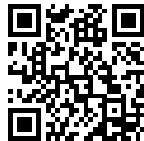

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F R I E N D L Y
R E M A R K S

Occasioned by the

S P I R I T A N D D O C T R I N E S

Contained in

The Rev. Mr F L E T C H E R ' s V i n d i c a t i o n,

And more particularly in his S E C O N D C H E C K t o

A N T I N O M I A N I S M,

To which is added,

A P O S T S C R I P T,

Occasioned by his T H I R D C H E C K.

In a L E T T E R t o t h e A U T H O R.

By * * * * * * * * * * , A. M.

L O N D O N :

Printed for E. and C. D I L L Y in the Poultry.


M D C C L X X I I .





FRIENDLY REMARKS, &c.

REVEREND SIR,


VER since the publication of Mr
WESLEY'S *Minutes* for 1770, toge-
 ther with your *Vindication* of the doc-
 trines they contained, my mind has
 been agitated with a thousand concerns : I have
 grieved for them inexpressibly ; and happy should
 I have been, were but my situation such, that I
 could have mourned over them in private, with-
 out troubling any with my complaints : but as
 my call to preach the Gospel in various places,
 in general, is extensive ; and as I have frequently
 not a few invitations for that purpose from those
 of Mr **WESLEY'S** connections, in particular ;
 what must be my conduct, in order that I may
 act with moderation on the one hand, yet with
 honesty on the other ; since the doctrines pub-
 lished

lished by Mr WESLEY, and vindicated by you, are so contrary to scripture, to my experience, and appear to me, in their very nature and end, so dangerous and delusive? To preach among Mr WESLEY's people what I conceive to be the truth, however I may industriously avoid any thing of the style or appearance of controversy, will be preaching, in his congregations, against the very sentiments he maintains; and to preach against a man's own sentiments in his own congregations, I confess would be unfair.

And yet, when I consider how many excellent christians are contained in his Societies, whom I love as my own soul, and to whom I have frequently given the fullest promises of my assistance and labours, never in the least suspecting at that time to see the publication of such sentiments as have lately appeared; how will it grieve me to be constrained to withdraw from them, whom I so much honour and respect, and to refuse them those labours which they have so frequently requested! I know that I *love the brethren*; and the very thoughts of forsaking them, while I write, pains me severely: The LORD divest me of prejudice, bless me with wisdom, and direct me for the best!

Hitherto have I carefully declined having the least share in any of the late contentions; peace I love, but controversy I hate: Glad therefore was I to leave *Bristol* at the time of the Conference;
hoping,

hoping, by some promising appearances, peace would have been the result among those who were to contend.

Upon my return to *Bristol*, I saw your first publication. As I dearly loved your character, I read it with great prejudice in your favour; but still, the *tartness* of the style, as well as the bad doctrine it contained, equally concerned me: but however, as I plainly perceived your intention was to make the *Minutes* speak as much Gospel as possible, though I was sorry for the performance, yet still I felt a loving pity for the author.

About the same time I called upon Mr WESLEY himself, then in *Bristol*. I made bold to express to him, in strong terms, my concern about his *Minutes*. I asked him, upon cooler reflection, his sentiments upon some passages in them. He told me the whole of the Eight Propositions he looked upon as truth; and that he should vindicate them as such.

This answer the more concerned me, as I was in hopes, from what had passed at the Conference, agreeable to the acknowledgment in the Declaration*, that for the future he would have owned, that the *Minutes* were drawn up in an hasty and unguarded hour; and that he was sorry for the offence they might have given to any. You yourself, SIR, was one to whom offence was first given upon this occasion; is it not then wonderful that

* See the Declaration.

you, who have been in the same condemnation with the many, should so plentifully stigmatise, with the most unkind language, others who have only taken like offence with yourself ?

After all that had passed as above, it was still my determination, to appear in no open separation from Mr WESLEY ; hoping that time would soften the edge of dispute, and restore calmness and composure among contending parties : but your *second* publication compels me to believe, that to be neuter any longer will be criminal ; you have now done sufficient to darken every gleam of hope of future tranquillity, by publishing *such* doctrine, and in *such* a spirit, as has kindled no small flame in the religious world.

Had your writings been delivered merely as your own private sentiments, the case would have been different ; but when you declare yourself the *public* advocate for Mr WESLEY, and tell the world that HE and ALL HIS preachers are as fond of the doctrine of a second justification by works as yourself * ; and while he himself never appears to contradict it, *your* words become *his*, and the cause universal. This also seems obviously acknowledged by the very great industry with which your publications are vended by almost all the preachers in connection with Mr WESLEY. Thus also I fear, is the way hedged up too closely for the continuation of that friendly intercourse
with

* See page 2.

with Mr WESLEY's congregations which I have hitherto maintained.

Besides, many of those whom I love and honour, as the disciples and faithful ministers of the LORD, are all in an alarm; they fear it is now the *foundation* that is struck at; and consequently that the *superstructure* is in danger: Their fears have called them into action; they therefore, both from the *press* and the *pulpit*, think it their duty, without any respect of persons, to stand to those doctrines upon which their EVERLASTING ALL, they conceive, depends. Should I therefore continue to preach in those places, from whence such contrary doctrines are maintained, shall not I be guilty of confirming those whom I conceive to be in error, by apparently wishing them God-speed; and weakening the hands of others, who honestly stand up in the maintenance of truth?

Thus far have I troubled you with a simple narration of facts, to shew you that I do not hastily rush into the battle; to which also I have added some few reasons why I fear my future conduct towards Mr WESLEY must now wear a different aspect; unless it should happen, that that Gentleman should please, upon some future occasion, to declare himself less willing to give his sanction to those creeds which you make for him, than you are to compose them.

That what is above written may not appear like begging the question, I will now make some strictures

strictures principally upon your last performance, as I fear it is That which must prove the concluding bar of separation. This I pray GOD I may be enabled to do with meekness and judgment. I know there is no *argument* in *banter*, nor *conclusion* in *sarcasm*, nor *divinity* in a *sneer*: such weapons I wish totally to discard; they are *pitiful* even for the world, but they are *scandalous* when used by a Christian. No,

— *Non defensoribus istis*
Tempus eget. —

I hate such feeble aids, and will scorn to use them: they would defile my soul, and stab the cause I mean to maintain. The meek and dove-like disposition of CHRIST, I humbly hope, will teach me, while I write, to *pity*, not to *abuse*, the mistaken; and meekly to deliver my sentiments, without having recourse to the *low arts* of *slander* and *reflection*.

The Prophet ELIJAH indeed, to the worshippers of BAAL, or rather to the BAAL they worshipped, might use a language that had the appearance of a sarcastic turn; I will not, however, treat you as if I thought you a *Baalite*, although I may speak with *plainness*, yet further than this I *dare not* go. With the above precautions, I would take the liberty to begin with a few animadversions upon the *spirit* of your performance,

ance, and will then add some strictures upon the most *remarkable passages* of the performance itself.

The great impropriety of your manner of writing, will much more visibly appear, when it is considered to *whom* your piece is principally addressed; to the dear and honoured Mr SHIRLEY; one so *humane* in his disposition, so *moderate* in his principles, so *laborious* in his ministry, and so *exemplary* in his conversation. Surely such a worthy person should never have been treated in any other terms, than those of tenderness and respect.

That you had a right to make him the principal subject of your address, is undeniable. If he thought it his duty honestly to withstand the *Minutes* publickly at the Conference, you also had equal right to stand up in opposition to him, and defend with meekness those doctrines which you conceived to be truth. This, however, should have been your *ne plus ultra*. Though the above-mentioned Gentleman may differ widely from you in sentiment, you had no just right for *one sneer*, nor for the *least hint* of any *slandorous accusation*. How grievously you have transgressed in this respect, is obvious to those who can read with candour what you have published to the world.

But though you address yourself particularly to Mr SHIRLEY, what you have written in general is plainly intended for all those who cannot
join

join in with the principles of Mr WESLEY. All are *Antinomians* who assert that *salvation is finished*; all are to be *sneered at* for their *Crispian Orthodoxy*, who cannot believe your notion of a *second justification by works*.

Now, SIR, let me request you calmly to consider your method of treating us in the general, which, I think, when you have done, you will blush for the characters you have injured by the rashness and severity of your pen.

After having first dressed up Mr SHIRLEY according to your own fancy, and branded him with the opprobrious name of *Antinomian*, you place him at the head of a set of monsters invented by yourself: and after, having thus raised an hideous and unthought-of ghost, you remand it to the shades by your own spells and incantations of *banter* and *contempt*.

Finished salvation you represent as the *vilest Antinomianism*: from this principle you deduce for us doctrines which you know we *disown* and *detest*: you represent us as entirely setting aside the law, even as a rule of life, that we may live as lawless as we please; by putting words into our lips, as if it were our constant practice to ridicule *obedience* in the most flagrant manner.

Having thus blackened our principles, you next attempt to scandalise our practice: “ Upon
 “ *this doctrinal system, you say, we raise a tower of*
 “ *presumption, whence we bid defiance both to Law*
 “ and

“ and Gospel*. Yea, we may be hypocrites, drunk-
 “ kards, whoremongers, covetous Persons, fretful,
 “ impatient, ill-natured, proud Bigots, implacable
 “ Zealots, malicious Persecutors; who, NOTWITH-
 “ STANDING FAIR APPEARANCES OF GODLINESS,
 “ would raise disturbances even in heaven itself,
 “ were we admitted there.” And all this because
 “ you slanderously insinuate, that we affirm that
 “ CHRIST’S Sobriety, Chastity, Generosity, Modest-
 “ ness, &c. &c. will atone for our iniquities †;”
 though we practice them at pleasure. But, as if
 the above accusations were not sufficiently severe,
 you go on still further to inform us, that the ad-
 vocates for irresistible grace can curse, swear, get
 drunk, and be guilty of Idolatry, Incest, yea,
 Murder itself §. And as if your once accusing
 us of principles that tolerate even Murder, among
 other crimes, was not enough, you repeat it yet
 again, by directly charging us in the plainest
 terms with introducing the palliating excuse of
 the spots of God’s children, even for Adultery and
 Murder ||.

After having said so much as to place us, in a
 manner, even amongst Murderers, on account of
 our principles of grace, it really shocks and al-
 most disheartens me from following you any
 further; I will therefore now omit reminding
 you of the numberless sneers, taunts, and sarcasms,
 which so dreadfully decorate the whole of your per-

* Page 11.

