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by Robert Trail

A VINDICATION OF THE Protestant Doctrine Concerning JUSTIFICATION, And of its Preachers and Professors, From the unjust charge of ANTINOMIANISM. In a LETTER from a Minister in the City, to a Minister in the Country.

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A LETTER FROM A Minister in the City to a Minister in the Country, about the present Difference concerning JUSTIFICATION.

YOUR Earnest Desire of Information about some Difference amongst Nonconformists in London, whereof you hear so much by flying Reports, and profess you know so little of the Truth thereof, is the Cause of this Writing.

You know, that not many Months ago, there was a fair-like appearance of Unity betwixt the two most considerable Parties on that Side; and their Differences having been rather in practice than principle, about Church-Order and Communion, seemed easily reconciliable, where a Spirit of Love, and of a sound Mind was at

work. But how short was the Calm? For quickly arose a greater Storm from another Quarter, and a Quarrel began upon higher Points, even on no less than the Doctrine of the Grace of God in Jesus Christ, and the Justification of a Sinner by Faith alone. Some think that the Reprinting of Dr. Crisp's Book, gave the first Rise to it. But we must look further back for its true Spring. It is well known, but little considered, what a great Progress Arminianism had made in this Nation before the beginning of the Civil War: And surely it hath lost little since it ended. What can be the Reason, why the very Parliaments in the Reign of James I. and Charles I. were so alarmed with Arminianism, as may be read in History, and is remembered by Old Men; and that now for a long time there hath been no talk, no fear of it; as if Arminianism were dead and buried, and no man knows where its Grave is? Is not the true Reason to be found in its Universal prevailing in the Nation?

But that which concerneth our Case, is, That the Middle way betwixt the Arminians, and the Orthodox, had been espoused, and strenuously defended and promoted by some Nonconformists, of great Note for Piety and Parts, (and usually such Men that are for middle ways in points of Doctrine, have a greater kindness for that Extream they go half way to, than for that which they go half way from) And the Notions thereof were imbibed by a great many Students who labored (through the Iniquity of the Times) under the great Disadvantage of the want of grave and sound Divines to direct and assist their Studies at Universities; and therefore contented themselves with studying such English Authors, as had gone in a path untrod, both by our Predecessors, and by the Protestant Universities abroad.

These Notions have been preached, and wrote against, by several Divines amongst ourselves; and the different Opinions have

been, till of late, managed with some Moderation, to which our being all born down by Persecution, did somewhat contribute.

It is a sad, but true Observation, That no Contentions are more easily kindled, more fiercely pursued, and more hardly composed, than those of Divines; sometimes from their Zeal for Truth, and sometimes from worse Principles, that may act in them, as well as in other Men.

The Subject of the Controversy is about the Justifying Grace of God in Jesus Christ. Owned it is by both, and both fear it be abused, either by turning it into Wantonness, hence the Noise of Antinomianism; or by corrupting it with the mixture of Works; hence the Fears on the other side of Arminianism. Both Parties disown the Name cast upon them: The one will not be called Arminians, and the other hate both Name and Thing of Antinomianism, truly so called: Both sometimes say the same Thing, and profess their Assent to the Doctrinal Articles of the Church of England, to the Confession of Faith and Catechisms composed at Westminster, and to the Harmony of the Confessions of all the Reformed Churches, in these Doctrines of Grace. And if both be Candid in this Profession, it is very strange that there should be any Controversy amongst them.

Let us therefore, first, take a View of the Parties, and then of their Principles. As to the Party suspected of Antinomianism, and Libertinism, (in this City) it is plain, That the Churches wherein they are concerned, are more strict and exact in trying of them that offer themselves unto their Communion, as to their Faith, and Holiness, before their admitting them; in the Engagements laid on them to a Gospel-walking at their Admission, and in their Inspection over them afterwards. As to their

Conversations, they are generally of the more Regular, and Exact Frame, and the Fruits of Holiness in their Lives, to the Praise of God, and Honor of the Gospel, cannot with modesty be denied. Is it not unaccountable, to charge a People with Licentiousness, when the Chargers cannot deny, and some cannot well bear the Strictness of their Walk? It is commonly said, That it is only their Principles, and the tendency of them to loose Walking, that they blame. But (waying that at present) it seems not fair to charge a People with Licentious Doctrines, when the Professors thereof are approved of for their Godliness, and when they do sincerely profess, that their Godliness begun with, and is promoted by the Faith of their Principles. Let it not be mistaken, if I here make a Comparison betwixt Papists and Protestants. The latter did always profess the Doctrine of Justification by Faith alone. This was Blasphemy in the Papists Ears. They still did, and do cry out against it, as a Licentious Doctrine, and destructive of Good Works. Many sufficient Answers have been given in to this unjust Charge. But to my purpose, the Wonder was, that the Papists were not convinced by the splendid Holiness of the Old Believers, and by the Visible Truth of their holy Practice, and their professing, that as long as they lived in the Blindness and Darkness of Popery, they were profane, and that as soon as God revealed the Gospel to them, and had wrought in them the Faith thereof, they were sanctified, and led other Lives. So witnessed the Noble Lord Cobham, who suffered in K. Henry the 5th his Time, above an 100 Years before Luther. His Words at his Examination before the Archbishop of Canterbury, and his Clergy, were these: As for that Virtuous Man, Wycliffe, (for with his Doctrine he was charged) whose Judgment ye so highly disdain, I shall say of my part, both before God and Man, that before I knew that Despised Doctrine of his, I never abstained from sin; but since I learned therein to fear my Lord God, it hath otherwise, I trust, been with me. So much Grace could I never find in all your glorious

Instructions. Fox's Book of Martyrs, Vol. 1. p. 640. Col. 2. Edit. 1664. And since I am on that excellent Book, I entreat you to read Mr. Patrick Hamilton 's little Treatise, to which Frith doth Preface, and Fox doth add some Explication, Vol. 2. p. 181. to p. 192, where ye will find the Old plain Protestant Truth about Law and Gospel, delivered without any School-Terms. To this, add in your reading, in the same Vol. 2. p. 497. to p. 509. Heresies and Errors falsty charged on Tindal 's Writings. Where ye will see the Old Faith of the Saints in its Simplicity, and the Old Craft and Cunning of the Antichristian Party, in slandering the Truth. I must, for my part, confess, That these plain Declarations of Gospel-Truth, have a quite other Savour with me, than the Dry Insipid Accounts thereof, given by Pretendders to human Wisdom.

But passing these things, let us look to Principles, and that with respect to their Native and Regular Influence on Sanctification. And I am willing, that that should determine the Matter, next to the Consonancy of the Principles themselves to the Word of God. It can be no Doctrine of God, that is not according to Godliness. Some think, that if Good Works, and Holiness, and Repentance, be allowed no room in Justification, that there is no room left for them in the World, and in the practice of Believers. So hard seems it to be to some, to keep in their Eye the certain fixed bounds betwixt Justification and Sanctification. There is no difference betwixt a Justified and a Sanctified Man; for he is always the same person that partakes of these Privileges: But Justification and Sanctification differ greatly in many Respects, as is commonly known. But to come a little closer:

The Party here suspected of Antinomianism, do confidently protest before God, Angels and Men, That they espouse no New Doctrine about the Grace of God, and Justification, and the other coincident

Points, but what the Reformers at home and abroad did teach, and all the Protestant Churches do own; And that in sum is, That a Law-condemned Sinner is freely Justified by God's Grace through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ, that he is Justified only for the Righteousness of Christ imputed to him by God of his free Grace and received by faith alone as an Instrument, which faith is the gift of the same Grace. For guarding against Licentiousness they constantly teach out of God's Word, That without Holiness no man can see God, That all that believe truly on Jesus Christ, as they are Justified by the sprinkling of his Blood, so are they Sanctified by the effusion of his Spirit. That all that boast of their Faith in Christ, and yet live after their own Lusts, and the course of this World, have no true Faith at all; but do in their profession and contradicting Practice, Blaspheme the Name of God, and the Doctrine of his Grace, and continuing so, shall perish with a double Destruction beyond that of the openly Profane, that make no Profession. And when they find any such in their Communion, which is exceeding rarely, they cast them out as Dead Branches; They teach that as the daily Study of Sanctification is a necessary exercise to all that are in Christ, so that the Rule of their Direction therein is the Holy spotless Law of God in Christ's Hand, That the Holy Ghost is the Beginner and Advancer of this Work, and Faith in Jesus Christ, the great Mean thereof. That no Man can be Holy till he be in Christ, and united to him by Faith, and that no Man is truly in Christ, but he is thereby Sanctified. They Preach the Law to Condemn all Flesh out of Christ, and to show thereby to people, the necessity of betaking themselves to him for Salvation. See the savory words of blessed Tindal, called the Apostle of England, in his Letter to John Frith, written Jan. 1533. Book of Martyrs, Vol. 2. Page 308. Expound the Law truly, and open the Vail of Moses to condemn all Flesh, and prove all Men sinners, and all deeds under the Law before Mercy have taken away the condemnation thereof, to be Sin and Damnable; and then as a faithful Minister set abroad the Mercy

of our Lord Jesus, and let the wounded Consciences Drink of the Water of him. And then shall your Preaching be with Power, and not as the Hypocrites. And the Spirit of God shall work with you, and all Consciences shall bear record unto you, and feel that it is so. And all Doctrine that casteth a mist on these two, to shadow and hide them, I mean the Law of God, and Mercy of Christ, that resist you with all your power. And so do we.

What is there in all this, to be offended with? is not this enough to Vindicate our Doctrine from any tendency to Licentiousness? I am afraid, that there are some things wherein we differ more than they think fit yet to express. And I shall guess at them:

1. Is about the Imputed Righteousness of Christ. This Righteousness of Christ, in his Active and Passive Obedience, hath been asserted by Protestant Divines, to be not only the Procuring, and Meritorious Cause of our Justification, for this the Papists own; But the Matter, as the Imputation of it is the Form of our Justification: Though I think that our Logical Terms are not so adapted for such Divine Mysteries. But whatever Propriety, or Impropropriety be in such School-Terms, the common Protestant Doctrine hath been, That a convinced Sinner seeking Justification, must have nothing in his Eye but this Righteousness of Christ, as God proposeth nothing else to Him; And that God in justifying a Sinner, accepts him in this Righteousness only, when he imputes it to him.

