

A  
**FEARLESS DEFENCE**  
OF THE  
**Leading Doctrines,**  
PREACHED AND RECEIVED BY  
**MODERN ANTINOMIANS,**

SUCCINCTLY STATED  
IN SEVEN LETTERS TO HIS FRIENDS.

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By **WASHINGTON WILKS,**  
Of Great Alie Street, Goodman's Fields, London.

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“ THOUGH we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you THAN THAT WHICH WE HAVE PREACHED unto you, let him be accursed. AS we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you THAN THAT YE HAVE RECEIVED, let him be accursed.” Gal. i, 8, 9.

“ Should I see whole sects or whole churches, in a glaring error, such as I can prove FROM SCRIPTURE to be palpably wrong, and of pernicious tendency, I would make no scruple to *remonstrate, dissent, and enter my protest.*”  
JAMES HERVEY.

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# DEDICATION

TO THE SPIRITUAL IN CHRIST JESUS,  
MEETING FOR WORSHIP IN GREAT ALIE STREET,  
GOODMAN'S FIELDS,  
LONDON.

HEIRS OF GOD, AND JOINT HEIRS WITH  
JESUS CHRIST,

TO DEDICATE, with unfeigned sincerity, and fervent love, the following pages to YOU, is both my *duty* and my *honor*; for as it is the duty of a man, who is a husband or a father, so to regulate all his transactions in business and intercourse with men and matters in general, with such management, as to prove in the end, that in all things, he has had such respect to those of his own household, as to make them and their gain the principal concern of all his transactions with others; so also is it the *duty*, of a Christian pastor, so to manage his every transaction with the public in general, as to leave no doubt on the minds of his church, but that their spiritual preferment, and increasing hap-

piness in the divine life, have been the chief object of all his undertakings, either as a preacher, or an author. Nor is it less my *honor*, than my duty; for as it is a great providential honor conferred on married people, to have children, for whom they can labor and bring forth wealth, while other married people having no issue, work, slave, care, and save, they know not for whom; so is it a great honor, conferred on a man, employed in the ministry, to have a people who are capable of discerning things that differ; holding fast that which is Christ's truth, in opposition to error, when both are presented to their notice; nor do I hesitate to acknowledge the official pride I feel at the thought of being the pastor of a church, whose greatest ambition it is "to know the truth as it is in Jesus," not wishing to put a padlock on the mouth of their minister, as was the desire, and determined object, could they have effected their purpose, of certain individuals, with whom I was once connected, for fear that I should utter some unpopular truth; which, although they believed it themselves, at least so they pretended,

quite as much as him who preached it, yet would they insist, that it ought not to be preached, especially in such an unguarded manner, because of the *reproach* to which it would subject both the ministry and the people espousing it; the times in which we live, being too enlightened and refined, to allow of such Puritanical preaching, as that which profusely pours forth all, and every thing, believed by a preacher, without any regard to the prejudices of his auditory; for although we live in times renowned for *Christian charity and toleration*, it only extends to *thinking*. How often have I been told, by both ministers and deacons, that I was very welcome to hold my own opinions, and that there was no need for me to give up any part of truth; indeed they did not wish I should; all that they wished for, was *to see me respected*, and to this end, they would insist, that I ought to be more guarded, as it respects preaching, *all that I might believe to be the truth*, for if, say they, we would live peaceably, and be respected by other ministers and churches, we must regulate the avowal

(*not our belief, O no, we would not give up our belief, any more than you*) of our real sentiments, by the standard of public taste, and if we do not, we shall have all the ministers giving us a name for ANTI-NOMIANS! O yes; "The taste of the present age is somewhat like the humour of children: their milk must be sugared, their wine must be spiced, and their necessary food garnished with flowers, and enriched with sweetmeats." Besides, I add, it makes a man, especially a *young* man in the ministry, so amiable and beloved, insomuch *that all men will speak well of him*, both for his great politeness, and courteous humility, when it is observed with what meek, and child-like modesty he preaches, without the least dogmatism; in other words, without an opinion of his own, except, as received from his theological tutor, and held with due deference to those with whom he associates, either in the neighbourhood where he dwells, or the circle in which *the dear young man* is obliged to be seen, but dare not be heard; I mean at "the board of ministers, in town," or at an "association of ministers,