§ Page 25.

† Page 9.

|| Page 69.

performance; they are nothing better than infernal terms of darkness; is is hateful to transcribe them; *let darkness be their doom.*

I cannot, however, conclude my remarks upon the virulent unchristian spirit in which your Letters are composed, without bringing to your review the concluding representation with which you finish your book: The * poor Calvinists are there arraigned at your fictitious bar, and after having first given a triumphant entry into glory to myriads of *those*, and *none but those*, that are *justified by their works*; the others, by myriads, are in return to feel the weight of God's everlasting frown; while all the vehemence of language, and of ill-natured satire are employed to paint them forth as holding the *most abominable tenets*, merely as a cloke for the *most atrocious hypocrisy*, and *bare-faced wickedness*. They need not *clothe the naked*, *feed the hungry*, *visit the sick*, and *imprisoned*; they were *full of hatred to their brethren*, *cheated their King and country*, *never mortified any of their corruptions*: in short, *they lived in the completest deadness to God*, and *wallowed in the foulest iniquity*; and all under the pretext of such a *strange notion of IMPUTATION*, as never entered into any one's brain but your own: and, persuading themselves that, as advocates for grace, they had liberty to go on in sin, and from allowed sin to glory, in order that they might shout the louder, *Free-grace, imputed Righte-*

* See Page 93, ad finem.

Righteousness, and Finished Salvation, to all eternity *. Thus you conclude this horrid scene, by sweeping us away with the besom of destruction, and consigning us over, in the strongest terms, by unnumbered millions, as Hypocrites, to hell.

Let me now beg you to descend from your imaginary judgment-seat, and to lay aside *banter* and *bravado*, in order to prepare for a few serious reflections. When you painted us in colours so odious and deformed, representing us as those who make the sovereignty of the Gospel a plea for the vilest abominations; for it falls upon all who do not hold a *second justification*, and who believe that CHRIST *finished the work which the Father gave him to do*; could you even suppose that what you wrote against us was true? If so, tell us fairly, Where did you ever hear such doctrines maintained as you charge upon us? Who was the person that first broached them? And where are his converts, who still assert that CHRIST'S feeding five thousand in the wilderness, is to be IMPUTED to others, though mercilefs, and covetous towards the poor? Where are they that ever think of making such a plea as follows, at the last day? "Instead of our giving
 " drink to the thirsty, though we often put our
 " bottle to those who are not thirsty, impute to
 " us thy turning water into wine at the marriage-
 " feast in *Cana*, and thy loud call in the last day
 " of

* See Page 93—102. John xvii. 4.

“ 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 IM-
 “ PUTE to us thy loving invitations to strangers;
 “ thy kind assurances of receiving all that come
 “ unto thee; thy comfortable promises of cast-
 “ ing out none, and of feeding them even with
 “ thy flesh and blood! We did not clothe the
 “ naked, as we had opportunity and ability;
 “ IMPUTE to us thy patient parting with thy
 “ seamless garment, for the benefit of thy *Mur-*
 “ *derers.* We did not visit sick-beds and prisons,
 “ we were afraid of catching the fever, especially
 “ the jail-distemper; but compassionately IM-
 “ PUTE to us thy visiting *JAIRUS’s* daughter and
 “ *PETER’s* wife’s mother, who lay sick of a fe-
 “ ver: and put to our account thy visiting pu-
 “ trifying *LAZARUS* in that most offensive prison,
 “ the grave. We did not dare to fast, but do
 “ thou IMPUTE to us thy fasting and continual
 “ abstinence, which will be enough to justify us
 “ ten times over. We hated private prayer,
 “ but IMPUTE to us thy love of that duty, and
 “ thy prayer that thou didst offer up upon the
 “ mountain all night. We have been hard to
 “ forgive, but IMPUTE to us thy forgiving the
 “ dying thief; and if that will not do, add the
 “ merit of that good saying of thine, *Forgive,*
 “ *and you shall be forgiven.* We have, &c. &c.”

But stop, SIR. I ask you yet again, Where
 and who are the persons against whom you thus
 vehe-

vehemently contend. I am fully assured you cannot produce even *one* of those who are advocates for free Grace, that do not detest such opinions. What then could be your reason for forming such abominable tenets, and fathering them upon others? Was there any argument in it? *No.* Could it be the result of love, candour, deliberation, or truth? *No.* Could even common honesty influence you to say such things? *No.*

But methinks I hear you say, The lives of many of the *Calvinists* are unbecoming the gospel of CHRIST. Supposing it should be granted (and may God amend them!) what will you get by this concession? Will *slander* reform them? For after all, you will never make it appear, that the above are their sentiments, though you have written them with so much confidence. Upon your next publication, therefore, let me first advise you, SIR, to consult the Decalogue, and learn there, that the character of your neighbour is too sacred to be trifled with.

Consider yet again, SIR, in what detestable colours you have pictured us before the world; there is scarce an abomination but what we are charged with; and our enemies triumph at the supposed discovery. You are the man, say they, that has been among the *Calvinists*, have found out their hypocrisy, and are now publishing against them. Numbers of them, to my knowledge, carry about your book in ill-natured triumph,

umph, and cast in our teeth as certain truth the *dreadful slanders* you have *invented*. In short, SIR, you have brought over us such a day of *blasphemy* and *rebuke* as we never felt before.

Such unfair and ungenerous treatment from your pen, I own, could little have been expected: Where, SIR, was that much-talked of *love* that can cover a multitude of evils? when through more than a hundred pages you unkindly take upon you to make such monstrous creeds, and put such vile expressions into the mouths of your supposed antagonists, as you know their souls must utterly abhor? And what end can be answered by it? unless that you might not only have the ungodly satisfaction of *scorning* at them yourself, but of rendering them odious and detestable to others? It is not, indeed, to be wondered at, that the Papists of old in their persecuting zeal at the burning of that worthy Martyr JOHN HUSS, should first dress him up, by painting upon him the resemblance of *devils* and their *imps*, to render him odious to a mob: but surely it is amazing that Mr FLETCHER should even treat those very people, many of whom he is constrained to acknowledge as the children of GOD, not only in a manner so unworthy of himself, but even in terms so void of truth.

But you will begin by this time to blame me in your mind, that I take no notice of any mollifying passages which you have inserted, though very sparingly, in behalf of some few *Calvinists*,
whom

whom you *pretend* greatly to respect, and at whose feet you say you are willing to sit; but who are these Calvinists whom you thus respect? The ministers of our *celebrated* pulpits, as you are pleased to call them, you condemn with a witness. You even charge it upon them, that *they speak more for sin, than against it* *; that they not only *licence*, but almost *plead for* the most enormous abominations in their hearers; whom, if possible, you represent as worse than their teachers †. Surely you cannot mean to express your willingness to sit at the feet of such persons as these! If so, what do you less than wish them God-speed; and so partake of their sin? But shall I suppose, in order to give you the utmost scope in my power, that though you have unmercifully condemned our *celebrated Calvinists*, yet there are some *more obscure* ones left, at whose footstool you are willing to take your seat. But, SIR, even after all, what false humility is this? If they are *Calvinists*, according to your dialect, they are *Antinomians*; and though you may apologise for them, that their conduct is better than others; of what advantage will that be to you? since it is not only what may be really blameable in their *practice*, but also their *principles* you have traduced. *Finished salvation*, the very essence of *Calvinism*, you have continually *scoffed at*, as the vilest heresy that ever was broached from beneath; you have stigmatised it with continual saeces, and most odious appella-

B

tions;

* Page 67.

† See Page 58—71.

tions ; called it, THE STALKING HORSE OF EVERY WILD RANTER * ; represented it, as *the Siren's song* of such as live in sin §. And can you conceive, that those very persons, the only foundation of whose hope you have continually placed in the most uncandid and ungenerous point of view, and sported with upon every turn, so contrary to the conduct of a friend, whose office should have been to have sought for the most favourable interpretations ; can you conceive, I say, that they can ever admit any of your expressions of regard in any other light but as words without meaning ?

While I am upon this subject, I cannot but remind you of the absurdities which you have of necessity fallen into, particularly in your mollifying *note* at the beginning of your book ||, which you introduce by begging “ not to be understood to “ level any part of these letters at your pious “ *Calvinist* brethren ;” when nine parts out of ten of them are levelled, with great severity, against the very doctrines that constitute them *Calvinists*. You then address them as *real children of God* : But how can that be ? When all *Calvinists* are *Antinomians* ; for all who deny a *second justification* by works, are but ONE STEP from the very centre of *Antinomianism* †. And can GOD's children be *Antinomians* ? God forbid !

You next lament the bad use that *Antinomians* make of their principles ; but what are their principles ?

* Page 82.

§ Page 71.

|| See Page 10.

† Page 2.

principles? Why *finished* and *unconditional* salvation, free grace and imputed righteousness. And what use do you yourself make of these principles? No very good one, I fear.—For do not you scoff at them continually, and represent them as the very vitals of *Antinomianism*? and to teach people to make a good use of bad principles, will be a hard task indeed. You then add, “I hope “ they (the *Calvinists*) will not be offended if I “ bear my testimony against a growing evil, which “ they have frequently opposed themselves.” If you mean the careless walk of *dead* professors, they certainly will not, but will love you for your pains; but if you mean the *growing evil of finished salvation*, from whence they derive all their happiness, “though it may be under the pretence “ of rebuking sin,” while, at the same time, you cut the very sinews of the Gospel, they will only regard you as taking away one evil, if possible, to establish a worse.

You next grant, that *Calvinists* guard the foundation against the Pharisees: *Finished salvation*, and *Electing love*, is their foundation. Surely you never mean to praise them for GUARDING THIS FOUNDATION; if so, how do you condemn yourself, when the whole of your cry is, DOWN WITH IT, DOWN WITH IT, EVEN TO THE GROUND?

These inconsistencies you yourself seem to be aware of as you proceed in your note, when you

apprise us, that “ *if in doing these GOOD OFFICES to the church, we find ourselves obliged to bear a LITTLE HARD (pardon my erratum, NOT a LITTLE hard) upon the peculiar sentiments of our opposite friends; let us do it in SUCH A MANNER, as NOT to break the bonds of peace and brotherly kindness.*” But what could you expect else, but war and contention, to be the result of your publishing in so severe and provoking a style?

