, nor the *softening corrections* made by Mr. W. in my *Vindication*; as I was not informed of some of the above-mentioned particulars when I was so eager to prevent the publication of my letters; and as I have reason to think that through the desire of an immediate peace, the festering wound was rather skinned over than probed to the bottom; all I can say about this publication is, what I wrote to our common friend, namely, that " I must look upon it as a NECESSARY evil."

I am glad, Sir, you do not direct your letter to Mr. Oliver who was so busy in publishing my *Vindication*, for by a letter I have just received from Bristol, I am informed he did not hear how desirous I was to call it in, till he had actually given out before a whole congregation, it would be sold. Besides, he would have pleaded with smartness, that he never approved of a patched up peace, that he bore his testimony against it, at the time it was made, and had a personal right to produce my arguments, since both parties refused to hear *his* at the conference.

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If your letter is friendly, Sir, and you print it in the same size with my Vindication, I shall gladly buy 10*l.* worth of the copies, and order them to be stitched with my Vindication, and given gratis to the purchasers of it; as well to do you justice, as to convince the world that we make a loving war; and also to demonstrate how much I regard your respectable character, and honor your dear person. Mr. W.'s heart is, I am persuaded, too full of brotherly love to deny me the pleasure of thus shewing you how sincerely I am,

Rev. and dear Sir,

Your obedient servant,

Madeley, 11th Sept.
1771.

J. F.

FIRST LETTER,

Hon. and Rev. Sir,

I Cordially thank you for the greatest part of your Narrative. It confirms me in my hopes, that your projected opposition to Mr. Wesley's minutes, proceeded in general from zeal for the Redeemer's glory; and as such a zeal, though amazingly mistaken, had certainly something very commendable in it, I sincerely desire your Narrative may evidence your *good meaning*, as some think my Vindication does your *mistake*.

In my last private letter I observed, Rev. Sir, that if your Narrative was *kind*, I would buy a number of copies, and give them gratis to the purchasers of my book, that they might see all you can possibly produce in your own defence, and do you all the justice your proper behaviour at the conference deserves. But as it appears to me there are some important mistakes in that performance, I neither dare recommend it *absolutely* to my friends, nor wish it in the religious world the *full* success you desire.

I do not complain of its severity; on the contrary, considering the sharpness of my 5th letter, I gratefully acknowledge it is *kinder* than I had reason to expect. But permit me to tell you, Sir, I look for *justice* to the scriptural arguments I advance in defence of Truth, before I look for *kindness* to my insignificant person, and could much sooner be satisfied with the *former* than with the *latter* alone. As I do not admire the fashionable method of ad-

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vancing general charges without supporting them by particular proofs, I shall take the liberty of pointing out some mistakes in your Narrative, and by that means endeavour to do justice to Mr. Wesley's Declaration, your own Sermons, my Vindication, and above all to the cause of practical religion,

Waving the repetition of what I said in my last touching the publication of my five letters to you, I object first to your putting a wrong colour upon Mr. Wesley's Declaration. You insinuate or assert that he, and 53 of the preachers in conference with him, give up the doctrine of justification by works in the day of judgment. *It appears, say you, from their subscribing the Declaration, notwithstanding Mr. Oliver's remonstrances, that they do not maintain a second justification by works.*

Surely, Sir, you wrong them. They might have objected to some of Mr. Oliver's expressions, or been displeas'd with his readiness to enter the lists of dispute; but certainly so many judicious and good men could never so betray the cause of practical religion, as tamely to renounce a truth of that importance. If they had, one step more would have carried them full into Dr. Crisp's eternal justification, which is the very center of Antinomianism; and without waiting for the return of the next conference, I would bear my *legal* testimony against their *antinomian* error. Mr. W. I reverence as the greatest minister I know, but would not follow him one step farther than he follows Christ. Were he really guilty of rejecting the evangelical doctrine of a second justification by works, with the plainness and honesty of a Suisse I would address him, as I beg you would permit me to address you.

I. Neither you, Rev. Sir, nor any divine in the world have, I presume, a right to blot out of the sacred Records those words of Jesus Christ, St. James, and St. Paul: *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life.*

life.—Not every one that says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that DOES the will of my Father.—Be ye therefore DOERS of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves— for as we are under the law to Christ, not the hearers of the law shall be just before God, but the DOERS of the law shall be JUSTIFIED.—Every man's WORK shall be made manifest: For the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's WORK of what sort it is. His very words shall undergo the severest scrutiny: I say unto you, (O how many will insinuate the contrary!) that every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT, for BY THY WORDS shalt thou then BE JUSTIFIED, and by thy words shalt thou then be condemned.

Can you say, Sir, that the justification mentioned by our Lord in this passage, is the same as that which St. Paul speaks of as the present privilege of all believers, and has no particular reference to the day of judgment mentioned in the preceding sentence? Or will you intimate our Lord does not declare we shall be justified in the last day by works, but by words? Would this evasion be judicious? Do not all professors know that words are works in a theological sense; as being both the signs of the workings of our hearts, and the positive works of our tongues? Will you expose your reputation as a divine, by trying to prove that although we shall be justified by the works of our tongues, those of our hands and feet shall never appear for or against our justification? Or will you insinuate that our Lord recanted the legal sermons written Matt. v. and xii? If you do, his particular account of the day of judgment, Chap. xxv. which strongly confirms and clearly explains the doctrine of our second justification by works, will prove you greatly mistaken; as will also his declaration to St. John above 40 years after, Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man as his WORK, not faith, shall be.

O if faith alone turns the scale of justifying evidence at the bar of God, how many bold antinomians will claim relation to Christ, and boast they are interested in his imputed righteousness! How many will say with the foolish virgins, "*Lord! Lord! WE are of faith, and Abraham's children: In thy name we publicly opposed all legal professors, traduced their teachers as enemies to thy free grace; and to do thee service made it our business to expose the righteousness, and cry down the good works of thy people; therefore Lord! Lord! open to us!*" But alas! far from thanking them for their pains, without looking at their boasted faith, he will dismiss them with a *Depart from me ye that work iniquity!* As if he said:

"*Depart, ye that made the doctrine of my atonement a cloke for your sins, or sewed it as a pillow under the arms of my people, to make them sleep in carnal security when they should have worked out their salvation with fear and trembling. You profess to know me, but I disown you. My sheep I know: Them that are mine I know: The seal of my holiness is upon them all: The motto of it (LET HIM THAT NAMETH THE NAME OF CHRIST DEPART FROM INIQUITY) is deeply engraven on their faithful breasts—Not on yours, Ye carnal, Ye seta under Sin.*"

"*And why called ye me Lord! Lord! and did not do the things which I said? Why did you even use my righteousness as a breast-plate, to stand it out against the word of my righteousness; and as an engine to break both tables of my law, and batter down my Holiness? Your heart condemns you, Ye sinners in Zion! Ye salt without savour! Ye believers without charity! And am not I greater than your heart! And know I not your works? Yes, I know that the love of God is not in you, for you despised one of these my brethren. How could you think to deceive me the Searcher of hearts and Tryer of reins? And how did you dare to call yourselves by my name? As if you were my people? my dear people?*"

people? mine elect? Are not all my peculiar people partakers of my holiness, and zealous of good works? Have not I chosen to myself the man that is godly? And protested that the ungodly shall not stand in judgment, nor sinners (though in sheep's clothing) in the congregation of the righteous? And say I not to the wicked, though he should have been one of my people, *Lo ammi* Thou art none of my people now, what hast thou to do with taking my covenant in thy mouth? You denied me in works, and did not wash your hearts from iniquity in my blood; therefore according to my word, I DENY YOU in my turn, before my Father and his holy angels. Perish your hope, Ye hypocrites! And utter darkness be your portion, Ye double minded! Let fearfulness surprise you, ye tinkling cymbals! Let the fall of your Babels crush you, Ye towering professors of my humble faith! Fly, ye clouds without water; Ye chaff, fly before the blast of my righteous indignation! Ye workers of iniquity! Ye Satans transformed into angels of light! Ye cursed! depart!"

II. Nor is our Lord singular in his doctrine of justification or condemnation by works in the day of judgment. If it is an heresy, the Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles are as great heretics as their Master. Enoch, quoted by St. Jude, prophesied that when the Lord shall come to execute judgment upon all men, he will convince the ungodly among them of all their ungodly DEEDS and hard SPEECHES. This conviction will no doubt be in order to condemnation; and this condemnation will not turn upon unbelief, but its effects, ungodly deeds and hard speeches.——Solomon confirms the joint testimony of Enoch and St. Jude where he says, *He that knoweth the heart shall render to every man according to his WORKS*: and again, *Know. O young man, that for all these things, for all thy WAYS, God shall bring thee into judgment.*

St. Paul, the great champion for faith, is peculiarly express upon this anti-Crispian doctrine.

The Lord, says he, in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, will render to every man according to his DEEDS; to them that CONTINUE IN WELL DOING, here is the true perseverance of the saints! *Eternal life*;—indignation upon every soul of man that DOES evil, and glory to every man who WORKETH good; for there is no respect of persons with God.—We shall all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things DONE in the body, not according to that he hath believed, whether it be true or false, but according to that he hath DONE, whether it be good or bad.—St. Peter asserts that the Father without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's WORK.—And St. John, who next to our Lord gives us the most particular description of the day of judgment, concludes it by these awful words, *And the dead were judged out of things written in the books, according to their WORKS.* It is not once said according to their FAITH.

Permit me, Sir, to sum up all these testimonies in the words of two kings and two apostles. *Let us bear the conclusion of the whole matter*, says the King who chose Wisdom, *Fear God and keep his COMMANDMENTS, for this is the whole duty of man; for God shall bring every WORK into judgment, whether it be good or evil.*—*They that have DONE good*, says the King who is Wisdom itself (and the Athanasian creed after him) *shall go into everlasting life; and they that have NOT DONE good, or that have DONE evil, to everlasting punishment.*—You see then, and they are the words of St. James, *that a man is JUSTIFIED BY WORKS, and not by faith only.* By faith he is justified at his conversion, and when his backslidings are healed. But he is *justified by works* (1.) In the hour of trial, as Abraham was when he had offered up Isaac: (2.) In a court of spiritual or civil judicature, as St. Paul at the bar of Festus: And (3.) before the judgment-seat of Christ, as every one will be whose *faith*, when he goes hence, is found *working by love*: For there, says St. Paul, as well as in consistorial courts, *circumcision*

circumcision is nothing, uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God, 1 Cor. vii. 19.

III. This doctrine is so obvious in the scriptures, so generally received in all the churches of Christ, and so deeply engraven on the conscience of sincere professors, that the most eminent ministers of all denominations perpetually allude to it (Yourself, Sir, not accepted, as I could prove from your sermons, if you had not recanted them). How often, for instance, has that great man of God the truly reverend Mr. Whitefield said to his immense congregations! "You are warned, I am clear of your blood, I shall rise as a swift witness against you, or you against me, in the terrible day of the Lord: O remember to clear me then;" or words to that purpose. And is not this just as if he had said, "We shall all be justified or condemned in the day of judgment by what we are now doing: I by my preaching, and you by your hearing?"

And say not, Sir, that "such expressions were only flights of oratory, and prove nothing." If you do, you touch the apple of God's eye. Mr. Whitefield was not a flighty orator, but spoke the words of soberness and truth, with divine pathos, and floods of tears declarative of his sincerity.

Instead of swelling this letter into a volume (as I easily might) by producing quotations from all the sober puritan divines, who have directly or indirectly asserted a 2d. justification by works, I shall present you only with two passages from Mr. Henry. On Matt. xii. 37. he says, *Consider how strict the judgment will be on account of our words. BY THY WORDS THOU SHALT BE JUSTIFIED OR CONDEMNED, a common rule in men's judgments, and here applied to God's. Note, the constant tenor of our discourse, according as it is gracious, or not gracious, will be an evidence for us, or against us at that day. Those that seemed to be religious, but bridled not their tongue, will then be found to have put a cheat upon themselves with a vain religion. — It concerns us to think much*

of the day of judgment, that that may be a check upon our tongues. And again,

Upon those words, Rom. 2, 13. NOT THE HEARERS OF THE LAW ARE JUST BEFORE GOD, BUT THE DOERS OF THE LAW SHALL BE JUSTIFIED; the honest commentator says, *The Jewish* (Antinomian) *Doctors belstere*d up their followers with an opinion that all that were Jews, (the elect people of God) how bad soever they lived, should have a glorious place in the world to come. This the Apostle here opposes. It was a very great privilege that they had the law, but not a saving privilege, UNLESS THEY LIVED UP TO THE LAW THEY HAD.—*We may apply it to the Gospel: It is not bearing but DOING THAT WILL SAVE US*, John xiii. 17. Jam. i. 22. Who does not perceive that Mr. Henry saw the truth, and spoke it so far as he thought his calvinist readers could bear it? Surely if that good man dared to say *so much*, we who have done “leaning too much towards calvinism,” should be inexcusable if we did not say *all*.

IV. These testimonies will, I hope, make you weigh with an additional degree of candor the following arguments, which I shall produce as a Logician, lest any should be tempted to call me a *bold Metaphysician*, or almost a *Magician*.

The voice that St. John heard in heaven did not say, *Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord, for their faith follows them*: No, it is THEIR WORKS. Faith is the hidden root, hope the rising stalk, and love, together with good works, the nourishing corn: And as the King's agents who fill a royal granary, do not take in the roots and stalks, but the pure wheat alone: So Christ takes neither faith nor hope into heaven, the former being gloriously absorbed in sight, and the latter in enjoyment.

If I may compare faith and hope to the chariot of Israel and the courser thereof, they both bring believers to the everlasting doors of glory, but do not enter in themselves. Not so Love and good Works,

for Love is both the nature and element of saints in glory; and good *Works* necessarily *follow them*, both in *the books* of remembrance which *shall then be opened*, and in the objects and witnesses of those works, who shall then be all present; as it appears from the words of our Lord, *You have done it, or you have not done it to one of the least of THESE my brethren*; and those of St. Paul to his dear converts, *You shall be my joy and my crown* in that day. Thus it is evident that although *faith* is the temporary measure according to which God deals out his mercy and grace in this world, as we may gather from that sweet saying of our Lord, *Be it done to thee according to thy FAITH*; yet *love* and *good works* are the eternal measures, according to which he distributes justification and glory in the world to come. On these observations I argue,

We shall be justified in the last day by the grace and evidences which shall *then* remain.

Love and good Works, the fruits of faith, shall *then* remain.

Therefore we shall *then* be justified by Love and good Works: That is, not by faith, but by its fruits.

V. This doctrine so agreeable to scripture, the sentiment of moderate calvinists, and the dictates of reason, recommends itself likewise to every man's conscience in the sight of God. Who, but Dr. Crisp, could (after a calm review of the whole affair) affirm that in the day of judgment, if I am accused of being actually an hypocrite, Christ's sincerity will justify me, whether it be found in me or not?

Again, Suppose I am charged with being a drunkard, a thief, an whoremonger, a covetous person; or a fretful, impatient, ill-natured man, or if you please a proud bigot, an implacable zealot, a malicious persecutor, who, notwithstanding fair appearances of godliness, would raise disturbances even in heaven if I were admitted there: Will Christ's sobriety,

fobriety, honesty, chafity, generofity; or will his gentlenefs, patience, and meeknefs, juftify me from fuch dreadful charges? muft not I be found really sober, honeft, chafte, and charitable? Muft I not be inherently gentle, meek, and loving? Can we deny this without flying in the face of common fenfe, breaking the ftrongeft bars of fcriptural truth, and opening the flood-gates to the fouleft waves of antinomianifm? If we grant it, do we not grant a fecond juftification by works? And does not St. Paul grant, or rather *infift* upon as much, when he declares that *Without holinefs no man fhall fee the Lord?*

VI. You will probably ask what advantage the Church will reap from this doctrine of a fecond juftification by works. I anfwer that, under God, it will rouse Antinomians out of their carnal fe- curity, ftir up believers to follow hard after holi- nefs, and reconcile fatal differences among Chris- tians, and feeming contradictions in the fcripture.

(1.) It will re-awaken Antinomians †, who fancy there

† I beg I may not be underftood to level the following para- graphs, or any part of thefe letters, at my pious *Calvinift* bre- thren. God knows how deeply I reverence many, who are immovably fixed in what fome call *the doctrines of grace*; how gladly (as conscious of their genuine converfion and eminent ufe- fulnefs) I would lie in the duft at their feet to honor our Lord in his dear members; and how often I have thought it a peculiar infelicity in any degree to difsent from fuch excellent men, with whom I wanted both to live and die, and with whom I hope foon to reign for ever.

As thefe *real* children of God lament the bad ufe antinomians make of their principles, I hope they will not be offended if I bear my testimony againft a growing evil, which they have fre- quently opposed themfelves. While the *Calvinifts* guard the *Foundation* againft *pharifees*, for which I return them my fincere thanks; they will, I hope, allow the *Remonftrants* to guard the *superstructure* againft *antinomians*. If in doing thofe good offices to the church, we find ourfelves obliged to bear a little hard upon the peculiar fentiments of our oppofite friends, let us do it in fuch a manner as not to break the bonds of peace and brotherly

there is no condemnation to them, whether they walk after the spirit in love, or after the flesh in malice; whether they forsake all to follow Christ, or like Judas and Sapphira keep back part of what should be the Lord's without reserve. Thousands boldly profess justifying faith and perhaps eternal justification, who reverence the commandments of God, just as much as they regard the Scriptures quoted in Mr. W.'s minutes.

Upon their doctrinal systems they raise a tower of presumption, whence they bid defiance both to the Law and Gospel of Jesus. His Law says, *Love God with all thy heart and thy neighbour as thyself, that thou mayest live in glory.—If thou wilt enter into the life of glory, keep the commandments.* But this raises their pity, instead of commanding their respect and exciting their diligence. "Moses is buried, say they: We have nothing to do with the law! *We are not under the law to Christ!* Jesus is not a Lawgiver to controul, but a Redeemer to save us."

brotherly kindness; so shall our honest reproofs become matter of useful exercise to that *love which thinketh no evil, hopeth all things, rejoiceth even in the galling truth,* and is neither quenched by many waters, nor damped by any opposition.

I have long wished to see, on both sides of the question about which we unhappily divide, moderate men stepping out of the unthinking, noisy croud of their party, to look each other lovingly in the face, and to convince the world that with impartial zeal they will guard *both* the foundation and the superstructure against all adversaries, those of their own party not excepted. Whoever does this *omne tulit punctum*: he is a real friend to *both* parties, and to the *whole* gospel; for he cordially embraces all the people of God, and joins in one blessed medium the seemingly incompatible extremes of scriptural truth.—Ye men of clear heads, honest hearts, and humble loving spirits, nature and grace have formed you on purpose to do the church this important service. Therefore without regarding the bigots of your own party, in the name of the loving Jesus, and by his catholic spirit, give professors public lessons of *moderation and consistency*, and permit me to learn those rare virtues with thousands at your feet,

The Gospel cries to them *Repent and believe*, and just as if God was to be the penitent believing sinner, they carelessly reply, "The Lord must do all, repentance and faith are *his* works, and they will be done in the day of his power;" and so without resistance they decently follow the stream of worldly vanities and fleshly lusts.—St. Paul cries, *If ye live after the flesh ye shall die*: We know better, answer they, there are neither *ifs* nor conditions in all the gospel: He adds, *This one thing I do, leaving the things that are behind, I PRESS towards the mark, for the prize of my high calling in Christ Jesus—the crown of life: Be ye followers of me: RUN also the race that is set before you.* "What! say they, would you have us *run* and *work* for life? Will you always harp upon that legal string *do! do!* instead of telling us that we have *nothing* to do, but to believe that all is done?—St. James cries, *Show your faith by your works; faith without works is DEAD* already, much more that which is accompanied by bad works. "What! say they, do you think the lamp of faith can be put out as a candle can be extinguished, by not being suffered to shine? We orthodox hold just the contrary: We maintain both that faith can never *die*, and that living faith is consistent not only with the omission of good works, but with the commission of the most horrid crimes."—St. Peter bids them *give all diligence to make their election sure* by *adding to their faith virtue, &c.* "Legal stuff! say they, the covenant is well ordered in all things and *sure*: Neither will our *virtue* save us, nor our *sins* damn us."—St. John comes next and declares, *He that sinneth is of the Devil.* "What! say they, do you think to make us converts to Arminianism, by thus insinuating that a man can be a child of God to-day and a child of the devil to-morrow?"—St. Jude advances last and charges them to *keep themselves in the love of God*, and they supinely reply, "We can do nothing: Besides, we are as easy and as safe without a *frame* as with one."

With

With the sevenfold shield of their antinomian faith they would fight the 12 apostles round, and come off, in their own imagination, more than conquerors. Nay, were Christ himself to come to them incognito, as he did to the disciples that went to Emmaus, and say, *Be ye perfect as your Father who is in heaven is perfect*, it is well if, while they measured him from head to foot with looks of pity or surprize, some would not be bold enough to say, with a sneer, "You are a perfectionist it seems, a follower of poor John Wesley! Are you? For our part we are for *Christ and free grace*, but John Wesley and you are for *perfection and free will*."

Now, Sir, if any doctrine, humanly speaking, can rescue these mistaken souls out of so dreadful a snare, it is that I contend for. Antinomian dreams vanish before it, as the noxious damps of the night before the rising sun. St. Paul, if they would but hear him out, with this one saying as with a thousand rams would demolish all their Babels: *Circumcision is nothing, uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God*: Or, to speak agreeable to our times, "Before the tribunal of Christ, forms of godliness, calvinian and arminian notions are *nothing*; confessions of faith and recantations of error, past manifestations and former experiences are *nothing*, but the keeping of the commandments of God;" the very thing which antinomians ridicule or neglect!