in the country," where those preachers, who have accumulated most money, and thereby gained most influence, absolutely reign over those who have got none; the latter being as much in awe of the former, as an adulating cardinal is awed into passive compliance, by the dreaded threatenings of his pope, and yet after all this, we have our C——s, our R——d, our F——r, C——x, I——y, and I know not who else, with their humble servant the editor of the *World* newspaper, raising a mighty feud in the ears of their deluded followers, about the corruptions of the priesthood in the established church. Now I am as much opposed to state corruptions as it is possible for these gentlemen to be, but I say let dissenters, especially dissenting ministers, seeth, and cleanse their *own Augian* stables first, and then may they, with some sort of consistency, undertake to administer reproof to the clergy of our established church; on the contrary, while dissenting ministers are all manifestly, and unblushingly, acting the part of parsimonious placemen, letting themselves out for hire, with a view to aggrandize their

wealth, tenaciously assuming to themselves titles, to which GOD only has a right, demanding fees, wearing priestly robes, and domineering over the consciences and creeds of their younger, and poorer brethren ; I say, while such is the case, I am constrained to say, from such progressively sanctified, and *demure faced* dissenters, good Lord deliver me, or rather my friends, I am constrained to thank the Almighty, that I dwell among my own people, where I am under no " BOARD OR ASSOCIATION," control, yea more, you yourselves would be in bondage, had you the most distant suspicion, that I was not standing fast in the liberty, wherewith, as a minister, Christ has made me free, commanding me to call no man father, or master, in matters of religion. It is for this reason therefore, that I am proud of you, my friends, as of those who know the truth, and will not give it up for the sake of a good name among a clan of professors, who have a form of religion, but know not the power thereof, the knowledge of which encourages me the more to dedicate, with all affection, the following letters to



YOU in particular; wherefore, beloved, having with all humility, and heart-felt anxiety, importuned the Divine Majesty of heaven and earth, even the God of truth, to bless the present productions of my pen, as far as they agree with the divine word, and flow from his good will and pleasure, for the defence of truth; I now commit the same to your generous notice. To apologize for its defects, would be both useless and feigned. That it has defects, and many too, is certain, for,

“ To err is human.”

Wherefore, only let them be pointed out by either friends, or foes, and then the best apology, for one like me, will be, to correct them whenever an opportunity offers for my so doing. In reference to the SENTIMENTS contained therein, I have very little, if any thing, to fear; and as for the execution of the work, that would have been done better, had I had *more time*, and *lighter calls*, but even now, I doubt not, but it will be perfectly understood by the spiritual reader, whether learned or illiterate, and as for those who

are destitute of the work of the Holy Ghost, and the knowledge of spiritual truths, to such professors I say, this Fearless Defence of truth, will, yea *must*, appear like a "root out of a dry ground," without either "form or comeliness; in a word, my dear friends, I must say, with Luther, "*I expect to be pelted,*" or with another divine, on a similar occasion, "I can expect nothing but bitter rage, contempt, and derision, from the crowd of the first Adam's offspring. The *censure of most*, is what I expect; but I hope what I have said, upon several important truths, will find an approbation in the *consciences* of those, who experimentally know what it is to be saved by grace, and to have CHRIST to be the author, preserver, and finisher, of their faith." Nor do I hesitate to add, that, in case it should please God to take away the desire of *your* eyes with a stroke, I say, subsequent to such an event, I wish it may be in your power to say of me, as was said of the above author, "Error," says his biographer, "he could give no quarter to, and a *politic* silence, when truth was attacked, was what his honest soul

abhorred. There was nothing more detestable in his esteem, than that false moderation, that could only show itself, in giving up the truths of the gospel." That such, my beloved friends, may be my deserved character, has been my study from my entrance into the ministry, to the present day; and that such will continue to be my special desire, I have no doubt, as long as I am interested in your affectionate and faithful prayers; to them I am aware, under God, I am greatly beholden already, and to you, for them, I wish to be beholden till time with me shall be no longer; yes, brethren, I have the greatest confidence in your prayers, as the gracious produce of God's Holy Spirit in your hearts on my behalf. Wherefore; pray, and if you desire to know what things to pray for, I will tell you; pray, *first*, that I may be, in every sense of the word, a pastor after God's own heart, feeding Christ's flock with knowledge and understanding. Jer. iii 15. Pray, *secondly*, that I may be delivered from wicked and unreasonable men.