Now about the Imputed Righteousness of Christ, some say, That it belongs only to the Person of Christ: He was under the Law, and bound to keep it for himself, that he might be a fit Mediator, without Spot or Blemish: That it is a Qualification in the Mediator, rather than a Benefit acquired by him, to be communicated to his People. For they will not allow this Personal Righteousness of Christ

to be imputed to us any otherwise than in the Merit of it, as purchasing for us a more easy Law of Grace; in the Observation whereof they place all our Justifying Righteousness: Understanding hereby our own Personal inherent Holiness, and nothing else. They hold, That Christ died to merit this of the Father; viz. That we might be Justified upon easier Terms, under the Gospel, than those of the Law of Innocency; Instead of Justification by perfect Obedience, we are now to be justified by our own Evangelical Righteousness, made up of Faith, Repentance, and sincere Obedience. And if we hold not with them in this, they tell the World, we are Enemies to Evangelical Holiness, slighting the practice of all Good Works, and allowing our Hearers to live as they list. Thus they slander the Preachers of Free Grace, because we do not place Justification in our own inherent Holiness, but in Christ's perfect Righteousness, imputed to us upon our believing in him. Which Faith, we teach, purifies the heart, and always inclines to Holiness of Life. Neither do we hold any Faith to be true and saving, that doth not show itself by Good Works, without which no man is, or can be Justified, either in his own Conscience, or before Men. But it doth not hence follow, that we cannot be justified in the sight of God by Faith only; as the Apostle Paul asserts the latter, and the Apostle James the former in a good Agreement.

2. There appears to be some difference, or misunderstanding of one another, about the true Notion and Nature of Justifying Faith. Divines commonly distinguish betwixt the Direct Act of Faith, and the Reflex Act. The Direct Act is properly Justifying and Saving Faith, by which a lost sinner comes to Christ, and relies upon him for Salvation. The Reflex Act is the looking back of the Soul upon a former Act of Faith. A Rational Creature can reflect upon his own Acts, whether they be Acts of Reason, Faith or Unbelief.

A Direct Act of saving Faith, is that by which a lost Sinner goes out of himself to Christ for help, relying upon him only for Salvation. A Reflex Act ariseth from the sense that Faith gives of its own inward Act, upon a serious Review; the truth and sincerity of which is further cleared up to the Conscience, by the Genuine Fruits of an unfeigned Faith, appearing to all men in our good Lives, and holy Conversation. But for as plain as these things be, yet we find we are frequently mistaken by others; and we wonder at the Mistake; for we dare not ascribe to some Learned and Good Men, the Principles of Ignorance, or Willfulness, from whence mistakes in plain Cases usually proceed. When we do press Sinners to come to Christ by a Direct Act of Faith, consisting in an humble Reliance upon him for Mercy and Pardon: They will understand us (whether we will or not) of a Reflex Act of Faith, by which a Man knows and believes that his sins are pardoned, and that Christ is his: When they might easily know, that we mean no such thing. Mr. Walter Marshall in his excellent Book, lately Published, hath largely opened this, and the true Controverly of this day, though it be 8 or 9 Years since he died.

3. We seem to differ about the Interest, and Room, and Place that Faith hath in Justification. That we are justified by Faith in Jesus Christ, is so plainly a New Testament-Truth, that no Man pretending never so bately to the Christian Name, denies it. The Papists own it, and the Socinians and Arminians, and all own it. But how different are their senses of it? And indeed you cannot more speedily and certainly judge of the spirit of a Man, than by his real inward sense of this phrase (if you could reach it) a Sinner is justified by Faith in Jesus Christ. Some say, that Faith in Jesus Christ justifies as it is a Work by the \langle in non-Latin alphabet \rangle credere, as if it came in the room of perfect Obedience, required by the Law. Some that Faith justifies, as it is informed and animated by Charity; so the Papists, who plainly Confound Justification and Sanctification.

Some say, That Faith justifies, as it is a fulfilling of the Condition of the New Covenant, if thou believest, thou shalt be saved. Nay, they will not hold there, but they will have this Faith to Justify, as it hath a Principle, and Fitness in it to dispose to sincere Obedience. The plain Old Protestant Doctrine is, That the place of Faith in Justification, is only that of a Hand, or Instrument, receiving the Righteousness of Christ, for which only we are justified. So that though great Scholars do often confound themselves, and others, in their Disputations about Faith's justifying a Sinner, every poor plain Believer hath the Marrow of this Mystery feeding his heart, and he can readily tell you, That to be justified by Faith, is to be justified by Christ's Righteousness, apprehended by Faith.

4. We seem to misunderstand one another about the Two Adams, and especially the latter. See Rom. 5.12. to the end. In that excellent Scripture a Comparison is instituted, which if we did duly understand, and agree in, we should not readily differ in the Main things of the Gospel. The Apostle there tells us, That the First Adam stood in the Room of all his Natural Posterity; He had their Stock in his hand, While he stood, they stood in him; when he fell, they fell with him; by his Fall he derived Sin and Death to all them that spring from him by Natural Generation. This is the sad side. But he tells us, in opposition thereto, and in comparing therewith, that Christ, the Second Man, is the New Head of the Redeemed World. He stands in their Room, his Obedience is theirs, and he communicates to his Spiritual Off-spring, the just contrary to what the first sinful Adam doth to his Natural Off-spring; Righteousness instead of Guilt and Sin, Life instead of Death, Justification instead of Condemnation, and Eternal Life instead of Hell deserved. So that I think, the 3^d, 4th, and 5th Chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, for the Mystery of Justification, and the 6th, 7th, and 8th, for the Mystery of Sanctification, deserve our

deep Study. But what say others about Christ's being the Second Adam? We find them unwilling to speak of it; and when they do, it is quite alien from the Scope of the Apostle in that Chapter. Thus to us they seem to say, That God as a Rector, Ruler, Governor, hath resolved to save Men by Jesus Christ; That the Rule of this Government is the Gospel, as a new Law of Grace: That Jesus Christ is set at the Head of this Rectoral Government; That in that State he sits in Glory; ready, and able, out of his Purchase and Merits, to give Justification, and Eternal Life, to all that can bring good Evidence of their having complied with the Terms and Conditions of the Law of Grace. Thus they antedate the Last Day, and hold forth Christ as a Judge, rather than a Savior. Luther was wont to warn people of this distinction, frequently in his Comment on the Epistle to the Galatians. And no other Headship to Christ, do we find some willing to admit, but what belongs to his Kingly Office: As for his Suretyship, and being the Second Adam, and a public person, some treat it with Contempt. I have heard, that Dr. Tho. Goodwin was in his Youth an Arminian, or at least inclining that way, but was by the Lord's Grace brought off by Dr. Sibbs his clearing up to him this same Point of Christ's being the Head and Representative of all his People. Now though we maintain steadfastly this Headship of Jesus Christ, yet we say not, That there is an actual partaking of his Fulness of Grace, till we be in him by Faith, though this Faith is also given us on Christ's behalf, Phil. 1.29. and we believe through Grace, Acts 18.27. And we know no Grace, we can call nothing Grace, we care for no Grace, but what comes from this Head, the Savior of the Body. But so much shall serve to point forth the main things of difference and Mistakes.

Is it not a little provoking, that some are so captious, that no Minister can preach in the hearing of some, (of the Freedom of God's Grace, of the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness, of sole and single believing

on him for Righteousness and Eternal Life, of the Impossibility of a Natural Man's doing any good Work, before he be in Christ; of the impossibility of the mixing of Man's Righteousness and Works, with Christ's Righteousness in the business of Justification, and several other Points,) but he is immediately called, or suspected to be an Antinomian. If we say, that Faith in Jesus Christ is neither Work, nor Condition, nor Qualification in Justification, but is a mere Instrument, receiving (as an empty Hand receiveth the freely given Alms) the Righteousness of Christ, and that in its very Act, it is a renouncing of all things but the Gift of Grace, the fire is kindled. So that it is come to that, as Mr. Christopher Fowler said, That he that will not be Antichristian, must be called an Antinomian. Is there a Minister in London, who did not preach, some twenty, some thirty years ago, according to their standing, that same Doctrine now by some called Antinomian. Let not Dr. Crisp's Book be looked upon as the Standard of our Doctrine; there are many good things in it; and also many expressions in it, that we generally dislike. It's true that Mr. Burgess, and Mr. Rutherford wrote against Antinomianism, and against some that were both Antinomians and Arminians: And it is no less true that they wrote against the Arminians, and did hate the New Scheme of Divinity, so much now contended for, and to which we owe all our present contentions. I am persuaded that if these godly and sound Divines, were on the present Stage, they would be as ready to draw their Pens against two Books lately printed against Dr. Crisp, as ever they were to write against the Doctor 's Book. Truth is to be defended by Truth, but Error is often, and unhappily opposed, by Error under Truth's Name.

But what shall we do in this case? What shall we do for peace with our Brethren? Shall we lie still under their undeserved Reproaches, and for keeping the peace, silently suffer others to beat us unjustly? If it were our own personal concern, we should bear it: If it were only

their charging us with ignorance, weakness, and being unstudied Divines (as they have used liberally to call all that have not learned, and dare not believe their New Divinity) we might easily pass it by, or put it up. But when we see the pure Gospel of Christ corrupted, and an Arminian Gospel new vanmpt and obtruded on people, to the certain peril of the souls of such as believe it, and our Ministry reflected upon, which should be dearer to us than our lives, can we be silent! As we have a charge from the Lord, to deliver to our people what we have received from Him, so as he calls and enables, we are not to give place by subjection not for an hour, to such as creep in, not only to spy out, but to destroy, not so much the Gospel Liberty, as the Gospel Salvation we have in Christ Jesus, and to bring us back under the Yoke of Legal Bondage. And indeed the case in that Epistle to the Galatians, and ours have a great affinity.

Is it desired that we should forbear to make a free offer of God's Grace in Christ, to the worst of Sinners? This cannot be granted by us, for this is the Gospel faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation (and therefore worthy of all our preaching of it) that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, and the chief of them, 1 Tim. 1.15. This was the Apostolic practice according to their Lord's command, Mark 16.15, 16. Luke 24.47. They began at Jerusalem, where the Lord of Life was wickedly slain by them, and yet Life in and through his Blood was offered to, and accepted, and obtained by many of them. Every believers experience witnesseth to this, That everyone that believes on Jesus Christ, acts that faith as the Chief of Sinners. Every man that seeth himself rightly, thinks so of himself, and therein thinks not amiss. God only knoweth who is truly the greatest Sinner, and every humbled Sinner will think that he is the Man.