(2.) This doctrine is not less proper to animate feeble believers in their careless pursuit of holiness. O if it were clearly preached and steadily believed— if we were fully persuaded we shall soon *appear before the judgment-seat of Christ*, to answer for every thought, word and work, for every business we enter upon, every sum of money we lay out, every meal we eat, every pleasure we take, every affliction we endure, every hour we spend, every idle word we speak, yea and every temper we secretly indulge,—if we knew we shall certainly *give account* of all the chapters we read, all the prayers we offer,

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all the sermons we hear or preach, all the sacraments we receive; of all the motions of divine grace, all the beams of heavenly light, all the breathings of the spirit, all the invitations of Christ, all the drawings of the Father, reproofs of our friends, and checks of our own conscience, — and if we were deeply conscious that every neglect of duty will rob us of a degree of glory, and every wilful sin of a jewel in our crown, if not our crown itself; what humble, watchful, holy, heavenly persons would we be! How serious and self-denying! How diligent and faithful! In a word, how angelical, and divine *in all manner of conversation!*

Did the *Woman*, the professing church, cordially embrace this doctrine, she would no more stay *in the wilderness* idly talking of her beloved; but actually leaning upon him she would come out of it in the sight of all her enemies. No more wrapped up in the showy cloud of ideal perfection or imaginary righteousness, and casting away her cold garments, her moon-like changes of merely doctrinal apparel, she would shine with the dazzling glory of her Lord; she would burn with the hallowing fires of his love: Once more she would be *clothed with the Sun and have the Moon under her feet.*

Ye lukewarm Talkers of Jesus's ardent love, if you were deeply conscious that nothing but love shall enter heaven, instead of judging of your growth in grace, by the warmth with which you espouse the tenets of Calvin or Arminius, would you not instantly try your state by the xiii. Chap. to the Corinthians, and by our Lord's alarming messages to the falling or fallen churches of Asia? Springing out of your Laodicean indifference, would you not earnestly pray for the faith of the gospel, the *faith that works by burning love*? If the *fire is kindled*, would you not be afraid of putting it out by *quenching the Spirit*? Would not you even dread *grieving him* lest your love should grow cold? Far from accounting the *shedding abroad of the love of God in your hearts* an unnecessary frame, would you

you not be *fratened* till you were *baptized every one of you with the Holy Ghost and with fire?*

Ye who hold the doctrine of perfection without going on to perfection, and ye who explode it as a pernicious delusion, and inconsistently publish hymns of solemn prayer for it, how would you agree from the bottom of your re-awakened hearts to sing together in days of peace and social worship, as you have carelessly sung afunder,

O for an heart to praise our God!

An heart from sin set free!—

An heart in ev'ry thought renew'd

And fill'd with love divine!

Perfect, and right, and pure, and good,

A copy, Lord, of thine.—

“Bigotry from us” remove,

Perfect all our souls in Love, &c.

O ye Halcyon days! Ye days of brotherly love and genuine holiness! if you appeared to pacify and gladden our distracted Jerusalem, how soon would practical christianity emerge from under the frothy billows of Antinomianism, and the proud waves of Pharisaism, which continually break against each other, and openly *foam out their own shame!* *What carefulness* would godly sorrow *work in us all!* *What clearing of ourselves* by casting away our dearest idols! *What indignation* against our former lukewarmness! *What fear* of offending either God or man! *What vehement desire* after the full image of Christ! *What zeal* for his glory! And *what revenge* of our sins! *In all things* we should *approve ourselves* for the time to come *to be clear* from the antinomian delusion! Then would we see what has seldom been seen in our age, distinct (not opposed) societies of meek professors of the *common faith*, walking in humble love, and supporting each other with cheerful readiness, like different battalions of the same invincible army. And if ever we perceived any contention among them, it would be only about the

lowest place and the most dangerous post. Instead of *striving for mastery* they would strive only who should stand truest to the standard of the cross, and best answer the neglected motto of the primitive christians: *Non magna loquimur sed vivimus*. "Our religion does not consist in high words but in good works."

(3.) I observed that this doctrine will likewise reconcile seeming contradictions in the scriptures and fatal differences among christians: Take one instance of the former: What can those who reject a second justification by works make of the solemn words of our Lord, *By thy Words thou shalt be justified, or by thy Words thou shalt be condemned*, Mat. xii. 37? And by what art can they possibly reconcile them with St. Paul's assertions, Rom. iv. 5. *To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his Faith is imputed to him for Righteousness*. And, v. 1. *Being justified by Faith, we have Peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ*. Accept an example of the latter. In the antinomian days of Dr. Crisp arose the honest people we call Quakers. Shocked at the general abuse of the doctrine of justification by faith, they rashly inferred it could never be from God; and seeing none *shall be justified in glory but the doers of the law*, they hastily concluded there is but one justification, namely the being made inherently just, or the being sanctified and then declared holy. Admit our doctrine, and you have both parts of the truth, that which the Antinomians hold against the Quakers, and that which the Quakers maintain against the Antinomians. Each alone is dangerous, both together mutually defend each other, and make up the scriptural doctrine of justification, which is invincibly guarded, on the one hand by *faith* against Pharisees, and on the other by *works* against Antinomians. Reader, may both be thy portion! So shalt thou be eternally reinstated both in the *favour and image of God*.

VI. But while I enumerate the benefits which the Church will reap from a *practical* knowledge of our second justification by works, an honest protestant, who has more zeal for, than acquaintance with the truth, advances with his heart full of holy indignation, and his mouth of objections which he says are unanswerable. Let us consider them one by one.

Obj. 1. "Your popish, antichristian doctrine I abhor, and could even burn at a stake as a witness against it. Away with your new-fangled arminian tenets! I am for old christianity, and, with St. Paul, *determined to know nothing for justification but Christ, and him crucified.*"

Ans. Do you indeed! Then I am sure you will not deny both Jesus Christ and St. Paul in this old christian doctrine, for Christ says *By THY WORDS shalt thou be justified*, and St. Paul declares, *not the bearers, but the DOERS of the law (of Christ) shall be justified.* Alas, how often are those who say they will know and have *nothing but Christ*, the first to *set him at nought* as a Prophet, by railing at his holy doctrine; or to reject him as a King, by trampling upon his royal proclamations! But *I wot that through ignorance they do it, as do also their Rulers.*

Obj. 2. "This legal doctrine robs God's dear children of their comforts and gospel-liberty, binds Moses' intolerable burden upon their free shoulders, and *intangles them again in the galling yoke of bondage.*"

Ans. If God's dear children have got into a *false* liberty of doing the devil's works, either by *not going into the vineyard* when they have said *Lord I go*, or by *beating their fellow servants* there instead of working with them; the sooner they are robbed of it the better; for if they continue thus free they will e'er long be *bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness.* It is the very spirit of antinomianism to represent *God's commandments as grievous*, and the keeping of his law as *bondage.* Not so the dutiful children of God: *their heart is never so*

much at liberty, as when they run best the way of his commandments, and so fulfil the law of Christ. Keep them from obedience, and you keep them in the snare of the devil, promising liberty to others while they themselves are the servants of corruption.

Again, you confound the heavy yoke of the circumcision and ceremonial bondage, with which the Galatians once intangled themselves, with the easy yoke of Jesus Christ. The former was intolerable, the latter is so light a burden, that the only way to find rest unto our souls is to take it upon us. St. Paul calls a dear brother his yoke-fellow: You know the word *Belial* in the original signifies without yoke; they are Sons of *Belial* who shake off the Lord's yoke; and though they should boast of their election as much as the Jews did, Christ himself will say concerning them, *These mine enemies that refuse my yoke, and will not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me.* So inexpressibly dreadful is the end of lawless liberty!

Obj. 3. "Your doctrine is the damnable error of the Galatians, who madly left mount Sion for mount Sina, made Christ the alpha and not the omega, and after having begun in the spirit would be made perfect by the flesh. This is the other gospel which St. Paul thought so diametrically contrary to his own, that he wished the teachers of it, though they were angels of God, might be even accursed and cut off."

Ans. You are under a capital mistake; St. Paul could never be so wild as to curse himself, anathematize St. James, and wish the *Missab* to be again cut off: for he himself taught the Romans that the *deers of the law shall be justified*; St. James evidently maintains a justification by works; and our Lord expressly says *by thy words thou shalt be justified.*—Again, the apostle, as if he had foreseen how his Epistle to the Galatians would be abused to antinomian purposes, gives us in it the most powerful antidotes against that poison. Take two or three instances. (1.) He exhorts his fallen converts to
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the fulfilling of all the law: Love one another, says he, for all the Law is fulfilled in this one word, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, because none can love his neighbour as himself, but he that loves God with all his heart. How different is this doctrine from the bold antinomian cry "We have nothing to do with the law!" (2.) He enumerates the works of the flesh, adultery, hatred, variance, wrath, strife, heresies, envyings, &c. of which, says he, I tell you before, as I have told you in time past, that they who do such things shall not be justified in the day of judgment, or which is the same thing, shall not inherit the kingdom of God. How different a gospel is this, from that which insinuates "impenitent adulterers may be dear children of God, even while such, in a very safe state, and quite sure of glory!" And (3.) as if this awful warning was not enough, he point-blank cautions his readers against the Crispian error. *Be not deceived, says he, whatever a man (not whatever Christ) soweth, that shall he also reap: He that soweth to the flesh shall reap corruption, and he that soweth to the spirit shall reap life everlasting.* How amazingly strong therefore must your prejudice be, which makes you produce this Epistle to thrust love and good works out of the important place allotted them in all the word of God! And no where more than in this very epistle!

Obj. 4. "Notwithstanding all you say I am persuaded you are in the dreadful berejy of the Galatians, for they were, like you, for justification by the works of the law; and St. Paul resolutely maintained against them the fundamental doctrine of justification by faith."

Ans. If you once read over the Epistle to the Galatians without prejudice, and without comment, you will see that (1.) they had returned to the beggarly elements of this world, by superstitiously observing days, months, times and years. (2.) Imagining they could not be saved except they were circumcised, they submitted even to that grievous and bloody injunction.

injunction. (3.) Exact in their useleſs ceremonies, and fondly hoping to be juſtified by their partial obſervance of Moſes' Law, they well-nigh forgot the merits of Chriſt, and openly trampled upon *his law*, and *walked after the fleſh*. Stirred up to contentious zeal by their new teachers, they deſpiſed the old Apoſtle's miniſtry, *bated his perſon*, and *devoured one another*. In ſhort, they truſted partly in the merit of their ſuperſtitious performances, and partly in Chriſt's merits; and on this prepoſterous foundation they *built the hay* of Jewish ceremonies *and the ſtraw* of fleſhly luſts. With great propriety therefore the Apoſtle called them back with ſharpneſs to the only ſure foundation, the merits of Jeſus Chriſt; and wanted them to *build upon it gold and precious ſtones*, all the works of piety and mercy, that ſpring from *faith working by love*.

Now which of theſe errors do we hold? Do we not preach preſent juſtification *by faith*, and juſtification at the bar of God *according to what a man ſoweth*, the very doctrine of this epiſtle? And do we not " ſecure the foundation " by inſiſting that both theſe juſtifications are equally by the alone *merits* of Chriſt, though the ſecond, as our Church intimates in her 12th article, is by the *evidence* of works.

Will you bear with me if I tell you my thoughts? We are all in general condemned by the Epiſtle to the Galatians, for we have too much dependence on our forms of piety, ſpeculative knowledge, or paſt experience; and too little heart-felt confidence in the *merits* of Chriſt: We *ſow* too little *to the ſpirit*, and too much *to the fleſh*. But thoſe, in the next place, are peculiarly reproved by it, who *return to the beggarly elements*, the idle ways and vain faſhions of *this world*.—Thoſe who make as much ado about the *beggarly* element of water, about baptizing infants and dipping adults, as the *Troublers* of the church of Galatia did about circumciſing their converts *that they might glory in their fleſh*.

flesh — Those who zealously affect others but not well — Those who now despite their spiritual Fathers, whom they once received as angels of God — Those who turn our enemies when we tell them the truth, who heap to themselves teachers smoother than the evangelically legal apostle, and would call us blind if we said as he does, *Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone and not in another*, Gal. vi. 4. — Those who plead for spiritual bondage while they talk of gospel liberty, and affirm that *the son of the bond woman shall always live with the son of the free*, that sin can never be cast out of the heart of believers, and that Christ and corruption shall always dwell together in this world. — And lastly, those who say there is no falling away from grace when they are already fallen like the Galatians, and boast of their stability chiefly because they are ignorant of their fall.

Obj. 5. “ However your pharisaic doctrine flatly contradicts the gospel summed up by our Lord in these words, *He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned*. Here is not one word about works, all turns upon faith.”

Ans. Instead of throwing such hints you might as well speak out at once, and say that Christ in Mark xvi. 16. *He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned*, flatly contradicts what he had said Matt. xii. 37. *By thy Words thou shalt be justified, or by thy Words thou shalt be condemned*. But drop your prejudices, and you will see that the contradiction is only in your own ideas. We steadily assert as our Lord, that *he who believeth, or endureth unto the end believing* (for the word implies both the reality and continuance of the action) shall infallibly be saved; because faith which continues living, works to the last by love and good works, which will infallibly justify us in the day of judgment. For when faith is no more, love and good works will evidence (1.) that we were grafted in Christ by
true

true faith, (2.) that we did not *make shipwreck of the faith*,—that we were not *taken away as branches in Him which bear not fruit, but abode fruitful branches in the true vine*, and (3.) that we are still in him by HOLY LOVE, the precious and eternal fruit of true persevering faith. How bad is that cause which must support itself by charging an imaginary contradiction upon *the Wisdom of God, Jesus Christ himself* *!

Obj,

* This is frequently the stratagem of those who have no arguments to produce. I bore my testimony against it in the Vindication, and flattered myself that serious writers would be less forward to oppose the truth, and expose the ministers of Christ by that injudicious way of discussing controverted points. Notwithstanding this, I have before me a little pamphlet, in which the Editor endeavours to *answer Mr. W.'s Minutes*, by extracting from his writings passages supposed to stand in direct opposition to the Minutes. Hence in a burlesque upon the *Declaration* he tries to represent Mr. W. as a knave.

I would just observe upon that performance, (1.) that by this method of raising dust, and avoiding to reason the case fairly, every malicious infidel may blind injudicious readers, and make triumphing scoffers cry out, *Jesus against Christ! Saul against St. Paul! or John the Divine against John the Evangelist! as well as Wesley against John! and John against Wesley.* (2.) Mr. W. having acknowledged in the beginning of the Minutes, he "had leaned too much towards Calvinism," we may naturally expect to meet in his voluminous writings, with a few expressions that look a little towards Antinomianism; and with some paragraphs, which (when detached from the context, and not considered as spoken to deep mourners in Zion, or to souls of undoubted sincerity) seem directly to favour the delusion of the present times. (3.) This may easily be accounted for, without flying to the charges of knavery or contradiction. When after working long without chearing light, we discover the ravishing day of luminous faith, we are all apt in the sincerity of our heart to speak almost as unguardedly of works, as Luther did; but when the fire of antinomian temptations has frequently burned us, and consumed thousands around us, we justly dread it at last; and ceasing to lean towards Crisp's divinity, we return to St. James, St. John, and St. Jude, and to the latter part of St. Paul's epistles, which we too often overlooked, and to which hardly two Ministers did, upon the whole, ever do more justice than Mr. Baxter and Mr. W. (4.) A man who gives to different people, or to the same people at different times,

Obj. 6. "Your doctrine exalts man, and, by giving him room to boast, robs Christ of the glory of his grace. *The top-stone is no more brought forth with shouting Grace! Grace!* but Works! Works!" *unto it*; and the burden of the song in heaven will be "*Salvation to OUR WORKS!*" and no more "*Salvation to the Lamb!*"

Ans. I no less approve your godly jealousy, than I wonder at your groundless fears. To calm them, permit me once more to observe, (1.) That this doctrine is Christ's, who would not be so unwise as to side with our self-righteous pride, and teach us to rob him of his own glory. It is absurd to suppose Christ would be thus against Christ, for even *Satan is too wise to be against Satan.* (2.) Upon our plan as well as upon Crisp's scheme, *free grace* has absolutely *all* the glory. The love and good works by which we shall be justified in the day of judgment are the fruits of faith, and *faith is the gift of God.* Christ the great object of faith, the Holy Ghost called the Spirit of faith, the power of believing, the means, opportunities and will to use that power, are *all* the rich presents of God's *free grace.* All our sins, together with the imperfections of our

times, directly contrary directions, does not always contradict himself. I have a fever, and my Physician, under God, restores me to health by cooling medicines; by and by I am afflicted with the cold rheumatism, and he prescribes fomentations and warming remedies, but my injudicious Apothecary opposes him, under pretence that he goes by *no certain rule*, and *grossly contradicts himself.* Let us apply this to Mr. W. and the Verifier, remembering there is less difference between a burning fever and a cold rheumatism, than between the case of the trifling antinomian and that of the dejected penitent. (5.) Whoever considers without prejudice what our satyric Poet produces as *contradictions*, will find some of them do not so much as amount to an *opposition*, and that most of them do not *seem* so contradictory, as numbers of propositions that might be extracted from the oracles of God.—If the *Editor* of the *Answer to the Minutes* will compare this note with the 31st page of the *Vindication*, I hope he will find his performance answered, his indirect attack upon the Minutes frustrated, and Mr. W.'s honesty fully vindicated.

works, are mercifully forgiven through the blood and righteousness of Christ: Our persons and services are graciously accepted merely for his sake and through his alone merits: And if rewards are granted us according to the fruits of righteousness we bear, it is not because *we* are profitable to God, but because the meritorious sap of the root of David produces those fruits, and the meritorious beams of the sun of righteousness ripen them. Thus you see that which way soever you look at our justification, God has *all* the glory of it, but that of turning moral agents into mere machines, a glory which we apprehend God does no more claim, than you do that of turning your coach-horses into hobby-horses, and your servants into puppets.

If *faith* on earth gives Christ the glory of all our salvation, you need not fear that *Love* (a superior grace) will rob him in heaven; for *love is not puffed up, seeketh not her own, and does not behave herself unbecomingly* towards a beggar on earth; much less will she do so towards the Lord of glory, when she has attained the zenith of heavenly perfection. Away then with all the imaginary lions you place in your way to truth! Notwithstanding Crisp's prohibitions, like the Bereans, receive Christ in his *holy* doctrine, and be persuaded that in the last day you will shout as loud as the honest Doctor, *Grace! Grace! and Salvation to the Lamb*: without suggesting with him to those on the left hand the blasphemous shouts of *Partiality! Hypocrisy! Barbarity!* and *Damnation to the Lamb!* Thus shall you have all the *free grace* he justly boasts of, without any of his horrid reprobating work.

Obj. 7. "How will the converted thief that did no good works be justified by works?"

Ans. We mean by *WORKS* the *whole of our inward tempers and outward behaviour*; and how do you know the *inward behaviour* of the converted thief? Did not his reproofs, exhortations, prayers, patience,

tience, and resignation evidence the liveliness of
 of his faith, as there was time and opportunity?
 (2.) Can you suppose his *inward temper* was not
love to God and man? Could he *go into paradise*
 without being born again? Or could he be born
 again and not love? Is it not said *he that loveth is*
born of God; consequently *he that is born of G.d*
loveth? Again, does not he who *loveth fulfil all the*
law, and do, as says St. Augustine, all good works
 in one? And is not *the fulfilling of all the law of*
Christ work enough to justify the converted thief
 by that law?

Obj. 8. "You say that your doctrine will make
 us *zealous of good works*, but I fully discharge it
 from that office; for *the love of Christ constraineth us*
 to abound in every good word and work."

Ans (1.) St. Paul, who spoke those words with
 more feeling than you, thought the contrary; as
 well as his blessed Master, or they would never have
 taught this doctrine. You do not, I fear, evidence
 the temper of a *Babe* when you are so exceedingly
wise above what Christ preached, and *prudent above*
what the Apostle wrote. (2) If the love of Christ
 in professors is so *constraining* as you say, why do
 good works and good tempers bear so little propor-
 tion to the great talk we hear of its irresistible
 efficacy? And why can those who have tasted it
return to sin as dogs to their vomit? Why can they
 even curse, swear and get drunk? be guilty of
 idolatry, murder, and incest? (3.) If love alone is
 always sufficient, why did our Lord work upon his
 disciples hearts by the hope of *thrones and a kingdom*,
 and by the fear of a *worm that dieth not*, and a
fire that is not quenched? Why does the Apostle stir
 up believers to *serve the Lord with godly fear*, by
 the consideration that *He is a consuming fire*? Illus-
 trating his assertion by this awful warning, *If they*
(Corah and his company) escaped not, but were con-
 sumed by fire from Heaven, because they *refused*
him (Moses) that spake on earth; *much more shall not*
we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh
 from

from heaven? Why did St. Paul himself, who no doubt understood the gospel as well as Crisp and Saltmarsh, *run a race for an incorruptible crown,* and *keep his body under, LEST he himself should be a cast-away?* O ye orthodox divines, and thou ludicrous verifier of an awful Declaration, instead of attempting to set Paul against Paul, and to oppose Wesley to Wesley, answer those scriptural questions; and if you cannot do it without betraying *heterodoxy,* for the Lord's sake, for the sake of thousands in Israel, keep no more from the feeble of the flock those necessary helps, which the *very chief of the apostles,* evangelical Paul, without any of your Crispian refinements, continually recommended to others, and daily used himself. And for your own soul's sake, never more prostitute these awful words, *the Love of Christ constraineth us;* never more apply them to yourselves, while you refuse to treat the most venerable ambassador of Christ, I shall not say with *respectful love,* but with *common decency.*

Obj. 9. "All the formal and pharisaical ministers, who are sworn enemies to Christ and the gospel of his grace, preach your legal doctrine of justification by works in the day of judgment."