2 Thess. iii. 2. Pray, *thirdly*, that I may in doctrine show uncorruptness, (Titus. ii. 7) and that I may keep the faith, holding fast a form of sound words. 2 Tim. i. 13. iv.7. Pray, *fourthly*, that when I err, mine error may remain with myself. Job xix. 4. And, *finally*, when God, in correction of me, for my many and aggravated sins, or for the trial of my faith, thinks proper to afflict me, pray, I say, to your covenant God and Father, to grant me this one request, that is, that I may fall into the hands of God, and *not into the hands of men*. 2 Sam. xxiv. 14. But not to extend my dedication to an undue length, I hasten on to add, that it was my intention, when I entered on the work of writing these letters, to have extended their number, to at least fourteen, this however I soon found impracticable, insomuch that I have been absolutely prevented publishing, even eight of the number, as I fully intended when I printed my prospectus; seven letters having far exceeded the number of sheets designed to be employed in the work. I have come therefore to the conclusion to write a se-

*cond* volume.\* providing that the present volume should so far meet YOUR approbation (for what have I to do with those that are without) as to secure me the continuance of that feeling on your part, in which, under God, the present work wholly originated, which I hesitate not to say, as many of you can attest, was undertaken with both fear and trembling, there being many things essential to a man's being accepted, either as an author or as a preacher, of which I am not possessed ; in the first place, every author should have A GOOD NAME, whereas I am of the sect every where spoken against as Antinomian, and therefore, necessarily as EVIL DOERS. NOW such circumstances are directly opposed to an author's becoming popular, for as the proverb says, "give a dog a bad name and you had better hang him," and yet a *bad name* is so

\* The subjects designed for discussion therein, would be on the law ;—the duty of unregenerate sinners, to repent, and believe unto salvation ;—universal exhortations and invitations ;—experimental, and practical, religion, and the Millennium.

immediately connected with a man's being an Antinomian, that the one cannot be without the other. But *secondly*, it is essentially necessary, that a man should be famed, both for literature and wealth (although he may possess neither) before an author, or preacher can become popular in the present day, which circumstance satisfies me, that on no account, could the apostles, and first preachers of the gospel be acceptable, were they now in existence ; for in the first place, most of them were ignorantly unlearned, and consequently, very destitute of the beauties of rhetorick, nor would they be less unpopular on account of the poverty of their circumstances, which in the present day, is quite an impeachment to the ministerial character, and instead of a *good name*, they would as much now, as formerly, be every where spoken against, as ministers who teach men contrary to law ; for as one observes, “ *the genuine gospel will always appear like an insult on the taste of the public ;* yes, it awakens *disgust*, and provokes *abhor-*

*rence*; but are these effects produced on the minds of professors, acknowledged, though both rich and learned, to be nothing but formalists, by the gospel preached in the popular pulpits of the present day. I mean our East Cheap, Walworth, Peckham, Hackney, Homerton, Bow, Stepney, Barbican, &c. I say, does the gospel, preached by the GENTLEMEN, officiating in the above mentioned places, with others, that might be named, AWAKEN DISGUST, AND PROVOKE ABHORRENCE; or are they every where spoken against? Are their names cast out for evil? are they HATED for Christ's sake, and the gospel's sake? indeed such is not the case; and, why not? why, for the plain reason, that they themselves despise the genuine gospel, under the fair pretence of a more than common concern for the interests of holiness, which subterfuge, while it too frequently succeeds, in keeping bewildered, and legally minded Christians, from hearing the pure gospel where it is preached, serves also, to meet the public *taste*, insomuch, that all men

speak well of such preachers; the result, therefore, is this, wherever men write, or preach, at variance with the public *taste*, (the modern standard for preaching) they can never obtain the coveted diploma of popular preachers, and well received authors. Besides, Sirs, there is another thing, which makes this work go forth, under the greatest disadvantage imaginable, and that is, I have not bargained with a single reviewer; no, Sir, I have not sent so much as a single sovereign beforehand, to excite the future expectations, and thereby secure the *empty* applause of a phalanx of men, of whom it has been justly said,

“Their praise is censure, and their censure praise.”

And yet who does not know, that these reviewers will not fail to *pay* off those authors, who do not well *pay them*, inso-much, that the first thing essential to an author's becoming popular, by the general acceptance of his works, is this, he must, as well as he can, buy up all periodicals, in particular, more than ordinarily pious



reviewers; this, however, I have not done; the result, therefore, will be serious; oh yes, as Peter Pindar has it, only in rhyme, with face demure, knit brows, and forehead scowling. I see the pious gents. *with self importance big,*

“ Mousing for faults, or if you’l have it *owling*”\*

The result is this, instead of any work being impartially reported to the public, it is quite the reverse, for one author’s productions, I mean, according to the sample given us by reviewers, being nothing short of literary, and religious perfection, while another’s is nothing else but a compilation of *illiterate errors*. Such, my friends, I mean the latter, will be the representation which these *impartial*, and *honest doers* of the public, will give of the work, now seeking shelter under your generous patronage; wherefore, beloved, earnestly beseeching you to continue in the faith, designated MODERN

\* He compares reviewers to the sagacious *bird of darkness* seeking its prey.