Shall we tell men, that unless they be holy, they must not believe on Jesus Christ? That they must not venture on Christ for Salvation, till they be qualified and fit to be received and welcomed by him! This were to forbear preaching the Gospel at all, or to forbid all men to believe on Christ; For never was any sinner qualified for Christ. He is well qualified for us, 1 Cor. 1.30. but a sinner out of Christ, hath no qualification for Christ but sin and misery. Whence should he have any better, but in and from Christ? Nay, suppose an impossibility, that a man were qualified for Christ, I boldly assert, that such a man would not, nor could ever believe on Christ. For Faith is a lost, helpless, condemned sinner's casting himself on Christ for Salvation; and the qualified man is no such person.

Shall we warn people that they should not believe on Christ too soon? It is impossible that they should do it too soon. Can a man obey the great Gospel Command too soon? 1 John 3.23. or do the Great Work of God too soon? John 6.28, 29. A man may too soon think that he is in Christ, and that is when it is not so indeed; and this we frequently teach. But this is but an idle Dream, and not Faith. A man may too soon fancy that he hath Faith, but, I hope, he cannot act Faith too soon? If any should say, a man may be holy too soon, how would that saying be reflected upon? And yet it is certain, that though no man can be too soon holy, (because he cannot too soon believe on Christ, which is the only Spring of true Holiness) yet he may, and many do set about the study of that he counts holiness, too soon, that is, before the Tree be changed, Matth. 12.33, 34, 35. before he have the new heart, Ezek. 36 26, 27. and the Spirit of God dwelling in him, which is only got by Faith in Christ, Gal. 3.14. And therefore all this man's studying of Holiness, is not only vain labor, but acting of Sin. And if this study, and these endeavors be managed, as commonly they are, to obtain Justification before God, they are the more wicked Works still. And because this point is needful to be

known, I would give you some Testimonies for it. Doctrine of the Church of England, in her 39 Articles, Art. 13. Works done before the Grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of Faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive Grace, or (as the School Authors say) deserve Grace of Congruity: Yea, rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the Nature of Sin. So Confession of Faith, Chap. 16. Art. 7. Calvin. Instit. Lib. 3. Cap. 15. Sect. 6. They (saith he, speaking of the Popish Schoolmen) have found out, I know not what, moral good works, whereby men are made acceptable to God before they are engrafted into Christ. As if the Scripture lied, when it said; They are all in death who have not the Son, 1 John 5.12. If they be in death, how can they beget matter of life? As if it were of no force, whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin; as if evil trees could bring forth good fruit. Read the rest of that Section. On the contrary, the Council of Trent, Sess. 6. Cannon 7. say boldly, Whosoever shall say, That all Works done before Justification, howsoever they be done, are truly sin, and deserve the hatred of God, Let him be Anathema. And to give you one more bellowing of the Beast, wounded by the Light of the Gospel, see the same Council Sess. 6. Can. 11. Si quis dixerit, Gratiam quâ justificamur, esse tantùm favorem Dei, Anathema sit. This is fearful blasphemy, saith Dr. Downham, Bishop of London-derry, in his Orthodox Book of Justification, Lib. 3. Cap. 1. Where he saith, That the Hebrew words, which in the Old Testament signify the Grace of God, do always signify favor, and never grace inherent. And above fifty Testimonies may be brought from the New Testament to prove that by God's Grace, his favor is still meant. But what was good Church of England Doctrine, at, and after the Reformation, cannot now go down with some Arminianizing Nonconformists.

If then nothing will satisfy our quarrelling Brethren, but, either Silence as to the Main Points of the Gospel which we believe, and live by the faith of, and look to be saved in, which we have for many years preached with some seals of the Holy Ghost in converting sinners unto God, and in building them up in holiness and comfort, by the faith and power of them, which also we vowed to the Lord to preach to all that will hear us, as long as we live, in the day when we gave up ourselves to serve God with our Spirit in the Gospel of his Son; If either this Silence, or the swallowing down of Arminian Schemes of the Gospel contrary to the New Testament, and unknown to the Reformed Churches, in their greatest purity, be the only terms of peace with our Brethren, we must then maintain our peace with God, and our own Consciences in the defense of plain Gospel Truth, And our Harmony with the Reformed Churches, and in the comfort of these, bear their Enmity. And though it be usual with them to vilify and contemn such as differ from them, for their fewness, weakness and want of Learning; yet they might know that the most Learned and Godly in the Christian World, have maintained and defended the same Doctrine we stand for, for some Ages. The Grace of God will never want, for it can and will furnish, Defenders of it. England hath been blessed with a Bradwardine, an Archbishop of Canterbury, against the Pelagians, a Twisse and Ames against the Arminians. And though they that contend with us would separate their Cause altogether from that of these two pests of the Church of Christ, I mean Pelagius and Arminius; yet judicious observers cannot but already perceive a coincidence, and do fear more, when either the force of Argument shall drive them out of their lurking holes, or when they shall think fit to discover their secret sentiments, which yet we but guess at; Then as we shall know better what they would be at, so it is very like, that they will then find Enemies in many, whom they have seduced by their craft, and do yet seem to be in their

Camp, and will meet with Opposers both at home and abroad, that they think not of.

Our Doctrine of the Justification of a Sinner by the free grace of God in Jesus Christ, however it be misrepresented and reflected upon, is yet undeniably recommended by four things.

1 It is a Doctrine savoury and precious unto all serious Godly Persons Dr. Ames his observation holds good as to all the Arminian Divinity, that it is *contra communem sensum fidelium*, against the common sense of Believers. And though this be an argument of little weight with them, that value more the judgment of the Scribes and the Wise, and Disputers of this World, 1 Cor. 1.18, 19, 20, 21. than of all the Godly; Yet the Spirit of God by John gives us this same argument 1 John 4.5, 6. They are of the World, therefore speak they of the World, and the World heareth them. We are of God; he that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us: Hereby know we the Spirit of Truth, and the Spirit of Error. How evident is it, that several who by Education, or an unsound Ministry, having had their Natural Enmity against the Grace of God strengthened, when the Lord by his Spirit hath broke in upon their hearts, and hath raised a serious Soul-exercise about their Salvation, their turning to God in Christ, and their turning from Arminianism, have begun together? And some of the greatest Champions for the Grace of God, have been persons thus dealt with, as we might instance. And as it is thus with men at their Conversion, so is it found afterward, that still as it is well with them in their inner man, so doth the Doctrine of Grace still appear more precious and savoury. On the other part, all the ungodly and unrenewed have a dislike and disrelish of this Doctrine, and are all for the Doctrine of doing, and love to hear it, and in their sorry exercise, are still for

doing their own business in Salvation, though they be nothing, and can do nothing, but Sin, and destroy themselves.

2. It is that Doctrine only, by which a convinced sinner can be dealt with effectually. When a man is awakened and brought to that, that all must be brought to, or to worse, What shall I do to be saved? Acts 16.30, 31. We have the Apostolic answer to it, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. This Answer is so old, that with many it seems out of date; But it is still, and will ever be fresh and new and savoury, and the only Resolution of this grand Case of Conscience, as long as Conscience and the World lasts. No Wit or Art of Man, will ever find a crack or flaw in it, or devise another or a better answer; nor can any but this alone, heal rightly the wound of an awakened Conscience. Let us set this man to seek resolution in this case, of some Masters in our Israel. According to their Principles, they must say to him, Repent and Mourn for your known Sins, and leave and loath them, and God will have mercy on you. Alas! saith the poor Man, My Heart is hard and I cannot repent aright; yea I find my heart more hard and vile, than when I was secure in sin. If you speak to this man of qualifications for Christ, he knows nothing of them: if of sincere Obedience, his answer is native and ready, Obedience is the work of a living man, and Sincerity is only in a renewed Soul: sincere Obedience is therefore as impossible to a dead unrenewed sinner, as perfect Obedience is. Why should not the right answer be given, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. Tell him what Christ is, what he hath done and suffered to obtain eternal Redemption for sinners, and that according to the Will of God and his Father. Give him a plain downright Narrative of the Gospel Salvation wrought out by the Son of God; tell him the History and Mystery of the Gospel plainly; it may be the Holy Ghost will work faith thereby, as he did in those first fruits of the Gentiles, Acts 10.44. If he ask, what warrant he hath to

believe on Jesus Christ, Tell him, that he hath utter indispensable Necessity for it (for without believing on him, he must perish eternally.) That, he hath God's gracious Offer of Christ and all his Redemption, with a promise, that upon accepting the Offer by Faith, Christ and Salvation with Him is his. That he hath God's express commandment, 1 John 3.23. to believe on Christ's Name, and that he should make conscience of obeying it, as well as any command in the Moral Law. Tell him of Christ's ability and good-will to save, that no man was ever rejected by him, that cast himself upon him, that desperate cases are the glorious Triumphs of his Art of saving. Tell him that there is no midst between Faith and Unbelief; that there is no excuse for neglecting the one, and continuing in the the other. That believing on the Lord Jesus for salvation is more pleasing to God, than all obedience to his Law, and that unbelief is the most provoking to God, and the most damning to man, of all sins. Against the greatness of his sins, the Curse of the Law, and the severity of God as Judge, there is no relief to be held forth to him, but the free and boundless Grace of God in the Merit of Christ's Satisfaction by the sacrifice of himself. If he should say, What is it to believe on Jesus Christ? As to this, I find no such question in the Word; but that all did some way understand the notion of it: The Jews that did not believe on him, John 6 28, 29, 30. the Chief Priests and Pharisees, John 7 48 the blind Men, John 9.35. When Christ asked him, Believest thou on the Son of God? He answered, Who is he Lord, that I may believe on him? Immediately, when Christ had told him, ver. 37. he saith not, what is it to believe on him? but, Lord, I believe, and worshipped him: and so both professed, and acted Faith in him. So the Father of the Lunatick, Mark 9.23, 24. The Eunuch, Act, 8.37. They all, both Christ's Enemies and his Disciples, knew, that Faith in him, was a believing that the Man Jesus of Nazareth, was the Son of God, the Messiah, and Savior of the World, so as to receive, and look for Salvation in his