In order to elucidate this the more, we will suppose, if you please, some *Calvinist* taking up his pen and writing against *your* tenets, in *your irritating style and spirit*: in this case he would have decorated *sinless perfection* in all those colours of *ridicule and contempt* with which you have painted *finished salvation*; and would have treated your *second justification* as the essence of Popery, with much more propriety, than you have treated *Calvinism* as the essence of *Antinomianism*; and lastly, he would have deduced such conclusions from your tenets in general, as would have *filled you with horror, and made your very blood run cold*, all the while sneering at the WESLEAN, as you have done at the CRISPIAN gospel. Now can you suppose that such a treatise as this would have been likely to have done a GOOD OFFICE *to the church*, or to have been written in *such a temper, as NOT to break the bonds of peace and brotherly love*? But has Mr FLETCHER

CHER

CHER done lefs against the doctrines of Grace, and against the professors of them ?

Some *Calvinists*, I am constrained to own, have degraded their pens with this unchristian style : their example was *bad* : and as I think it is too obvious that you have followed it, however sharply for the future you may be dealt with, I think you will have now no cause to complain.

You have as yet been treated with the utmost deference and respect by the *Calvinists*. The two publications that have hitherto been addressed to you, have been worded with all the humanity and tenderness that could be conceived ; but alas ! your returns of love have been amply specified in this your *second* publication : and I am bold to say it, that when our days are over, posterity shall declare, that while the advocates for *grace* address their opponents in meekness and humility, the advocates for *perfection* and *justification by works*, betray their own cause by returning their answer by no better arguments than what *banter* and *abuse* can furnish.

It is not to be wondered at, if it should now appear that you have tired their patience ; I wish and pray that they may still keep a gospel-temper : but even a trampled worm will turn about, and (in its manner) complain. God only knows how greatly we have been injured by you ; and oppression will certainly force a cry. I would not, however, mean to condemn you for those

few lines of candour that may appear interspersed in your book, as they are the lovely risings of the original sentiments of a *quondam tender and benevolent* Mr FLETCHER; but would only shew you how inconsistent they are with the present, *quantum mutatus, severe and censorious Vindicator*. Let me also just hint to you, the very great impropriety of your style in another point of view. The subjects you at present principally plead for, are those of *perfection* and a *final justification* by works: and you know, SIR, unless religion dwells powerfully upon the heart, and amends the tempers, we may indeed be *professors*, but we cannot be *possessors* of true Grace. What then should be the style of those that hope to be *sinless* here below, and afterwards expect, agreeably to a passage in the *Minutes*, when literally translated, *to be rewarded according to the MERIT of works?* Surely nothing less than the greatest pity and tenderness, the most universal candour and benevolence, the divinest meekness and compassion, the most unfeigned love, patience, and forbearance, can ever be reconciled to such a profession of *merit* and *perfection*. Had this been Mr FLETCHER'S style, he would not have given me room to have quoted that passage for his consideration: *If I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am PERFECT, it shall also prove me PERVERSE, Prov. ix. 20.* Let him, however, and all who deal in controversy for the future,

future, learn, that the language of *contempt*, is the language of the *proud*; and that the language of *ridicule*, can never be acknowledged as the language of the *wise*.

In your next publication, therefore, which it is whispered is soon to come out, upon the *notion of perfection*, let me sum up this part of my remarks, by praying you to consider, that our characters now lie bleeding before you; we smart severely under the cruelty of your pen; and complain loudly against your great injustice: you have given us up to be trampled upon by the world, who, from your *pretended* discoveries, look upon us all as hypocrites detected under the mask of religion. If you think us in error, for CHRIST's sake, *sneer* at us no more; though it may be *sport* to you, it is, in a manner, *death* to us. Learn the more christian lesson to pity us, and pray for us, and try to set us right in love. You may indeed tell us, that you fear our notion of *finished salvation* will lead us into *unboldness*; and we will heartily thank you, if you would in meekness guard us against so dangerous a rock; we then, in humility, will return our answer, that we conceive your well-meant fears are groundless, since we by no means intend to set aside, or in the least supersede, the absolute necessity of the most universal and devoted *obedience*, by pleading, that the *finished salvation* which we contend for, does not provide for sanctification

in time, as well as glorification to eternity. And if we cannot be convinced by the arguments you may advance in favour of *perfection*, do not again tell the world, that we *plead for sin*, and *make a covenant with iniquity!* for indeed, SIR, it is not true. Instead of that, O that I could prevail with you to take the christian part, to heal those wounds which you have made, by honestly confessing the truth on our behalf!

Thus, SIR, have I been free in making my remarks, in the simplicity of my heart, upon the temper in which your publication is composed: If I have, any way *offended* you, while I have *defended* others, I am sure it was not done for the sake of any ill-natured pleasure whatever. I have known what it is to feel pain almost incessantly, and that too pretty severely, from different crosses, for now above these ten years. I pray that what I have felt myself, may make me cautious of giving the least degree of unnecessary concern to any other person upon earth. This makes me really tremble while I begin my remarks upon some passages in your book, lest those glaring inconsistencies, and palpable mistakes, which I conceive to be therein contained, should provoke my corrupted nature to write any thing unworthy of the humility and meekness of the Gospel.

Here, however, I shall be short: A more able and worthy pen than mine has engaged to controvert

trovert these matters with you before the world : What I therefore shall further add, will be only to deliver my own soul, in bearing my feeble testimony with others against the sentiments you maintain.

Of all the considerations in the world, none can be more important than *how* a sinner is finally to be accepted before the bar of God. This you affirm to be BY WORKS; this we affirm to be ONLY BY GRACE. And though the disputes of the Conference can be of very little consequence to truth itself, as it must continue invariably the same; you must, nevertheless, out of respect to those who have stood up for truth, permit me to observe to you the very great contradictions you have fallen into in matters concerning the Conference, and what was consequent thereupon.

You tell us, in the beginning of your book, that neither Mr WESLEY, nor any of his preachers, by signing the *Declaration*, ever intended to, and in fact ever did, renounce the doctrine of a *second justification* by works*. You wave the subject for a considerable time, and then revive it at the conclusion of your *first* Letter, where you attempt something that you call a *proof* that the *Declaration* and the above mentioned doctrine are both of them consonant with each other. And I am sorry to say it, that if *sarcastic turns,*
bold

bold assertions, and unmeaning triumph, will stand for argument, you have gained the day.*

Common sense can see into the meaning of *common terms*; else all language is uselefs and ridiculous. Those persons, who have not humility enough to give up what is directly false, by their vindicating error, and offering violence to the slightest degree of reason, do more injury to themselves than to the persons with whom they contend. You have astonished me, and many more besides, at your *reconciling* attempts: it is hard disputing with those that are not open to conviction. To cut matters short, I shall make bold to present you here with a harmony extracted from the *Minutes, Declaration, and Vindicator*, and make a few remarks, as I go along.

• Page 27, 28.

HARMONY

HARMONY between the MINUTES, DECLARATION, and the VINDICATOR.

MINUTES.	DECLARATION.	VINDICATOR.
<p>Concerning <i>Justification</i>. I. "Is not this SAL- " VATION BY WORKS" [the Answer is Affirma- " tive] "Not by MERIT " of works but by works " as a CONDITION." [It is then salvation by works, though the merit of works is here absolutely denied.]</p>	<p>Concerning <i>Justification</i>. I. "Whereas the " Minutes have been " understood to favour " Justification by " WORKS, we declare " we had NO SUCH " meaning." Again, "We AB- " HOR the doctrine " of Justification by " WORKS, as a MOST " PERILOUS and " ABOMINABLE doc- " trine."</p>	<p>Concerning <i>Justification</i>. I. "In the day of " judgment thou " shalt be justified " by works." [And I suppose there can be no difference made between sal- vation by WORKS, the word used in the Mi- nutes, and justifica- tion by works the words used in the Declaration, and by the Vindicator. Let then common sense declare, are not these contradictions?]</p>
<p>II. "We have received " it as a maxim, That a " man is to do nothing IN " ORDER TO JUSTIFICA- " TION: nothing can be " more false. Whoever " desires to find favour " with God, should cease " from evil, and learn to " do well; whoever re- " pents, should do work " meet for repentance; " and if this be not IN " ORDER to find favour " with God, what does " he do them for?" [The short is, every person is to do good WORKS, in or- der to be justified by them, else, says the Querist. "What does he do them " for?"] Again, "Every " RELIEVER works FOR " as well as FROM life, i.e. for working he hopes to get eternal life, which I suppose is the life here meant.</p>	<p>II. "WE SOLEMN- " LY DECLARE IN " THE SIGHT OF " GOD, that we have " no trust or confidence " but in the ALONE " MERITS of our " Lord and Saviour " JESUS CHRIST for " JUSTIFICATION or " Salvation, either in " life, death, or at the " day of judgment," [which when hon- estly abridged, a- mounts to thus much respecting a second justification,] "We have no trust " but in the alone " merits of our Lord " and Saviour JESUS " CHRIST for justifi- " cation at the day " of judgment."</p>	<p>II. "I DEFY YOU " EVER to produce " out of Mr WES- " LEY'S Declaration " one single word or " tittle denying or ex- " cluding a second justifi- " cation by works;". Again, if they had denied a second justifi- cation by works, "I would have born " my legal testimony " against their An- " tinomian error ." Here again, as above, "in the day " of judgment, thou " shalt be justified by " thy WORKS."</p>

• Page 28. § Idem.
|| Page 2.

MINUTES.

DECLARATION.

VINDICATOR.

Query by

Query for

Mr OLIVERS,

The *Vindicator*.

Can a person who expects to be justified by his own good works at the day of judgment, honestly say, that he "has no trust but in the alone merits of Christ in the day of JUDGMENT?"

If a man expects to be justified at the day of judgment by his good works, may not such a person have trust and confidence in those good works? If so, how can such say, they have no trust or confidence but in the alone merits of Christ at the day of judgment?

Concerning MERIT.

I. We above saw that the merit of Works was absolutely denied. Now we shall see it as absolutely affirmed.

"As to merit itself, of which we have been so dreadfully afraid, we are rewarded according to our works, yea, because of our works; how differs this from for the sake of our works? How does this differ from *secundum merita operum*, or as our works deserve?"

[After several deductions he asks the question about merit, and answers it; He "cannot split this hair. There is no difference. It is there fore plain merit."