ANTINOMIANISM, I doubt not, but you will exert yourselves to the utmost of your power, to *defend, commend, support,* and *recommend* the truths now submitted to your examination, as far as you believe them to accord with GOD'S most holy and precious word. This being done, I shall feel happy in being permitted to subscribe myself,

Your most dutiful, obliged,  
And affectionate Pastor,  
WASHINGTON WILKS.

STEPNEY GREEN,  
*May 27th, 1830*

# A FEARLESS DEFENCE, &c.



## LETTER I.

### TO ONESIMUS.

#### ANTINOMIANISM DEFINED.

*“ Long have I wished to see the subject of Antinomianism properly discussed and placed in its proper light. The name hath been too frequently used by men as a bugbear to frighten the Lord’s little ones. By confounding LIBERTINISM with ANTINOMIANISM, and blending them together as one and the same; many godly persons have been distressed and shrunk from the imputation of it, as considering it the greatest obloquy.”*

HAWKER.

MY EVER DEAR ONESIMUS,

YOU, agreeable to the interpretation of your name, have been to me both “ profitable, and useful,” on which account it cannot be otherwise than that you should be esteemed by me as “ a faithful and beloved brother.” In proof of which, I am going to make use of you as such, by laying at your feet a definition of modern Antinomianism. But before I enter on the immediate subject that I am about to consider, it will be highly proper, that I should assign some more than ordinarily plausible reasons in justification of my undertaking: with a view to this, Sir, I need only refer your attention to the abominably nefarious falsehoods that have, and still are propa-

gated abroad, by every religious demagogue, concerning the religious opinions, and general reputation of MODERN ANTINOMIANS.

It is true, that in many instances, these *pious cannibals* ("My foes came upon me *to eat up my flesh*," Ps. xxvii.2) have carried their progressively sanctified spleen to such extremities, that the less inhuman among them have been constrained to acknowledge, that their fellows had wrought themselves to such a pitch of pharisaic phrenzy, that they had actually conceived and brought forth a man of straw, ascribing to it the properties of the most unrivalled demon, and then set up the hue and cry of Antinomianism! Of such unfortunate lunatics, amongst whom may be named, HALL, COTTLE, BIDLAKE, &c. Antinomians make no more account, than a citizen, possessed of unbounded wealth and excellency of character, would make of a deranged pauper, who would insist to all around him, that the worthy citizen was the most abject, insolvent, and arrant knave. But where the doctrines of Christianity are impugned, and the character of God's saints are maligned, a different plan must be adopted. In such a case, to be silent is to be criminal. My design, therefore is, as Mr. Calvin, in his Institutes, states it, "*To declare a confession to you, whereby ye may learn, what manner of doctrine that is, against which those furious men burn in so great rage. In the mean time no man steppeth forth to set himself in defence against such furies.*" Nor can I refrain from the self gratification, of what will in fact be equally delightful to my friend, and honoring to the memory of its ingenious author; I refer to an extract which I enthusiastically introduce to your notice, as containing the best standard of decision for judging of what is truth, that I ever

read from an uninspired writer. "Paul," says Calvin "when he willed all prophecy to be frame to the agreeableness of faith, hath set a most sure rule, whereby the expounding of Scripture ought to be tried. Now, if *our* (Antinomian) doctrine be examined by this rule of faith, the victory is already in our hands; for what doth better or more fitly agree with faith, than to acknowledge ourselves *naked* of all virtue, that of God we may be clothed; *empty* of all good, that of him we may be filled; the *bond-servants* of sin, that of him we may be made free; *blind*, that of him we may be enlightened; *lame*, that of him we may be made straight; *feeble*, that of him we may be upholden; to take from ourselves all matter of glorying, that *He* alone may be glorious on high, and in *HIM* we may glory." Again, "Of a true doctrine (as Christ teacheth) this is the mark, if it tendeth not to the seeking of the glory of men but of God." I am aware that it has been insinuated, that the excrementitious ignominy, so profusely poured upon modern Antinomianism, is just on account of there being, as they affirm, "no class of people that will answer to the name;" but the latter is not true, and therefore, the assumption, founded thereon, must be false.