Name, Acts 4.12. This was the common Report, published by Christ, and his Apostles, and Disciples; and known by all that heard it. If he yet ask, What he is to believe; you tell him, that he is not called to believe that he is in Christ, and that his Sins are pardoned, and he a Justified Man; but that he is to believe God's Record concerning Christ. 1 John 5, 10, 11, 12. And this Record is, that God giveth; that is, offereth to us Eternal Life in his Son Jesus Christ. And that all that with the heart believe this Report, and rest their Souls on these glad Tidings, shall be saved, Rom. 10.9, 10.11. And thus he is to believe, that he may be justified, Gal. 2.16. If he still say; That this Believing is hard. This is a good doubt, but easily resolved. It bespeaks a Man deeply humbled. Any body may see his own Impotence, to obey the Law of God fully; but few find the Difficulty of believing; For his Resolution, ask him, what it is he finds, makes believing difficult to him. Is it unwillingness to be justified and saved? Is it unwillingness to be so saved by Jesus Christ, to the praise of God's Grace in him, and to the voiding of all boasting in himself? This he will surely deny. Is it a Distrust of the Truth of the Gospel-Record? This he dare not own. Is it a Doubt of Christ's Ability, or Good Will to save? This is to contradict the Testimony of God in the Gospel. Is it because he doubts of an Interest in Christ and his Redemption? You tell him, That believing on Christ makes up the Interest in him. If he say, that he cannot believe on Jesus Christ, because of the difficulty of the acting this Faith? and that a Divine Power is needful to draw it forth, which he finds not? You tell him, that believing in Jesus Christ is no work, but a resting on Jesus Christ. And that this pretence is as unreasonable as that if a Man wearied with a Journey, and who is not able to go one step further, should argue, I am so tired, that I am not able to lie down; when indeed he can neither stand nor go. The poor wearied sinner can never believe on Jesus Christ till he finds he can do nothing for himself; and in his first believing doth always apply himself to Christ

for Salvation, as a man hopeless and helpless in himself. And by such reasonings with him from the Gospel, the Lord will (as he hath often done) convey faith, and joy, and peace by believing.

3. This Doctrine of free Justification by Faith alone, hath this Advantage, That it suits all men's Spirits and Frame, in their serious Approaches to God in Worship. Men may think and talk boldly, of inherent Righteousness, and of its worth and value, of good Works, and Frames, and Dispositions; but when men present themselves before the Lord, and have any discoveries of his Glory, all things in themselves will disappear, and be looked upon as nothing. Zophar, though the hottest Speaker of Job 's Friends, did yet speak rightly to him, Job 11.4, 5. For thou hast said, My Doctrine is pure, and I am clean in thine eyes. But, O that God would speak! And so Job found it, when God displayed his Glory to him, and that only in the works of Creation and Providence, Chap. 38, 39. He then changed his note, Job 40.4, 5. and 42.2, — 6. So was it with Isaiah, Chap 6.5. till pardoning Grace was imparted to him. No man can stand before this Holy Lord God, with any peace and Comfort, unless he have God himself to stay upon. His Grace and Mercy in Jesus Christ, can only preserve a man from being consumed, and the Faith of it, from being confounded. Hence we see the difference betwixt men's frame in their Disputes and Doctrine about these points, and their own sense and pleadings with God in Prayer.

4. This Doctrine of Justification by Faith without any mixtures of man (however and by what Names and Titles soever they be dignified or distinguished) hath this undoubted advantage, that, it is that, which all not judicially hardened and blinded, do, or would, or must betake themselves unto, when dying. How loath would men be to plead that Cause on a Death-bed, which they so stoutly stand up

for with Tongue and Pen, when at ease, and that evil day far away? They seem to be jealous, least God's Grace and Christ's Righteousness have too much room, and Men's Works too little, in the the business of Justification; But was ever a sensible dying person, exercised with this jealousy as to himself? Even bloody Stephen Gardener, when a dying, could answer Dr. Day, Bishop of Chichester, who offered comfort to him, by this Doctrine, What, my Lord, will you open that Gap now? then farewell altogether. To me, and such other in my case, you may speak it, but open this Window to the People, then farewell altogether. Book of Martyrs, V. 3. p. 450. In which words, he bewrayed a conviction of the fitness of the Doctrine to dying persons, and his knowledge that it tended to the destroying the Kingdom of Antichrist. As Fox in the same Book of Martyrs, Vol. 2. p. 46. gives this as the reason of Luther 's success against Popery, above all former attempts of preceeding Witnesses. But, saith he, Luther gave the stroke, and plucked down the foundation, and all by opening one vein, long hid before, wherein lieth the touchstone of all Truth and Doctrine, as the only Principal Origin of our Salvation, which is our free Justification by Faith only, in Christ the Son of God. Consider how it is with the most holy and eminent Saints, when dying? Did ye ever see or hear any boasting of their works and performances? They may and do own to the praise of his Grace, what they have been made to be, what they have been helped to do or suffer for Christ's sake. But when they draw near to the Awful Tribunal, what else is in their Eye and Heart, but only Free-Grace, Ransoming Blood, and a Well-ordered Covenant in Christ the Surety? They cannot bear to hear any make mention to them of their Holiness, their own Grace and Attainments. In a word, the Doctrine of Conditions, Qualifications, and Rectoral Government, and the distribution of Rewards and Punishments, according to the New Law of Grace, will make but an uneasy Bed to a dying Man's Conscience, and will leave him in a very bad condition at

present, and in dread of worse, when he is feeling in his last Agonies, that the Wages of Sin is Death, if he cannot by Faith add, but the Gift of God is Eternal Life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Rom. 6.23. He is a wise and happy man that anchors his Soul on that Rock, at which he can ride out the storm of Death. Why should men contend for that in their life, that they know they must renounce at their death? Or neglect that Truth now, that they must betake themselves unto then; why should a man build a House, which he must leave in a Storm, or be buried in its ruins? Many Architects have attempted to make a sure House of their own Righteousness; but it is without a Foundation, and must fall, or be thrown down sorrowfully by the foolish Builder, which is the better way. It is a great Test of the Truth of Doctrine, about the way of Salvation, when it is generally approved of by sensible dying men. And what the Universal Sense of all such in this case is, as to the Righteousness of Christ, and their own, is obvious to any man. He was an ingenuous Balaamite, who being himself a Papist, said to a Protestant, Our Religion is best to live in, and yours best to die in.

But notwithstanding of these great advantages (and they are but a few of many) that this Doctrine is attended with; There are not a few disadvantages, it labors under, which though they are rather to its commendation than reproach, yet they do hinder its Welcome and Reception.

As 1. This Doctrine is a Spiritual Mystery, and lieth not level to a Natural Understanding, 1 Cor. 2.10, 14. Working for Life, a man naturally understands; but believing for Life, he understands not. To mend the Old Man, he knows, but to put on the New Man by Faith is a Riddle to him. The study of Holiness, and to endeavor to square his Life according to God's Law, he knows a little of, though he can never do it; but to draw Sanctification from Christ by Faith,

and to walk holily, in and through the force of the Spirit of Christ in the Heart by Faith, is mere canting to him. A new Life he understands a little, but nothing of a New Birth and Regeneration. He never saw himself stark dead. Nay, not only is it unknown to the Natural Man, but he is by his Natural State, an enemy to it: he neither doth, nor can know it, nor approve of it, 1 Cor. 2.14. Wisdom that is Christ's way of saving men revealed in the Gospel, is justified of all her Children, and of them only, Matth. 11.19. Luke 7.29, 30, 35. This Enmity in Men to the Wisdom of God, is the cause not only of this contempt of its Ministry, but is a Temptation to many Ministers to patch up and frame a Gospel that is more suited to, and taking with, and more easily understood, by such men, than the true Gospel of Christ is: this Paul complains of in others, and vindicates himself from, 1 Cor. 1: 17. and 2.2. he warns others against it, Col. 2.8. 2 Cor. 11.3, 4. Gal. 1.6, 7, 8, 9. And it is certain that doing for Life, is more suited to corrupt Nature, than Believing is.

2. Our Opposers in this Doctrine have the Many for them and against us, as they of old boasted, John 7.48. This they have no ground to glory in, though they do, not we to be ashamed of the Truth, because we cannot vie numbers with them. With our Opposers, are all these sorts (and they make a great number) though I do not say or think that all our Opposers are to be ranked in any of these Lists, for some both Godly and Learned may mistake us and the Truth in this matter. 1. They have all the Ignorant People, that know nothing of either Law or Gospel. They serve God (they say, but most falsely) and hope that God will be merciful to them and save them. To all such, both the clear explication of God's Law, and the Mysteries of the Gospel, are strange things. Yet sincere obedience they love to hear of (for all of them think there is some sincerity in their hearts, and that they can do somewhat.) But of Faith in Christ they have no

knowledge, except by faith you understand a dream of being saved by Jesus Christ, though they know nothing of him, or of his way of saving men, nor of the way of being saved by him. 2. All Formalists are on their side. People that place their Religion in Trifles, because they are strangers to the substance thereof. 3. All proud secure sinners are against us, that go about, with the Jews, to establish their own Righteousness, Rom. 10.3. The secure are whole, and see no need of the Physician; the proud have physic at home, and despise that that came down from Heaven. 4. All the zealous devout people in a Natural Religion, are utter enemies to the Gospel. By a Natural Religion, I mean that, that is the product of the remnants of God's image in fallen man, a little improved by the Light of God's Word. All such cannot endure to hear, that God's Law must be perfectly fulfilled in every tittle of it, or no man can be saved by doing. That they must all perish forever that have not the Righteousness of a man that never sinned, who is also God over all blessed forever, to shelter and cover them from a holy God's anger, and to render them accepted of him. That this Righteousness is put on by the Grace of God, and a man must betake himself to it, and receive as a naked blushing sinner. That no man can do anything that is good, till Gospel Grace renew him and make him first a good man: This they will never receive, but do still think that a man may grow good by doing good.

3. Natural Reason is very fertile in its Objections and Cavils against the Doctrine of the Grace of God. And especially when this corrupt Reason is polished by learning and strong natural parts. When there are many to broach such Doctrines, and many so disposed to receive it, is it any wonder that the Gospel Truth makes little progress in the World? Nay, were it not for the Divine Power that supports it, and the promises of its preservation, its enemies are so many and strong, and true friends so few and feeble, we might fear its perishing from

the earth. But we know it is impossible. And if the Lord have a design of mercy to these Nations, and hath a vein of his Election to dig up amongst us, we make no doubt but the Glory of Christ, as a crucified Savior, shall yet be displayed in the midst of us, to the joy of all that love his salvation, and to the shame of others, Isa. 66.5.