Ans. And what do you infer from it? That the doctrine is false? If the inference is just, it will follow there is neither heaven nor hell; for they publicly maintain the existence of both. But suppose they now and then preach our doctrine without zeal, without living according to it, or without previously preaching the fall and a *present justification by faith in Christ* productive of peace and power. what can be expected from it? Would not the doctrine of the atonement itself be totally useless, if it were preached under such disadvantages?—The truth is, such ministers are only for the roof, and you, it seems, only for the foundation: but a *roof* unsupported by solid walls crushes to death, and a foundation without a roof is not much better than the open air. I therefore *wise ma, e.-builders,* like St. Paul, are for having both
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in their proper places. Like him, when the foundation is well laid, *leaving the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, they go on to perfection*; nor will they forget as they *work out their salvation, to shout grace, grace, to the last slate that covers in the building*; or to the *top-stone, the key that binds the solid arch.*

Obj. 10. "Should I receive and avow such a doctrine, the generality of professors would rise against me; and while the warmest would call me a *papist*, an *antichrist*, and what not; my dearest christian friends would pity me as an unawakened-pharisee, and fear me as a blind legalist."

Ans. *Rejoice and be exceeding glad when all men (the godly not excepted) shall say all manner of evil of you falsely for Christ's sake,*—for preferring *Christ's holy doctrine to the loose tenets of Dr. Crisp*: and remember that in our antinomian days, it is as great an honor to be called *legal* by fashionable professors, as to be branded with the name of *Methodist* by the fops who glory in their shame.

VII. As I would hope my Objector is either satisfied or silenced, before I conclude permit me a moment, Rev. Sir, to consider the two important objections which you directly or indirectly make in your Narrative.

(1.) "I should tremble, say you, page 21, lest some bold metaphysician should affirm that a *second justification by works is quite consistent with what is contained in Mr. W.'s Declaration*; but that it is expressed in such **STRONG AND ABSOLUTE TERMS**, as must for ever put the most exquisite refinements of metaphysical distinctions **AT DEFIANCE.**"

Ans. For ever at **DEFIANCE!**—You surprise me, Sir: I, who am as perfect a stranger to exquisite refinements as to Crisp's eternal justification, defy you (pardon a bold expression to a bold metaphysician) ever to produce out of Mr. W.'s Declaration, I shall not say (as you do) **STRONG AND ABSOLUTE TERMS**, but one single word or tittle denying or

excluding a second justification by works; and I appeal both to your second thoughts and to the unprejudiced world, whether these three propositions of the Declaration, *We have no trust or confidence but in the alone MERITS of Christ FOR justification in the day of judgment.*—*Works have no part in MERITING or PURCHASING our justification from first to last, EITHER IN WHOLE OR IN PART.*—*He is not a real Christian Believer (and consequently cannot be saved) WHO DOES NOT GOOD WORKS where there is time and opportunity.*—I appeal, I say, to the unprejudiced world, whether these three propositions are not highly consistent with this assertion of our Lord, *By thy words thou shalt be justified*, that is, “Although from first to last the alone Merits of my life and death purchase or deserve thy justification; yet in the day of judgment thou shalt be justified by thy works; that is, thy justification which is purchased by my alone merits, will entirely turn upon the evidence of thy works, according to the time and opportunity thou hast to do them.”

Who does not see that *to be justified by the EVIDENCE of works*, and *to be justified by the MERITS of works*, are no more phrases of the same import, than *Minutes* and *Heresy* are words of the same signification? The latter proposition contains the error strongly guarded against both in the Declaration and in the Minutes: The former contains an evangelical doctrine, as agreeable to the Declaration and Minutes as to the scriptures; a doctrine of which we were too sparing when we “leaned too much towards calvinism,” but to which, after the example of Mr. W., we are now determined to do justice.

Whoever is ashamed of Christ's words, we will proclaim them to the world. Both from our pulpits and the press we will say, *By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*—*Yea, Whoever shall say to his brother, Thou Fool! shall be in danger of hell fire, and whosoever maketh a lie shall have his part in the lake which*

which burneth with fire and brimstone, for as with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, or disbelieveth to unrighteousness, so with the mouth confession is made to SALVATION, or hard speeches are uttered to DAMNATION. Reserve therefore, reverend Sir, your public praises for a more proper occasion than that which caused their breaking out in your Narrative. BLESSED BE GOD, say you, page 16, Mr. Wesley and 53 of his preachers do not agree with Mr. Oliver in the material article of a second justification by works. Indeed, Sir, you are greatly mistaken, for we do agree with him, and shall continue so to do, till you have proved he does not agree with Jesus Christ, or that our doctrine is not perfectly consistent both with the Scriptures and the Declaration.

(2.) Your second objection is not so formal as the first; it must be made up of broad hints scattered through your Narrative, and they amount to this, "Your pretended difference between justification by the MERIT of works, and justification by the EVIDENCE of works, and between a 1st and a 2d justification, is founded upon the subtilties of metaphysical distinctions: If what you say wears the aspect of truth, it is because you give a new turn to error, by the almost magical power of metaphysical distinctions." Pag. 16, 20, and 21.

Give me leave, Sir, to answer this objection by two appeals, one to the most ignorant collier in my parish, and the other to your own sensible child; and if they can at once understand my meaning, you will see that my metaphysical distinctions, as you are pleased to call them, are nothing but the dictates of common sense. I begin with the collier.

Thomas, I stand here before the Judge accused of having robbed the Rev. Mr. Shirley near Bath, last month on such an evening; can you speak a word for me? Thomas turns to the Judge and says, "Please your Honor the accusation is false, for our parson was in Madely-wood, and I can make oath of it, for he even reproved me for swearing at

our pit's mouth that very evening." By his evidence the Judge acquits me. Now, Sir, ask cursing Tom whether I am acquitted and *justified* by his *merits* or by the simple *evidence* he has given, and he will tell you, "Aye to be sure by the *evidence*: Though I am no scholar, I know very well if our methodist parson is not hanged, it is none of my deservings." Thus, Sir, an ignorant collier, as great a stranger to *your metaphysics* as you are to *his mandrel*, discovers at once a material difference between *justification by the EVIDENCE*, and *justification by the MERITS of a witness*.

My 2d Appeal is to your sensible child. By a plain comparison I hope to make him at once understand both the difference there is between our 1st and 2d justification, and the propriety of that difference. The lovely boy is old enough, I suppose, to follow the gardener and me to yonder nursery. Having shewn him the operation of *grafting*, and pointing at the crab-tree newly grafted, "My dear child, would I say, though hitherto this tree has produced nothing but crabs, yet by the skill of the gardener, who has just fixed in it that good little branch, it is now made an *apple-tree*, I *justify* and warrant it such. (Here is an emblem of our *first justification by faith!*) In three or four years, if we live, we will come again and see it: *If it thrives and bears fruit, well*; we shall then by that mark justify it a second time, we shall declare that it is a *good apple-tree* indeed, and fit to be transplanted from this wild nursery into a delightful orchard. But if we find that the old crab-stock, instead of nourishing the graft, spends all its sap in producing wild shoots and four crabs; or if it is a *tree whose fruit withereth without fruit, twice dead* (dead in the graft and in the stock) *plucked up by the root*, or quite cankered, far from declaring *it a good tree*, we shall pass sentence of condemnation upon it, and say, *Cut it down: Why cumbereth it the ground? For every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.*"

Here

Here is an emblem of our *second* justification by *works*, or of the condemnation that will infallibly overtake those Laodicean professors and wretched apostates, whose faith is not shewn by works, where there is time and opportunity.

Instead of offering an insult to your superior understanding, in attempting to explain by *metaphysical distinctions* what I suppose your sensible child has already understood by the help of a grafting-knife, I shall leave you to consider whether scripture, reason, and candor, do not join their influence to make you acknowledge, at least in the court of your own conscience, that you have put as wrong a construction upon Mr. W.'s Declaration as upon his Minutes, and by that means inadvertently given another *rash* touch to the ark of practical religion, and to the character of one of the greatest ministers in the world.

I am with due respect,

Hon. and Rev. Sir,

Your obedient servant, in the bond of the
practical gospel of Christ,

THE VINDICATOR.

SECOND

S E C O N D L E T T E R.

Hon. and Rev. Sir,

HAVING endeavoured in my last to do justice to the practical gospel of Christ, and Mr. W.'s awful Declaration; I pass on to the other mistakes of your Narrative. That which strikes me next is the PUBLIC RECANTATION OF YOUR USEFUL SERMONS IN THE FACE OF THE WHOLE WORLD. Page 22.

I. Oh! Sir, what have you done? Do you not know that your Sermons contain not only the legally evangelical doctrine of the Minutes, but likewise all the doctrines which moderate Calvinists esteem as the marrow of the gospel? And shall all be treated alike?—*Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked? That be far from thee to do after this manner!* Thus did a good man formerly plead the cause of a *wicked* city, and thus I plead that of your *good* sermons, those twelve valuable, though unripe fruits of your ministerial labours. Upon this plea the infamous city would have been spared, had only *ten* good men been found in it. Now, Sir, spare a valuable book for the sake of a *thousand* excellent things it contains. But if you are inflexible, and still wish it “burned,” imitate at least the kind angels who sent Lot out of the fiery overthrow, and except all the evangelical pages of the unfortunate volume.

Were it not ridiculous to compare wars which cost us only a little ink, and our friends a few pence,

penance, to those which cost armies their blood, and kingdoms their treasures, I would be tempted to say you imitate the Dutch in their last effort to balance the victory, and secure the field. When they are pressed by the French, rather than yield, they break their dykes, let in the sea upon themselves, and lay all their fine gardens and rich pastures under water : but before they have recourse to that strange expedient, they prudently save all the valuable goods they can. Why should you not follow them in their prudential care, as you seem to do in their bold stratagem ? When you publicly lay your useful book under the bitter waters of an anathema, why do you save absolutely nothing ? Why must gospel truths, more precious than the wealth of Holland and the gold of Ophir, lie for ever under the severe scourge of your recantation ? Suppose you had *recanted* your 3d Sermon, *The way to eternal life* in opposition to Mysticism ; and *burned* the 4th, *Salvation by Christ for Jews and Gentiles*, in honor of Calvinism, could you not have spared the rest ?

If you say, you may do what you please with your own ; I answer, Your book publicly exposed to sale, and bought perhaps by thousands, is, in one sense, no more your own ; it belongs to the purchasers, before whom you lay, I fear, a dangerous example ; for when they shall hear that the Author has *publicly recanted it in the face of the whole world*, it will be a temptation to them to slight the gospel it contains, and perhaps to ridicule it *in the face of the whole world*.

You add, “ it favours too strongly of mysticism.” Some passages are a little tainted with Mr. Law’s capital error, and you might have pointed them out ; but if you think *mysticism* is intrinsically bad, you are under a mistake. One of the greatest *mystics*, next to Solomon, is Thomas à Kempis, and, a few errors excepted, I would no more burn his *Imitation of Jesus Christ*, than the Song of Solomon, and
Mr.

Mr. Romaine's edifying paraphrase of the 107th Psalm.

You urge also, "Your sermons favour too much of *free will*." Alas! Sir, can you recant *free will*? Was not your will as *free* when you recanted your sermons as when you composed them? Is there not as much *free will* expressed in this one line of the gospel as in all your sermons, *I would have gathered you, and ye would not?* Do not *free will offerings with an holy worship* delight the Lord more than *forced*, and if I may be allowed the expression, *bound-will* services? Is not the *free will* with which the martyrs went to the stake as worthy of our highest admiration, as the *mysticism* of the Canticles is of our deepest attention? If all that strongly "favours of *free will*" must be "burned," Ye heavens! what Smithfield work will there be in your lucid plains! Wo to Saints! Wo to Angels! for they are all *free-willing* Beings,—all full of *free will*: Nor can you deny it, unless you suppose they are *bound* by irresistible decrees, as the Heathens fancied their Deities were hampered with the adamantine chains of an imaginary something they called *Fate*; witness their *Fata vitant*, and *Fata jubent*, and *ineluctabile Fatum*

Pardon, Rev. Sir, the oddity of these exclamations. I am so grieved at the great advantage we give infidels against the gospel, by making it ridiculous, that I could try even the method of Horace, to bring my friends back from the fashionable refinements of Crisp, to the plain truth as it is in Jesus.

Ridiculum acri

Fortius ac melius stultas plerumque fecat res.

Nor is this the only bad tendency of your new doctrine: for by exploding the *freedom* of the will, you rob us of *free agency*; you afford the wicked, who determine to continue in sin, the best excuse in the world to do it without either shame or remorse;

more; you make us mere machines, and indirectly reflect upon the wisdom of our Lord! for saying to a set of Jewish machines, *I would and ye would not*. But what is still more deplorable, you inadvertently represent it an unwise thing in God to judge the world in righteousness; and your *new* glass shews his vindictive justice in the same unfavourable light, in which England saw two years ago the behaviour of a great monarch, who was exposed in the public papers for unmercifully cutting with a whip, and tearing with spurs, the horses worked in the tapestry of his royal apartment. because they did not prance and gallop at his nod.

If a commendable, but immoderate fear of Pelagius's doctrine drove you into that of St. Augustine, the oracle of all the Dominicans, Thomists, Jansenists, and all other Roman catholic predestinarians. you need not go so far beyond him as to recant all your sermons, because you mention perhaps three or four times, the freedom of our will in the whole volume. "Let no one, says judicious Melancthon, be offended at the word *free will*, (*liberum arbitrium*) for St. Augustine himself uses it in many volumes, and that almost in every page, even to the surfeit of the reader."

The most ingenious Calvinist that ever wrote against *free will*, is, I think, Mr. Edwards of New England. And his fine system turns upon a comparison by which it may be overturned, and the *freedom* of the will demonstrated.

The will, says he, (if I remember right) is like an even balance which can never turn without a weight, and must *necessarily* turn with one.—But whence comes the weight that *necessarily* turns it? From the understanding, answers he; the last dictate of the understanding *necessarily* turns the will.—And is the understanding also *necessarily* determined? Yes, by the effect which the objects around us *necessarily* have upon us, and by the circumstances in which we *necessarily* find ourselves; so that from first to last our tempers, words and actions *necessarily* follow each

each other, and the circumstances that give them birth, as the 2d, 3d, and 4th links of a chain follow the first, when it is drawn along. Hence the eternal, infallible, irresistible, universal concatenation of events, both in the moral and material world. This is, if I mistake not, the scheme of that great divine, and he spends no less than 414 large pages in trying to establish it.

I would just observe upon it, that it makes the first Cause, or first Mover, the only *free Agent* in the world; all others being *necessarily* bound with the chain of his decrees, drawn along by the irresistible motion of his arm, or, which is the same, intangled in *forcible* circumstances unalterably fixed by his immutable counsel.

And yet, even upon this scheme you needed not, Sir, be so afraid of *free will*; for if the *will* is like an even balance, it is *free* in itself, though it is only with what I beg leave to call a *mechanical freedom*; for an even balance, you know, is *free* to turn either way.

But with respect to our ingenious author's assertion, that the will cannot turn without a weight, because an even balance cannot; I must consider it as a mere begging the question, if not as an absurdity. What is a balance, but *lifeless matter*? And what is the will, but the living *active soul*, springing up in its willing capacity, and self-exerting, self-determining power? O how tottering is the mighty fabric raised, I shall not say upon such a fine-spun metaphysical speculation, but upon so weak a foundation as a comparison, which supposes that two things so widely different as *spirit* and *matter*, a *living soul* and a *lifeless balance*, are *exactly* alike with the reference to self-determination! Just as if a *spirit* made after the image of the *living, free and powerful God*, was no more capable of determining itself, than an horizontal beam supporting two equal copper bowls by six silken strings.

I am sorry, Sir, to dissent from such a respectable Divine as yourself, but as I have no taste for new refinements,

refinements, and cannot even conceive how our actions can be *morally* good or evil, any farther than our *free will* is concerned in them; I must follow the universal experience of mankind, and side with the author of the sermons against the author of the Narrative, concerning the *freedom* of the will.

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*.

However, it must be granted that fashionable professors, and the large book of Mr. Edwards are in general for you; but when you maintained *the freedom of the will*, Jesus Christ and the Gospel were on your side. To the end of the world this plain, peremptory assertion of our Lord, *I would and ye would not*, will alone throw down the sophisms, and silence the objections of the most subtle philosophers against *free will*. When I consider what it implies, far from supposing the will is like a lifeless pair of scales, *necessarily* turned by the least weight; I see it is such a strong, self-determining power, that it can resist the effect of the most amazing weights; keep itself inflexible under all the warnings, threatenings, miracles, promises, entreaties and tears of the Son of God; and remain obstinately unmoved under all the strivings of his holy Spirit. Yes, put in one scale the most stupendous weights, for instance, the hopes of heavenly joys, and the dread of hellish torments; and only the gaudy feather of honor, or the breaking bubble of worldly joy in the other; if the Will casts itself into the light scale, the feather or bubble will instantly preponderate. Nor is the power of the rectified Will less wonderful; for though you should put all the kingdoms of the world and their glory in one scale, and nothing but *the reproach of Christ* in the other; yet if the

Will *freely* leaps into the infamous scale, a crown of thorns easily outweighs a thousand golden crowns, and a devouring flame makes ten thousand thrones kick the beam.

Thus it appears the will can be persuaded, never forced. You may bend it by moral suasions, but if you do it farther than it freely gives way, you *break*, you absolutely *destroy* it. A Will forced is no more a *Will*, it is mere *compulsion*; freedom is not less essential to it, than moral agency to man. Nor do I go, in these observations upon the freedom of the will, one step farther than honest John Bunyan, whom all the Calvinists so deservedly admire. In his *Holy War* he tells us there is but one Lord *Will-be-will* in the town of Man's soul: whether he serves *Diabolus* or *Sbaddai*, he is *Lord Will-be-will still*, "a man of great strength, resolution, and courage, whom in his occasion no one can turn," if he does not freely turn or yield to be turned.

I hope, Sir, these hints upon the harmlessness of *mysticism*, and the important doctrine of our *free-agency* will convince you, and the purchasers of your sermons, that you have been too precipitate in *publicly recanting them in the face of the whole world*, especially the *ninth*.

If you ask why I particularly interest myself in the behalf of that one discourse, I will let you into the mystery. At the first reading I liked and adopted it; I cut it out of the volume in which it was bound, put it in my sermon-case, and preached it in my church. The title of it is, you know, *Justification by Faith*, and among several striking things on the subject, you quote twice this excellent passage out of our homilies. "Justification by faith implies a sure trust and confidence a man hath in God, that by the *merits* of Christ his sins are forgiven, and he is reconciled to the favour of God." O Sir, why did you not except it in your recantation, both for the honour of our Church and your own?

Were

Were I to print and disperse such an advertisement as this, "Eight years ago I preached in my Church a sermon intitled JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH, composed by the Hon. and Rev. Mr. Shirley, to convince Papists and Pharisees that we are accepted through the alone merits of Christ; but I see better now, *I wish this sermon had been burned, and I publicly recant it in the face of the whole world;*" how would the popish priest of Madeley rejoice! And how will that of Loughrea triumph, when he hears *you* have actually done it in your Narrative! What will your protestant parishioners, to whom your book is dedicated, say, when the surprising news reaches Ireland? And what will the world think, when they see you warmly plead in August for *Justification by Faith*, as being, "the foundation that must by all means be secured;" and publicly recant in September your own excellent *sermon of Justification by Faith*?

Indeed, Sir, though I admire your candor in acknowledging there are some exceptionable passages in your discourses, and your humility in readily giving' them up, I can no more approve your readiness in making, than in insisting upon *formal recantations*. We cannot be too careful in dealing in that kind of ware; and it is extremely dangerous to do it by wholesale; as by that means we may give up, or *seem* to give up, *before the whole world*, precious truths delivered by Christ himself, and brought down to us in streams of the blood of martyrs.

Among some blunt expostulations that Mr. Wesley erased in my fifth letter, as being too severe, he kindly but unhappily struck out this, "Before you could with candor insist upon a recantation of Mr. W.'s Minutes, should you not have recanted yourself the passages of your own sermons where the same doctrines are maintained; and have sent your recantation through the land together with your circular letter?" Had this been published, it might have convinced you of the un-

seasonableness of your recantation: Thus this *second hasty step* would have been prevented; and if I dwell so long upon it now, believe me, Sir, it is chiefly to prevent a *third*.

And now your sermons are recanted, is the vindication of Mr. W.'s Minutes invalidated?—Not at all; for you have not yet recanted the Bath Hymn-book, nor can you ever get Mr. Henry, Mr. Williams, and a tribe of other anti-Crispian, though Calvinist divines now in glory, to recant with you; much less the Prophets, Apostles, and Christ himself, on whose irrefragable testimony we chiefly rest our doctrine.

