

L.—*To the Same.*NEWCASTLE, *September 22, 1745.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I HAVE only just time to inform you, that since the account is confirmed by an express to the Mayor, that General Cope is fled, and his forces defeated, (all that did not run away,) the consternation of the poor people is redoubled. The townsmen are put under arms; the walls planted with cannon; and those who live without the gates are removing their goods with all speed. We stand our ground as yet, glory be to God, to the no small astonishment of our neighbours. Brethren, pray for us, that if need be, we may

True in the fiery trial prove,
And pay Him back his dying love.

Adieu!

LI.—*To the Same.*

DEAR BROTHER,

YESTERDAY I was thinking on a *desideratum* among us, a *genesis problematica* on justifying faith. A skeleton of it, (which you may fill up, or any one that has leisure,) I have roughly set down:—

Is justifying faith a sense of pardon? *Negatur.**

1. Every one is deeply concerned to understand this question well: But Preachers most of all; lest they either make them sad whom God hath not made sad, or encourage them to say, Peace, where there is no peace.

Some years ago we heard nothing of justifying faith, or a sense of pardon; so that when we did hear of them, the theme was quite new to us; and we might easily, especially in the heat and hurry of controversy, lean too much either to the one hand or to the other.

2. By "justifying faith," I mean that faith which whosoever hath not is under the wrath and the curse of God. By "a sense of pardon," I mean a distinct, explicit assurance that my sins are forgiven.

I allow, (1.) That there is such an explicit assurance. (2.) That it is the common privilege of real Christians. (3.)

* It is denied.—*EDIT.*

That it is the proper Christian faith, which "purifieth the heart," and "overcometh the world."

But I cannot allow, that justifying faith is such an assurance, or necessarily connected therewith.

3. Because, if justifying faith necessarily implies such an explicit assurance of pardon, then every one who has it not, and every one so long as he has it not, is under the wrath and under the curse of God. But this is a supposition contrary to Scripture, as well as to experience.

Contrary to Scripture; to Isaiah l. 10: "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God."

Contrary to Acts x. 34, 35: "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

Contrary to experience; for J. R., &c., &c., had peace with God, no fear, no doubt, before they had that sense of pardon. And so have I frequently had.

Again: The assertion, "that justifying faith is a sense of pardon," is contrary to reason: It is flatly absurd. For how can a sense of our having received pardon be the condition of our receiving it?

4. If you object, (1.) "J. T., St. Paul, &c., had this sense:" I grant they had: But they were justified, or rather had justifying faith, before they had it. (2.) "We know fifteen hundred persons who have this assurance." Perhaps so: But this does not prove, they had not justifying faith till they received it. (3.) "We have been exceedingly blessed in preaching this doctrine." We have been blessed in preaching the great truths of the Gospel; although we tacked to them, in the simplicity of our hearts, a proposition which was not true. (4.) "But does not our Church give this account of justifying faith?" I am sure she does of saving or Christian faith: I think she does of justifying faith too. But to the law and to the testimony. All men may err. But the word of the Lord shall stand for ever.