4. I might add the great Declension of some of the Reformed Churches from the purity and simplicity of that Doctrine they were first planted in. The new Methodists about the Grace of God, had too great an increase in the French Churches. And which was very strange, this Declension advanced amongst them, at the same time when Jansenism was spreading amongst many of the Church of Rome: So that a man might have seen Papists growing better in their Doctrine, and Protestants growing worse. See Mr. Gale 's Idea of Jansenism, with Dr. Owen 's Preface. What there is of this amongst us in England, I leave the Reader to Mr. Jenkyn 's Coleusma, and to the Naked Truth, Part 4. And if there be any warping toward Arminian Doctrine, by some on our side, in order to ingratiate themselves with that Church that hath the secular advantages to dispense, and to make way for some accommodation with them, I had rather wait in fear till a further discovery of it, than offer to guess at.

Lastly, It is no small disadvantage this Doctrine lies under from the Spirit of this Day, we live in. A light, frothy, trifling temper prevails generally: Doctrines of the greatest weight, are talked of and treated about, with a vain unconcerned frame of Spirit, as if men contended rather about Opinions and School-points, than about the Oracles of God, and matters of Faith. But if men's hearts were seen by themselves, if Sin were felt, if men's Consciences were enlivened, if God's Holy Law were known in its exactness and severity, and the Glory and Majesty of the Law-giver shining before men's eyes, if men

were living as leaving Time and launching forth into Eternity, the Gospel Salvation by Jesus Christ, would be more regarded.

Object. 1. Is there not a great decay amongst Professors in real practical Godliness? Are we like the Old Protestants, or the Old Puritans? I answer, That the Decay and Degeneracy is great and heavily to be bewailed. But what is the cause? and what will be its cure? Is it because the Doctrine of Morality, and Virtue and Good Works is not enough preached? This cannot be; For there hath been for many years a public Ministry in the Nation, that make these their constant themes. Yet the Land is become as Sodom for all lewdness; and the Tree of Profaneness is so grown, that the Sword of the Magistrate hath not yet been able to lop off any of its Branches. Is it because men have too much Faith in Christ? or too little? or none at all? Would not faith in Christ increase Holiness? did it not always so? and will it not still do it? Was not the holiness of the first Protestants eminent and shining? And yet they generally put assurance in the definition of their faith. We cannot say that Gospel Holiness hath prospered much by the correction or mitigation of that harsh-like definition. The certain spring of this prevailing Wickedness in the Land, is people's ignorance and unbelief of the Gospel of Christ, and that grows by many Prophets that speak lies to them in the Name of the Lord.

Object. 2. But do not some abuse the Grace of the Gospel and turn it into Wantonness. Answer. Yes, Some do, ever did, and still will do so. But it is only the ill-understood and not-believed Doctrine of Grace that they abuse; the Grace itself no man can abuse, for its power prevents its abuse. Let us see how Paul, that blessed Herald of this Grace (as he was an eminent instance of it) dealeth with this Objection, Rom. 6.1, &c. What doth he to prevent this abuse? Is it by extenuating what he had said, Chap. 5.20. that Grace abounds

much more, where Sin had abounded? Is it by mincing Grace smaller, that men may not choke upon it, or surfeit by it? Is it by mixing something of the Law with it, to make it more wholesome? No: But only by plain asserting the power and influence of this Grace, wherever it really is, as at length in that Chapter. This Grace is all treasured up in Christ Jesus, offered to all men in the Gospel, poured forth by our Lord in the Working of Faith, and drunk in by the Elect in the exercise of Faith, and becomes in them a living spring, which will and must break out and spring up in all holy conversation. He exhorts them to drink in more and more of this Grace by Faith. And as for such as pretend to Grace and live ungodly, the Spirit of God declares they are void of Grace, which is always fruitful in good works, 2 Pet. 2. and Jude's Epistle. The Apostle orders the Churches to cast such out, 1 Cor. 5. 2 Tim. 3.5. And to declare to them as Peter did to a Professor, Acts 8.20, 21. That they have no part nor portion in this matter, for their heart is not right in the sight of God, though the Doctrine be right, that they hypocritically profess.

But if our Brethren will not forbear their charge of Antinomianism, we entreat them that they will give it in justly. As 1. On them that say that the sanction of the Holy Law of God is repealed, so that no man is now under it, either to be condemned for breaking it, or to be saved by keeping it; which to us is rank Antinomianism and Arminianism both. Yea that it doth not now require perfect holiness; but indeed what can it require? For it is no Law, if its Sanction be repealed. 2. On them let the charge lie, that are ungodly under the name of Christianity. And both they and we know where to find such true Antinomians in great abundance, who yet are never called by that name. And is it not somewhat strange that men who have so much zeal against an Antinomian principle, have so much kindness for true Antinomians in practice? 3. Let him

be called by this ugly name, that judgeth not the Holy Law and Word of God written in the Old and New Testament to be a perfect rule of life, to all Believers, and saith not that all such should study conformity thereunto, Rom. 12.2. 4. That encourageth himself in Sin, and hardeneth himself in Impenitence, by the Doctrine of the Gospel. No man that knows and believes the Gospel, can do so. What some hypocrites may do, is nothing to us, who disown all such persons and practices, and own no principle that can really encourage the one, or influence the other. 5. That thinketh holiness is not necessary to all that would be saved. We maintain not only that it is necessary to, but that it is a great part of, Salvation. 6. Whoever thinks, that when a Believer comes short in obeying God's Law, he sins not, and that he ought not to mourn because of it as provoking to God, and hurtful to the new creation in him, and that he needs not renew the exercise of Faith and Repentance for repeated washing and pardoning. Lastly, That say that a Sinner is actually justified before he be united to Christ by faith. It's strange that such that are charged with this, of all men do most press on Sinners to believe on Jesus Christ, and urge the damnation threatened in the Gospel upon all Unbelievers. That there is a decreed Justification from Eternity, particular and fixed as to all the Elect, and a Virtual Perfect Justification of all the Redeemed, in and by the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ, Isa. 53 11. Rom. 4.25. Heb. 9.26, 28. and 10.14 is not yet called in question by any amongst us; and more is not craved, but that a Sinner for his Actual Justification must lay hold on and plead this Redemption in Christ's blood by Faith.

But on the other hand, we glory in any name of Reproach (as the honorable reproach of Christ) that is cast upon us for asserting the absolute boundless freedom of the Grace of God, which excludes all merit and everything like it; The Absoluteness of the Covenant of Grace (for the Covenant of Redemption was plainly and strictly

a conditional one, and the noblest of all conditions was in it; the Son of God's taking on him man's nature, and offering it in Sacrifice, was the strict condition of all the Glory and Reward promised to Christ and his seed, Isa. 53.10, 11.) wherein all things are freely promised, and that Faith that is required for sealing a man's Interest in the Covenant, is promised in it and wrought by the Grace of it, Ephes 2.8. That Faith at first, is wrought by, and acts upon, a full and absolute offer of Christ, and of all his fullness; an Offer that hath no condition in it, but that native one to all Offers, acceptance; and in the very act of this Acceptance, the Acceptor doth expressly disclaim all things in himself, but Sinfulness and Misery. That Faith in Jesus Christ doth justify (although by the way it is to be noted, that it is never written in the Word, that Faith justifieth actively, but always passively, that a man is justified by faith, and that God justifieth men by, and through faith, yet admitting the phrase) only as a mere instrument receiving that Imputed Righteousness of Christ, for which we are justified; and that this Faith in the Office of Justification, is neither condition nor qualification, nor our Gospel-Righteousness, but in its very Act is a renouncing of all such pretences.

We proclaim the Market of Grace to be free, Isai. 55.1, 2, 3. It's Christ's last offer and lowest, Rev. 22 17. If there be any price or money spoke of, it is no price, no money. And where such are the terms and conditions, if we be forced to call them so, we must say that they look like a renouncing, than a boasting of any Qualifications or Conditions. Surely the Terms of the Gospel-Bargain, are God's free giving, and our free taking and receiving.

We are not ashamed of teaching the ineffectualness of the Law, and all the works of it, to give Life, either that of Justification, or of Regeneration and Sanctification, or of Eternal Life. That the Law of

God can only damn all sinners, that it only rebukes, and thereby irritates and increaseth sin, and can never subdue it, till Gospel Grace come with power upon the heart, and then when the Law is written in the heart, it is copyed out in the life.

That we call men to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, in that case the first Adam brought them to, and left them in, in that case that the Law finds and leaves them in, guilty, filthy, condemned, out of which case they can only be delivered by Christ, and by believing on him.

That we tell Sinners, that Jesus Christ will surely welcome all that come to him, and as he will not cast them out for their sinfulness, in their Nature and by past Life, so neither for their Misery in the want of such Qualifications and Graces, that he only can give.

That we do hold forth the Propitiation in Christ's Blood, as the only thing to be in the eye of a man that would believe on Christ unto justification of Life; and that by this faith alone a sinner is justified, and God is justified in doing so.

That God justifieth the Ungodly, Rom. 4.5. neither by making him godly before he justify him, nor leaving him ungodly after he hath justified him; But that the same Grace that justifies him, doth immediately sanctify him.

If for such Doctrine we be called Antinomians, we are bold to say, that there is some ignorance of, or prejudice at, the known Protestant Doctrine, in the hearts of the Reproachers.

There are some things we complain of; as, That they load their Brethren so grievously with unjust calumnies, either directly, or by consequence; As when they preach up holiness and the necessity of it, as if it were their proper Doctrine and disowned by us, when they

cannot but know in their Consciences, that there is no difference betwixt them and us, about the nature or necessity of Holiness, but only about its Spring and Place in Salvation. We derive it from Jesus Christ and Faith in him, and know assuredly that it can spring from nothing else. We place it betwixt Justification and Glory, and that is its Scripture place and nowhere else can it be found or stand, let men try it as much and long as they will.

That they seem very zealous against Antinomianism, and forget the other extreme of Arminianism, which is far more common, as dangerous, and far more natural to all men. For though there have been, and may be this day, some true Antinomians, either through ignorance, or weakness, reeling to that extreme, or by the heat of contention with, and hatred of Arminianism (as it is certain, some very good and learned men have inclined to Arminianism, through their hatred of Antinomianism, and have declared so much.) And some may, and do corrupt the Doctrine of the Gospel. through the unrenewedness of their hearts; yet how destructive soever this abuse may be to the souls of the seduced, such an appearance of Antinomianism, is but as a Meteor or Comet, that will soon blaze out, and its folly will be quickly hist off the Stage. But the principles of Arminianism are the natural dictates of a carnal mind, which is enmity both to the Law of God, and to the Gospel of Christ, and next to the Dead Sea of Popery (into which also this stream runs) have since Pelagius to this day, been the greatest plague of the Church of Christ, and its like will be till his Second Coming.