Concerning MERIT.

I. "Our works have no part in meriting or purchasing our salvation from first to last, either in whole or in part."

Concerning MERIT.

I. The *Vindicator*, in his first publication, dwells much upon that passage in the *Minutes*. "Not by the merit of works," insisting strongly that Mr *W.* renounces MERIT: when he comes to that passage, "We are rewarded according to the merit of works," after having spoken upon merit, he as plainly pleads for this more refined merit, *i. e.* making the graces that are in us, *merit*, as he before directly pleaded against it.

See also what he says for *merit* in his quotation from *BAXTER*, in his second publication, from a bad criticism upon the word *αξιος*, which more properly means *meet* or *fit*.

MINUTES.

II. [We have above seen SALVATION by works asserted in one proposition, and the doctrine of the Merit of works maintained in another, therefore when both are brought together we get this doctrine out of them, TOTIDEM VERBIS, "Salvation by the MERIT of WORKS."] Again, "We know how all that are convinced of sin undervalue themselves in every respect : [Strong terms, plainly indicating VALUE ; and how much short is this of MERIT in the creature ?]"

DECLARATION.

II. [Let the words of the Declaration still be remembered,] "Our works have no part in meriting or purchasing our Salvation, either in WHOLE or in PART from first to LAST."

THE VINDICATOR.

II. In his first publication he tells us roundly, that "the Redeemer is much exalted by the doctrine of the merit of good works † : " and they that deny this, the Vindicator says, are running into a Popish Error. He here, however, means the meritoriousness of grace in us, the very doctrine of Trent. — Let Protestants, however, consider how they can merit in themselves by the free gifts of another.

† Page 73, 75.

Thus, SIR, have I finished my *Harmony* : and does it not appear, that Mr WESLEY, according to custom, contradicts himself : that you contradict the *Declaration*, and that the *Declaration* contradicts you BOTH ? Nor can I think that you can prove any of the interpretations to be false, which I have given on this subject. And now, let me advise you to read over what you have written upon this head once again ; and judge for yourself, if such vast assurance, and such high-flying triumph, were not a little premature.

Nor

Nor can you say here, as you have said in other places, that we may as well make PETER contradict PAUL, and PAUL contradict PETER : No, SIR, they harmonize completely, and there is no proving the contrary ; but it is obvious as the day, that the *Minutes* no more harmonize with the *Declaration*, than the *Declaration* harmonizes with the *Vindicator*.

Thus also you see, that by vindicating Mr WESLEY in all his inconsistencies you become inconsistent yourself. That Gentleman, it is notorious, has been a proverb for his contradictions, for above these Thirty years together. And if You should proceed in the path that you are now in, what must you expect, but to fall into the like condemnation with your friend ?

And here also, let me assure you, that it is no hasty prejudice against Mr WESLEY that makes me hint these things ; indeed, SIR, he was one whom I honoured above many ; multitudes can bear me witness how I have pleaded for him, at all times, as far as ever it has been in my power ; and made the tenderest excuses for him, in those things in which I conceived him to err. Truth, however, is too solemn to be parted with for the sake of friendship with any. Had not Mr WESLEY's *Minutes*, and your Vindication of them, shaken the very foundation of grace and mercy, from whence I have all my hope, no smaller differences would ever have availed to lessen him in my esteem.

Waving

Waving now all further disputes concerning matters of the Conference, let us proceed to a few considerations of the subject itself, which has been the principal cause of controversy amongst us; viz. the doctrine of a *second justification* by works.

Here, however, I find it difficult to understand you; at one time you speak much of *merit* and *claiming rewards*; then again your language is more modest, as you in other places seem to deny merit, and only talk of being justified by the *evidences of good works*. But though you are glaringly inconsistent in this respect, thus much you seem to vindicate throughout, that whether these works are *meritorious* or *evidential*, yet a man is to be justified before the bar of God, a SE-COND time by his own good works. Had you indeed but soberly maintained, agreeable to the Declaration, and the sentiments of thousands whom you must acknowledge as the excellent of the earth, that though the *whole* cause of our salvation from *first to last*, either in *life, death, or at the day of judgment*, is *all of mere grace and mercy*, through the *alone everlasting atonement of the Redeemer*; yet when the LORD shall come to judge the world in righteousness, He will applaud that in his people which was done through faith in his name, by suffering their obedience to appear as a *declarative proof* of the reality of their faith; had you maintained, I say, no more than this, you would have asserted a truth, that no sober-minded person could have contradicted, and made all those

those scriptures harmonize which you have now put in direct opposition to each other.

But when you take upon you to exclude faith (and consequently the object it apprehends, at the final day) by making the whole of our justification to depend upon a righteousness of our own; when you insist upon it, agreeably to those strange assertions in the *Minutes*, which you vindicate throughout, that *we are REWARDED BECAUSE OF our works*; yea, *FOR the SAKE of our works*; yea, *on account of the MERIT of our works*; is it not enough to put *Sion* in alarm, and to provoke her messengers to beware lest they should be spoiled of their consolations, and everlasting hope?

And how confident are you that you have this doctrine from Scripture! With the authority of a Dictator you transcribe passage after passage, and yet give us very little more than your own *mandamus* to believe them, as proofs of your assertion. We first, however, must examine if they be any thing to the purpose, before we give up the cause that lies so near our hearts: we will now instance a few of those texts which you have collected. “*Not every one that says unto me, LORD, LORD, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father, which is in heaven, Matt. vii. 21.* And what is this more than a description of those that are to be saved? I cannot find that this in the least hints,
that

that for the sake of DOING we are to be saved. Similar to this passage is that, "*without holiness no man shall see the Lord,*" Heb. xii. 14. This you dwell much upon: But does it in the least insinuate that holiness justifies us? Again, "*Be ye therefore doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves,*" James i. 22. And what is the comment, which common sense will put upon this passage? Why, that they, who are not obedient to the faith they profess, are self-deceivers. And what is this to the purpose, respecting a second justification, and the merit of works? Just about as much as what we read in *Exod. xvi. 36. Now an omer is the tenth part of an ephab.*

The next passage I shall mention, you frequently quote with a vast air of triumph; and in one place put it all in capitals*; "*Not the HEARERS of the law are just before GOD, but the DOERS shall be justified,*" Rom. ii. 13. This certainly proves, that *the doers of the law shall be justified.* But the place which this text stands in, is the apostle's introductory argument with the Jews against the possibility of salvation by the law, the *doers* of which shall *be justified*, but the breakers of it *condemned*; from whence it follows, that justification must be sought by faith in the Lord JESUS CHRIST. As this is evidently the connection in which the words are found, they can answer no other purpose in the dispute, but to establish my side of the question, by utterly overthrowing yours.

C

Another

Another passage, which you produce upon this head, I think will appear better in its old dress, as a proof for *Purgatory*, than for your doctrine of a *second justification* by works: “*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 †.*” And if this text is to be understood as relating to a final judgment, who that reads the Bible, denies but that every man’s works shall be examined as a proof of his faith, and that upon their evidence the judge will pass sentence; or, in other words, though works have *not the least to do in justifying our persons*, yet that they will appear to the justifying that faith as sound by which alone we are to be saved?

One text however, (*Rev. xxii. 14.*) which you have brought upon this subject, I must own, upon a first perusal, perplexed me not a little, till looking into the original, I found the mistake was in the translation: “*Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a RIGHT,*” ἡ ἐξουσία (should it not have been) POWER, PRIVILEGE, OR AUTHORITY, “*to the tree of life?*” And if we may interpret the apostle by himself concerning the phrase of *doing GOD’s commandments*, that text in *1. John iii. 23.* will more fully clear up the subject in debate; “*This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son JESUS CHRIST.*” What then is the conclusion?

To

† 1 Cor. iii. 13.

TO BELIEVE is the great New Testament command of GOD. They that believe *will* and *must* obey ;—*upon believing*, not *for obeying*, they are initiated into all the new-covenant blessings in time, and shall *not from merit*, but *from grace*, have *power*, *privilege*, or *authority*, through their Surety, to partake of the tree of life in eternity.

While I am venturing upon a few criticisms, permit me also to remind you of another passage (though not immediately to this present purpose) which you have grossly mistaken, by not consulting the original. Page 62 you blame the *Calvinists* for not exhorting their hearers, like PETER, *Acts* ii. 40. TO SAVE THEMSELVES (which you put in capitals) *from this untoward generation* ; when you yourself are not a little to blame for transcribing a passage so differently worded from the general tenor of scripture, without first referring to the Greek Testament ; had you done this, you would have found, that there is no *save themselves* in the case : the verb in the original is passive *σωθητε*, *be ye saved*. Let the context also illustrate this still farther : Thousands were pricked to the heart, by the apostle's sermon ; they ask *what they shall do* ? doubtless meaning, *to be saved*. The apostle directs them immediately to JESUS for salvation ; and it would have been strange indeed if in the next words after, he had directed them to SAVE THEMSELVES : a language so glaringly inconsistent as this, would have ill become the mouth of inspiration. No : the command is still pure Gospel, perfectly

consonant with what was spoken before ; “ *be ye
 “ saved from this untoward generation, by the
 “ power of that salvation which is manifested in
 “ this JÉSUS, whom we now preach unto you,
 “ who are pricked to the heart, and know that
 “ ye cannot save yourselves.”*”

One passage, however, among others, one would really think you meant to quote against yourself ; *Rev. xiv. 13.* “ *Blessed are the dead that die in the
 “ LORD ; (their blessedness then arises from their
 “ dying in the LORD) yea, saith the Spirit, that
 “ they may rest from their labours, and their WORKS
 “ do follow them,”* not go before them, as things that they did in order to justification, as the author of the *Minutes* expresses himself, and as his *Vindicator* would here insinuate : but follow after, to prove that they were in that LORD, whose prerogative alone it is to justify the ungodly. I think, therefore, the conclusion is fair ; sinners are justified ONLY by being in the LORD, and not by the WORKS that follow after.