I admit, that there are certain ministers and churches, who profess to believe and espouse the doctrines of modern Antinomianism, who would fain elope from the dreaded odium cast on those doctrines and their adherents, by contending that the term Antinomian, is a *non-descript*. This, however, is not true, as the etymology of the word will prove; but to this I shall have occasion to refer, when I come to write upon the law; on which account, I shall proceed to observe, that several charges alleged, whether true or

false, no matter, are strong arguments for my writing, at least defensively on the subject, especially in disproof of that *pious cunning*, which designs the total overthrow of the doctrines and discipline of modern Antinomianism, by the underground insinuation, that “ Antinomianism is a name so odious, that it is disowned even by those who contend *most* for its peculiar tenets. It ventures not abroad without a mask.” Surely, Sir, such a statement, could it be proved true, would be enough to justify the vilest aspersions cast upon Antinomianism; for of what mischievous tendency must not those sentiments be capable, whose warmest votaries dare not avow that they are believers in them. I had much rather see the subject rescued from the sullies of unmeritted slander, by the pen of a person more competent to the responsible undertaking than myself; but rather than suffer ignominy and falsehood to be heaped upon sentiments so worthy divine revelation, and the belief of men, unrivalled by their contemporaries, both for learning, orthodoxy, and character, I say, rather than submit any longer to this, I will hazard my all in an encounter with the Antinomian’s common foe, excusing myself from the foreseen charge of arrogancy, by the saying of a valiant veteran on a similar occasion, (*viz.*) “ When officers refuse to fight, the *common* soldiers must.” “ A thorough Antinomian,” says the editor of the N. B. Magazine, “ is one, who is ardently attached to the *traditions* of his leaders or fathers; he lays more stress on what these men say, than on the Scriptures themselves. It is true that he professes a love to his Bible, &c. &c., but even these can be received only as expounded by CRISP, or Huntingdon, or some of their living followers.”

If my Onesimus has ever read that unequalled

Antinomian work, entitled "CHRIST MADE SIN," he will readily realize the author of the following smart, and on the present occasion, seasonable *repartee*, "Here is a parcel of sad Antinomians, &c." Of Crisp, the first Antinomian to whom we are referred, we have the following testimony, from the pen of a divine, who was quite as capable of judging between characteristic worth, or vileness, as it is possible for modern Calvinists to do. "I am persuaded Dr. Crisp was raised up on purpose by God, to break that box of spikenard that sent out so high and sweet a savour of Christ, &c." Of William Huntingdon, a second Antinomian, and against whose style so much complaint has been lodged, it may be said, as it was of Luther, "God, who made the man, gave him his language. His language was the language for his case, for his hour, for his hearers and readers; we all know severe words may be spoken without a particle of malignity, and a *smooth tongue often disguises an envenomed spirit!*" "Since the FALL of William Huntingdon," says the forementioned editor, "Dr. Hawker, of Plymouth, stands foremost in the ranks, or rather sustains the character of being the prime leader of this *unhallowed* confederacy; his word is law with his followers, and to him they look up as to one gifted with the authority of an apostle." As a follower of such "*leaders and fathers*," Sir, in Antinomianism, so far as I think they followed *their* leader and father, Christ, by the belief and unqualified propagation of *his truth*, I have taken up my pen on the present occasion.

First of all then permit me to assure you, that notwithstanding Antinomianism is a subject, the most odious amongst modern and popular professors, it is a subject which has much engrossed

and greatly interested my attention, particularly so since the death of that late venerable holy man and servant of God, Dr. Hawker, whose excellencies, allow me to add, will be matter of joy and praise in the true church of Christ, in proportion as the beauties of literature, the philanthropy of benevolence, and the religion of Jesus Christ, are subjects of pre-eminent pursuit, and unqualified admiration.

You may wish to know, in what it originated that Dr. Hawker's death became an occasion of my paying more than ordinary attention to the subject of Antinomianism ; in reply to which, I beg leave to remind you, that in the month following the doctor's demise, almost every religious periodical readily united in an anti-evangelical requiem over his long desired death. His herculean presence as a divine, during a long, honorable, and useful life, being to his self-serving anti-spiritual contemporaries, what the presence of the noble Mordecai was to his court adversary, Haman: their aggrandizement in wealth and popularity, being marred by the existence of one who dared to make himself singular among a thousand, by "*speaking TRUTH to his neighbours,*" not saying "*A confederacy, a confederacy, with those who said a confederacy.*" No sooner therefore was this "prince and great man in Israel fallen," a victim to the shaft of death, than every bystander was necessitated to realize the just observation of Dr. Parr, in reference to Dr. Johnson, and his pragmatistical enemies, as applicable to Dr. Hawker, and his little pragmatistical foes, "Ah, now that old lion is dead, every ass thinks he may kick at him;" for so it was proved among those asses who let themselves out for hire, each one saying to the best paymaster, "AM NOT I THINE ASS?" I need