We do also justly complain that in their opposing of true Antinomian Errors, and particularly the alleged Tenants of Dr. Crisp, they hint that there is a party of Ministers and Professors that defend them, whereas we can defy them to name one Minister in London at least, that doth so.

That expressions capable of a good sense, are strenuously perverted, contrary to the scope of the Writer or Speaker. But this and such like are the usual methods of unfair Contenders. Were the like method taken on the other side, how many Popish, Arminian, yea and Socinian expressions might be published? If any Gospel-Truth be preached or published, that reflects on the Idol of Self-Righteousness, and Justification thereby, it is soon quarrelled with: Put Reproaches cast on the free Grace of God, and the imputed Righteousness of Christ, are with them, if not approved, yet but Venial well meant Mistakes. Let men's stated Principles be Known, and their Expressions explained accordingly, or Mistakes and Contentions will be endless.

We do also complain, That Love to Peace hath made many grave and sound Divines forbear to utter their Minds freely in public on these Points; Whereby the adverse Party is emboldened, and such Ministers as dare not purchase Peace by silence, when so great Truths are undermined, are exposed as a Mark. But we do not question but these Worthy Brethren, when they shall see the Points of Controversy accurately stated (as they may shortly) will openly appear on Truth's side, as we know their hearts are for it.

Lastly, We complain, that the Scheme of the Gospel contended for by our Opposers, is clouded, veiled and darkened by School-Terms, new, uncouth, and unscriptural Phrases; whereby, as they think to guard themselves against Opposition, so they do increase the Jealousies of their Brethren, and keep their Principles from the Knowledge of ordinary people, who are as much concerned in those Points as any Scholar or Divine.

This Controversy looks like a very bad Omen. We thought we might have healed our Old Breaches, in smaller things; and behold a New

one is threatened in the greatest Matters. We did hope, that the good Old Protestant Doctrine had been rooted and rivetted in the hearts of all the Ministers on our side; but now we find the contrary, and that the sour Leaven of Arminianism works strongly. Their Advocates do not yet own the Name, but the younger sort are more bold and free; and with them no Books or Authors are in esteem and use, but such as are for the New Rational Method of Divinity (Rational is a fitter Commendation of a Philosopher, than of a Divine; and yet it's somewhat better applied to a Divine than to Divinity: For true Divinity hath a higher and Nobler Original than Man's Reason, even Divine Revelation? and it can never be rightly learned by them that have no higher Principle in them than Reason, even the Teaching of the Holy Ghost.) But for Luther, Calvin, Zanchi, Twisse, Ames, Perkins, and Divines of their Spirit and Stamp, they are generally neglected and despised.

We were in hope, that after the Lord had so signally appeared for his Truth and People, in preserving both, under the Rage of that Antichristian Spirit of Persecution, and Apostasy to gross Popery, that wrought so mightily under the Two Last Reigns; and when he had given us the Long-desired Mercy of a Legal Establishment of our Gospel-Liberty, in This, that all Hearts and Hands should have been unanimously employed in the advancing the work of Christ. But we find, that as we have for a Long Time lost, in a great measure, the Power, we are now in no small danger of losing also the Purity of the Gospel; And without them what signifies Liberty!

It is undoubted, that the Devil designs the obstructing of the Course of the Gospel; and in this he hath often had the Service of the Tongues and Pens of Good Men, as well as of Bad; yet we are not without hope, that the Lord in his Wisdom and Mercy will defeat

him, and that these Contentions may yet have good Fruit, and a good Issue.

For furthering of this good End, let me request a few things of my Brethren.

1. Let us not receive Reports suddenly of one another. In times of Contention, many false Reports are raised, and rashly believed. This is both the Fruit and the Fuel of Contention; For all the Noise of Antinomianism, I must declare, that I do not know (and I have both Opportunity and Inclination to inquire) any one Antinomian Minister, or Christian in London, who is really such as their Reproachers paint them out, or such as Luther and Calvin wrote against.

2. Let us make Christ Crucified our great Study, as Christians, and the preaching of him, our main work, as Ministers, 1 Cor. 2.2. Paul determined to know nothing else. But many manage the Ministry, as if they had taken up a contrary determination, even to know anything, save Jesus Christ, and him Crucified. We are amazed to see so many ashamed of the Cross of Christ, and to behave as if they accounted the Tidings of Salvation, by the slain Son of God, an Old Antiquated Story, and unfit to be daily preached. And what comes in the room thereof, is not unknown, nor is it worth the mentioning: For all things that come in Christ's room, and jostle him out, either of Hearts, or Pulpits, are alike abominable to a Christian. How many Sermons may a man hear, and read, when printed; yea, and Books written, about the way to Heaven, wherein is hardly the Name of Jesus Christ? And if he be named, it is the Name of Christ, as a Judge and Lawgiver, rather than that of a Savior. And as little room hath Christ in many men's Prayers; except it be in the conclusion. When we cannot avoid the

observing of those sad things, let it be a sharp Spur to us, to Preach Christ more, to Pray more in his Name, and to Live more to his Praise. Let us not be deceived with that pretence, That Christ may be Preached, when he is not Named. The Preaching of the Gospel, is the Naming of Christ, and so called, Rom. 15.20. And Paul was to bear Christ's Name before the Gentiles, and Kings, and the Children of Israel, Acts 9.15.

3. Let us Study hard, and Pray much, to know the truth and to cleave unto it. It is an Old Observation, Ante Pelagian, securiùs loquebantur Patres. Before Pelagius, even the Fathers spoke more carelessly; meaning well, and fearing no Mistakes in their Hearers. Now it is not so; the more careful should we be in our Doctrine. Let us search our own Consciences. and see how we ourselves are justified before God. So Paul argued, Gal. 2.15, 16. And let us bring forth that Doctrine to our People, that we find in our Bibles, and have felt the power of upon our own hearts.

Let us not run into Extremes upon the Right or Left Hand, through the heat of Contention; but carefully keep the good Old way of the Protestant Doctrine; wherein so many thousands of Saints and Martyrs of Jesus; have lived holily, and died happily, who never heard of our New Schemes and Notions.

And for this end, let us take and cleave to the Test of the Assemblies Confession of Faith and Catechisms. More we own not ourselves, more we crave not of our Brethren; and because we deal fairly and openly, I shall set it down, Verbatim, Conf. Chap. 11. Of Justification, Art. 1. Those whom God effectually calleth, he also freely Justifieth; not by infusing Righteousness into them, but by Pardoning their Sins, and by accounting and accepting their Persons as Righteous; not for anything wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's

sake alone; not by imputing Faith itself, the Act of Believing, or any other Evangelical Obedience, as their Righteousness; but by imputing the Obedience and Satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving, and resting on him and his Righteousness by Faith; which Faith they have not of themselves, it is the Gift of God.

Art. 2. Faith thus receiving and resting on Christ and his Righteousness, is the alone Instrument of Justification; yet is it not alone in the Person Justified, but is ever Accompanied with all other saving Graces, and is no dead Faith, but worketh by Love.

Art 3. Christ by his Obedience and Death, did fully discharge the Debt of all those that are thus Justified, and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to his Fathers Justice in their behalf; yet in as much as he was given by the Father for them, and his Obedience and Satisfaction accepted in their Stead, and both freely, not for anything in them, Their Justification is only of Free Grace, that both the exact Justice, and rich Grace of God, might be glorified in the Justification of Sinners.

Art. 4. God did, from all Eternity, Decree to Justify all the Elect, and Christ did, in the fullness of time, Die for their Sins, and Rise again for their Justification: Nevertheless, they are not Justified, until the Holy Spirit doth in due time, actually apply Christ unto them.

Art. 5. God doth continue to forgive the sins of those that are Justified: And although they can never fall from the state of Justification, yet they may, by their sins, fall under God's Fatherly displeasure, and not have the light of his Countenance restored unto them, until they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their Faith and Repentance.

Art. 6. The Justification of Believers under the Old Testament, was in all these Respects, one and the same with the Justification of Believers under the New Testament. This is the whole Chapter exactly.

Larger Catechism. Q. How doth Faith Justify a sinner in the sight of God? Ans. Faith Justifieth a sinner in the sight of God, not because of those other graces which do always accompany it, or of good Works, that are the Fruits of it, nor as if the grace of Faith, or any Act thereof, were imputed to him for his Justification; but only as it is an Instrument, by which he receiveth and applieth Christ and his Righteousness.

Let these weighty words, be but heartily assented to, in their plain and Native Sense, and we are one in this great point of Justification. But can any considering Man think, that the new Scheme, of a real Change, Repentance and Sincere Obedience, as necessary to be found in a person that may Lawfully come to Christ for Justification, of Faith's Justifying as it is the spring of sincere Obedience, of a Man's being Justified by, and upon his coming up to the Terms of the new Law of Grace (a new word, but of an old and ill meaning) can any man think that this Scheme and the sound words of the Reverend Assembly, do agree? Surely if such a Scheme had been offered to that Grave, Learned and Orthodox Synod, it would have had a more severe Censure past upon it, than I am willing to name.

Do not we find in our particular Dealings with Souls, the same Principles I am now Opposing?

When we deal with the Carnal, Secure, Careless Sinners (and they are a vast Multitude) and ask them a Reason of that hope of Heaven, they pretend to, Is not this their common Answer? I live inoffensively, I keep God's Law as well as I can, and wherein I fail, I

repent, and beg God's Mercy for Christ's sake: My Heart is sincere, though my Knowledge and Attainments be short of others. If we go on to inquire further, what acquaintance they have with Jesus Christ, what Applications their Souls have made to him, what workings of Faith on him, what use they have made of his Righteousness for Justification, and his Spirit for Sanctification, What they know of living by Faith in Jesus Christ? We are Barbarians to them; and in this sad state, many Thousands in England live and die, and Perish Eternally. Yet so thick is the darkness of the Age, that many of them live here, and go hence with the Reputation of good Christians; and some of them may have their Funeral Sermon and Praises Preached by an Ignorant Flattering Minister, though it may be the poor creatures never did, in the whole course of their Life, nor at their Death, employ Jesus Christ so much, for an Entry to Heaven, purchased by his Blood, and only accessible by Faith in him, as a poor Turk doth Mahomet, for a Room in his Beastly Paradise. How common and fearful a thing is this in this Land and City!