II. As I have pleaded out the cause of *free will* against *bound will*, or that of your Sermons against your Narrative; and am insensibly come to the Vindication, give me leave, Sir, to speak a word also for that performance and the author of it.

You say he has "*attempted a vindication of the Minutes*;" but do not some people think he has likewise *executed* it? and have you proved he has not?

You reply, *There would be a great impropriety in my giving a full and particular answer to those letters, because the author did all he could to revoke them, and has given me ample satisfaction in his letter of submission*. Indeed, Sir, you quite mistook the nature of that *submission*; it had absolutely no reference to the *arguments* of the Vindication. It only respected the *polcmic dress* in which the Vindicator had put them. You might have been convinced of it by this paragraph of his letter of submission. "I was just going to preach when I had the news of your happy accommodation, and was no sooner out of church, than I wrote to beg my Vindication might not appear in the *dress* in which I had put it. I did not then, nor do I yet repent having written upon the Minutes; but *as matters are now*, I am very sorry I did not write in a general manner, without taking notice of the circular letter and mentioning

mentioning your dear name." He begs therefore you will not consider his letter of submission as a reason not to give a *full or particular answer* to his ARGUMENTS: On the contrary, if you can prove they want solidity, a *letter of thanks* shall follow his *letter of submission*; if he is wrong, he sincerely desires to be set right.

You add however, that he has *broken the Minutes into sentences and half sentences. and by refining upon each of the detached particles has given a new turn to the Whole.* But he appeals to every impartial Reader whether he has not, like a candid man, first considered them all together, and then every one afunder. He begs to be informed whether an artist can better inquire into the goodness of a watch, than by making first his observations on the whole movement in general, and then by taking it to pieces, that he may examine every part with greater attention. And he desires you would shew whether what you are pleased to call a new turn, is not preferable to the heretical turn some persons give them; and whether it is not equally, if not better adapted to the literal meaning of the words, as well as more agreeable to the antinomian state of the Church, the general tenor of the propositions, and the system of doctrine maintained by Mr. W. for near 40 years.

The Vindicator objects likewise to your asserting, page 21, that *when he first saw the Minutes, he expressed to Lady Huntingdon his ABHORRENCE of them:* Had you said *surprize*, the expression would have been strictly just; but that of *abhorrence* is far too strong. Her Ladyship, who testified her *detestation* of them in the strongest terms, might easily mistake his *abhorrence* of the sense fixed upon the Minutes, for an abhorrence of the Minutes themselves; but she may recollect that far from ever granting they had that sense, he said again and again, even in their first conversation upon them, "Certainly, my Lady, Mr. W. can mean no such thing: he will explain himself."

But supposing he had at first been so far wrought upon by the jealous fears of Lady Huntingdon, as to express as great an *abhorrence* of the Minutes, as the mistaken disciples did of the person of our Lord, when they took him for an apparition, and *cried out for fear*; would this excuse either him or you, Sir, for resolutely continuing in a mistake, in the midst of a variety of means and calls to get out of it? And if the Vindicator, before he had weighed the Minutes in the balance of the sanctuary, had a mind to take his pen, and condemn them as dangerously legal, what can you fairly conclude from it, but that he is not partial to Mr. W.; and has also "leaned so much towards Calvinism," as not instantly to discover and *rejoice in the truth*?

In your last page you take your friendly leave of the Vindicator, by saying you *desire in love to cast a veil over all apparent mistakes of his judgment on this occasion*; but as he is not conscious of *all these apparent mistakes*, he begs you would in love take off the veil you have cast upon them, that he may see, and rectify at least those which are capital.

III. And that you may not hastily conclude he was *mistaken* in his vindication of the article that touches upon *Merit*, he embraces this opportunity of presenting you with another quotation from the John Wesley of the last century, he means Mr. Baxter, the most judicious divine, as well as the greatest, most useful, and most laborious preacher of his age.

In his *Catholic Theology*, answering the objections of an Antinomian, he says: *Merit* is a word I perceive you are against, you may therefore chuse any other of the same signification, and we will forbear this rather than offend you. But yet tell me, (1.) What if the words *αξις* and *αξια* were translated *deserving* and *merit*, would it not be as true a translation as *worthy* and *worthiness*, when it is the same thing that is meant? (2.) Do not all the ancient Teachers of the Churches, since the Apostles,

Apostles, particularly apply the names *αξία* and *meritum* to believers? And if you persuade men that all these teachers were Papists, will you not persuade most that believe you, to be Papists too? (3.) Are not *reward* and *merit* or *desert* relative words, as *punishment* and *guilt*, *master* and *servant*, *husband* and *wife*? And is there any reward which is not *meriti præmium*, the reward of some merit? Again,

Is it not the second article of our faith, and next to believing there is a God, that He is the REWARDER of them that diligently seek him? When you thus extirpate faith and godliness, on pretence of crying down *merit*, you see what *over-doing* tends to. And indeed by the same reason that men deny a *reward* to duty (the faultiness being pardoned through Christ) they would infer there is no *punishment* for sin; for if God will not do good to the righteous, neither will he do evil to the wicked; he is like the God of Epicurus, he does not trouble himself about us, nor about the merit or demerit of our actions. But David knew better, *The Lord*, says he, *plenteously REWARDETH the proud doers*, and *verily there is a REWARD for the righteous*, for *there is a God that judgeth the earth*, that sees matter of praise or dispraise, rewardableness or worthiness of punishment in all the actions of men. This is, Sir, all Mr. Baxter and Mr. W. mean by *merit* or *demerit*; and if the Vindicator is wrong for thinking they are both in the right, please to remove the *veil* that conceals his *mistake*.

IV. As one of his correspondents desires him to explain himself a little more upon the article of the Minutes which respects *undervaluing ourselves*; and as you probably place the arguments he has advanced upon that head among his *apparent mistakes*, he takes likewise this opportunity of making some additional observations on that delicate subject.

How

How we can *esteem every man better than ourselves*, and ourselves the *chief of sinners*, or the *least of saints*, seems not so much a calculation for the understanding, as for the lowly, contrite and loving heart. It puzzles the former, but the latter at once makes it out. Nevertheless the seeming contradiction may perhaps be reconciled to reason by these reflections.

(1.) If friendship brings the greatest monarch down from his throne, and makes him sit on the same couch with his favourites; may not brotherly love, much more powerful than natural friendship, may not humility excited by the example of Christ washing his disciples feet, may not a deep regard for that precept, *he that will be greatest among you let him be the least of all*, sink the true christian in the dust, and make him lie in spirit at the feet of every one?

(2.) A well-bred person uncovers himself, bows, and declares even to his inferiors, that he is their "most humble servant." This affected civility of the world is but an apish imitation of the genuine humility of the church, and if those who customarily speak humble words without meaning may yet be honest men, how much more the saints, who have *truth written in their inward parts*, and *speak out of the abundance of their humble hearts!*

(3.) He who walks in the light of divine love sees something of God's spiritual, moral, or natural image in all men, the worst not excepted; and at the sight, that which is merely creaturely in him (by a kind of spiritual instinct found in all who are *born of the spirit*) directly bows to that which is of God in another. He imitates the captain of a first rate man of war, who, upon seeing the King or Queen coming up in a small boat, forgetting the enormous size of his ship, or considering it is the King's own ship, immediately strikes his colours; and the greater vessel, consistently with wisdom and truth, pays respect to the less.

(4.)

(4.) The most eminent saint, having known more of the workings of corruption in his own breast, than he can possibly know of the wickedness of any other man's heart, may with great truth (according to his present views and former feelings of the internal evil he has overcome) call himself *the chief of sinners*.

(5.) Nor does he know but if the feeblest believers had had all his talents and graces, with all his opportunities of doing and receiving good, they would have made far superior advances in the christian life; and in this view also, without hypocritical humility, he prefers the least saint to himself. Thus, although according to the humble light of *others*, all true believers certainly *undervalue*; yet according to *their own* humble light, they make a true estimate of *themselves*.

V. The Vindicator having thus solved a problem of godliness, which you have undoubtedly ranked among *his apparent mistakes*, he takes the liberty of presenting you with a list of some of *your own* "apparent mistakes on this occasion."

(1.) In the very letter in which you recant your circular letter, you desire Mr. W. to *give up the fatal errors of the Minutes*, though you have not yet *proved* they contain one; you still affirm *they appear to you evidently subversive of the fundamentals of christianity*, that is in plain English, still "dreadfully heretical;" and you produce a letter which asserts also, without shadow of proof, that the *Minutes were given for the establishment of another foundation than that which is laid*,—that they are *repugnant to scripture, the whole plan of man's salvation under the new covenant of grace, and also to the clear meaning of our established Church, as well as to all other protestant Churches*.

(2.) You declare in your Narrative, that *when you cast your eye over the Minutes you are just where you was*, and assure the public that *nothing inferior*
to

to an ATTACK UPON THE FOUNDATION of our hope, through the all-sufficient sacrifice of Christ, could have been an object sufficient to engage you in its defence: Thus, by continuing to insinuate such an ATTACK was really made, you continue to wound Mr. W. in the tenderest part.

(3.) Although Mr. W. and 53 of his fellow-labourers have let you quietly *secure the foundation* (which, by the bye, had been only shaken in your own ideas, and was perfectly secured by these express words of the Minutes, "not by the merit of works," but by "believing in Christ") yet far from allowing them to *secure the superstructure* in their turn, which would be nothing but just, you begin already a contest with them about our *second justification by works in the day of judgment*.

(4.) Instead of frankly acknowledging the rashness of your step, and the greatness of your mistake, with respect to the Minutes, you make a bad matter worse, by treating the Declaration as you have treated them; forcing upon it a dangerous sense, no less contrary to the scriptures, than to Mr. W.'s meaning, and the import of the words.

(5.) When you speak of the dreadful charges you have brought against the Minutes, you softly call them *misconstructions you MAY SEEM to have made of their meaning*, Page 22 Line 4. Nor is your *Acknowledgment* much stronger than your *may seem*; at least it does not appear to many, adequate to the hurt done by your circular letter to the practical gospel of Christ, and the reputation of his eminent servant, thousands of whose friends you have grieved, offended, or stumbled; while you have confirmed thousands of his enemies in their hard thoughts of him, and in their unjust contempt of his ministry.

(6.) And lastly, far from candidly enquiring into the merit of the arguments advanced in the Vindication, you represent them as mere *metaphysical distinctions*; or cast, as a veil over them, a friendly

Friendly submissive *letter of condolence*, which was never intended for the use to which you have put it.

Therefore the Vindicator, who does not admire a peace founded upon a *may seem* on your part, and on Mr. W.'s part upon a *Declaration*, to which you have already fixed a wrong, unscriptural sense of your own; takes this public method to inform you, he thinks his arguments in favour of Mr. W.'s anti-Crispian propositions, rational, scriptural, and solid; and once more he begs you would remove the veil you have hitherto "cast over all the apparent mistakes of his judgment on this occasion" that he may see whether the *antinomian* gospel of Dr. Crisp is preferable to the *practical* gospel which Mr. W. endeavours to restore to its primitive and scriptural lustre.

VI. Having thus finished my remarks upon the mistakes of your Narrative, I gladly take my leave of controversy for this time: Would to God it were for ever! I do no more like it than I do applying a caustic to the back of my friends; it is disagreeable to me and painful to them, and, nevertheless, it must be done when their health and mine is at stake.

I assure you, Sir, I do not love the warlike dress of the Vindicator any more than David did the heavy armour of Saul. With gladness therefore I cast it aside to throw myself at your feet, and protest to you, that although I thought it my *duty* to write to you with the utmost *plainness*, *frankness*, and *honesty*; the design of doing it with *bitterness* never entered my heart. However, for every "*bitter expression*" that may have dropped from my sharp vindicating pen, I ask you pardon; but it must be *in general*, for neither friends nor foes have yet *particularly* pointed out to me *one* such expression.

You have accepted of a *letter of submission* from me; let, I beseech you, a concluding *paragraph of submission* meet also with your favourable acceptance.

ance. You condescend, rev. Sir, to call me your "learned friend." *Learning* is an accomplishment I never pretended to; but your *friendship* is an honor I shall always highly esteem, and do at this time value above my own brother's love. Appearances are a little against me, I feel I am a thorn in your flesh; but I am persuaded it is a *necessary* one, and this persuasion reconciles me to the thankless and disagreeable part I act.

If Ephraim must vex Judah, let Judah bear with Ephraim, till, happily tired of their contention, they feel the truth of Terence's words, * *Amantium* (why not *credentium*) *ira amoris redintegratio est*. I can assure you, my dear Sir, without metaphysical distinction, I love and honor you, as truly as I dislike the rashness of your well-meant zeal. The motto I thought myself obliged to follow was † *E bello pax*; but that which I delight in is ‡ *In bello pax*; may we make them harmonize till we learn war and polemic divinity no more!

My Vindication cost me tears of fear, lest I should have wounded you too deep. That fear, I find, was groundless; but should you feel a little for the great truths and the great minister I vindicate, these expostulations will wound me, and probably cost me tears again.

If in the mean time we offend our weak brethren; let us do something to lessen the offence till it is removed. Let us shew them we make war without so much as shyness. Should you ever come to the next county, as you did last summer, honor me with a line, and I shall gladly wait upon you, and shew you (if you permit me) the way to my pulpit, where I shall think myself highly favoured to see you "secure the foundation," and hear you enforce the doctrine of *justification by faith*,

* The misunderstandings of lovers (why not of believers) end in a renewal and increase of love.

† We make war in order to get peace.

‡ We enjoy peace in the midst of war.

which

which you fear we attack. And should I ever be within 30 miles of the city where you reside, I shall go to submit myself to you, and beg leave to assist you in reading prayers for you, or giving the cup with you. Thus shall we convince the world that controversy may be conscientiously carried on without interruption of brotherly love; and I shall have the peculiar pleasure of testifying to you in person, how sincerely I am,

Honored and dear Sir,

Your submissive and obedient servant
in the bond of a *practical* gospel,

J. F.

T H I R D L E T T E R.

Hon. and Rev. Sir,

IF I mistake not the workings of my heart, a concern for St. James's *pure and undefiled religion* excites me to take the pen once more, and may account for the readiness with which I have met you in the dangerous field of controversy. You may possibly think mere partiality to Mr. W. has inspired me with that boldness; and others may be ready to say as Eliab, *We know the pride and naughtiness of thy heart: Thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle:* But may I not answer with David? *Is there not a cause?*

Is it not highly necessary to make a stand against *Antinomianism*? Is not that gigantic *Man of Sin* a more dangerous enemy to king Jesus, than the champion of the Philistines was to king Saul? Has he not defied more than forty days the armies and arms, the people and truths of the living God? By audaciously daring the thousands in Israel, has he not made all the faint-hearted among them ashamed to *stand in the whole armour of God*, afraid to defend the important post of *Duty*? And have not many left it already, openly running away, flying into the dens and caves of earthly-mindedness, *putting their light under a bushel*, and even burying themselves alive in the noisome grave of profaneness?

Multitudes indeed still keep the field, still make an open profession of godliness. But how few of these *endure hardship as good soldiers of Jesus Christ!*

How

How many have already cast away *the shield of gospel faith, the faith which works by love!* What numbers dread the *Cross*; the heavenly standard they should steadily bear, or resolutely follow! Whilst in pompous speeches they extol that of Jesus, how do they upon the most frivolous pretence refuse to *take up* their own! Did the massy staff of Goliath's spear seem more terrible to the frightened Israelites, than the *daily cross* to those dastardly followers of the Crucified? What Boanerges can spirit them up, and lead them on *from conquering to conquer*? Who can even make them look the enemy in the face? Alas! *in their heart they are already gone back to Egypt. Their faces are but half Sionward.* They give way,—they *draw back*;—O may it not be *to perdition!* May not the King of terrors overtake them in their retreat, and make them as great monuments of God's vengeance against cowardly soldiers, as Lot's wife was of his indignation against halting racers!

But setting allegory aside, permit me, Sir, to pour my fears into your bosom, and tell you with the utmost plainness my distressing thoughts of the religious world.

For some years I have suspected there is more imaginary than *unfeigned faith*, in most of those who pass for believers. With a mixture of indignation and grief have I seen them carelessly follow the stream of corrupt nature, against which they should have manfully wretted: And by the most preposterous mistake, when they should have exclaimed against their † *Antinomianism*, I have heard them cry out against “ the † *Legality* of their wicked hearts; which, they

† The word *Antinomianism* is derived from two Greek words *anti* and *nomos*, which signify *against the law*; and the word *Legal* from the Latin *legalis*, which means *agreeable to the law*.

‡ The *legality* contended for in these letters is not a *stumbling at Christ*, and a *going about to establish our own righteousness by faithless works*: This sin, which the scripture calls *unbelief*, I would

they said, still suggested they were to *do something* in order to salvation." Glad was I therefore, when I had attentively considered Mr. W.'s Minutes, to find they were levelled at the very errors, which gave rise to an evil I had long lamented in secret, but had wanted courage to resist and attack.

I.

This evil is † *Antinomianism*; that is, any kind of doctrinal or practical *opposition to God's law*, which is the perfect rule of right, and the moral picture of the God of love, drawn in miniature by our Lord in these two exquisite precepts, *Thou shalt love God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself.*

As the law is good if a man use it lawfully, so † legality is excellent if it is evangelical. The external respect shewn by pharisees to the law, is but feigned and hypocritical legality. Pharisees are no more truly legal than Antinomians are truly evangelical. *Had ye believed Moses,* says Jesus to people of that stamp, *ye would have believed me:* but in your heart you hate his law, as much as you do my gospel.

We see no less gospel in the preface of the ten commandments, *I am the Lord thy God, &c.* than we do legality in the middle of our Lord's Sermon on the mount, *I say whoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath already committed adultery in his heart.* Nevertheless the latter *has in all things the pre-eminence* over the former, for if *the law* shortly prefaced by the gospel *came by Moses*; *Grace*, the

would no more countenance than murder. The evangelical legality I want to see all in love with, is a cleaving to Christ by a faith which *works righteousness*; a following him as he *went about doing good*; and a shewing by St. James's *works* that we have St. Paul's faith.

† See the note on this word in the preceding page.

gracious, the full display of the gospel, and Truth, the true explanation and fulfilling of the law, came by Jesus Christ.

This evangelical law should appear to us *sweeter than the honey-comb* and *more precious than fine gold*. We should continually spread the tables of our hearts before our heavenly Lawgiver, beseeching him to write it there with his own finger, the powerful Spirit of life and love: But alas! God's commandments are disregarded; they are represented as the needless or impracticable sanctions of that superannuated legalist, *Moses*; and if we express our veneration for them, we are looked upon as people who were always strangers to the gospel, or are fallen into the Galatian state.

Not so David: he was so great an admirer of God's law, that he declares the godly man *doth meditate therein day and night*; he expresses his transcendent value for it, under the synonymous expressions of *Law, word, statutes, testimonies, precepts* and *commandments* in almost every verse of the 119th Psalm. And he says of himself, *O how I love thy law! It is my meditation all the day.*

St. Paul was as evangelically legal as David; for he knew the law is as much contained in the gospel, as the tables of stone, on which the moral law was written, were contained in the ark. He therefore assured the Corinthians, that *though he had all faith*, even that which is most uncommon, and worked the greatest wonders, it would *profit him nothing*, unless it was accompanied by *charity*, unless it *worked by love*, which is the *fulfilling of the law*; the excellency of faith arising from the excellent end it answers in producing and nourishing love.

Should it be objected, that St. Paul says to the Galatians, *I through the law am dead to the law that I might live to God*, and to the Romans, *Ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ*: I answer: In the Apostle's days that expression *the Law* frequently meant the whole Mosaic dispensation; and in that sense every believer is dead to it, dead

to all that *Christ* has not adopted. For, (1.) he is dead to the *Levitical Law*, *Christ* having abolished in himself the law of ordinances, *Touch not, taste not, handle not.* (2.) He is dead to the ceremonial Law, which was only a shadow of good things to come, a typical representation of *Christ* and the blessing flowing from his sacrifice. (3.) He is dead to the curse attending his past violations of the moral law, for *Christ* hath delivered us from the CURSE of the law, being made a curse for us. And lastly, he is dead to the hopes of recommending himself to God; by the merit of his obedience of the moral law; for in point of merit, he is determined to know nothing but *Christ* and him crucified.

To make St. Paul mean more than this, is (1.) to make him maintain that no believer can sin; for if *sin is the transgression of the law*, and "the law is dead and buried," it is plain no believer can sin, as no body can transgress a law which is abolished; for *where no law is, there is no transgression.* (2.) It is to make him contradict St. James, who exhorts us to fulfil the royal LAW according to the scripture, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* And (3.) It is to make him contradict himself: for he charges the Galatians by love to serve one another, all the law being fulfilled in one word, even in this, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself:* And he assures the Hebrews that, under the new covenant, believers, far from being without God's Laws, have them written in their hearts: God himself places them in their minds. We cannot therefore with any shadow of justice put Dr. Crisp's coat upon the Apostle, and press him into the service of Antinomians.