not tell you, Sir, that I refer to those nefarious auctioneers in religion, called evangelical and baptist reviewers, whose practice it is to cry down all authors and works, but their's who employ them; while the latter, they cry up, without the least regard to truth or modesty. Dr. Hawker, however, having no theological tinsel for these poor beasts of burthen to carry for sale, no wonder that he was immediately advertised by the first conveyance after his death, as an *Antinomian*.

Now in this craft, by which pious reviewers get their wealth, the editors of the Baptist Magazine made themselves pre-eminently zealous, by advertising that "*It would be rendering an important service to Christianity, if some competent person would undertake to prepare an analysis of the system of modern Antinomianism, as contained in the writings of Dr. Hawker and others, in order to show wherein and to what extent it differs from the Holy Scriptures.*"

This advertisement could not fail to interest the attention of every one who read it, I know it did mine, not only from its exhibiting so much of the self importance so strikingly characteristic of the editors of the Baptist Magazine, whose pretensions invariably *assume* the character of infallibility, that they may be free from the judgment both of their fellow creatures, and their Creator, though they judge without mercy their fellows. This I am warranted to say, both of the editors referred to, and also of those in whose *employ* they (the editors) are continually dipping their professedly *hallowed* pens, in the poison of acrimonious calumny, criminating the *moral* reputations and religious tenets of their contemporaries, for no other reason than that they will not follow them. For proof of

this, Sir, you have only to read "Chase's Antinomianism Unmasked," with a recommendatory preface, by the Rev. R. Hall, A.M., of Bristol, in which preface, the reverend writer says, "It appears to me improper to speak of ANTINOMIANISM, as a *religious* error; religion, whether true or false, has nothing to do with it; it is rather to be considered as an attempt to substitute a system of **SUBTLE AND SPECIOUS IMPIETY**, in the room of Christianity." Now, Sir, after this description of Antinomianism, from such a pious gentleman as Mr. Hall, you cannot wonder at my concern when I read that the works of DR. HAWKER, and others, consisted of such an anti-religious and subtle system of *specious impiety*. But is it not monstrously strange, Sir, that full two years have elapsed since the publication of the above advertisement, and yet no competent person has been found, who could render to Christianity the important service of showing *wherein*, and to what extent, MODERN ANTINOMIANISM differs from the Holy Scriptures. Surely such an undertaking must have been a *disideratum* to the cause of Christianity; and I will tell you why; that is, it would have been to a hair's breadth similar to the editor's advertising for some competent person who would show "*wherein* and to what *extent*, the Holy Scriptures differed from the Holy Scriptures," for that modern Antinomianism, in its import and extent, differs as much from the Scriptures, as the Scriptures differ from themselves, I will undertake to prove, without the least fear of being foiled by the editors of the Baptist Magazine.

Indeed, with me, it has long since been a matter of assurance, that the vilest aspersions cast on the distinguishing doctrines of God's grace, justly designated Antinomian, are de-

signed by the God of those doctrines, for the good and divine preferment of those, who could as soon hate their own flesh, which never man did yet, as not believe them. I fear no man, Sir, nor a phalanx of men, be they who they will, or their pretensions what they may, in respect to any attack they may make, however invidiously they may set about it, on the belief of modern Antinomians. Who have I to thank that it should be my mercy to be so established in the belief of what I advocate, as not to be the least intimidated, or shaken, though attacked by the vilest aspersions, by those who disbelieve them? But why not afraid? why? because I know I am not preaching or writing in favor of opinions, about which I am at no positive certainty, whether they are God's truth, or whether after all they may not be palpable error. But who have I to thank for this rooted establishment in grace? Why God. But how has the Almighty teacher of his people conferred this benefit on my soul? Why through the medium of those invidious enemies to truth, by whose aspersions of the Antinomian doctrines, I have been repeatedly stirred up from a state of religious laxity, "to prove all things," that I might "hold fast that which is good." This was the case I am certain, when I read the pious advertisement already inserted. Yes, I determined afresh, on reading *every* work extant on the subject, in particular as the preface of "Chase's Antinomianism Unmasked," had publicly affirmed of Antinomians, that "could they be *prevailed* upon to engage in serious dispassionate controversy, some hope might be indulged of reclaiming them; their *errors would admit of easy refutation.*" Mr. Chase also, for whom Mr. Hall undertook to write the above testimony, says "O let the