When we come to deal with a poor awakened sinner, who seeth his lost state, and that he is condemned by the Law of God; we find the same Principles working in him; for they are Natural, and therefore Universal in all Men, and hardly rooted out of any. We find him sick and wounded; we tell him where his Help lies, in Jesus Christ; what his proper work is, to apply to him by Faith. What is his Answer? Alas! saith the Man, I have been, and am so vile a sinner, my heart is so bad, and so full of Plagues and Corruptions, that I cannot think of believing on Christ. But if I had but Repentance, and some Holiness in Heart and Life, and such and such gracious Qualifications, I would then believe. When indeed this his Answer is as full of Nonsense, Ignorance, and Pride, as words can contain or express. They imply, 1. If I were pretty well recovered, I would employ the Physician, Christ. 2. That there is some hope to work out

these good things by myself, without Christ. 3. And when I come to Christ, with a Price in my hand, I shall be welcome. 4. That I can come to Christ when I will. So ignorant are people Naturally of Faith in Jesus Christ; and no Words or Warnings repeated, nor plainest Instructions can beat into men's heads and hearts, that the first coming to Christ by Faith, or believing on him, is not a believing we shall be saved by him, but a believing on him, that we may be saved by him. And it is less to be wondered at, that ignorant people do not, when so many learned men will not understand it.

When we deal with a Proud, Self-Righteous Hypocrite, we find the same Principles of Enmity against the Grace of the Gospel. A Profane Person is not so enraged at the rebukes of Sin from the Law, as these Pharisees are at the discovery of their ruin by Unbelief. They cannot endure to have their Idol of Self Righteousness touched, neither by the Spirituality of God's Law, that condemns all Men, and all their Works, while out of Christ, nor by the Gospel, which Reveals another Righteousness than their own, by which they must be Saved; but they will have God's Ark of the Covenant to stand as a Captive, in the Temple of their Dagon of Self-Righteousness, until the Vengeance of God's despised Covenant, over throw both the Temple, and Idol, and Worshippers.

There is not a Minister that dealeth seriously with the Souls of Men, but he finds an Arminian Scheme of Justification in every unrenewed Heart. And is it not sadly to be bewailed, that Divines should plead that same Cause, that we daily find the Devil pleading in the Hearts of all Natural Men? And that instead of casting down, 2 Cor. 10.4, 5. they should be making defences for such strong holds, as must either be levelled with the dust, or the Rebel that holds them out, must eternally Perish?

It is no bad way of Studying the Gospel, and of attaining more Light into it, that may be used in dealing particularly with the Consciences of all sorts of Men, as we have occasion. More may be learned this way, than out of many large Books. And if Ministers would deal more with their own Consciences, and the Consciences of others, in and about these Points, that are most properly Cases of Conscience, we should find an increase of Gospel-Light, and a growing fitness to Preach aright, as Paul did, 2 Cor. 4.2. By manifestation of the Truth, commending ourselves to every man's Conscience in the sight of God.

Let us keep up in our Hearts and Doctrine, a reverend regard of the Holy Law of God, and suffer not a reflecting, disparaging word, or thought of it. The Great Salvation is contrived with a Regard to it, and the satisfaction given to the Law by the Obedience and Death of Christ our Surety, hath made it glorious and honorable, more than all the Holiness of Saints on Earth, or of the Glorified in Heaven, and than all the Torments of the Damned in Hell, though they do also magnify the Law and make it honorable. But if men will teach that the Law and Obedience unto it, whether perfect or sincere, is the Righteousness we must be found and stand in, in our pleading for justification, they neither understand what they say, nor whereof they affirm. 1 Tim. 1.7. They become Debtors to it, and Christ profits them nothing. Gal. 2 21. and 5.2.5. And we know what will become of that man, that hath his Debts to the Law to pay, and hath no Interest in the Suretys Payment: Yet many such offer their own Silver, which whatever coin of Man be upon it, is reprobate and rejected both by Law and Gospel.

Let us carefully keep the bounds clear betwixt the Law and Gospel (which whosoever doth is a right perfect Divine, saith blessed Luther in his Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians. A

Book that hath more plain sound Gospel, than many Volumes of some other Divines.) Let us keep the Law as far from the business of Justification, as we would keep Condemnation, its contrary. For the Law and Condemnation are inseparable, but by the Intervention of Jesus Christ, our Surety. Gal. 3.10,—14. But in the practice of Holiness, the fulfilled Law given by Jesus Christ to Believers as a Rule, is of great and good Use to them, as hath been declared.

Lastly, Be exact in your Communion, and Church Administrations. If any walk otherwise than it becometh the Gospel, if any abuse the Doctrine of Grace, to Licentiousness; draw the Rod of Discipline against them the more severely, that ye know so many wait for your halting, and are ready to speak evil of the Ways and Truths of God,

The Wisdom of God sometimes orders the Different Opinions of Men about his Truth, for the clearing and confirming of it; while each side watch the extremes that others may be in hazard of running into. And if controversy be fairly and meekly managed this way, we may differ, and plead our Opinions, and both love and edify them we oppose, and may be loved, and edified by them in their Opposition.

I know no fear possesseth our side, but that of Arminianism. Let us be fairly secured from that, and as we ever hated true Antinomianism, so we are ready to oppose it with all our might. But having such grounds of jealousy as I have named (and its well known that I have not named all) men will allow us to fear, that this Noise of Antinomianism is raised, and any advantage they have by the Rashness and Imprudence of some Ignorant Men, is improved to a severe height, by some, on purpose to shelter Arminianism in its growth, and to advance it further amongst us, which we pray and hope the Lord will prevent.

Yours, N. N.

POSTSCRIPT.

This Paper, presented to thee, was in its first design intended as a private Letter to a particular Brother, as the Title bears. How it comes to be published, I shall not trouble the World with an account of: I think that Dr. Owen 's Excellent Book of Justification, and Mr. Marshal 's Book of the Mystery of Sanctification by Faith in Jesus Christ, are such Vindications and Confirmations of the Protestant Doctrine, against which I fear no effectual Opposition. Dr. Owen 's Name is so savoury, and famous, his soundness in the Faith, and ability in Learning for its defense, so justly reputed, that no sober man will attempt him. Mr. Marshal was a holy retired Person, and is only known to the most of us by his Book, published lately. The Book is a deep, practical, well-jointed Discourse, and requires a more than ordinary attention in the reading of it with profit. And if it be singly used, I look upon it as one of the most useful Books the World hath seen for many years: Its excellency is, that it leads the serious Reader directly to Jesus Christ, and cuts the sinews, and overturns the foundation of the New Divinity, by the same argument of Gospel-Holiness, by which many attempt to overturn the Old. And as it hath already the seal of high approbation, by many judicious Ministers and Christians that have read it; so I fear not, but it will stand firm as a Rock against all Opposition, and will prove good Seed, and Food, and Light, and Life to many hereafter.

All my design in publishing this, is plainly and briefly to give some Information to ordinary plain people, who either want Time or Judgment to peruse large and learned Tractates, about this point of Justification, wherein everyone is equally concerned.

The Theme of Justification hath suffered greatly by this, That many have employed their Heads and Pens, who never had their Hearts and Consciences exercised about it. And they must be frigid and dreaming speculations, that all such are taken up with, whose Consciences are not enlivened with their personal concern in it.

These things are undoubted, 1. That, as it is a point of highest concern to every man, so it is to the whole-Doctrine of Christianity. All the great Fundamentals of Christian Truth, center in this of Justification. The Trinity of persons in the Godhead; The Incarnation of the only Begotten of the Father; The Satisfaction paid to the Law and Justice of God, for the sins of the World, by his Obedience, and Sacrifice of Himself in that flesh he assumed; and the Divine Authority of the Scriptures which reveal all this; Are all straight lines of Truth, that center in this Doctrine of the Justification of a Sinner by the Imputation and Application of that Satisfaction. No Justification, without a Righteousness; No Righteousness can be, but what answers fully and perfectly the Holy Law of God: No such Righteousness can be performed, but by a Divine Person; No benefit can accrue to a Sinner by it, unless it be someway his, and applied to him; No application can be made of this, but by Faith in Jesus Christ. And as the connection with, and dependence of this Truth upon, the other great Mysteries of Divine Truth, is evident in the plain proposal of it; So the same hath sadly been manifest in this, that the forsaking of the Doctrine of Justification by Faith in Christ's Righteousness, hath been the first step of Apostasy in many, who have not stopped till they revolted from Christianity itself. Hence so many Arminians, and their chief Leaders too, turned Socinians; from denying Justification by Christ's Righteousness, they proceeded to the denying of his Satisfaction, from the denial of his proper Satisfaction, they went on to the denying of the Divinity of his Person: And that man's

Charity is excessive, that will allow to such Blasphemers of the Son of God, the Name of Christians. Let not then the Zeal of any, for so fundamental a point of Truth, as that is of the Justification of a Sinner by Faith in Christ, be charged with folly. It is good to be always zealously affected in a good thing; and this is the best of things.

2. It is undoubted, That there is a Mystery in this Matter of Justification. As it is God's act, it is an act of Free-Grace and Deep Wisdom. Herein Justice and Mercy kiss one another in saving the Sinner. Here appears God Man, with the Righteousness of God, and this applied and imputed to sinful men; Here man's Sin and Misery, are the field in which the Riches of God's Grace in Christ are displayed. Here the Sinner is made Righteous by the Righteousness of another, and obtains Justification through this Righteousness, though he pays, and gives nothing for it; God declares him righteous, or justifies him freely, and yet he is well paid for it by the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus, Rom. 3.24, 25, 26. It is an act of Justice and Mercy both, when God justifies a Believer on Jesus Christ. And must there not then be a great Mystery in it? Is not every Believer daily admiring the depth of this way of God? This Mystery is usually, rather darkened, than illustrated, by Logical Terms used in the handling of it. The only defense that good and learned men have for the use of them, is (and it hath great weight) that the craft of Adversaries doth constrain them to use such Terms to find them out, or hedge them in. It's certain that this Mystery is as plainly revealed, in the Word, as the Holy Ghost thought fit to do in teaching the Heirs of this Grace; and it were well if men did contain themselves within these bounds.

3. It is certain, That this Doctrine of Justification proposed in the Word, hath been very differently understood and expressed by

men, that profess that God's Word is the only Rule of their thoughts and words about the things of the Spirit of God. It hath been, and will be still a Stone of Stumbling, as our Lord Jesus Christ himself was, and is, Rom. 9.32, 33. 1 Pet. 2.7, 8.