And did our Lord side with Antinomians? Just the reverse. Far from repealing the two above mentioned royal precepts, he asserts, that on them hang all the Law and the Prophets; and had the four gospels been then written, he would no doubt have represented them as subservient to the establishing of the Law, as he did the book of Isaiah, the evangelical Prophet. Such high thoughts had He of the Law, that

that when a Lawyer expressed his veneration for it, by declaring that the *love of God and our neighbour was more than all the whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices*; Jesus seeing that he had answered discreetly, said unto him: *Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.*

The gospel itself terminates in the fulfilling of the commandments: For as the curse of the law like the scourge of a severe schoolmaster drives; so the gospel like a loving guide brings us to Christ; the great law-fulfiller, in whom we find inexhaustible treasures of pardon and power; of pardon for past breaches of the law, and of power for present obedience to it. Nor are we sooner come to Him; than he magnifies the law by his precepts, as he formerly did by his obedience unto death. *If Ye love me, says he, keep my commandments: This is his commandment that we should love one another; and he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.*

Again, the gospel displays Jesus's dying love; that by believing it we may love him; that is, *have everlasting life*, the life of love which abideth when the life of faith is no more. Hence St. John sums up christianity in these words, *We love him because he first loved us*; and what is it to love Jesus, but to fulfil the whole law at once, to love God and man, the Creator and the Creature, united in one divinely human person?

Did the Son of God *magnify the Law* that we might vilify it? Did he *make it honorable* that we might make it contemptible? Did he *come to fulfil it* that we might be discharged from fulfilling it according to our capacity? that is, discharged from loving God and our neighbour? discharged from the employment and joys of heaven? No: the *Word was never made flesh* for this dreadful end. None but Satan could have become incarnate to go upon such an infernal errand as this. Standing therefore upon the rock of evangelical truth, we ask with St. Paul, *Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid! Nay, we establish the law.* We point sinners to that Saviour, in and from whom they may

may continually have the law-fulfilling power, *that the righteousness of the Law may be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.*

Such are the glorious and delightful views, which the Scripture gives us of the Law disarmed of its curse in Christ, the Law of holy, humble love, so strongly enforced in the discourses, and sweetly exemplified in the life and death of the *Prophet like unto Moses!*—So amiable, so precious is the book of the law, when delivered to us by Jesus, sprinkled with his atoning blood, and explained by his loving Spirit! And so true is St. Paul's assertion, *We are not without law to God, but under the law to Christ!*

Instead then of dressing up the Law as a scarecrow, let us in our degree *magnify it, and make it honorable* as did our Lord. Instead of representing it as "an intolerable yoke of bondage," let us call it with St. Paul *the Law of Christ*, and with St. James *the perfect law of LIBERTY*. . . And let every true believer say with David, *I love thy commandments above gold and precious stones: I shall alway keep thy law, yea for ever and ever: I will walk at LIBERTY for I seek thy precepts.*

But alas! how few give us these evangelical views of the law, and practical views of the gospel! How many intimate Christ has *fulfilled all righteousness*, that we might be the children of God with hearts *full of unrighteousness!* If some insist upon our *fulfilling all righteousness* also, is it not chiefly when they want to draw us into their peculiarities, and *dip* us into their narrow denomination? And what number, under the fair pretence that they "have a living law *written in their hearts*," insinuate, "there is no need of preaching the law" to them, either to shew them more of God's purity, in dear the atoning blood, regulate their conduct, or convince them of the necessity of *perfecting holiness!*

But suppose these Objectors have, as they say, the *law written in their inward parts*, (which the
actions

actions and tempers of some make rather doubtful, is the writing so *perfectly finished*, that no one stroke needs be added to it? Is not the law an important part of *the word of righteousness*? And could not the Holy Ghost re-touch the writing, or deepen the engraving, by the ministry of *the word of righteousness*? Again, if the internal teachings of the holy spirit supersede the *letter of the law*, must they not by the same reason supersede the *letter of the gospel*? Is there any more need of *preaching* the gospel than the law to believers? Or have they not the gospel *written in their hearts*, as well as the law?

At what amazing heights of unscriptural perfection must our Objectors suppose themselves! What palpable errors do they run into, that they may have the honor of passing for evangelical! And who will envy them the glory of countenancing the antinomian delusion, by standing in direct opposition to Christ, who thus decides the controversy: *Think not that I am come to destroy the Law and the Prophets: I am not come to destroy but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled*, either in what it requires or denounces; for the law is *fulfilled* not only when its precepts are obeyed, but when rewards are given to the observers, and punishments inflicted upon the violators, of it. *Whoever therefore shall do my commandments, and TEACH them, shall be great in the kingdom of heaven.*

Do not imagine Rev. Sir, I thus cry up God's Law, to drown the late cries of *heresy* and *apostacy*. I appeal to matter of fact and your own observations. Consider the religious world, and say, if ANTI-NOMIANISM is not in general a motto better adapted to the state of professing Congregations, Societies, Families, and Individuals, than *Holiness unto the Lord*, the inscription that should be even upon our *horses bells*.

H.

II.

Begin with *Congregations*, and cast first your eyes upon the *Hearers*. In general they have curious *itching ears*, and *will not endure sound doctrine*. Many of them are armed with *the breastplate of a righteousness* which they have vainly † imputed to themselves: they have on the showy *helmet of a presumptuous hope*, and hold fast the impenetrable shield of strong prejudice. With these they *quench the fiery darts* of convincing Truth, and stand undaunted under volleys of reproof.

They say, they “ will have nothing but Christ:” And who could blame them, if they would have Christ in all his offices? Christ with all his parables and sermons, cautions and precepts, reproofs and expostulations, exhortations and threatenings? Christ preaching to the multitudes upon a mountain, as well as honorably teaching in the temple? Christ fasting in the wilderness, or praying in Geth-

† Our imputation of Christ's righteousness to ourselves is a trick of our antinomian hearts, and is a dreadful delusion: but God's imputing of Christ's righteousness to true believers is a most blessed reality, for which we cannot too much contend. *He speaks the word and it is done*; his imputation is not an *idea*, but a fiat, wherever it takes place, *Yehovah our righteousness*, or *Christ the righteous dwells in the heart by faith*. I wish that with respect to *imputed righteousness*, we paid more regard to the late Mr. Hart's sentiment. This experienced and *sound Calvinist*, in the account of his conversion, prefixed to his hymns, says with great truth: “ As much as Lazarus coming out of the grave, and feeling himself restored to life, differed from those who only saw the miracle, or believed the fact told them; so great is the difference between a soul's *real* coming to Christ out of himself, and having the righteousness of Christ imputed to him by the precious faith of God's elect; and a man's bare believing the doctrine of imputed righteousness, because he sees it contained in the scripture, or assenting to the truth of it epr oposed to his understanding by others.”

semane;

semane; as well as Christ making the multitudes sit down upon the grass to receive *loaves and fishes*, or promising *thrones* to his disciples? Christ *constraining them to get into a ship*, and *toil in rowing all night with a contrary wind*; as well as Christ *coming in the morning*, and causing *the ship to be immediately at the land whither they went*? Christ upon mount Calvary as well as Christ upon mount Tabor? In a word, Who would find fault with them, if they would have Christ with his poverty and self-denial, his reproach and cross, his spirit and graces, his prophets and apostles, his plain apparel and mean followers?

But alas! It is not so. They will have *what* they please of Christ, and that too *as* they please. If he comes accompanied by legal Moses and honest Elijah, who talk of the crucifixion of the body and *decease* of the flesh, they can do very well without him. If he preaches free grace, free will, faithfulness, or heavenly-mindedness, some turn to the right, some wheel about to the left, others go directly back, and all agree to say or think, *This is an hard saying, who can hear it?*

They admire him in one chapter, and know not what to make of him in another. Some of his words they extol to the sky, and others they seem to be ashamed of. If he asserts his authority as a Lawgiver, they are ready to treat him with as little ceremony as they do Moses. If he says, *Keep my commandments, I am a King*: like the Jews of old they rise against the awful declaration; or they *crown him as a surety*, the better to *set him at nought as a monarch*. And if he adds to his ministers, *I am the Prophet that was to come, go in my name and TEACH ALL nations to OBSERVE ALL THINGS whatsoever I have COMMANDED you*; they complain, "This is *the law*; give us *the gospel*, we can relish nothing but *the gospel*."

They have no idea of *eating the paschal lamb whole, his head with his legs, and the purtenance thereof*; nor do they take care of *not breaking his bones*: They do not like him *roast with fire* nei-

ther; but raw, or soddē with water out of their own broken cisterns: If you present him to them as the type of the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, and maketh an end of it; their hearts heave, they say, Pray have me excused from thus feeding upon him; and though it is said, *Ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning, you shall eat it in haste*, they postpone, they beg leave to keep it till the article of death: And if in the mean time you talk to them of bitter herbs, they marvel at your Jewish legal taste, and complain that you spoil the gospel feast.

They do not consider we must give every one his portion of meat, or proper medicine in due season; and that sweet things are not always wholesome.

They forget we must leave all antinomian refinements to follow Christ, who sometimes says to decent pharisees, *How can you escape the damnation of hell!* And to a beloved disciple that shuns the cross, *Satan! thou savourest not the things of God, but the things of men.* They will have nothing but the atonement. Nor do they chuse to remember that St. Paul, who did not shun to declare the whole counsel of God, preached Christ to Felix by reasoning of temperance, righteousness, and judgment to come.

Hence it is that some preachers must chuse comfortable subjects to please their hearers; just as those who make an entertainment for nice persons, are obliged to study what will suit their difficult taste. A multitude of important scriptures can be produced, on which no minister, who is unwilling to lose his reputation as an evangelical preacher, must dare to speak in some pulpits, unless it is to explain away or enervate their meaning. Take some instances.

The good old Calvinists (Archbishop Leighton for one) questioned whether a man was truly converted who did not sincerely go on to perfection, and heartily endeavour to perfect holiness in the fear of God: but now if we only quote such passages with an emphasis, and inforce their meaning with some degree

degree of earnestness, the truth of our conversion is suspected: We even pass for enemies to Christ's righteousness.

If we have courage to handle such scriptures as these, *To do good and to distribute forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.—Shew me thy faith by thy works.—Was not Rahab justified by works? By works was Abraham's faith made perfect, &c.* The bare giving out of our text prejudices our Antinomian hearers against us, and robs us of their candid attention; unless they expect a Charity-Sermon: For on such an occasion they will yet allow us, at the close of our discourse, to speak honorably of good works: just as those who run to the opposite extreme, will yet, on some particular days, such as Christmas and Good-Friday, permit us to make honorable mention of Jesus Christ.

The evil would be tolerable, if we were only obliged to select smooth texts in order to gratify an Antinomian audience; but alas! it is grown so desperate, that unless we *adulterate the sincere milk of the word*, many reject it as poison. It is a doubt whether we could preach in some celebrated pulpits on *the good man, who is merciful and lendeth, who hath dispersed abroad and given to the poor, and whose righteousness remaineth for ever,—or on breaking off our sins by righteousness, and our iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor,—or on the righteousness which exceeds the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees,—or on the robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb*, without giving general disgust; unless, to keep in the good grace of our Nicolaitan hearers, we were to dissent from all sober commentators, and offer the greatest violence to the context, our own conscience, and common sense, by saying that the *righteousness* and *robes* mentioned in those passages, are Christ's imputed, and not our performed obedience.

How few of our evangelical congregations would bear from the pulpit an honest explanation of what they allow us to read in the desk! We may open our service by saying, that *When the wicked*

man turneth away from his wickedness, and doth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive; but woe to us, if we handle that scripture in the pulpit, unless we wreat it by representing Christ as the wicked man, who DOES that which is lawful and right, to save our souls alive, without any of our DOINGS.

Were we to preach upon these words of our Lord, *This DO and thou shalt live*, Luke x. 25; the sense of which is fixed by the 37th Ps. *Go and do thou likewise*; or only to handle without deceit those common words of the Lord's prayer, confirmed by a plain parable, *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us*; our reputation as Protestants would be in as much danger from the bulk of some congregations, as our persons from the fire of a whole regiment in the day of battle. How would such a discourse, and the poor, blind man that preached it, be privately exclaimed against; or publicly * exposed in a *Magazine* presented to the world under the sacred name of *Gospel*!

In short, whoever has courage enough to preach as St. Paul did at Athens, at Lystra, and before Felix, rebuking sin without respect of persons: whoever will imitate St. Peter, and exhort all his hearers to SAVE THEMSELVES from this perverse generation, assuring them that *the promise of the Holy Spirit is unto THEM, and their CHILDREN*; must expect to be looked upon as unsound, if not as an enemy to free grace, and a setter forth of Pelagian or Popish doctrines. Moderate Calvinists themselves must run the gauntlet, if they preach *free grace* like St. Peter. A pious clergyman, noted for his strong attachment to what some call *the doctrines of grace*, was, to my knowledge, highly blamed by one part of his auditory, for having preached to the other *repentance towards God*, and exhorted them to call on him for mercy: And I remember he just saved his sinking

* This was actually the case some months ago, with respect to a sermon preached by Mr. Wesley.

reputation as a *sound* divine. by pleading, that two Apostles exhorted even Simon Magus to *repent of his wickedness, and pray to God, if perhaps the thought of his heart might be forgiven him.*

When such professors will not bear the plainest truth, from ministers whose sentiments agree with theirs; how will they rise against deeper truths advanced by those who are of a different opinion! Some will even lose all decency. Observing, in preaching last summer, one of them remarkably busy in disturbing all around him, when the service was over I went up to him, and inquired into the cause of the dissatisfaction he had so indecently expressed. "I am not afraid to tell it to your face," said he; "I do not like your doctrine: You are a free-willer." If I have spoken evil, replied I, bear witness of the evil. He paused a while, and then charged me with praying before the sermon, as if *all* might be saved. "That is false doctrine," added he, and if Christ himself came down from heaven to preach it, I would not believe him."

I wondered at first at the positiveness of my rigid objector; but upon second thoughts, I thought him modest, in comparison of those numbers of professors, who see that Christ actually came down from heaven, and preached the doctrine of perfection in his sermon upon the mount, and yet will face us down that it is an Anti-Christian doctrine.

This Antinomian cavilling of hearers against preachers is deplorable; and the effects of it will be dreadful. If the Lord does not put a stop to this growing evil, we shall soon see every where, what we see in too many places; self-conceited, unhumbled men, rising against the truths and ministers of God,—men who *are not meek doers of the law, but insolent judges*, preposterously trying the law by which they shall soon be tried—men, who instead of sitting as criminals before all the messengers of their Judge, with arrogance invade the Judge's tribunal, and arraign even his most venerable

rable ambassadors—men who should *fall on their faces before all*, and *give glory to God*, by *confessing that He is with his ministers of every denomination of a truth*; but who, far from doing it, boldly condemn the word that condemns them, snatch the two-edged sword from the mouth of every faithful messenger, blunt the edge of it, and audaciously thrust at him in their turn—men who, when they see a servant of God in the pulpit, suppose he stands at their bar; try him with as much insolence as Corah, Dathan and Abiram tried Moses; cast him with less kindness than Pilate did Jesus; force a fool's coat of their own making upon him; and then, from *the seat of the scornful*, pronounce the decisive sentence: “He is legal, dark, blind, unconverted; an enemy to free grace:—He is a rank Papist, a Jesuit, a false Prophet, or a wolf in sheep's clothing.”

III.

But whence springs this almost general antinomianism of our congregations? Shall I conceal the sore because it festers in my own breast? Shall I be partial? No, in the name of Him who is *no respecter of persons*, I will confess my sin, and that of many of my brethren. Though I am the least, and (I write it with tears of shame) the most unworthy of them all, I will follow the dictates of my conscience, and use the authority of a Minister of Christ. If Balaam, a *false Prophet*, took in good part the reproof of his ass, I should wrong my honored Brethren and Fathers, the *true Prophets of the Lord*, if I feared their resenting some well-meant reproofs, which I first level at myself, and for which I heartily wish there was no occasion.

Is not the antinomianism of hearers fomented by that of preachers? Does it not become us to take
the

the greatest part of the blame upon ourselves, according to the old adage, "Like priest, like people?" Is it surprising that some of us should have an antinomian audience? Do we not make or keep it so? When did we preach such a practical sermon as that of our Lord on the mount, or write such close letters as the Epistles of St. John? Alas! I doubt it is but seldom. Not living so near to God ourselves as we should, we are afraid to come near to the consciences of our people. The Jews said to our Lord: *In so saying thou reproachest us*; but now the case is altered; and our auditors might say to many of us, "In so saying you would reproach yourselves."

Some prefer popularity to plain-dealing. We love to see a crowd of worldly-minded hearers rather than a little flock, a peculiar people zealous of good works. We dare not shake our congregations to purpose, lest our five thousand should in three years time be reduced to an hundred and twenty.

Luther's advice to Melancthon, *Scandalizari festiter*, "So preach that those who do not fall out with their sins, may fall out with thee," is more and more unfashionable. Under pretence of drawing our hearers by love, some of us softly rock the cradle of carnal security in which they sleep. For "fear of grieving the dear children of God," we let buyers and sellers, sheep and oxen, yea goats and lions, fill the temple undisturbed. And because "the bread must not be kept from the hungry children," we let those who are wanton make shameful waste of it, and even allow dogs which we should beware of, and noisy parrots that can speak *shibboleth*, to do the same. We forget that God's children are led by his Spirit, who is the Comforter himself: that they are all afraid of being deceived; all jealous for the Lord of hosts; and therefore prefer a preacher who searches Jerusalem with candles, and cannot suffer God's house to be made a den of thieves, to a workman who white-washes the noisome sepulchres

he should open; and *daubs over with untempered mortar the bulging walls* he should demolish.

The old Puritans strongly insisted upon *personal holiness*, and the first Methodists upon the *new birth*; but these doctrines seem to grow out of date. The gospel is cast into another mould. People it seems may now be *in Christ* without being *new creatures*, or new creatures without casting *old things* away. They may be God's children without God's image; and *born of the Spirit* without *the fruits of the Spirit*. If our unregenerate hearers get orthodox ideas about the way of salvation in their heads, evangelical phrases concerning Jesus's love in their mouths, and a warm zeal for our party and favourite forms in their hearts; without any more ado we help them to rank themselves among the children of God. But alas! this self-adoption into the family of Christ will no more pass in heaven, than self-imputation of Christ's righteousness. The work of the spirit will stand there, and that alone. Again,

Some of us often give our congregations particular accounts of *the covenant* between the persons of the blessed Trinity, and speak of it as confidently as if the King of kings had admitted us members of his privy council; but how seldom do we do justice to the scriptures where the covenant is mentioned in a *practical* manner! How rarely do the ministers who are fond of preaching upon the Covenant between God and David, dwell upon such scriptures as these! *Because they continued not in my covenant I regarded them not; because they have transgressed the Law, changed the Ordinances, and broken the Everlasting Covenant, therefore hath the curse devoured the Earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate; therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and few men left. I say to the wicked what hast thou to do to take my covenant in thy mouth?— They kept not the covenant of God and refused to walk in his law; they would not be evangelically legal,*
therefore

therefore a fire was kindled in Jacob, the wrath of God came upon them, he slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen, the elect of Israel!

We frequently keep back from our hearers the very portions that honest Nathan, or blunt John the Baptist would have particularly enforced. The taste of many is perverted, they *loath the manna* of the word, not because it is *light*, but *heavy* food: They must have *savory meat*, such as their soul loveth; and we *hunt for venison*, we minister to their spiritual luxury, and feast with them on our own doctrinal refinements. Hence *many are weak and sickly among us?* Some that might be *fat and well-liking*, cry out, *My leanness! my leanness!* And many *sleep* in a spiritual grave, the easy prey of corruption and sin.

How few Calebs, how few Joshuas are found among the many spies who bring a report of the good land! The cry is seldom, *Let us go up and possess it*, unless the good land be the map of the gospel drawn by Dr. Crisp. On the contrary, the difficulties attending the noble conquest are magnified to the highest degree: *The sons of Anak are tall and strong, and their cities fenced up to heaven.*

“All our corruptions are gigantic, the castle where they dwell shall always remain a den of thieves; it is an impregnable citadel, strongly garrisoned by Apollyon’s forces; we shall never love God here with all our souls, we shall always have *desperately wicked hearts.*”

How few of our celebrated pulpits are there, where more has not been said *at times* for sin than against it! With what an air of positiveness and assurance has that Barabbas, that murderer of Christ and souls been pleaded for! “It will humble us, make us watchful, stir up our diligence, quicken our graces, endear Christ,” &c. that is in plain English, pride will beget humility, sloth will spur us on to diligence, rust will brighten our armour, and unbelief, the very soul of every sinful temper, is to do the work of faith! Sin must

not

not only be always lurking about the walls and gates of the town of Man's soul (if I may once more allude to Bunyan's holy war) but it shall dwell in it, in the King's palace, *in the inner chamber*, the inmost recesses of the heart: There is no turning it out. Jesus, who cleansed the lepers with a word or a touch, cannot, with all the force of his spirit and virtue of his blood, expel this leprosy; it is too inveterate. Death, that foul monster, the offspring of Sin, shall have the important honor of killing his father. He, he alone is to give the great, the last, the decisive blow. This is confidently asserted by those who cry, Nothing but Christ! They allow him to lop off the branches; but Death, the great Saviour Death, is to destroy the root of sin. In the mean time *the temple of God shall have agreement with idols, and Christ concord with Belial: The Lamb of God shall lie down with the roaring Lion* in our heart.

Nor does the preaching of this internal slavery; this bondage of spiritual corruption, shock our hearers. No: this mixture of light and darkness passes for gospel in our days. And, what is more astonishing still, by making much ado about "*finished* salvation," we can even put it off as "the only pure, genuine and comfortable gospel." While the smoothness of our doctrine will atone for our most glaring inconsistencies.