churches of Christ beware how they encourage the growth of this deadly plant (ANTINOMIANISM,) if happily for them they are not yet overshadowed by its branches. O let them beware how they give ear to this *lying delusion*. Other errors may consist with rectitude of intention, but not so this damnable heresy !!!” The *reverend* John Stevens, another bitter accuser of Antinomians, reports it to the world, that “*the command of God constitutes duty, but Antinomus acts without respect to any commandment; therefore, Antinomus performs no duty; he serves not God but himself.*”

Now what Antinomian in the world, after reading these statements, could refrain from interrogating himself with “*Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee?*” “*Are these things so?*” “*What sayest thou of thyself.*” And yet, after all the accusations witnessed against Antinomians and their religious views, I should have remained in silent obscurity, had I not been pushed to the performance of my present undertaking, by the animating conduct of my invaluable friends, saying, “*Arise; for this matter belongeth unto thee; we also will be with thee; be of good courage, and do it;*” to which I was the more minded, from the following minute, published a few months back, by the associated Baptist churches, in the county of Essex, May, 1819,\* by whom

*It was resolved UNANIMOUSLY,*

“That the church at Braintree, now under the

\* The county of Essex, says Mr. Toplady, was one of the first counties in this kingdom, into which Arminianism was introduced; its abettors were then called free will men, in the year 1550, ten years before Arminius was born, and it continues I add; from the surest source of certainty—facts the most Arminian county of the whole kingdom to this day.

pastoral care of the rev. W. Humphries, having RENOUNCED\* THE SENTIMENTS contained in a letter, addressed to the association, in the year 1825, by Mr. Wilks, (then pastor over the church at Braintree,) be immediately invited to re-unite itself with the association." I say, ONESIMUS, only for the intreaties of my kind friends, and the above publication, I should have refrained from my present undertaking, believing, as I must, that the unerring standard of public *taste*, affords indisputable proof, that it must be WEALTH, NOT WORTH—CHICANERY, NOT TRUTH—that can meet with acceptance and find applause with the present race of religious professors.

I confess there are many young Christians, to whom a delineation and defence of Antinomianism may prove of great service; for thereby they will perceive that those invidious slanders imputed to Antinomian ministers and Christians, are only designed to degradet in the eyes of the public, those who will not call any man, or association of men, let their pretensions to infallibility be what they may, master or father in matters of conscience; they will see also that the hue and cry of "Antinomianism," is designed to keep weak Christians from free inquiry, especially into the doctrines of free and unmerited grace, any error being preferable in their opinions to the *gospel of Christ*, the absolute import of which is, ANTINOMIANISM. The *reverend* John

\* What those renowned sentiments were will appear in print in connexion with my present undertaking.

† The utmost height of opposition adhered to by persecuting papists, against the religious opinions and official comforts of protestant ministers, was to cry them down as "confirmed and irrecoverable heretics." The very zest of delight amongst persecuting protestants, is to cry down those who differ from them, as *confirmed and irrecoverable* ANTINOMIANS.

Stevens, in his *mouse-like* quibblings against *Antinomians*, amongst many falsehoods, tells his readers one truth, which is, that "the appellation (Antinomian) literally signifies persons who are AGAINST the law," all of which is very true, but in what incontrovertible truth does that confirm all who heartily believe it? Why that the gospel of Christ, as taught by himself, and his apostles, was strictly Antinomian. Christ said, "He that is not with (for) me, is against me, and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad." Now, was not the law "*against*" Christ? undoubtedly, but was the gospel in one single feature *against* him? certainly not; if it had, then Christ would have been divided, and his gospel could not have stood. Again, did the law gather sinners together with Christ? did it not rather scatter all that came in its way to the borders of despair? while the gospel gathered them to the centre of hope.

The law is not of Sion, nor is the gospel of Christ's grace of Sinai; one is inflexibly bent on condemning all who do not come up to its standard, which immutably the same extends to the thoughts and intents of the heart, making all guilty of breaking the whole if they offend only in one point. See Romans, chap. iii. 19th verse. "And now we know that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law."