4. That whatever Variety and Differences there be in Men's Notions and Opinions (and there is a great deal) about Justification, They are all certainly reducible to two; one of which is every man's opinion. And they are, That the Justification of a sinner before God, is either on the account of a Righteousness in and of ourselves, or on the account of a Righteousness in another, even Jesus Christ, who is Jehovah our Righteousness. Law and Gospel, Faith and Works, Christ's Righteousness and our own, Grace and Debt, do equally divide all in this matter. Crafty Men may endeavor to bend and mix these things together in Justification; but it is a vain attempt. Is it not only most expressly rejected in the Gospel, which peremptorily determines the Contrariety, Inconsistency, and Incompatibility, betwixt these two; But the Nature of the things in themselves and the sense and conscience of every serious person, doth witness to the same, that our own Righteousness and Christ's Righteousness, do comprehend all the pleas of men to Justification (one or other of them, every man in the world stands upon;) and that they are inconsistent with and destructive one of another in justification: if a man trust to his own Righteousness he rejects Christ's, if he trusts to Christ's Righteousness he rejects his Own. If he will not reject his own Righteousness as too good to be renounced, if he will not venture on Christ's. Righteousness as not sufficient alone, to bear him out, and bring him safe off at God's Bar, he is in both a convicted Unbeliever. And if he endeavor to patch up a Righteousness before God, made up of both, he is still under the Law, and a despiser of Gospel-Grace, Gal. 2.21. That Righteousness that justifies a Sinner,

consists in aliquot indivisibly, and this every man finds when the case is his own, and he serious about it.

5. These different Sentiments about Justification have been at all times managed with a special Acrimony. They that are for the Righteousness of God by Faith in Jesus Christ, look upon it as the only foundation of all their hopes for eternity, and therefore cannot but be zealous for it. And the contrary side are as hot for their own Righteousness, the most admired and adored Diana of proud Mankind, as if it were an Image fallen down from Jupiter, when it is indeed the Idol that was cast out of Heaven with the Devil, and which he hath ever since been so diligent to set up before sinful men, to be worshipped, that he might bring them into the same condemnation with himself; And by true Sin, and false Righteousness he hath deceived the whole world, Rev. 12.9.

6. As the Holy Ghost speaking in the Scriptures, is the Supreme and Infallible Judge and Determiner of all Truth; So where he doth particularly, and on purpose deliver any Truth, there we are specially to attend and learn. And though in most points of Truth, he usually teacheth us by a bare Authoritative Narration, yet in some Points, which his Infinite Wisdom foresaw special Opposition to, he doth not only declare, but debate and determine the Truth. And the Instances are two especially. One is about the Divinity of Christ's Person and Dignity of his Priesthood, reasoned, argued, and determined in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The other is about Justification by Faith, exactly handled, in the Epistles to the Romans, and to the Galatians. In the former of these two, the Doctrine of free Justification, is taught us most formally, and accurately. And though we find no Charge against that Church in Paul 's time, or in his Epistle, for their departing from the Truth in

this Point, yet the Wisdom of the Holy Ghost is remarkable in this, That this Doctrine should be so plainly asserted, and strongly proved in an Epistle to that Church, the pretended Successors whereof, have Apostatized from that Faith, and proved the main Asserters of that damnable Error, of Justification by Works. That to the Galatians is plainly written, to cure a begun, and obviate a full Apostasy, from the purity of the Gospel, in the point of Justification by Faith, without the Works of the Law. And from these two Epistles, if we be wise, we must learn the Truth of this Doctrine, and expound all other Scriptures, in a harmony with what is there so setly determined, as in Foro contradictorio.

Lastly, It is not to be denied, nor concealed, That on each side, some have run into Extremes, which the generality do not own, but are usually loaden with. The Papists run high for Justification by Works; yet even some of them in the Council of Trent, discoursed very favourably of Justification by Faith. The Arminians have qualified a little the grossness of the Popish Doctrine in this Article; And some since have essayed to qualify that of the Arminians, and to plead the same cause more finely. Again, some have run into the other extreme, as appeared in Germany a little after the Reformation; and some such there have been always, and in all places, where the Gospel hath shined; and these were called Antinomians. But how unjustly this hateful Name is charged upon the Orthodox Preachers and sincere Believers of the Protestant Doctrine of Justification by Faith only, who keep the Gospel-midst betwixt these two Rocks, is the design of this Paper, to discover. What we plead for, is in sum, That Jesus Christ our Savior is the fountain opened in the House of David, for Sin and for Uncleanness, wherein only men can be washed in Justification and Sanctification. And that there is no other fountain of man's devising,

nor of God's declaring, for washing a Sinner first, so as to make him fit and meet to come to this, to wash, and to be clean.

As for Inherent Holiness, Is it not sufficiently secured by the Spirit of Christ received by Faith, the certain Spring and Cause of it, By the Word of God, the plain and perfect Rule of it, By the declared necessity of it to all them that look to be saved, and to justify the sincerity of a man's Faith? Unless we bring it in to Justification, and thereby make our own pitiful Holiness sit on the Throne of Judgment, with the precious blood of the Lamb of God.

Though I expect that a more able hand will undertake an Examination of the New Divinity; yet to fill up a little room, I would speak somewhat to their Achillaeon Argument, that is so much boasted of, and so frequently insisted on by them, as their Shield and Spear. Their Argument is this, That Christ's Righteousness is our Legal Righteousness; but our own, is our Evangelical Righteousness; that is, when a Sinner is charged with Sin against the Law of God, he may oppose Christ's Righteousness as his Legal Defense; But against the Charge of the Gospel, especially for Unbelief, he must produce his Faith as his Defense or Righteousness, against that charge.

With a great deference to such Worthy Divines as have looked on this as an argument of weight, I shall in a few words, essay to manifest, that this is either a saying the same in other odd words, that is commonly taught by us, or a Sophism, or a departing from the Protestant Doctrine about Justification.

1. This Argument concerns not at all the Justification of a Sinner before God. For this end, no more is needful, than to consider, what this charge is, against whom it is given, and by whom. The charge is said to be given in by God, and a charge of Unbelief, or disobeying

the Gospel. But against whom? Is it against a Believer or Unbeliever? And these two divide all mankind. If it be against a Believer, it is a false charge, and can never be given in by the God of Truth. For the Believer is justified already by Faith, and as to this charge he is innocent. And Innocence is defense enough to a man falsely charged, before a Righteous Judge. Is this charge given us against an Unbeliever? We allow it is a Righteous charge. Ay, but say they, Will Christ's Righteousness justify a man from this Charge of Gospel-Unbelief. The answer is plain, No, it will not, nor yet from any other charge whatsoever, either from Law or Gospel: for he hath nothing to do with Christ's Righteousness, while an Unbeliever. What then doth this arguing reprove? Is it, that no man's Faith in Christ's Righteousness can be justified in its sincerity before men, and in a man's own Conscience, but in and by the fruits of a true lively faith? In this they have no Opposers, that I know of. Or is it, That a man may have Christ's Righteousness for his Legal Righteousness, and yet be a Rebel to the Gospel and a stranger to true Holiness? Who ever affirmed it? Or is it, That this Gospel-Holiness is that, that a man must not only have (for that we grant) but also may venture to stand in, and to be found in before God, and to enter into judgment with God upon, in his Claim to Eternal Life? Then we must oppose them that think so, as we know their own Consciences will, when in any lively exercise. These plain Principles of Gospel-Truth, while they remain (and remain they will on their own foundation, when we are all in our Graves, and our foolish contentions are buried) do overthrow this pretended charge. 1. That Christ's Righteousness is the only Plea and Answer of a Sinner arraigned at God's Bar for Life and Death. 2. This Righteousness is imputed to no man but a Believer. 3. When it is imputed by Grace, and applied by Faith, it immediately and eternally becomes the man's Righteousness, before God, Angels, Men and Devils, Rom. 8.33, 35, 38, 39. It is a

Righteousness, that is never lost, never taken away, never ineffectual, answereth all charges, and is attended with all Graces.

2. I would ask, What is that Righteousness that justifies a man from the Sin of Unbelief? We have rejected the imaginary charge, let us now consider the Real Sin. Unbelief is the greatest Sin against both Law and Gospel: More remotely against the Law which binds all men to believe God speaking, say what he will; more directly against the Gospel, which tells us what we should believe, and commands us to believe. Let us put this case (and it is pity the case is so rare, when the Sin is so common) that a poor soul is troubled about the greatness of the Sin of Unbelief, in calling God a Lyar. 1 John 5.10. in distrusting his faithful promise, in doubting Christ 's ability and good-will to save, in standing aloof so long from Jesus Christ; as many of the Elect are long in a state of Unbelief, till called; and the best of Believers have Unbelief in some measure in them, Mark 9.24 Abraham 's faith staggered sometimes, Gen. 12. and 20. What shall we say to a Conscience thus troubled? Will any man dare to tell him, that Christ's Righteousness is his Legal Righteousness against the Charge of Sins against the Law, but for Gospel-Charges, he must answer them in his own Name? I know our hottest Opposers would abhor such an Answer, and would freely tell such a man, that the Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all Sin, and that his Justification from his Unbelief, must be only in that Righteousness which he so sinfully had rejected while in Unbelief, and now lays hold on by Faith.

3. But some extend this Argument yet more dangerously. For they say, That not only men must have their Faith for their Righteousness against the Charge of Unbelief but Repentance against the charge of Impenitence, Sincerity against that of Hypocrisy, Holiness against that

of Unholiness, and Perseverance as their Gospel-Righteousness against the charge of Apostasy. If they mean only, that these things are Justifications and Fruits of true Faith and of the sincerity of the Grace of God in us; We do agree to the meaning, but highly dislike the expressions, as Unscriptural and Dangerous, tending to the dishonoring of the Righteousness of Christ, and to run men on the Rocks of Pride and Self-Righteousness, that natural corruption drives all men upon. But if they mean, that either jointly or separately, they are our Righteousness before God, or that either separate from, or mixed with Christ's Righteousness, they may be made our Claim and Plea for Salvation, I must say, that it is dangerous Doctrine, and its native tendency is to turn Christ's imputed Righteousness out of the Church, to destroy all the solid Peace of Believers, and to exclude Gospel Justification out of this world, and reserve it to another, and that with a horrible uncertainty of any particular man's partaking of it. But these Blessed Truths of God, and blessings of Believers, stand on firmer foundations than Heaven or Earth, and will continue fixed against all the Attempts of the Gates of Hell. Blessed be the Rock, Christ, on which all is built, blessed be the New Covenant, ordered in all things and sure, and blessed is he that believeth, for there shall be a performance of those things which are told him from the Lord, Luke 1.45. Amen.

London, Sept. 1. 1692.

FINIS.

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