We have so whetted the antinomian appetite of our hearers, that they swallow down almost any thing. We may tell them, St. Paul was at one and the same time *carnal, sold under sin*, crying, *Who shall deliver me from this body of death?* and triumphing that he *did not walk after the flesh but after the spirit, rejoicing in the testimony of a good conscience*, and glorying that *the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus had made him free from the law of sin and death!* This suits their experience; therefore they readily take our word, and it passes for *the word of God*. It is a mercy that we have not yet attempted to prove by the same argument, that
lying

lying and *curfing* are quite confiftent with apoftolic faith; for St. Paul fpeaks of *his lie*, and St. James fays, *with our tongues curfe we men.*

We may make them believe, that though adultery and murder are damning fins in poor blind Turks and Heathens, yet they are only *the fpofts of God's children* in enlightened Jews and favoured Chriftians.—That God is the moft partial of all judges, fome being accufed to the pit of hell for breaking the law in the moft trifling points; while others, who actually break it in the moft flagrant inftances, are richly *blessed with all heavenly benedictions.*—And that while God beholds no iniquity in Jacob, no perversenefs in Ifrael, he fees nothing but odious fins in Ifmael, and devilifh wickednefs in Efau: although the Lord affures us *the wickednefs of the wicked fhall be upon him*, and that *though hand join in hand the wicked fhall not go unpunifhed*, were he as great in Jacob as Corah, and as famous as Zimri in *Ifrael.*

We may tell our hearers one hour, that “the love of Chrift sweetly *conftains* all believers to walk, yea to run the way of God's commandments, and that they cannot help obeying its forcible dictates:” And we may perfuade them the next hour, that “how to perform what is good they find not, that they fall continually into fin; for that which they do they allow not, and what they would that do they not; but what they hate that do they.” And that thefe inconfiftencies may not fhock their common fenfe, or alarm their confciences, we again touch the fweet-founding ftring of *finifhed* falvation; we intimate we have the key of evangelical knowledge, reflect on thofe who expect deliverance from fin in this life, and *build up* our congregations in a moft comfortable, I wifh I could fay, *moft holy faith.*

In fhort, we have fo ufed our people to ftrange doctrines, and prepofterous assertions, that if we were to intimate, God himfelf fets us a pattern of antinomianifm, by difregarding his own moft holy
and

and lovely law, which inculcates perfect love—if we were even to hint that he bears a secret grudge, or an immortal enmity to those very souls whom he commands us to *love as Christ has loved us*; that he feeds them only for the great day of slaughter, and has determined (so inveterate is his hatred!) *before the foundation of the world, to fit them as vessels of wrath, that he might eternally fill them with his fiery vengeance, merely to shew what a great and sovereign God he is*; I doubt not whether some would not be highly pleased and say, we had “preached a sound and sweet discourse.” This would probably be the case if we addressed them in such a manner as to make them believe they are *elect*: not indeed of those ancient, legal, and wrestling *elect who cry to God day and night to be avenged of their spiritual adversary*; but of those modern, indolent *elect, who have found out a short-way to heaven, and maintain, “we are absolutely to do nothing in order to salvation.”*

With joy I confess however, that glorious and rousing truths are frequently delivered in the demonstration of the spirit and of power. But alas! the blow is seldom followed. You have seen fond mothers violently correcting their children one instant, and the next dandling them upon their knees; and by foolishly kissing away their tears, spoiling the correction they had given. Just so it is with several of us: We preach a close discourse, and seem determined to drive the buyers and sellers out of the temple. Our antinomian hearers begin to awake and look about them: Some are even ready to cry out, *Men and brethren what shall we do?* But alas! we found a retreat when we should shout for a second battle: By an unaccountable weakness, before we conclude, we sooth them up, and make a way for their escape; or, which is not much better, the next time we preach, by setting up Dr. Crisp's doctrine as much as ever, we indistinctly repair the breach we had made in the antinomian Babel.

And

And suppose some of us preach against Antinomianism, is not our practice contrary to our preaching? We are under a dangerous mistake, if we think ourselves clear from antinomianism, merely because we thunder against antinomian principles: For as some, who zealously maintain such principles, by the happiest inconsistency in the world, pay nevertheless in their practice a proper regard to the law they revile; so not a few, who profess the deepest respect for it, are so unhappily inconsistent, as to transgress it without ceremony. The God of holiness says, *Go and work in my vineyard.* The inconsistent Antinomian answers, "I will not be bound by any Law: I scorn the ties of Duty;" but nevertheless *he repents and goes.* The inconsistent legalist replies, "It is my bounden duty to obey, *I go Lord;*" nevertheless *he does not go.* Which of the two is the greater antinomian? The latter no doubt: his practical antinomianism is much more odious to God and man, than the speculative error of the former.

The Lord God help us to avoid both! Whether the hellish wolf come barefaced, or in *sheep's clothing*; or what is a still more dangerous disguise, in *LAMB'S clothing*; in the clothes of the shepherd, covered from head to foot with a righteousness which he has *imputed* to himself, and sing the Syren song of *finished* salvation.

IV.

I shall close these reflexions upon the antinomianism of preachers by presenting you with sketches of two very opposite ways of preaching. The first is an extract from Bishop Hopkins's 24th sermon, intitled *Practical Christianity*; upon those words of St. Paul, *Work out your salvation with fear and trembling, &c.* This testimony will weigh so much

much the more with you as he was a *sound Calvinist*, and a truly converted man.

‘ To *work out our Salvation*, says the godly prelate, is to persevere in the ways of obedience, until, through them, that salvation that is begun here on earth be perfected in heaven. This *work* implies three things. (1.) Pains and labour. *Salvation* is that which must be wrought out; it is that which will make the soul pant and breathe, yea run down with sweat to obtain it. (2.) It implies constancy and diligence. A Christian that would *work out his salvation*, must be always employed about it. It is a web, into which we must weave the whole thread of our lives. That man who works at salvation only by some passionate fits, and then within a while undoes it all again by foul apostacy, and notorious sins, will never *work salvation out*. (3.) It promises success; though it be hard work, it shall not be long work; continue working, it shall be wrought out; what before was your work, shall be your reward; and this salvation that was so painful in working, shall be most blessed in the enjoyment.

‘ Say not, “ We have no strength to work with.” What God commands us to do, he will assist us in doing. We are impotent, but God is omnipotent: *Work* therefore, for this omnipotent God *works in you both to will and to do*.

‘ The proposition I shall lay down from the text is this: *That it is the Duty of every true Christian to work out his own salvation with fear and trembling: Or, that every Christian may every man, ought to work for his living, even for an eternal life*. To mention places for the proof of this were to transcribe the Bible. We can no where open this blessed book, but we find this truth proved to us, either directly or by consequence. And yet it is strange in these days to see how dubiously some men, who would be thought admirers of *free grace*, speak of obedience and working,

‘ as

' as if they were the badge of a *legal spirit*.
 ' Oh it is a soft and easy doctrine to bid men sit
 ' still and believe, as if God would translate them
 ' to heaven upon their couches. Is it possible that
 ' these notions should be dispersed and entertained
 ' but because it has always been the Devil's policy
 ' to vent those doctrines that indulge the flesh
 ' under the patronage of *free grace* and *gospel*
 ' *attainments*?

' Wherefore is it that we are commanded to
 ' *strive that we may enter in at the strait gate*? So
 ' *to run that we may obtain*? So to *wrestle* that we
 ' *may be able to stand*? So to *fight* that we may
 ' *lay hold on eternal life*? Can you *strive* and *run*,
 ' and *wrestle* and *fight*, and all this by doing no-
 ' thing?—If God would save you without work-
 ' ing, why has he given you grace, an operative
 ' principle, that you might work? He might as
 ' well save you without grace, as without works:
 ' for that is not grace that does not put forth itself
 ' in working. God, rather than we shall not
 ' work, will set us at work. He gives and pro-
 ' mises assistance only that we might work out our
 ' own salvation. *We are not sufficient of ourselves to*
 ' *think any thing*: What then? Must we therefore sit
 ' still? No, says the apostle, for God who finds us
 ' employment, will also find us strength: *Our suf-*
 ' *ficiency is of God*.

' Wherefore is it that men are justly damned?
 ' Is it not because they will not do what they are
 ' able to do? And whence have they this ability?
 ' Is it not from the grace of God's spirit?—What
 ' is it that men expect? Must God drive them to
 ' heaven by force and violence whether they will
 ' or no?

' If man will, he may work out his salvation. I
 ' speak not this to assert the power of man to work
 ' out salvation, without the aid of special grace to
 ' incline his will. Where there is special grace
 ' given to make the will willing to convert, there
 ' is nothing more required to make him able, be-
 ' cause

' cause conversion chiefly consists in the act of the
 ' will itself, only to make him willing is required
 ' special grace; which they that favour the undue
 ' liberty of the will do deny. Our impotency lies in
 ' the stubbornness of our wills. The greatest sin-
 ' ner may work out his own salvation if he will. If
 ' he is but willing, he has that already that may make
 ' him able. God puts no new powers in the soul
 ' when he converts it!

' Are there any so desperately profane as not
 ' to have prayed unto God in their whole life.
 ' Why now to what end have you prayed? Was it
 ' not for salvation? And did you work for salva-
 ' tion, and at the same time believe you could not
 ' work? Thou art inexcusable O man, whoever
 ' thou art that wilt not work; it is in vain to plead
 ' thou wantest power. God will confute thee out
 ' of thy own mouth.'

' Would a master when he commands his servant
 ' to work, take this as a sufficient excuse for his
 ' sloth and idleness, that he has no power to work
 ' till God acts and moves him? Why this is a
 ' truth, and it may as well be objected by your
 ' servants to you, as by you unto God. Though
 ' it is impossible that men should stir without God's
 ' concurrence, yet this hinders not their endea-
 ' vours, no, nor is it any matter of discouragement
 ' to them. They put these things to the trial.
 ' Now why should we not do so in spirituals as
 ' well as in temporals? Are they not of great-
 ' er concernment? It is not inability but wil-
 ' ful sloth that destroys men. Sinners, wherefore
 ' will you perish? Why will you sleep away your
 ' souls into hell? Is it more painful for you to
 ' work than to be damned? Endeavour therefore to
 ' do what you can; labour and sweat at salvation's
 ' work, rather than fail of it for a wilful neglect.
 ' *How shall you escape if you neglect so great sal-
 ' vation?*

' *Obj.* Thus to press men to working is derogatory to Christ's merits, by which alone we are
 ' saved,

- saved, and not by our works. Christ has done all
- for us, and wrought out our salvation by himself.
- Shall we piece out his work by our obedience;
- when all we have now to do is to believe on
- him?

• *Ans.* There is the sweetest harmony between
 • the merits of Christ, and our *working out of our*
 • *salvation*. To make it evident, I shall shew what
 • Christ has done for us, and what he expects we
 • shall do for ourselves. He has merited grace, and
 • purchased eternal happiness. And why did
 • Christ merit grace? Was it not that we might
 • act it in obedience? If he merited grace that we
 • might obey, is it sense to object that our obe-
 • dience is derogatory to his merit? If one end of
 • his doing all that he did for us, was to enable us
 • to do for ourselves; will any man say, now I am
 • bound to do nothing, because Christ has done all?
 • How lost are such men both to reason and religion,
 • who undertake so to argue? No, Salvation was
 • purchased and Grace procured, that by the act-
 • ing and exercise of that grace, we might attain
 • to that salvation. It is not by way of merit or
 • purchase that we exhort men to work out their
 • salvation. Those are guilty of practical blas-
 • phemy against the Priestly Office of Christ, who
 • think to merit it by their own works.

• As Christ has done two things for us, so he
 • requires two things from us. (1.) That we
 • should put forth all the strength of nature in la-
 • bouring after grace: and, (2.) That we should
 • put forth the power of grace in labouring for the
 • salvation purchased for us. (1.) Let every sin-
 • ner know it is his work to repent and return,
 • that he may live. You cannot sit down and say,
 • what need is there of my working? Christ has
 • already done all my work for me to my hands.
 • No, Christ has done his own work, the work of
 • a *Saviour* and a *Surety*; but he never did the
 • work of a *finner*.

' If Christ by *meriting* grace had bestowed it
 ' upon thee, and wrought it in thee, then indeed
 ' no more would be required of thee to become
 ' holy, but to cast back a lazy look at the pur-
 ' chase of Jesus Christ: Then thy sloth would have
 ' some pretence not to labour. But this will not
 ' do. Our saviour commands all men *To seek first*
 ' *the kingdom of God*, and the Apostle exhorts
 ' Simon Magus to *pray*. Do not therefore cheat
 ' your own souls into perdition by lazy notions
 ' about Christ's merits. If you sit still expecting
 ' till the meriting grace of Christ drop down into
 ' your souls, and change your hearts; truly it
 ' may be before that time you yourselves may
 ' drop down into hell, with your old unchanged
 ' hearts.

' (2.) Christ expects that those who have grace,
 ' should put forth the utmost power thereof in
 ' labouring after the salvation he has purchased
 ' for them. He has merited salvation for them,
 ' but it is to be obtained by their own labour and
 ' industry. Is not what Christ has done sufficient?
 ' Must he *repent, believe, and obey* for them? This
 ' is not to make him a Saviour but a drudge. He
 ' has done what was fit for a *mediator* to do. He
 ' now requires of us what is meet for *sinners* to do;
 ' that is, to *repent, &c.* He now bids you *wash*
 ' *and be clean*. Would you have the great Prophet
 ' come and strike off your leprosy, and do nothing
 ' towards the cure? The way to heaven is made
 ' possible, but if you do not walk in the way that
 ' leads to it, you may still be as far from heaven
 ' as ever. Though Christ's bearing the punishment
 ' of the law by death does exempt us from suffer-
 ' ing, yet his obeying of the law does not excuse
 ' our obedience to the law. Nor is our obedience
 ' derogatory to Christ's, because it proceeds from
 ' other grounds than Christ's did. He obeyed the
 ' law as a covenant of works, we only as a rule of
 ' righteousness.

' To

• To conclude upon this point, So work with
 • that earnestness, constancy and unweariness in
 • well doing, as if thy works alone were able to
 • justify and save thee: And so absolutely depend
 • and rely upon the alone merits of Christ for
 • justification and salvation, as if thou never hadst
 • performed one act of obedience in all thy life.
 • This is the right gospel-frame of obedience, so
 • to work as if we were only to be saved by our
 • own merits; and withal so to rest on the merits
 • of Christ, as if we had never wrought any thing.
 • It is a difficult thing to give to each of these its
 • due in our practice: When we work we are too
 • apt to neglect Christ; and when we rely on
 • Christ, we are too apt to neglect working. But
 • that Christian has got the right art of obedience
 • who can mingle these two together; who can
 • with one hand *work the works of God*, and yet at
 • the same time lay fast hold of the merits of Jesus
 • Christ. Let this antinomian principle be for
 • ever rooted out of the minds of men, that our
 • working is derogatory to Christ's work. Never
 • more think he has done all your work for you,
 • but labour for that salvation which he has pur-
 • chased and merited. Could ever such senseless
 • objections prevail with men who have seriously
 • read this Scripture? *He gave himself for us that he*
 • *might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify to him-*
 • *self a peculiar people zealous of good works.* But truly
 • when sloth and ignorance meet together, if you
 • tell men what powers their natures, assisted by
 • preventing grace, have to work, and how neces-
 • sary obedience is to salvation, they with the
 • sluggard fold their arms in their bosom doing
 • nothing; telling us these doctrines are *Arminian-*
 • *ism* and flat *Popery*. But deceive not yourselves;
 • whether this doctrine takes hold on your judg-
 • ments now I know not; but this I know assuredly,
 • it shall take hold of your consciences either here or
 • hereafter; and then it will not suffice you to say

‘ either that you had no power to do any thing, or
 ‘ that Christ has already done all for you.’

This excellent discourse should be in all the houses of professors. It would shame the careless Remonstrants, and shew them how orthodox some Calvinists are in point of works; and it would confound the slothful Calvinists, and make them see how they have left *Practical Christianity* for *Antinomian Crispianity*. For East cannot be farther from West, than the preceding extract of Bishop Hopkins’s sermon is from the following propositions, extracted from Dr. Crisp’s works, which some make the standard of evangelical preaching. (They are refuted also in *Gospel truth vindicated by Mr. Williams*, whose excellent refutation is recommended by 53 Calvinist divines of the last century. And Mr. Wesley’s Propositions in the Minutes of the Conference held in 1770, may be looked upon as the ground on which that refutation stands.)

‘ Must not a believer, an elect, be reckoned to
 ‘ be a sinner while he does sin? No. Though he
 ‘ does sin, yet he is not to be reckoned as a sinner,
 ‘ his sins are reckoned to be taken away from
 ‘ him.—A man does sin against God; God
 ‘ reckons not his sin to be his; he reckons it
 ‘ Christ’s, therefore he cannot reckon it his.—
 ‘ There is no condition in the covenant of Grace :
 ‘ man has no tie upon him to perform any thing
 ‘ whatsoever; as a condition that must be observed
 ‘ on his part; and there is not one bond or obli-
 ‘ gation upon man to the fulfilling of his part of
 ‘ the covenant, or partaking of the benefits of
 ‘ it.—There is no better way to know your
 ‘ portion in Christ, than upon the general tender of
 ‘ the Gospel to conclude absolutely he is yours :
 ‘ say, “ my part is as good as any man’s :” Set
 ‘ down thy rest here; question it not, but believe
 ‘ it.—Christ belongs to sinners as sinners;
 ‘ and if there be no worse than sinfulness, rebel-
 ‘ lion and enmity in thee, he belongs to thee, as
 ‘ well

well as to any in the world.—Christ does justify a person before he believes; we do not believe that we may be justified, but because we are justified. The elect are justified from eternity, at Christ's death; and the latest time is before they are born.—It is a received conceit among persons, that our obedience is the way to heaven; and though it be not, say they, the cause of our reign, yet it is the way to the kingdom: but I must tell you, all this sanctification of life is not a jot the way of that justified person to heaven.—To what purpose do we propose to ourselves the gaining of that by our labour and industry, that is already become ours before we do one jot?—Must they now labour to gain these things, as if it were referred to their well or evil walking; that as they shall walk so they shall speed: The Lord does nothing in his people upon conditions: The Lord intends not that by our obedience we shall gain something which in case of our failing we shall miscarry of.—While you labour to get by duties, you provoke God as much as in you lies.—We must work from life and not for life.—There is nothing you can do from whence you ought to expect any gain to yourselves.—Love to the brethren, universal obedience, and all other inherent qualifications are no signs by which we should judge of our state.—Every elect vessel, from the first instant of his being, is as pure in the eyes of God from the charge of sin, as he shall be in glory.—Though such persons do act rebellion, yet the loathsomeness and hatefulness of this rebellion is laid on the back of Christ; he bears the sin, as well as the blame, and shame: And God can dwell with persons that act the thing, because all the filthiness of it is translated from them upon the back of Christ.—It is the voice of a lying spirit in your hearts that says, you that are believers (as David) have yet sin wasting your conscience. David indeed says, *my sins are gone over my head,*

but

' but he speaks here from himself, and all that he
 ' speaks from himself was not truth.—There is
 ' as much ground to be confident of the pardon of
 ' sin to a believer, as soon as he committed it,
 ' as to believe it after he has performed all the
 ' humiliation in the world: A believer may be
 ' assured of pardon as soon as he commits any sin,
 ' even adultery and murder.—There is not one fit
 ' of sadness in a believer but he is out of the way
 ' of Christ.—God does no longer stand displeased
 ' though a believer do sin often.—There is no sin
 ' that ever believers commit, that can possibly do
 ' them any hurt. Therefore, as their sins cannot
 ' hurt them, so there is no cause of fear in their sins
 ' committed.—Sins are but scare-crows and bug-
 ' bears to fright ignorant children, but men of
 ' understanding see they are counterfeit things.—
 ' Sin is dead, and there is no more terror in it than
 ' in a dead lion.—If we tell believers except they
 ' walk thus and thus holily, and do these and these
 ' good works, God will be angry with them, we
 ' abuse the scriptures, undo what Christ has done,
 ' injure believers, and tell God lies to his face.—
 ' All our righteousness is filthy, full of menstru-
 ' osity, the highest kind of filthiness—even what
 ' is the spirit's, must be involved within that which
 ' is a man's own, under the general notion of
 ' *dung*.—God has done every thing in Christ, and
 ' taken away all things that can disturb our peace;
 ' but man will be mincing the truth, and tell you
 ' that if you keep close to God, and refrain from
 ' sin, God will love you.—Christ does all his work
 ' for him as well as in him that believes.—If per-
 ' sons are not united to Christ, and do not partake
 ' of justification before they do believe, there will be
 ' bringing to life again the covenant of works; you
 ' must of necessity press upon yourselves these terms,
 ' "I must do, that I may have life in Christ: I must
 ' believe." Now if there be believing first, then
 ' there is doing before living.—To what purpose
 ' do.

do we tell men of wrath and damnation? We had as good hold our tongues.' &c. &c.

' I do observe, says my judicious Calvinist author, the pretence for these opinions is, that they exalt *Christ* and *free grace*. Under this shadow Antinomianism set up in Germany. This was the great cry in England above fifty years since. The Synod of New England expose this as one of the speeches of them whom they call Antinomians: *Here is a great stir about graces and looking to hearts; but give me Christ: I seek not for graces, but for Christ: I seek not for promises, but for Christ: I seek not for sanctification, but for Christ: Tell me not of meditation and duties, but tell me of Christ.* Dr. Crisp very often bears upon this point, as if all he said was to advance *Christ and Grace.*'

You will perhaps say that our gospel-ministers are far more guarded than the good Doctor. But I would ask whether all his scheme is not collected, and made to center in the one fashionable expression of FINISHED SALVATION? Which seems to be our *Shibboleth*.