Were I to go on and follow you through all the passages which you quote in defence of a second justification by works, I should soon transgress the bounds of conciseness I propose : I shall therefore conclude the examination of your proofs upon this head, with what you call *your concluding testimonies from two Kings and two Apostles.*

The one you urge from *Eccles. xii. 13, 14.*
 “ *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter ;
 Fear God, and keep his commandments, for this*
 “ *is*

“ is the whole (duty) of man : for God shall bring every work into judgment, whether it be good or bad.” The other, I suppose, you mean to collect from *Matt. xxv. 41.* *They that have done good, shall go into everlasting life; and they that have done evil, into everlasting punishment.* But what do either of these texts prove more than has been granted before? The one passage indeed asserts, that we are to be accountable for our actions; and what does the other more than characterize those that are to be saved? But is it possible for you, or is it within the reach of any LOGICIAN in the world, to collect a sense that at all resembles, I must say, those proud expressions, of being rewarded *BECAUSE of, for the SAKE of, or ACCORDING to the MERIT of our works?* No, SIR, tho’ our works may appear to justify the righteousness of God in the decisive day, yet sure I am, that nothing will do in point of salvation, but *looking for the mercy of our Lord JESUS CHRIST* unto eternal life, *Jude 21.*

A bad cause, is frequently forced to put up with bad arguments; else surely you would have adopted somewhat more conclusive than what you here make use of, to sum up the whole.

When St JAMES concludes, that *a man is justified by works, and not by faith only*; this justification you interpret as referring to the final day, against every appearance of reason; since it is obvious beyond a doubt, that the only justification here meant, is a *justification in time.* RAHAB was

justified by works; that is, her works proved her faith to be genuine, *at the time when she received the spies.* In the same sense was ABRAHAM justified, *when he offered up his son ISAAC*: so that all that can be gathered from this passage of St JAMES, appears to be, that RAHAB and ABRAHAM were justified in a *declarative* sense; that is, declared to be true believers, by such genuine fruits and evidences of the soundness of their faith.

Proceed we now to your last testimony upon this head: this you collect from 1 Cor. vii. 19. "*Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but the keeping of the commandments of God.*" That this passage proves that no externals in religion will avail, and that those who boast of their privileges, while they live in disobedience, are deceiving themselves, no one can deny; but how you came to hit upon this text as a proof of justification in any shape whatever, must be left to those to discover who are *curious at invention.* To me, however, it appears, that this passage, as well as many others you have quoted upon the subject, as proofs of your doctrine of a *second justification* by works, would equally as well prove for Cardinal BELLARMINE *the supremacy of the Pope.*

And yet all the way throughout, how egregiously do you triumph? Page 2. you have these words; "Neither you, Reverend SIR, nor any divine in the world, have, I presume,

" a

“ a right to blot out these words from the sacred records.” Indeed, SIR, we never did think we had any such right : but if we had a mind to triumph in return, we could give you our answer, “ That we have equally as good right to blot them out of the Bible, as you had so grossly to misrepresent them.”

But what could influence you to affirm, as in page 9. that this doctrine is agreeable to the sentiments of all moderate *Calvinists*? For how can this be? Can justification by works be consonant with the opinions of those, who look upon their salvation wholly to depend upon the purpose of God according to election, through the vicarious sufferings of the Redeemer, without any respect to what may be in them? And whatever you may think of its recommending itself to every man's conscience, to us it appears the *most frightful notion ever was invented*, and your attempts to propagate it make us conceive it to be our duty thus publickly to withstand you.

But Mr WHITEFIELD, you say, was for a *second justification* by works, and you give us what you call a proof of it. Thus that dear, bold, and honest champion for *free grace, electing love, and finished salvation*, is saddled with a creed that sends its votaries to gain salvation at the final day by a *righteousness of their own, entirely independent of the righteousness of CHRIST*: and all the proof we have for it, is, that he used to say, “ he should rise as a witness against his hearers, or his hear-

“ers against him, in the day of the LORD; he to
 “give account for his preaching, and they for
 “their hearing.”

Suffer me now to drop some serious exhortations upon this subject, before we proceed.

One error seldom comes unattended by another. Ignorance of the extent and spirituality of the Law must certainly produce false conceptions of the glory and efficacy of the Gospel. God, out of CHRIST, is revealed in scripture *as a consuming fire*; his nature being infinitely pure, he cannot behold the least iniquity, but with everlasting *detestation* and *abhorrence*. His law is himself, *boly beyond all conception*; it binds every creature, capable of obeying, under its *eternal dominion*. He can sooner cease to *be*, than to allow the least failure in the least degree; nor can any time change him, or erase transgression from his *eternal mind*; or cause him to dispense with that law, which is *boly and eternal* as himself. This is the *jealous and tremendous* God that revealed himself from *Sinai*; this is the law against which we have all been offenders, for *all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*. And in consequence of this, the oath of God is gone out against us, that we shall surely die. More fallen we cannot be, more subjected to his curse, or more destitute of his image. How then are we to be saved? Surely, in no other way but by mere mercy, thro' that grand atonement brought in by Him that is equal with God. So far perhaps you say we are agreed: I wish we may, but

I fear we are not. I never yet knew one that pleaded for what is very falsely called *perfection*, but who seemed to me, in a measure, a stranger to the Law, and to the extent of its demands. Pardon me, if I say you yourself, SIR, seem not a little defective in this knowledge, by some expressions you have adopted. In your first publication, you make mention of the *innocent infirmities incident to flesh and blood* * ; in your second performance, you talk of *breaking the Law in the most trifling points* †. Mr WESLEY, throughout the whole of his publications, is continually making distinctions of sins: and what can be the meaning of that strange expression in the *Minutes*, which is certainly the foundation of every other error they contain, *We know how ALL that are convinced of sin undervalue themselves in every respect?* And after all refinements that may be used to mollify such a sentiment, what less can be understood by it than some worthiness in the creature? And what will this bring us to, but, more or less, a denial of the total apostasy of our souls from God? Whereas had we but clear views of the exceeding holiness of the Law, and of the eternal vengeance it pronounces upon every failure, instead of ever attempting to make the Law bend to what we call our *innocent infirmities, trifling failures*; instead of ever thinking it possible for us to *undervalue ourselves in ANY, much less in EVERY respect*, how should we sink into the very dust

* Page 12.

† Page 69.

dust before the LORD! How should we be constrained to cry out with JOB, *Behold I am vile!* Instead of adopting those haughty notions, recorded in the *Minutes*, of being rewarded for the *SAKE of our works*, and as *our works* DESERVE: How should we confess that our best performances never can stand the scrutiny of the holy Law? How should we own ourselves impure, even in our purest moments; and after having laboured with the zeal of Martyrs, should we not be compelled, if we know ourselves, at the last gasp to wrap ourselves up (pardon the expression) in the *finished salvation* of JESUS CHRIST, and thus cry for mercy and forgiveness?

From these considerations, let us once more take a short but solemn review of your *second justification by works*. When the sinner is arraigned before the last tribunal, how is he to escape? Not by faith, you repeatedly tell us; but *by a righteousness of his own*. But has he a righteousness *perfect as the Law*? For it is awfully recorded, that *not one jot or tittle shall pass away, until all be fulfilled*. Can you, therefore, suppose it possible for sinners, breakers of the Law, to gain glory by being obedient to *pieces* of that Law? Can the God of justice thus connive at our iniquities, by passing by, as you express yourself, our *innocent infirmities* and *trifling breaches*? To stand, as you maintain it, upon the footing of merit, to claim rewards for graces that are in us, which we have defiled and abused by our own corruptions, when every

every sin at once deserves everlasting banishment from the presence of God, can justice itself bear to stand by and see such transgressors; and not take vengeance, as in a moment, without an adequate atonement? And will you say, that the righteousness which is of faith, is not to be pleaded before the bar of God? Will you affirm, that our judge is to lay aside all the mercies of a Redeemer, and at once weigh every sinner by turns in the balance of the sanctuary, according to the standard of his holy law alone? This, SIR, is your doctrine of justification by works. And now let me ask you, Dare you trust in it for salvation yourself? Which of your duties that ever you have performed, have not been abundantly tinged with sin? What graces and mercies have you received, and yet how poor have been your best returns of love? Do not you hate, as it were, your sinful self on account of your vile ingratitude? How much more, out of CHRIST, must you be hateful to God? Are you not an *unprofitable* servant from first to last? And have you not reason to repent, and abhor yourself in dust and ashes? Have you loved enough? Have you prayed enough? Have you believed enough? However you may have gotten into the doctrine of sinners *undervaluing themselves* of late, I cannot conceive that you have so far lost all your former sentiments, as not to be willing to acknowledge with me, without the aids of feigned humility, that we are both guilty of much more than the above.

Believe

Believe me then, SIR, that it is out of no desire of *pleading for sin*, that we thus oppose your doctrine, however unkindly you charge it upon us. No; we are convinced in ourselves that we are utterly undone; and we are certainly assured, that if we are not saved at the final day *only by CHRIST*, we never shall be saved at all. If grace and mercy follow us not to the last, our best obedience will sink us into hell.

Suffer me now to make a few animadversions upon your doctrine of *sinless perfection*. We have before been observing the extent and spirituality of the Law; can any thing be perfection that falls in the least degree short of this law? Yes, say the Papists; and, if I mistake not, the Quakers with them, (and I would by no means have Mr FLETCHER in their company) for God has provided a milder law, called by some the *remedial law*, by others the *law of love*, as if different from the law revealed from *Sinai*. But can God give two transcripts of his own invariable image? Can He give two likenesses of himself? This, SIR, then seems to me the foundation of your error, you bend GOD's law to what you call our *innocent infirmities*; as if God could lose his power of commanding, because we have lost our power of obeying. And the consideration of these things has driven some people from the use of the term *sinless perfection*, to take up with what they conceive to be the milder expression, of *christian perfection*. But if the perfection here meant be a perfection in the creature,

creature, it must, after all, be an entire conformity to the holy law of God ; else this much-boasted perfection is but an *imperfect perfection* ; which brings up such a contradiction in terms as proves itself in the end no perfection at all, and at once reduces all those who are mounted, as it were, upon the pinnacle of the temple, from all their mighty acquirements of the *second blessing, third state, kingdom of the holy Ghost, &c. &c.* quite to the level of other poor believers, who have no confidence but as breakers of the Law through the mercy of the Redeemer.

And here, SIR, I might retaliate, and treat you, as you have treated us : but I forbear. Let me only remind you of the injury you have done us in speaking of the law, *page 11*, you put these words into the mouths of the poor bespattered Calvinists : “ MOSES is buried : 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.” Now, SIR, we grant, that *in point of justification* we have nothing to do with the law ; and, so far from esteeming it as a covenant of *Life and Salvation*, we view it as held forth as *the letter that killeth ; the ministration of death and condemnation* * ; and, as justly taking the part of a sin-avenging God, we are compelled to fly from it unto CHRIST ; and we glory in it as our New-Testament privilege, that “ we are dead to the
 “ law through the body of CHRIST, that we may
 “ be

* 2 Cor. iii. 7, 8, 9.