If the *salvation* of the elect was *finished* upon the cross, then was their *justification* finished, their *sanctification* finished, their *glorification* finished: for justification, sanctification, and glorification *finished*, are but the various parts of our *finished salvation*. If our justification is *finished*, there is no need of believing in order to be justified. If our sanctification is *finished*, there is no need of mortifying one sin, praying for one grace, taking up one cross, parting with either right eye or right hand, in order to perfect holiness. Again,

Suppose our salvation is *finished*, it follows Christ has done all, and we are to do nothing. Obedience and good works are no more necessary in order to it, than cutting and carrying stones are necessary to the completing of Westminster bridge. We are as perfect in Christ, as compleatly blameless and holy in the midst of all our sins, as ever we shall

shall be in glory. In a word, if salvation is *finished*, well ordered in all things and sure, our sins cannot take any thing from it, nor our righteousness have any thing to do with it. The little flock of the elect shall be saved, nay are fully saved now, do what they please; and the multitudes of the reprobates shall be damned, do what they can. Give me only the smooth ring of *finished salvation*, and without offering the least violence to common sense, I shall necessarily draw every link of Dr. Crisp's antinomian chain.

I have often wondered, how so many excellent men can be so fond of an expression which is the stalking-horse of every wild ranter. Is it scriptural? Which of the Prophets or Apostles ever used it on earth? Do even *the Spirits of just men made perfect* ascribe *finished* salvation to the Lamb? If they did, would not their uncollected dust, and the souls *crying under the altar*, prove their praises premature? Will salvation be *finished* till *the last enemy, death*, is fully overcome by the general resurrection? Again,

Is the expression of *finished Salvation* consistent with the analogy of faith? Does it not supersede our Lord's *intercession at the right hand of God*? Whether he intercedes for the reprobate or the elect, acts he not a most unwise part? Is not he giving himself a needless trouble, whether he intercedes for the *justification* of those whom he has himself *reprobated*, or for the salvation of those whose salvation is *finished*? Is it right to offer an insult to our High-Priest upon his mediatorial throne, under pretence of honouring him on the cross? And may not I say with judicious Baxter, *See what this overdoing tends to!* See what contempt it pours upon Him who is *the Brightness of his Father's glory!*

If that favourite expression is neither scriptural, nor agreeable to the analogy of faith, is it at least *rational*? I doubt it is not. *Finished* salvation implies both a deliverance from bodily and spiritual evils, and a being made fully partaker of heavenly glory.

glory, in body and in soul. But waving the consideration of glory and heaven, and taking the word *salvation* in its negative and lower sense, I ask: Can it be said with any propriety that *bodily* salvation is *finished*, while innumerable pains and diseases surround us, to drag us to the grave, and deliver us to putrefaction? And is *spiritual* salvation finished? Is *the body of sin destroyed*? Do not those very Ministers who preach *finished salvation* with one breath, tell us with the next, "there is *no* deliverance (that is, *no* finished salvation) from sin in this life?"

And what end does that expression answer? I know of none but that of spreading Dr. Crisp's doctrine, and making thousands of deluded souls talk as if the *tower* of their salvation was *finished*, when they have not so much as *counted the cost*; or when they have just laid the foundation.

Therefore, with all due deference to my Brethren and Fathers who preach *finished salvation*, I ask, Would it not be better to drop that doctrine, with all the other dangerous refinements of the honest Doctor, and preach a *finished atonement*, a *present sovereign remedy*, compleatly prepared to heal all our spiritual infirmities, assuage all our miseries, and fit us for *finished salvation* in glory? Would not this be as well at least, as to help our patients to compose themselves to sleep upon the pillow of Antinomianism; by making them believe the preparation of the remedy, and a compleat cure are all one; so that now they have absolutely nothing to do in order to saving health, and (as the Apostles concluded about Lazarus) if they *sleep they shall do well*? And should we not, even in speaking of *Redemption*, imitate the judicious Calvinists of the last century, who carefully distinguished between redemption by the *price* of Jesus's blood, and redemption by the *power* of his Spirit. "The former, said they, was finished upon the cross, but the latter is not so much as begun in thousands;

Sands; even in all that are unborn or unconverted?

V.

To speak the melancholy truth, how few individuals are free from practical Antinomianism? Setting aside their attendance on the ministry of the word, where is the material difference between several of our genteel believers and other people? Do not we see the sumptuous furniture in their apartments, and fashionable elegance in their dress? What sums of money do they frequently lay out in costly superfluities to adorn their persons, houses and gardens?

Wise heathens, by the help of a little philosophy, saw the impropriety of having any useless, brittle vessels about them: they broke them on purpose, that they might be consistent with the profession they made of *seeking wisdom*. But we, who profess to have *found Christ the wisdom of God*, purchase such vessels and toys at an high rate, and instead of hiding them for shame, as Rachel did her Teraphim for fear, we *write our motto over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall*, and any man that fears the God of Daniel may, upon studying the Chinese characters, make out ANTI-NOMIANISM.

Our Lord, whose garment does not appear to have been cut in the height of the fashion as it was made without seam, informs us that they who wear *soft clothing*, and splendid apparel, *are in king's houses*. But had he lived in our days, he might have found them in God's houses; in our fashionable churches or chapels. There you may find people professing to believe the Bible, who so conform to this present world as to wear gold, pearls and
precious

precious stones, when no distinction of office or state obliges them to it; in direct opposition to the words of two Apostles: *Let not their adorning be.* says St. Peter, *that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel.— Let them adorn themselves in modest apparel,* adds St. Paul, *not with curled hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array.*

Multitudes of professors, far from being convinced of their sin in this respect, ridicule Mr. W. for bearing his testimony against it. The opposition he dares make to that growing branch of vanity, affords matter of pious mirth to a thousand antinomians. Isaiah could openly reprove the *haughty daughters of Zion, who walked with stretched forth necks, wanton eyes, and tinkling feet*: he could expose *the bravery of their fashionable ornaments, their round tires like the moon, their chains, bracelets, headbands, rings, and ear-rings*: but some of our humble Christian ladies will not bear a reproof from Mr. W. on the head of dress. They even laugh at him, as a *pitiful legalist*; and yet, O the inconsistency of the antinomian spirit! They call Isaiah the *evangelical Prophet*!

Finery is often attended with an expensive table, at least with such delicacies as our purse can reach. St. Paul *kept his body under,* and was *in fastings often*; and our Lord gives us directions about the proper manner of *fasting*. But the Apostle did not *know* the easy way to heaven taught by Dr. Crisp; and our Lord did not *approve* of it, or he would have saved himself the trouble of his directions. In general we look upon fasting much, as we do upon penitential flagellation. Both equally raise our pity: we leave them both to popish devotees. Some of our good old church-people will yet fast on Good-Friday; but our fashionable believers begin to cast away that last scrap of self-denial. Their faith, which should produce, animate and regulate works of mortification, goes a shorter way to work; it explodes them all.

“ But perhaps *we wrestle not with flesh and blood,* because we are entirely taken up with *wrestling against Principalities, Powers, and spiritual Wickednesses in high places.*”

Alas! I fear this is not the case. Few of us know what it is to *cry out of the deep*, to pray and believe, till in the name of Jesus we force our way beyond flesh and blood, come within the reach of the internal world, conflict in an agony with the powers of darkness, vanquish Apollyon in all his attacks, and continue wrestling till the day of eternity break upon us, and the God of Jacob bless us with all spiritual benedictions in heavenly places. John Bunyan's pilgrim, the old Puritans, and the first Quakers had such engagements, and gained such victories; but they soon got over the edge of internal activity into the smooth easy path of Laodicean formality: Most of us called Methodists have already followed them; and when we are in that snare, Satan scorns to conflict with us; puny flesh and blood are more than a match for us. We fall asleep under their bewitching power, and begin to dream strange dreams: “ Our salvation is finished, we have got above legality, we live without frames and feelings, we have attained Christian liberty, we are perfect in Christ, we have nothing to do, our covenant is sure,” &c. True! But unhappily it is a covenant with the flesh: Satan, who is too wise to break it by rousing us in the spirit, leaves us to our delusions; and we think ourselves in the kingdom of God, when we are only in a fool's paradise.

At midnight I will rise and praise thee, said once a pious Jew; but we pious Christians, who enjoy both health and strength, are imprisoned within our bed-curtains, long after the sun has called the diligent to their labour. When *the fear of the Lord* was in us *the beginning of wisdom*, we durst not *so confer with flesh and blood*. We had then a little faith; and so far as it went, it shewed itself by our works. Then we could without hesitation, and
from

from our hearts, pray, Stir up, we beseech Thee, O Lord, the Wills of thy faithful people; that they plenteously bringing forth the Fruit of good Works, may by Thee be plenteously rewarded, through Jesus Christ our Lord. (Collect for the last Sunday in Trinity.) We believed there was some truth in those words of our Lord: *Except a man forsake all that he hath, deny himself, and take up his cross daily, he cannot be my disciple. He that will save his life shall lose it, and he that will lose his life for my sake shall find it. If thine eye offend thee pluck it out: It is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire. Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for I say unto you that many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able; because they will seek to enter in at the wide, rather than the strait gate; the antinomian or pharisaic, rather than the evangelically legal gate of salvation. But now, "We know better, say some of us, we have got over our scruples and legality." We can conform to this present world; cleave to, instead of forsaking all we have, and even grasp what we have not. What a strange way this of growing in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ crucified!*

Daniel informs us that he made his petition three times, and David that he offered up his praises seven times a day. Once also like them we had fixed hours for private prayer and self-examination, for reading the scriptures and meditating upon them, perhaps upon our knees; but we thought this was legality too, and under the specious pretence of going beyond forms, and learning to pray always, we first threw away our form, and soon after our endeavours to watch unto prayer: Now we scarce ever, for any length of time, solemnly bend the knee before our Father who sees in secret. And instead of leaning on Christ's bosom in all the means of grace, we take our graceless rest on the bosom of that painted Jezebel. *Formality.*

If we are backward in performing that leading work of PIETY, *secret prayer*; Is it a wonder if in general

general we are averse to every work of MERCY, that costs us something, besides a little of our superfluous money? And would to God some did not even grudge this, when it is pressed out of their purse, by the importunate addresses of those who beg for the poor! However we give yet at the door of a church, or at the communion, whether with indifference or joy, whether out of custom, shame, or love, we seldom examine. But that important branch of St. James, *pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father, which consists in visiting the fatherless and widows in their afflictions*, is with many almost as much out of date, as a pilgrimage to our Lady of Loretto.

O ye forsaken sons of poverty, and ancient daughters of sorrow, who pine away in your desolate garrets or cellars, without fire in winter, destitute of food, physic, or nurse in sickness; raise a moment your emaciated bodies wrapt up in thread-bare blankets, if you are possessed of any such a covering; and tell me, tell the world how many of our gay professors of Religion have sought and found you out in your deplorable circumstances! How many are come to visit, in you, and worship with you, *the man of sorrow*; who once lay on the cold ground in a bloody sweat? When did they make your bed in your sickness? When have they kindly inquired into ~~all~~ your wants, sympathized in all your temptations, supported your drooping heads in a fainting fit, revived your sinking spirits with suitable cordials, gently wiped your cold sweats, or mixed them with their tears of pity?

Alas! You sometimes find more compassion and assistance in your extremity, from those who never *name the name of Christ*, than from our easy Antinomian Laodicean *Believers*. Their wants are richly supplied; that is enough: they do not inquire into yours, and *you* are ashamed or afraid to trouble them with the dismal story. Nor indeed would some of them understand you if you did. Their uninterrupted abundance makes them as incapable

pable of feeling for you, as the warm inhabitants of Ethiopia are to feel for the frozen Icelanders.

While the table of some Believer (so called) is alternately loaded with a variety of delicate meats, and rich wines, what have ye to sustain sinking nature? Alas! One can soon see your all of food and physic. A pitcher of water stands by your bed-side upon a stool, the only piece of furniture left in your wretched apartment. The Lord God bless the poor widow that brought it you, with her *two mites!* Heaven reward a thousand-fold the loving creature that not only shares with you, but freely bestows upon you *all her living, even all that she has*; when *they* forget to inquire after you, and to send you something out of their luxurious abundance! *The Son of Man, once forsaken by all the disciples, and comforted by an angel, make her bed in the time of sickness!* And a waiting band of celestial Spirits carry her charitable soul into Lazarus's bosom in the awful hour of dissolution! I had rather be in her case, though she should not confidently profess the faith, than in yours, O ye cressed Believers, who let your affluence overflow to those that have more need to learn frugality in the school of scarceness, than to receive bounties which feed their sensuality and indulge their pride.

And ye women professing godliness, who enjoy the comforts of health and abundance, in whose streets there is no complaining, no decay, whose daughters are as the polished corners of the temple; when did you ever want visitors? Alas! Ye have too many for the good they do you, or that you do them. Does not your conversation, which begins with the love of Jesus, terminate in religious scandal; as naturally as your soul, which once *began in the spirit, ends now in the flesh?* O that your visitors were as ready to attend workhouses, jails, infirmaries and hospitals, as they are to wait upon you! O that at least, like the Dorcases, the Phebes, and Priscillas of old, you would teach them cheerfully to work for the poor, to be the free servants of the Church,

and tender nurses of the sick! O that they saw in you all, how the holy women, the *widows who were widows indeed, formerly entertained strangers, washed the saints' feet, instructed the younger women, and continued night and day in prayer!* But alas! *The love of many, once warm, as the smoking flax, is waxed cold instead of taking fire and flaming:* They who once began to *seek the profit of many,* now *seek their own ease, or interest; their own honor, or indulgence.*

Almost all, when they come to the foot of the hill Difficulty, take their leave of Jesus as a guide; because he leads on through spiritual death to the regeneration. Some disliking that *door, like thieves and robbers climb up an easier way.* And others leaving the high way of the cross, under the fair pretence that blind Papists walk therein, make for themselves and others broad and downward roads, to ascend the steep hill of Zion.

Those easy paths are innumerable, like the people that walk in them. *O that my eyes, like David's, did run down like water; because men professing godliness keep not God's law, and are even offended at it! Their mouth talketh of vanity, they dissemble with their double heart, and their right hand is a right hand of sloth, or positive iniquity.* O that I had the tenderness of St. Paul, to *tell you even weeping of those who mind earthly things; those who have sinned and have not repented; those who, while they boast they are made free by the Son of God, are brought under the power of many things; whom foolish desires, absurd fears, undue attachments, imported superfluities, and disagreeable habits, keep in the most ridiculous bondage!*

O that my head were waters, and my eyes fountains of tears, to deplore with Jeremiah the slain of the daughter of God's people; who live in pleasure and are dead while they live! And to lament over spiritual Pharisees of every sort; those who say *Stand by, I am holier than thou;* and those who fix the names of *poor creature! blind! and carnal!* upon every publican

publican they see in the temple; and boldly placing themselves among the *elect*, thank God they are not as other men, and in particular as the *reprobates*!

Who can number the *adulterers and adulteresses*; who know not that the friendship of the world is enmity against God! The concealed idolaters, who have their *chambers of imagery* within, and set up their idols in their hearts! The envious Cains, who carry murder in their breast! The profane Esaus, who give up their birth-right for a sensual gratification; and covetous Judases, who sell the truth which they should buy, and part with Christ for filthy lucre's sake! The sons of God, who look at the fair daughters of men, and take to themselves wives of all which they chuse! The gay Dinahs who visit the daughters of the land, and come home polluted in body or in soul: The filthy Onans, who defile the temple of God: The Prophets of Bethel, who deceive the Prophets of Judah, intice them out of the way of self-denial, and bring the roaring lion and death upon them! The fickle Marcuses, who depart when they should go to the work! The self-made Prophets, who run before they are sent, and scatter instead of profiting the people! The spiritual Absaloms, who rise against their Fathers in the gospel; and in order to reign without them, raise a rebellion against them! The furious Zedekiahs, who make themselves horns of iron to push the true servants of the Lord, because they will not prophesy smooth things, and deceit, as they do!

Who can count the fretful Jonahs, who are angry to death when the worm of disappointment smites the gourd of their creature happiness? The weak Aarons who dare not resist a multitude, and are carried by the stream into the greatest absurdities? The jealous Miriams, who rise against the ministers that God honours? The crafty Zibas, who calumniate and supplant their brethren? The treacherous Joabs, who kiss them, to get an opportunity of stabbing them under the fifth rib? The busy

Sops

Sons of Zeruiah, who perpetually stir up resentment and wrath? The mischievous Doegs, who carry about poisonous scandal, and blow up the fire of discord? The hypocritical Gehazis, who look like saints before their masters and ministers, and yet can impudently lie, and impiously cheat? The Gibeonites, always busy in hewing wood and drawing water, in going through the drudgery of outward services, without ever aspiring at the adoption of sons? The halting Naamans, who serve the Lord and bow to Rimmon: The backsliding Solomons, who once *chose wisdom*, but now pursue folly in her most extravagant and impious forms? The apostatizing Alexanders, who *tread under foot the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified, an unholy thing*? And, to include multitudes in one class, the Samaritans, who, by a common mixture of truth and error, of heavenly and earthly mindedness, *worship the Lord and serve their gods*; are one day for God, and the next for Mammon: Or the thousands in Israel who *halt between two opinions*, crying out when Elijah prevails, *The Lord He is the God!* and when Jezebel triumphs, returning to the old song, “*O Baal save us!*” O Trinity of the world, Money, Pleasure and Honor, make us happy!”

VI.

Time would fail to describe the innumerable branches of *Antinomianism*, with all the fruits they bear. It may be compared to the astonishing tree, which Nebuchadnezzar saw in his mysterious dream: *A strong tree, set in the midst of the Church; the height thereof reaches unto heaven, and the sight thereof unto the ends of the earth. Its leaves are fair, and its fruit much. Thousands sleep under its fatal shadow, and myriads feed upon its pernicious fruit.*

At

At a distance it looks like *the tree of life planted in the mid^d of Paradise*; but it only proves *the tree of knowledge of good and evil*. *The Woman* (the Antinomian Church) *is deceived* by the appearance. *She sees that it is good for food, pleasant to the eye, and desirable to make one wise: She eats to the full, and flushed with fond hopes of heaven, nay fancying herself as God, she presents of the poisonous fruit that intoxicates her to the nobler part of the Church, the obedient members of the second Adam.*

O ye sons of God and daughters of Abraham, who, in compliance with the insinuations of this deceived Eve, have already stretched forth your hands to receive her fatal present, instantly draw them back, for *eternal death is in the fruit*. Fly from the tree on which she banquets, to the tree of *life*, the despised cross of Jesus; and there feed on *Him crucified*, till you are *crucified with him*; till *the body of sin is destroyed*, and you feel eternal life abundantly circulating through all your sanctified powers.

And ye uncorrupted, self-denying followers of Jesus, whom love and duty still compel to bear your cross after him, join to pray that *the Watcher and his holy Ones may come down from heaven, and cry aloud, Hew down the tree of Antinomianism; cut off its branches, shake off its leaves, scatter its fruit, and let not even the stump of its roots be left in the earth*. Your prayer is heard,

He comes! he comes! the Judge severe!
The seventh trumpet speaks him near.

Behold he appears in his glory, with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment upon all. The thrones are cast down; the Ancient of days doth sit, whose garment is white as snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool: his throne is like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issues, and comes forth from before him: Thousand thousands minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand

Stand before him. The trumpet sounds : The sea gives up the dead which are in it, death and hades deliver up the dead which are in them. The just are separated from the unjust ; and while the earth and the heaven flee away from the face of him that sits on the great resplendent throne, and there is found no place for them ; the judgment so set, the books are opened, and the dead, small and great, are judged, every one according to their works.

Fear not, Ye Righteous. Ye are in the hand of the Lord, and there shall no torment touch you. In the sight of the unwise ye seemed to die, they laughed at your dying daily : but ye are in peace, and your joy is full of immortality. Having been a little chastised, you shall be greatly rewarded ; for God proved you and found you worthy for himself. And now that the time of your visitation is come, judge the nations, and reign with your Lord for ever ; for such as are faithful in love shall abide with him ; grace and mercy are to his saints, and he careth for his elect : He sets his sheep on his right hand, and stretching it towards them with ravishing looks of benignity and love, he finally justifies by works, those whom he had freely justified by faith. How sublime and solemn is the sentence !

Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink ; I was a stranger and ye took me in ; naked and ye clothed me : I was sick and ye visited me ; I was in prison and ye came to me.—And do not ask with astonishment when you gave me all these tokens of your love ; for whatever you did out of regard to me, my law, and my people, you did it in my name ; and whatever you did in my name to the least of my creatures, and in particular to the least of these my brethren, you did it unto me.

As if he said, “ Think not I am biased by lawless partiality. No ; I am the Author of eternal salvation to them that obeyed me, and made a right use

use of my *sanctifying blood*. Such are the *blessed of my Father*; and such are *ye*. Your *faith unfeigned* produced unfeigned love: You *loved not in word only, but in deed and in truth*; witness the works of mercy that adorned your lives, or the fruits of the spirit that now replenish your souls. *You, of all the families of the earth, have I known* with approbation. Ye have not *denied me in works*; or if ye have, bitter repentance, and purifying, renovating faith followed your denial; and by *keeping that faith, ye continued in my covenant, and endured unto the end*.

“ Thou seest it, righteous Father, for to Thee the books are always open. Thou readest *my laws in their mind*, and beholdest my loving precepts *written in their hearts*: I therefore *confess them before Thee*; and before You, my *Angels*, who have seen them agonize, and *follow me through the regeneration*. I take the new heavens and the new earth to witness, that *I am to them a God, and they are to me a people*. They walked *WORTHY of God, who called them to his kingdom and glory*; therefore *they are worthy of me*.”

“ I have confessed you^r persons, O ye *just men made perfect*, Ye precious *jewels* of my mediatorial crown; let me next reward your works. In the days of my flesh I declared, that *a cup of water given in my name* (and my name, ye know, is *Mercy, Goodness and Love*) *should in no wise lose its reward*; and that *whosoever should forsake earthly friends or property for righteousness' sake, should have an hundred fold, and everlasting life*. The pillars of heaven have given way; but my promise stands firm as the basis of my throne. Triumph in my faithfulness, as you have in my forgiving love. I bestow on all, crowns of blissful immortality; I *appoint unto each a kingdom which shall not be destroyed*. - Be *Kings and Priests unto God for ever*. Prepare to follow me to the realms of glory, and there *whatsoever is right* (*δικαιο*) *that shall ye receive*; in *just proportion* to the various degrees of perfection,

tion, with which you have obeyed my law, and improved your talents."

Thus are the persons of the righteous accepted, and their works *praised in the gate of heaven, and rewarded in the kingdom of their Father*. Thus they receive crowns of life and glory; but it is only to cast them to all eternity, with unutterable transports, grateful, humble love, at the feet of him who was crowned with piercing thorns, and hung bleeding upon the cross, to purchase their thrones.

While they shout *Salvation to God and the Lamb* † the Judge turns to the left hand, where trembling myriads stand waiting for their fearful doom. O how does confusion cover their faces, and guilty horror rack their breasts, while he says with the firmness of the eternal Lawgiver, and the majesty of the Lord of Lords; *Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels! For I was hungry and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not †!*

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† Should some sincere followers of Christ read these lines, and be convinced they never visited Christ *in prison*, never entertained him in a *stranger*, &c. it is proper they should be humbled for having overlooked this important part of *pure religion*; and consider next how far it is in their power literally to practise it. Some live at a great distance from prisons, and are necessarily detained at home. Some (as women) could not in many places visit prisoners with decency. Others are altogether unable to do good to the souls or bodies of the sick and captives, being themselves sick, poor, and confined. If thou art in any of these cases, believer, canst not thou influence others to do what is out of thy power? Canst thou not send the relief thou art unable to carry, and shew thy good-will by cutting off thy superfluities, sparing some of thy conveniencies, and at times a little of thy necessaries for thy sick, naked, hungry or imprisoned Lord? If thou art so indigent and infirm, that thou canst absolutely do nothing for the bodies of thy fellow-creatures,

Some are not yet *speechless*; they only falter. With the trembling insolence of Adam, not yet driven out of paradise, they even dare to plead their desperate cause. While stubborn sons of Belial say, "Lord, thy Father is merciful; and if thou didst die for *all*, why not for *us*?" While obstinate Pharisees plead the good they did in their own name, to supersede the Redeemer's merit; methinks I hear a bold Antinomian addressing thus the Lord of glory:

"Lord, when saw we *THEE* hungry, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to *THEE*? Had we seen *THEE*, dear Lord, in any distress, how gladly would we have relieved thy wants! Numbers can witness how well we spoke of *thee*, and *thy* righteousness: It was all our boast. Bring it out in this important hour. Hide not the gospel of thy free grace. We always delighted in pure doctrine, in "Salvation without any condition; especially without the condition of works." Stand, gracious Lord, stand by us, and the preachers of thy free grace, who *made us hope thou wouldst confirm their word.*"

"While they taught us to call thee *Lord, Lord*, they assured us that love would *constrain* us to do good works; but finding no inward constraint to

creatures, endeavour to do works of mercy for their souls; exhort, reprove, comfort, instruct, as thou canst, all around thee, in the meekness of wisdom. If thou canst do works of mercy, neither with thy tongue, hands, nor feet, then be the more diligent to do them with thy *heart*. In spirit, visit prisons and sick-beds. If thou hast no house to take in strangers, open to them thy heart; earnestly recommend them to God, who can supply all their wants, and open to them the *Gate of Heaven*, when they lie under a hedge; as He once did to Jacob in the fields of Bethel. Give thy heart continually to the Lord, and thou givest more than a mountain of gold; and the moment thou canst give a cup of water in his name, bestow it as freely as he did his blood; remembering, *God loves a cheerful giver*, and that it is *accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not*,

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entertain

entertain strangers, visit the sick, and relieve prisoners, we did it not; supposing we were not called thereto. They continually told us, "human righteousness was mere filth before thee; and we could not appear but to our everlasting shame in any righteousness but thine in the day of judgment." As to works, we were afraid of doing them, lest we should have *worked out* abominations instead of *our salvation*."

"And, indeed, Lord, what need was there of our *working it out*? For they perpetually assured us, it was *finished*; saying, if we did any thing towards it, we worked for life, fell from grace like the bewitched Galatians, spoiled thy perfect work; and exposed ourselves to the destruction which awaits yonder trembling Pharisees."

"They likewise assured us, that all depended on *thy decrees*; and if we could but firmly believe our *election*, it was a sure sign we were interested in thy salvation. We did so; and now, Lord, for the sake of a few dung-works we have omitted, let not our hope perish! Let not electing and everlasting love fail! Visit our offences with a rod, but take not thy loving kindness altogether from us; and break not David's covenant, ordered in all things and sure, of which we have so often made our boast."

"May it please thee also to consider, that if we did not love and assist some of those whom thou callest *thy Brethren*, it was because they appeared to us so exceedingly legal; so strongly set against free grace, that we judged them to be obstinate Pharisees, and dangerous reprobates. We therefore thought that in hating and opposing them, we did thee service, and walked in thy steps. For thou hast said, *It is enough if the servant is as his Lord*; and supposing *thou didst hate them*, as thou dost Satan; *we* thought we need not be more righteous than thou, by loving them more than thou didst."

“ O suffer us to speak on, and tell thee, we were champions for thy free grace. Like true Protestants, we could have burned against the doctrine of a second justification by works. Let then *grace* justify us *freely without works*. Shut those books † filled with the account of our deeds, open the arms of thy mercy, and receive us just as we are.”

“ If *free grace* cannot justify us alone, let *faith* do it, together with free grace: We do *believe* finished salvation, Lord; we can join in the most evangelical creeds, and are ready to confess the virtue of thy atoning blood. But if thou sayest, we have *trampled it under foot*, and *made it a common thing*, grant us our last request, and it is enough.”

“ Cut out the immaculate garment of *thy righteousness* into robes that may fit us all, and put them upon us by *imputation*: So shall our nakedness be gloriously covered. We confess we have not dealt our bread to the hungry; but impute to us thy feeding 5000 people with loaves and fishes. We have seldom given drink to the thirsty, and often *put our bottle to those who were not athirst*; but impute to us thy turning water into wine, to refresh the guests at the marriage-feast in Cana; and thy loud call, *in the last day of the feast at Jerusalem*; *If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink*. We never supposed it was our duty to *be given to hospitality*; but impute to us thy loving invitations to strangers, thy kind assurances of receiving *all that come to thee*; thy comfortable promises of *casting out none*, and of feeding them even with thy *flesh and blood*. We did not clothe

† This plea is excellent when a man comes to Christ, his High Priest, as a sinner for pardon and holiness, or for his first justification on earth; but it will be absurd when he *stands before the throne* of Christ as a rebellious subject, or *before his judgment-seat* as a criminal in the last day.

the naked as we had opportunity and ability; impute to us thy patient parting with thy seamless garment, for the benefit of thy murderers. We did not visit sick-beds and prisons, we were afraid of fevers, and especially of the jail-distemper: But compassionately impute to us thy visiting Jairus's daughter, and *Peter's wife's mother, who lay sick of a fever*; and put to our account thy visiting putrefying Lazarus in the offensive prison of the grave."

"Thy imputed righteousness, Lord, can alone answer all the demands of thy law and gospel. We did not dare to *fast*; we should have been called *legal* and *Papists* if we had; but thy forty days fasting in the wilderness, and thy continual abstinence imputed to us, will be self-denial enough to justify us ten times over. We did not *take up our cross*; but impute to us thy *carrying THINE*; and even fainting under the oppressive load. We did not *mortify the deeds of the flesh, that we might live*: This would have been evidently "working for life;" but impute to us the crucifixion of *thy* body, instead of our *crucifying OUR flesh, with its affections and lusts*. We hated private prayer; but impute to us thy love of that duty, and the prayer thou didst offer upon a mountain all night. We have been rather hard to forgive, but that defect will be abundantly made up, if thou imputeest to us thy forgiving of the dying thief: And if that will not do, add, we beseech thee, the merit of that good saying of thine, *Forgive and you shall be forgiven*. We have cheated the king of his customs; but no matter, only impute to us thy exact paying of the tribute-money, together with thy good advice, *Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's*."

"It is true, we have brought up our children in vanity, and thou never hadst any to bring up. May not thy mercy find out an expedient, and impute to us instead of it, thy obedience to thy parents?"

parents? And if we have received the sacrament unworthily, and thou canst not cover that sin with thy worthy *receiving*, indulge us with the imputation of thy worthy *institution* of it, and that will do yet better."

"In short, Lord, own us *freely* as thy children. Impute to us thy perfect righteousness. Cast it as a cloke upon us, to cover our filthy souls and polluted bodies. "We will have no righteousness but thine:" make no mention, we beseech thee, of *our* righteousness and personal holiness; they are but *filthy rags*, which thy purity forbids thee to take into heaven; therefore accept us without, and we shall shout *free grace, imputed righteousness, and finished salvation*, to eternity."

While the bold Antinomian offers, or prepares to offer, this most impious plea, the Lord, who *is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*, casts a flaming look upon all the obstinate violators of his Law. It pierces their conscience, rouses all its drowzy powers, and restores their memory to its original perfection. Not one wish passed their heart, or thought their brain, but is instantly brought to their remembrance: *the books are opened* in their own breast, and every character has a voice which answers to the voice of *the Lion of the tribe of Judah*.

"Shall I pervert judgment, says he, and justify the wicked for a bribe? The bribe of your abominable praises? *Think you*, by your base flatteries, to *escape the righteous judgment of God*? Is not my *wrath revealed from heaven against all ungodliness, and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness*? Much more against you, ye *Vessels of wrath*; who hold an impious absurdity in matchless insolence."

"Said I not to Cain himself at the beginning, *If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted?* Personal holiness, which ye scorned, is the *wedding garment* I now look for. I *swear in my wrath that,*

without it, none shall taste of my heavenly supper. Ye have rejected my word of commandment, and I reject you from being kings. Ye cried unto me, and I delivered you. Yet have ye forsaken me, and served other gods; therefore I will deliver you no more: go and cry unto the gods whom ye have chosen. I wound the hairy scalp of such as have gone on still in their wickedness. Whosoever hath sinned against me to the last, him do I blot out of my book: and this you have done, Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, awake to everlasting shame!——Will ye set the briers and thorns against me in battle, and make them pass for roses of Sharon, and lillies of the valleys? I will go through them with a look, and consume them together. The day is come that burneth like an oven: All that have DONE wickedly are stubble, and must be burnt up root and branch. Upon such I rain squares, fire, and brimstone; storm and tempest: this is the portion of their cup. Drink the dregs of it, Ye hypocrites, depart! And wring them out in everlasting burnings.”

“ Said I not, He that DOES good is of God, but he that DOES evil is not of God: Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life; for he that overcometh, and he only, shall be clothed in white raiment, and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life. And shall I keep your name in that book for having continued in doing evil? Shall I give you the crown of life for having been unfaithful unto death; and clothe you with the bright robes of my glory, because you defiled your garments to the last? Delusive hope! Because your mind was not to do good, be ye rather clothed with cursing, like as with a garment! Let it come into your bowels like water, and like oil into your bones!”

VII.

If *these shall go into eternal punishment*; if such will be the dreadful end of all the impenitent Nicolaitans; if our churches and chapels swarm with them, if they crowd our communion-tables, if they are found in most of our houses, and too many of our pulpits: if the seeds of their fatal disorder are in all our breasts; if they produce Antinomianism around us in all its forms; if we see bold Antinomians in *principle*, barefaced Antinomians in *practice*, and sly *pharisaical Antinomians*, who speak well of the law, to break it with greater advantage; Should not every one *examine himself whether he is in the faith*, and whether he has an *holy Christ* in his heart, as well as a *sweet Jesus* upon his tongue; lest he should one day swell the tribe of antinomian reprobates? Does it not become every minister of Christ to drop his prejudices, and consider whether he ought not to imitate the old Watchman, who, 15 months ago, gave a *legal alarm* to all the watchmen that are in connexion with him? And should we not do the church excellent service, if agreeing to lift up our voices together against the common enemy, we gave God no rest in prayer, and our hearers in preaching, till we all *did our first works*, and our *latter end*, like Job's, *exceeded our beginning*?

Near forty years ago, some of the ministers of Christ, in our church, were called out of the extreme of self-righteousness. Flying from it we have run into the opposite, with equal violence. Now that we have learned wisdom by what we have suffered in going beyond the limits of truth both ways, let us return to a just scriptural medium. Let us equally maintain the two evangelical

gical axioms on which the gospel is founded ; (1.) " All our salvation is of God by free grace, through the alone merits of Christ." And (2.) " All our damnation is of ourselves, through our avoidable unfaithfulness."

This second truth, as important as one half of the Bible, on which it rests, has not only been set aside as useless by thousands, but generally exploded as unscriptural, dangerous, and subversive of true protestantism. Thus has the gospel-balance been broken, and St. James's pure religion despised. What we owe to Truth in a state of oppression, hath engaged me to cast two mites into the scale of truth, which Mr. W. has the courage to defend against multitudes of good men, who keep one another in countenance, under their common mistake. I do not want *his* scale to preponderate to the disadvantage of free grace: If it did, far from rejoicing in it, I would instantly throw the insignificant weight of my pen into the other scale; being fully persuaded that Christ can never be so truly honored, nor souls so well edified, when we overdo on either side of the question, as when we scripturally maintain the *whole* truth as it is in Jesus.

" But are we not in as much danger from over-doing in pharisaic works, as in antinomian faith?"

Not at present: The stream runs too rapidly on the side of lawless faith, to leave any just room to fear we shall be immediately carried into excessive working. There would be some ground for this objection; if we saw most professors of religion obstinately refusing to drink any thing but water, eat any thing but dry bread or cheap vegetables; fasting themselves into mere skeletons; wearing sack-cloth instead of soft linen; lying on the bare ground, with a stone for their pillow; imitating Origen, by literally *making themselves Eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake*; turning hermits,

hermits, spending whole nights in contemplation in churches and churchyards; giving away all their goods, the necessaries of life not excepted; allowing themselves only three or four hours sleep, and even breaking that short rest to pray or praise; overpowering their bodies the next day with hard labour, to keep them under; scourging their backs unto blood every day; or forgetting themselves in prayer for hours in the coldest weather, till they have almost lost the use of their limbs. But I ask any unprejudiced person, who knows what is now called, "gospel-liberty," whether we are in danger of being thus *righteous over-much*, or legal to such an extreme?

I grant however we are not absolutely safe from any quarter: let us therefore continually stand on our guard. The right wing of Immanuel's army, which defends living faith, is partly gone over to the enemy, and fights under the Nicolaitan banner. The left wing, which defends good works, is far from being out of the reach of those crafty adversaries. Therefore, as we are, or may be attacked on every side, let us faithfully use *the sword of truth, the power of God, and the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left*. Let us gallantly fly where the attack is the hottest, which now, *in the religious world*, is evidently where gross *Crispianity* (if I may use the word) is continually obtruded upon us as true *Christianity*: I say, *in the religious world*; for, in this controversy, *what have I to do to judge them also that are without? Do not ye judge them that are WITHIN*, and represent them as opposers of free grace?

Should Pharisees, while we are engaged in repelling the Nicolaitans, try to rob us of present and free justification by faith, under pretence of maintaining justification by works in the last day; or should they set us upon unnecessary, and unscriptural works, we shall be glad of your assistance to repel them also.

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If you grant it us, and do not despise ours, the world shall admire in the *Shulamite* (the Church at unity in herself) *the company of two armies*, ready mutually to support each other against the opposite attacks of the Pharisees and the Nicolaitans; the *popish workers* who exclude the gospel, and the modern gnostics, the *Protestant Antinomians*, who explode the Law.

May the Lord God help us to sail safely through these opposite rocks, keeping at an equal distance from both, by taking Christ for our Pilot, and the Scripture for our Compass! So shall we enter full sail the double haven of present and eternal rest. Once we were in immediate danger of splitting upon *Works, without faith*; now we are threatened with destruction from faith, *without works*: May the merciful Keeper of Israel save us from both, by a *living faith*, legally productive of all good works, or by *good works*, evangelically springing from a living faith!

Should the divine blessing upon these sheets, bring one single Reader a step towards that good old way, or only confirm one single believer in it, I shall be *rewarded a hundred fold* for this little *labour of love*; and I shall be even content to see it represented as the invidious labour of malice: for what is my reputation to the profit of one blood-bought soul!

Beseeching you, dear Sir, for whom these letters are first intended, to set me right where I am wrong; and not to despise what may recommend itself in them to reason and conscience, on account of the blunt and Helvetic manner in which they are written, I remain, with sincere respect,

Honored and Reverend Sir,

Your affectionate and obedient servant
in the practical gospel of Christ,

J. F.

P O S T S C R I P T.

Since these Letters were sent to the press, I have seen a pamphlet, intitled, "A Conversation between Richard Hill, Esq; the Rev. Mr. Madan, and Father Walsh," a Monk at Paris, who condemned Mr. Wesley's Minutes as "too near Pelagianism," and the author as "a Pelagian;" adding, that, "*their doctrine was a great deal nearer that of the Protestants.*" Hence the editor concludes, that "the principles in the extract of the Minutes are too rotten even for a Papist to rest upon, and supposes that Popery is about the mid-way between Protestantism and Mr. J. Wesley." I shall just make a few strictures upon that performance.

(1.) If an Arian came to me, and said: You believe that *Jesus Christ is God over all, blessed for ever.* "Pelagius, that heretic who was publicly excommunicated by the whole Catholic Church," was of your sentiment; therefore you are a Pelagian; give up your heresy: Should I, upon such an assertion, give up the Godhead of our Saviour? Certainly no. And shall I, upon a similar argument, advanced by the help of a French Monk, give up truths with which the practical gospel of Jesus Christ must stand or fall? God forbid!

(2.) We desire to be confronted with all the pious Protestant divines, except those of Dr. Crisp's class, who are a party: But, who would believe it? The suffrage of a Papist is brought against us! Astonishing! That our opposers should think it worth their while to raise one recruit against us in the immense city of Paris, where fifty thousand might be raised against the Bible itself!

(3.) So long as Christ, the Prophets, and Apostles are for us, together with the multitude of the Puritan divines of the last century, we shall smile at an army of Popish friars. The knotted
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whips that hang by their side, will no more frighten us from our Bibles, than the *ipse dixit* of a Benedictine monk will make us explode, as heretical, propositions which are demonstrated to be scriptural.

(4.) An argument which has been frequently used of late against the *Anticalvinist* Divines is, "This is downright Popery! This is worse than Popery itself!" And honest Protestants have been driven by it to embrace doctrines, which were once no less contrary to the dictates of their conscience, than they are still to the word of God. It is proper therefore such persons should be informed, that St. Augustin, the Calvin of the fourth century, is one of the saints whom the Popes have in the highest veneration; and that a great number of friars in the church of Rome are champions for Calvinism, and oppose St. Paul's doctrine, that *the grace of God bringeth salvation, has appeared unto all men*, as strenuously as some real Protestants do among us. Now, if good Father Walsh is one of that stamp, what wonder is it that he should so well agree with the gentlemen who consulted him! If Calvinism and Protestantism are synonymous terms, as some divines would make us believe, many monks may well say, that *their doctrine is a great deal nearer that of the Protestants than the Minutes*; for they may even pass for real Protestants.

(5.) But whether the good friar is a hot *Jansenist*, or only a warm *Thomist*, (so they call the popish Calvinists in France) we appeal from his bar to the tribunal of Jesus Christ, and from the published conversation to the law and the testimony. What is the decision of a popish monk to the express declarations of the scripture, the dictates of common sense, the experiences of regenerate souls, and the writings of a cloud of Protestant divines? No more than a grain of loose sand to the solid rock on which the church is founded.

I hope

I hope the gentlemen concerned in the conversation lately published, will excuse the liberty of this Postscript. I reverence their piety, rejoice in their labours, and honor their warm zeal for the protestant cause. But that very zeal, if not accompanied with a close attention to every part of the gospel-truth, may betray them into mistakes which may spread as far as their respectable names; I think it therefore my duty to publish these strictures, lest any of my readers should pay more regard to the good-natured friar, who has been pressed into the service of Dr. Crisp, than to St. John, St. Paul, St. James, and Jesus Christ, on whose plain declarations I have shewn that the Minutes are founded.

F I N I S.