“*be married to another.*” And though we boldly say, that *we are not under the law as a covenant of works*, yet we never were so ignorant and daring, as you represent us, contrary to the express words of scripture, as to say, *We are not under the law to CHRIST, as a rule of life.* No, SIR, we own the law with all its demands to be *holy, just and good*; which we desire to *reverence in our inmost souls*: And GOD forbid that *we should make void the law through that faith*, which we know is revealed *universally to establish it*, without the *least abatement of its demands*! And had you yourself been of the same opinion with those whom you *slander*, you had not talked of *trifling failures*, and the *innocent infirmities incident to flesh and blood.*

No further than the next page you invent for us the following sentiment respecting the law, which you palm upon us as our own: “*We Orthodox (a miserable sneer, SIR!) hold, that living faith can never die:*” Thus much indeed we do hold, unless the *living GOD should die first*; for it is written, *Because I live, ye shall live also*, John xiv. 19. but we, *Orthodox*, do not maintain what you further add, that “*this living faith is consistent not only with the omission of good works, but with the commission of the MOST HORRID CRIMES:*” No, SIR, *we Orthodox hold just the contrary*; that *living faith is only consistent with living works and universal obedience*; and though they are scripture instances that you here seem to hint at, namely, those of *LOT, DAVID, PETER, &c.* and you will have

have a hard matter to prove they had not living faith, though they did transgress; yet, *we Orthodox* still maintain, that their practice was not consistent, but INCONSISTENT with their profession, which should have taught them better. Here then you have *slandered* us yet again: GOD give you grace to repent of it, and us patience meekly to bear it!

You scarce write a page in any part of your book without some unjust reflections upon our sentiments concerning the law: To follow you through all your accusations on this point would be endless. One passage more, however, which seems to me to shine conspicuous among the rest for *calumny and falshood*,

———— *Velut inter ignes*
Luna minores ————

shall be the last that we will notice: This we extract from page 56. “*How many intimate, that CHRIST has fulfilled all righteousness, that we might be the children of GOD, with HEARTS FULL OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS?*” *How many!* There are a generation then it seems of these *black blasphemers*, who, however justly they may maintain that CHRIST *has fulfilled all righteousness*, yet produce a *very vile deduction*, that CHRIST has done this work for them *in order that they may have HEARTS FULL OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS*; and still arrogate to themselves the title of being *the children of GOD*, amidst all their wickednesses:

wickednesses : And as there are *so many of them*, it will be no hard task in you to produce but a *few of them*, who thus affirm, that they may *continue in sin that grace may abound* ; and I will then join with you in saying, *that their damnation will be just*.

And now, SIR, let me tell you, that all *truly converted Calvinists* dread such doctrine as you here set forth : They know that JESUS died to “ *purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works* ;” who will *honour* the law, and *love* its demands ; and are grieved at their short-comings. And though the lives of some may be unworthy of their profession, yet it is equally as unbecoming in you to scandalize their principles on this account, which you have notoriously done (instance the story you have sent forth to the world in your first publication, *page 22.*) as it would be ungenerous and unfair in us to treat your notion of perfection with nothing but abuse. by exposing to the world *some*, from the list of its lewd professors, or by descanting upon the conduct of its *quondam* grand hero, the *famous* GEORGE BELL.

No further than in the next page, you severely represent us as “ *standing in direct opposition to CHRIST himself* :” This is a hard accusation, and I trust the hearts and souls of many of us say, *May God forbid* ! You bring Him however to decide the controversy. We own Him as our Lord and Master, and by his decision will we gladly stand. And now, SIR, let us hear it : “ *Think*
“ *not*

"not that I am come to destroy the law, or the pro-
 "phets; 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." True, SIR,
 and may God sink into our souls, by the power
 of his Spirit, the divinest and most solemn holi-
 ness and respect unto his commands that sinners
 can receive! May no *trifling failures*, no *innocent*
infirmities be allowed or pleaded for, no not for a
 moment, by those who expect to be justified by
 free grace alone; but may *every* the *most darling*
lust, that may be found working within us, be
 brought to the cross, and there be *crucified* with
 the Redeemer, without the least *mercy* or *compassion*!

As we proceed, we find ten pages which en-
 tertain us with ten *objections*, which you first raise,
 and then answer. I once thought to have consid-
 ered them each by themselves, but upon a second
 perusal of them, as I find the style to be so *egre-*
giously high, the following remark may be as much
 as they *deserve*: Had I been present as a third
 person, really to have heard the dispute you have
 feigned, as hating the thoughts of being present
 at a *fray*, I should have been in haste to have
 escaped from their companies, lest from *words*, so
 exceedingly *sneering* and *abusive*, they should soon
 have come to *blows*.

A few observations, however, upon this *furious*
disputation, I cannot persuade myself to omit.

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You

You have, some lines not far from the bottom of page 24, too dreadful to be transcribed, being *vastly* in the style of *certain godly lampoons* * of *famous memory*, formerly sent forth from the *Foundery*, intituled, *Hymns upon GOD's everlasting Love*; and wherever I find a paragraph worded in such a style as is there set forth, I cannot only esteem it as *unworthy of an answer*, but even as BENEATH CONTEMPT.

We shall now consider how it is that you would prove that the thief upon the cross was *justified by good works*: And this you attempt to do by the aid of St AUGUSTINE †, whom you acknowledge yourself as the great Predestinarian of the age. First you bring a long string of good works which, you say, he performed; from hence you *justly* prove, that he was *born of GOD*: then you *attempt* to prove, that he had somewhat like *the second blessing*; for you say, "*he fulfilled the whole law.*" And now you ask the question, *Is not fulfilling all the law of CHRIST work enough to justify the converted thief by THAT law*; that is, *THAT law of CHRIST*? Now I shrewdly suspect, that the law here meant, is *that law* which puts up with our *innocent infirmities*, and *trifling failures*: A *new or milder law*, quite different from that *holy law* revealed from *Sinai*. If this be the law you here mean, in your next publication let me advise you *honestly to speak out*; and then I will plainly tell you, that *it was not work enough*

* See page 12 of the Vindication.

† Page 35.

enough to justify the converted thief; and that your proof against his being justified by grace at the final day, and for his being justified by his good works, is premature.

But since Mr WESLEY tells us in the *Minutes*, that “*there is no exception to the general rule.*” We are still to believe that this thief upon the cross, having “*fulfilled ALL the law,*” is at length, with others, rewarded BECAUSE OF *his works*; FOR THE SAKE OF *his works*; OR, AS *his works DESERVED*. But in case of disobedience, we are to be condemned as *Antinomians*. Thanks be to GOD, however, that *hard names* are *nothing to the purpose*. We shall therefore still bring the instance of this happy thief, as a full proof for our *Calvinistic divinity*, as one that *did nothing in order to justification, and who, from first to last, was saved ONLY BY GRACE.*”

But what seems to affect you most, is, that you should be esteemed as holding the same doctrine, as to justification, with all the FORMAL and PHARISAICAL *ministers in the kingdom*. To be sure this proves you to be in *very bad company*; and I find you deny not the charge: only you say, that *they omit preaching up justification by faith first*; here, however, you do not do them justice: they all literally agree, with you and Mr WESLEY, excepting in the doctrine of Merit; in which they are more *cautious* and *evangelical*. They first talk of the “*conditions of the covenant on man's part,*” as *something he is to do by way of working for life;*

order to justification: then they *blindly blunder on*, by insisting upon *justification by faith only*; afterwards they complete the wretched jumble, by pleading for a *second justification by works only*. Examine but the writings mostly admired by these *formal* and *pbarisaical* ministers, namely, those of CLARKE, HOADLY, (especially, in his *Terms of Acceptance*) TAYLOR of *Norwich*, &c. &c. and let Mr WESLEY burn the best book he ever published *on Original Sin*, against the last mentioned author, as “*leaning too much towards Calvinism* :” and then shall we find, that the divinity of the *Foundery*, in *point of justification*, is perfectly consonant with the *divinity* propagated by the multitudes of the *world*, whether they be *formal* or *pbarisaical*; or even *drunken* or *debauched*.

And this I assert with much greater confidence; since I can plainly tell you, from *my own certain knowledge*, how greatly you have advanced in the *good graces* of all the *formal* and *pbarisaical* ministers in *one* of our famous Universities, who look upon you as a very *sound* and *orthodox* divine. Some of them, however, are of opinion, that you carry matters a *little* too far; and are under some fears, lest talking so much about MAN'S MERIT, should at length endanger the *atonement itself*; and thus still open wider the floodgates of *deism* and *infidelity*.

They also greatly admire the *spirit* of your performance: They are exceedingly rejoiced to see the Calvinists *lashed* with such severity, especially by

by one that was once received amongst them with all the tenderness and affection of a brother. Many say, "*they are sad hypocrites, and it is well they are detected.*"

And now, SIR, let us recollect the criterion the LORD has given us for the examination of ministers; "*by their fruits you shall know them:*" *Bad doctrines produce bad fruits; and bad fruits are certain indications of bad ministers.*

But I will not even yet arraign you of any intentional evil whatever: had you in any wise been master of your temper, and pure in your doctrine, the strain of piety that runs through your book would have been highly commendable. But still, not a *shred* of the gospel is ever to be parted with: CHRIST is the *way*, the *truth*, and the *life*. I would therefore pray you to consider, that however earnestly you may appear to have holiness as your aim, lest *deadness to God* should be the result in the end. Were this ever to be the case, I know that it would grieve you: But what less can we expect? when JESUS is dishonoured, his grace will be withdrawn.

We shall now briefly consider the method of treating dear and honest Mr SHIRLEY, on account of his publicly recanting his Sermons *before the face of the whole world*: This you wanted long to be at before you came to it; else you had not asked that *sneering question**, namely, "*Will you insinuate, that our LORD recanted his LEGAL*

“ *sermon preached upon the mount?* ” A question *this*, quite in your own *spirit, style, and manner.*

And first, let me remark to you, the great unkindness you have been guilty of towards that most worthy minister, in falsely representing him as recanting *truth* as well as *error*; and then making him the sport of so many *unkind turns*, and *severe reflections*. True indeed it is, that he has recanted his Sermons *wholesale*; but why so? Not that he ever meant to acknowledge them as containing *nothing but error*; but, like a man of *sense* as well as *honesty*, justly judging, that *error* when *blended with truth*, would be much more dangerous than *error in the gross*, concluded it best to *revoke them altogether*.

But how unaccountable it is, that you should tell Mr SHIRLEY, *page 33*, that his book publicly exposed to sale, and perhaps bought by thousands, being in a measure no longer his own, he had no right to recant them. And so you would prove, that though he has published what he conceives to be *lies* to the people, since they have *bought and paid for them*, they are to be left *by right of purchase calmly to believe those lies* that may lead them into error, and deceive them wofully for an eternity.

To retract an error, is a noble disposition. This was the peculiar excellency of the late worthy Mr WHITEFIELD: Dear Mr SHIRLEY has now followed that bright exemplar. Play upon him as you will, SIR; you never will lessen him in the esteem of

of those who honour him for his honesty, and love him for his candour.

Since what you have advanced in favour of the freedom of the will, has already been discussed by a more able hand than mine; all that I shall add on this head, is, that you should have paid some regard to the Articles of your own Church (especially to the Xth) which you have elsewhere pretended greatly to revere. That it very ill became you to adopt a language so *exceedingly pert* against Mr EDWARDS; who, from his *very great abilities*, certainly demanded more respect from your pen. That you should rather have lashed honest Mr BUNYAN for a *Crispian divine*, than have brought him for an advocate to the system which you have adopted. And lastly, let me ask you, Are you not too severe against the *Popish priest of Madely*? In regard to the *fopperies* of religion, you certainly differ: these things, however, are but *trifles* in comparison of justification before God. And here it appears, that you are literally agreed. I have now before me the History of the Council of *Trent*, and FULKE against the *Jesuits of Rbemes*: And if you choose to deny the charge, I will transcribe from your *Vindications* and from the books mentioned above, a *harmony in full*. This you will suppose a hard accusation; but is it not the truth, and, consequently, the *fault your own*?

And now, SIR, for a few comments upon that *dreadfully proud* piece of divinity of sinners *undervaluing themselves*. But let it still be remembered,

before we proceed, that the *best illustrations* amount to no proof : for this *you* attempt to prove only by different *illustrations*.

You first tell us, how a “ *king* undervalues “ himself by renouncing his *regal dignity*, and “ sitting upon the same couch with his subject.” But are not we from being *kings upon the throne*, by our total fall become as *beggars upon the dunghil*? Strange indeed! that a man that pretends to believe the IXth Article of the Church of *England*, should represent fallen man as a *king upon the throne*! You therefore only *beg the question*, which we *refuse to grant* : First *prove* that man is, in any respect, unless in *pride* and *self-conceit*, a *king upon the throne*; else we will say, *your illustration is false*.

You next tell us, how a *well-bred person* undervalues himself by uncovering himself before his *inferiors*. Here you blunder just as above; and; unless you choose directly to deny the fall, thus much you cannot but grant, that man, instead of being *born from above*, proves himself, by the whole of his conduct, as *naturally born from beneath*: consequently, instead of being *well-bred*, he is *ill-bred*. And after this blunder at the beginning, how do you proceed? Why you tell us, that these *well-bred* people compliment others by “ speaking “ *words without meaning*, in telling them, that they “ *are their tumble servants* :” This you call *affected civility*, and therefore in a measure condemn in them, what you bring as an illustration why *poor, vile, fallen* man, should do the very same before the great heart-searching God of eternal glory.

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In the next passage you are still more curious ; you there represent fallen man as *the captain of a first-rate man of war* ; and put the sovereign in an humble fishing-boat. After having thus *exalted the subject*, and *debased the sovereign*, you tell us of the captain's humility in *striking his colours* : And so it comes about how *sinners may undervalue themselves*. *I think this needs no confutation.*

Your fourth proof stands thus : “ *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 evils he has overcome, call himself the chief of sinners.*” So that after *these internal evils are overcome*, he is still to call himself *the chief of sinners*. And if you mean by his *overcoming these internal evils*, the *second blessing* ; how contradictory it is, that he should call himself *the chief of sinners*, even when all sin is entirely taken away ; and consequently, when he is *no sinner at all*. And yet you calmly say, he may do all this with GREAT TRUTH.

Your last proof “ *leans too much towards Calvinism.*” The sum of it is, that “ *the Christian, supposing THE FEEBLEST BELIEVER, would have made a better improvement of grace given, PREPERS THE LEAST SAINT to himself.*” But unless this Christian is a *Calvinist*, how can he suppose any such thing ? If he is no *Calvinist*, he will tell

tell you, that grace is given, or perhaps even MERITED, on account of his *faithfulness to grace received*: And that it is *his own power, thro' grace received*, that advances him, and makes him better than others. Therefore, he that supposes any thing like the above, *supposes an absurdity contrary to the tenets of those, who will sometimes roundly tell us, that we may repent when we will, believe when we will, and be perfect when we will.* According to these opinions therefore, the *feeblest believers, and the least saints*, are those who have made the *poorest use of grace received*: And if any one is stronger than another, the good pleasure of God has nothing to do with it, but he became stronger than another because *he improved grace better than another*. And can this be reconciled to the supposition as above?

And now, SIR, if I was to do once what you have done an hundred times, and treat you with one sneer for this *scrap of your Crispian orthodoxy*, I am apt to conceive you would find somewhat arising very ill-becoming the *feeblest believer, or the meanest saint*.

But to let your proof stand as it does, and, as the language of a *Calvinist*, perhaps it may stand; but, as the language of an *Arminian*, it is absurd: It proves no more than that sinners undervalue the grace that is in them, freely given from above. But it is not grace given, but our *own dear selves* that we are here said to undervalue; and that too *in every respect*. But all are not deserv-

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ing of this condemnation: The author of the *Minutes* himself, stands fully acquitted of this charge. He, it seems, was the reviser of your first publication; and he is there, through many a long paragraph, extolled as the *greatest saint and first minister upon earth*. Some things, by page 39 it seems, he has rejected. But all those great things spoken of himself, though they pass under HIS OWN PEN, HE HIMSELF permits to stand. Doubtless, therefore, *he concludes them to be true*; otherwise *he would have erased them as false*. This, SIR, is a circumstance that has not a little astonished many of Mr WESLEY'S most devoted admirers: and though the observation may be thought severe, I had not made it unless the remark had been obvious, and the truth notorious.

Your denial of the doctrine of imputed righteousness must not pass altogether unnoticed. The proof of this assertion I extract from that very note, page 58, in which you pretend greatly to respect this great truth of GOD: You there tell us, "*that this imputation is not an idea but a fiat: wherever it takes place, JEHOVAH our righteousness, or CHRIST the righteous, dwells in the heart by faith.*" And so it comes out that this imputed righteousness is inherent holiness: And as you are vastly fond of decorating your tenets with the most respectable characters you can collect from the dead, while it is out of their power to speak for themselves, you tell us, that this was

Mr

MR HART'S notion of imputed righteousness* : But surely, SIR, it was not. If he was a *sound Calvinist*, as you are pleased to call him, the only *sound* belief he could have of *imputed righteousness*, would be a belief that taught him to fly away from his own inherent holiness, as a thing of nought, in order that his soul might be clothed by imputation in that *perfect, everlasting righteousness*, or *conformity to the law*, wrought out in the Redeemer's own person, as the covenant-head of his people. Now all this notion of imputation, you make the continual subject of the *most indecent ridicule*. Read yet again what I have quoted to you from your own book before upon this subject †, and tremble at the conclusion you give us of the whole, when no less *daringly* than *inconsistently* with yourself, you directly call this *glorious doctrine of imputed righteousness* (*horresco referens*) THE MOST IMPIOUS PLEA OF A BOLD ANTINO-MIAN §.

But what could be your reasons for pretending in any sense to hold this doctrine? Was it left
people

* It is something very remarkable, that Mr HART scarce ever preached a Sermon but he more or less exploded the tenets of Mr WESLEY, as tending to lead people into the most *dangerous delusions*. For this he was frequently blamed by many people : but now it appears, that he knew what he was about ; and that his warnings were the result of the maturest deliberation, and the soundest wisdom. I mention this, that the world may know that the truly venerable name of Mr HART is but ill suited to give a sanction to the divinity propagated by the *Vindicator*, or broached from the *Foundery*.

† See page 101.

§ Page 101.

people should be *too much* frightened at the universal havock you make of every truth of the gospel, that you thus inserted in your note the term *imputed righteousness* * ; when, according to the very nature of things, the whole of your system must overturn every idea of imputation altogether? For what need is there of the imputation of CHRIST'S *righteousness* to those, who expect to be saved by a *righteousness of their own*, at the final day? Thus it appears, that you plainly deny the doctrine of imputed righteousness.

I shall now conclude my Remarks, by expostulating with you relative to what you have advanced concerning *finished salvation* : And first, as to the phrase itself: You tell us “ *it is not scriptural, nor yet agreeable to the analogy of faith* §.” When JESUS bowed his head, and gave up the ghost, he said, IT IS FINISHED, *John* xix. 30. Those that deny the atonement will give us so idle a comment upon these words, as to tell us, that CHRIST meant *his life was here finished*. But for what end was CHRIST crucified? Doubtless for the salvation of sinners. If so, how can you deny that when his crucifixion was finished, that our salvation was not finished also? You yourself allow the expression of *finished atonement* ; but what is CHRIST'S atonement but our salvation? From your own premises, therefore,

* The same reason hinted as above, may be given for the *Vindicator's* making use of such terms as *the evangelical doctrine of a second justification by works; of people's being evangelically legal, &c. &c.*

fore, I draw the very conclusion you *stiff* at continually, that *salvation is finished*. This expression therefore, though perhaps not exactly, yet is too nearly scriptural, to be parted with; and as being fully agreeable to the analogy of the faith, we contend earnestly for the casket, lest you should spoil us of the most precious jewel it contains.

And now let us see into your art of *slandering* and *blackening* finished salvation; and this you pretty plentifully do in a very few lines: “*If finished salvation be true, you say, we have no need to repent, to believe, to mortify one sin, to take up one cross, or to part with one right eye or right hand**,” &c. &c. &c. And now, SIR, let me tell you, that we draw just the very contrary conclusion to what you here ungenerously draw for us. Since salvation is finished, we argue, that all things being richly provided in the covenant of grace, *without money and without price*; holiness of heart being part of the gift of this covenant, it is *predestinated*, (and I love predestination to my heart, especially since your publications have appeared) that those who are ordained to eternal life, should *repent, believe, mortify all their sins, pray for graces, cut off right hands, pluck out right eyes, and thus to go on perfecting holiness in the fear of God*. So that according to the dictates of *pure Calvinism*, we look upon it as much *impossible* for a *child of God, elect according to the foreknowledge of God, through sanctification of the Spirit unto the obedience of the truth,*

* See page 81, 82.

to live and die unbelieving and impenitent, with his corruptions unmortified and his soul unsanctified, as we look upon it impossible for you or any one else to get to glory, while depending upon any other righteousness than that of the Redeemer's, for the life and salvation of the soul.

Thus, SIR, have I finished my remarks upon the doctrine and spirit contained in this your second Check to Antinomianism. To have answered you upon every passage that is exceptionable would almost have been an endless piece of work. I hint this, that you may not boast that any such passages are unanswerable, because want of time and the natural hatred I have to controversy, forbid me to follow you throughout. Believe me, I hate Antinomianism from my inmost soul; but still dare not part with the glorious truths of *free, sovereign, and everlasting love*, for a thousand worlds; however they may be abused by some that pretend to hold them. And was it not obvious as the day, that it is the doctrines of grace, much more than the loose lives of professors, which have chiefly excited the *bitterness* of your pen, gladly would I have joined with you, though in another spirit, in loudly exclaiming against the *deadness and formality* of the day.

Having by your address, already constituted dear Mr SHIRLEY the *first Antinomian in the kingdom*, and consequently set forth his truly noble and much honoured patroness the COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON, as nothing better than the *patroness of Antinomianism*,

Antinomianism ; I am not myself, I fear, to expect much lenity from your pen ; however, for your own sake as well as mine, if you think me worthy of an answer, let me intreat you to be merciful. And do, SIR, remember, that *big-flown metaphors, frothy declamation worked up to a ferment, bombast expressions, and bold assertions, may pass with some for solidity and proof, but will be rejected by others as a cloak for error, when devoid of argument for its support.*

Hoping that GOD may give us both a right judgment in all things, I gladly conclude with assuring you, that with love and pity I subscribe myself,

Your sincere well-wisher

In the Gospel of CHRIST,

R. H.

P O S T :



P O S T S C R I P T.

WHEN the greater part of the above Letter was printed off, your last publication, which you are pleased to call *A Third Check to Antinomianism*, made its appearance. Upon this I concluded it best to stop my publication, till notice could be taken of what you had farther advanced. This, together with my incessant engagements, and absence from the Press, have made the delay much longer than might have been expected.

And first, let me confess to you that you have now really puzzled us all together, and I think it must be owned that you are quite become *unanswerable*: For first, as to your doctrine, how mysterious is the jumble! In your *first* Check, we hear but of *one* justification: in your second, you treat us with *two*: And here I cannot but for once agree with Mr WESLEY, that you have published one too many: For he plainly tells us in his *Journals* from 1739, to 1741, THAT OUR JUSTIFICATION IS NOT TWO-FOLD, BUT ONE AND NO MORE. How unfortunate it is that *Mr WESLEY's Vindicator* should so contradict his friend *whose Vindication he attempts!* And
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in such language too, as directly charges him with *Crispianity*, and paints him as an *Antinomian*? And what is more curious still, as these *Journals* were reprinted in 1769, only three years ago, till that time the *Vindicator* himself dresses up Mr WESLEY as an *Antinomian*; and represents him to the world as having been nothing better, for more than the thirty first years of his ministry, than an *Antinomian preacher*. Thus have you thrown your own friend in the dirt; and does it not behove you to help him out, if you can?

But to return: In your second publication, you gave us a sort of a *promissory Note*, that you had *no more justifications* besides the above *two* with which to present the world: for speaking *directly* upon your *second justification*, in a quotation which you take from Mr HENRY, you have as follows*; “Surely
 “ if that good man dared to say so much, we,
 “ who have done leaning too much towards *Cal-*
 “ *vinism*, should be inexcusable if we did not say
 “ ALL:” And this you put in *Italics*. But now it appears that this ALL only means HALF; and that there are *two more* justifications to be believed in, as absolutely necessary to save us from the errors of *Antinomianism*. So that this *second* justification appears at length to be a *fourth*; in order to make room for two more *lately invented*, that are to be *shoved in* among the rest. And you now *once more* say, you have spoken all: so you said before; but as the contrary has appeared, why may

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we not expect that as you proceed in your Checks, these *four* justifications may be *doubled* and *doubled*, till they amount to *four score*.

And since it is obvious that *but three years ago* Mr WESLEY insisted that there was but *one* justification, and that now his *Vindicator* preaches up *four*, three more than ever were advanced by Mr WESLEY himself; pray let us know which of you are to be believed; and let the next Conference inform the world who is in the wrong.

I once thought of enumerating the different *degrees* you make of *divine Favour*, of *Acceptance*, and of *Redemption*; and though they are pretty numerous, and consequently would have given some trouble, I should not have denied my pains, could I have been certain you would have stuck to your number. But being apprehensive that some future publication might multiply these, as has been the case with the justifications, (for, as your imagination is fertile, you can invent them by dozens) I will lay aside the task, lest in the end it should prove but labour in vain.

From Mr WESLEY's performances, collectively considered, the world has been convinced what a *farrago* they contain. His Works, however, have been large; when numbered in volumes, perhaps not less than thirty to your one; but what a pity it is, that though you have published but thrice, your *three* publications should evidently appear such a *farrago of themselves*. But how is it you prove these different degrees in this *your* system of

famous divinity? Why by *metaphors* and *illustrations*; which, in fact, are no proofs at all. One man, you observe, conciliates the regard and affection of another by little and little, by some GOODNESS he performs by way of recommendation. A king pardons a rebel as he begins by degrees to see him relinquish his rebellion, and to prove his sincerity by his repentance and Obedience. Thus the poor fickle conduct of silly changeable creatures towards each other, is brought by way of proof, why the eternal Mind of the unchangeable GOD should vary towards the creature perhaps *fifty times* a day. But this has been the maxim throughout all your publications. You bring down the Creator to the littleness of the creature, and then make your proof.

— *Sic parvis componere magna solebas.*

Think not, however, that I mean to advance that GOD is not, in some sense, angry with his people on account of their sin; all that I would urge is, that man being represented as currying favour with GOD, by little and little, partly through CHRIST, and partly through his own obedience, is mean to a degree; totally destroys the glories of the covenant, wretchedly dims all the beauties of the intercession of CHRIST, and at once erases every idea of grace and mercy that can possibly be conceived. These truths you have a wonderful art of blackening; as if held by Calvinists as

a miserable cloke for the basest disobedience and vilest ingratitude. I can only say, what I have learnt by my own particular experience, and of which I am verily persuaded, that wherever the motives to holiness, arising from a sense of free grace, distinguishing mercy, and electing love, do not avail to the practice of it, however specious the *appearance* may be, the true *spirit* of evangelical obedience ever *will*, and ever *must* be wanting.

But how mightily are you indebted to *Metaphors* and *Declamation* for what you advance against the *sovereignty of GOD*! What pains you have taken to *blacken* this truth, and render it *odious* to the world! Indeed, SIR, it is *dishonest* to take our premises, and draw *such* conclusions from them, as *you know we detest*. Do but give us leave to explain for ourselves, and we shall not appear such monsters, as you are pleased to represent us. And *do* let me remind you, to teach you moderation, that *you yourself* was once *almost* a *Calvinist*: And that poor Mr WESLEY, in an uncertain fit, was actually compelled to draw lots upon the occasion.

You know, SIR, my character: that I have suffered much, very much for GOD; and am now gone forth preaching upon a plan exceedingly mortifying to flesh and blood. Great has been the opposition which, at some places, I have met with from the malignant world. This would have grieved me but little, had not others followed me into places that never had the gospel before, with your art of misrepresenting my sentiments, and
 exposing

exposing me as the most furious preacher of the *deepest reprobation*, in order to lessen my usefulness; insomuch that it has been charged upon me, that I believe *there are reprobate children crawling in hell, not a span long*; and that God *compels people to be damned, even against their own wills*: And God only knows the grief of heart I have *repeatedly* undergone, to see those very persons, who received their first serious impressions under my ministry, dread me as a *viper*. These slanders may perhaps, with some, come under the denomination of *Swiss bluntness* and *Helvetic plainness*; when, in reality, such conduct ought to make even a *Turk* blush.

It is evident that the lenity and tenderness of the Five first Letters addressed to you by the author of *Pietas Oxoniensis*, was not a little check to the *bitterness of your pen*: the excuses you make for your bitterness are full of contradictions; sometimes *Antinomianism* and *Calvinism* are synonymous terms; then you are pleased to be a little more mild, by making a difference between them; sometimes you begin with expressions of love that are *smoother than oil*, but the very same paragraph proves the severity of your pen, by a *wretched conclusion, as bitter as gall*. Alas, SIR! What a pity it is that you are not more master of your temper, and more mild in your compositions!

Not one word of what is advanced in the *two* first *Checks* is given up in the *third*. In regard to your temper, you do not seem to think a *line*, or

letter severer than we for our *wickedness* deserve ; and even in point of doctrine you still are determined boldly to insist, that the *piece* lighted the candle and swept the house, in order to find the *woman* that was lost.

Your present very uncommon zeal for writing, prompts me to believe that this Letter will not remain long without an answer ; but since it now appears that you have not humility enough to give up *one* point that you have advanced ; and since it is obvious beyond a doubt, by this your *third* Check, that what system you have is a system of inconsistency, and that you do not know what you believe yourself ; independent of what might be urged from my incessant engagements in the work of the ministry ; if I should refuse any farther to take up my pen, you ought not to construe my silence as a victory in your favour.

I have now eased my conscience in declaring in full, why I publickly withdraw my future assistance from Mr WESLEY, and his connections ; unless the time should come in which, through the mercy of GOD, MERIT should be renounced, and CHRIST acknowledged as the sinner's ALL IN ALL.

LONDON,
July 4, 1772.

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