And yet in the face of all this evidence, Mr. Stevens affirms "*That the law* DOETH NOT *speak alike to all,*" though afterwards for fear of being degraded as an Antinomian, he adds, that "THE LAW OF SINAI, is the *righteous* statute book, for MEASURING THE CONDUCT of *his* (CHRIST'S) subjects, *as a PERFECT WRITTEN RULE OF CHRISTIAN OBEDIENCE;*" but to spend time in answering such ridiculous remarks, for to call

what HE has adduced reasoning, except for reference sake, would be to abuse language, and provoke common sense.

I shall now proceed to lay before my valued friend, in language that cannot be misunderstood, an epitome of those theological tenets for the belief and dissemination of which, both yourself and your humble servant the writer, have the honor to be like the primitive Christians of the sect which is every where spoken against, "Tell us plainly what the word means? to whom it really applies? and what are the marks by which it may be detected?" are questions which many serious inquirers after truth, have urged on the attention of periodical editors and authors, whose deep researches into the languages of falsehood and scandal had richly qualified them as public declaimers against orthodox Antinomians. The abuse however so profusely poured forth on the topic of declamation, has never been followed with a direct reply to these interesting questions for though many bear false witness against Antinomianism, yet none of the witnesses are agreed except in one thing, which is "*that we have a law, and right or wrong, by that law Antinomians ought to die.*"

"But my province is not to answer the *angry accusations* of the ungodly, but to satisfy the humble inquiries of the just."\* To this, therefore, I shall now attend. What is Antinomianism? This question answered, will furnish all inquirers with a direct reply to two others, "to whom does the appellation really belong?" and "by what marks may it be detected?" Allow me to remark, therefore, as Antinomianism is allowed to rank among the *isms* of modern

\* Dr. Hawker.

religion, it cannot be better defined, on principles of the strictest inquiry on the subject, than by saying, it is the *ISM* of *ISMS*, in a word, it is the *SUPER-ISM*. But lest this description of Antinomianism should be deemed unintelligible, I will remark further, that there is a great variety of religious *isms* in the religious world, at the head of which popular orthodoxy has placed *modern Calvinism*. Now *modern Antinomianism*, without detraction, or exaggeration, is one *ism* above modern Calvinism; on which account, the more liberal-minded Calvinists have distinguished between the advocates of the two systems, by the discriminating term of high and low Calvinists; while the more rancorous and malevolent modern Calvinists, have maligned Antinomians, by imputing to them sentiments and conclusions drawn therefrom, in *disdain* of which I will now undertake to give such a distinct description of the two parties, as must (where party prejudice is slain and free inquiry encouraged,) constrain the impartial reader to make a similar concession, in favour of Antinomianism, to that which was made by that exquisitely beautiful author, the Rev. James Hervey, who, being requested to read Cudworth's *Treatise on Faith*, "on the *ANTINOMIAN* side of the question," complied, and returned the following answer, "*There seems to me to be much good sense and solid argument, much more than I apprehended could have been produced on the occasion;*" nor would the subject discussed be less honored by an impartial reader, whose mind was fully set on obtaining a Scripture answer to that important question, "What is truth?"

But where persons, however much they hear and read, are bent upon maligning Antinomianism, on account of their having neither hearts



to receive it, nor arguments to disprove it such persons must remember that "malice, when too highly wrought, resembles a cannon too highly charged, which recoils on the engineer himself, instead of reaching its intended object of direction."—Toplady.

The FIRST thing, therefore, permit me to remark, believed and contended for by modern Antinomians, as part of the faith once delivered to the saints, refers to the eternal WILL, PURPOSE, or DECREE of God. Modern Calvinists say, that Jehovah, as a trinity of persons, WILLS or DECREES the existence of what is morally good, but that he does *not decree or will*, but PERMIT ONLY the existence of what is morally evil. "It is scarcely possible (says a very popular modern Calvinist) to employ language too strong, in exposing to deserved reprobation, the tendency of some modern speculations, on the character and agency of the MOST HIGH.

In a discourse lately published by a clergyman of the national church, entitled "God the doer of all things," the most unhallowed representations are given of the Divine Being; on the principles of this *daring* reasoner, sin itself is considered, not as a subject of mysterious *permission*, over-ruled and controlled in its operations, by a Being, to whose nature and perfections it is essentially opposed, but as actually resulting from his direct and positive appointment." Yes, Antinomians do believe that the unerring Disposer of all time-events, did, from before all time, *decree, purpose, and will*, the actual and unavoidable existence of whatever takes place in this world, from its creation to the period when time shall be no longer; but, as this, with other doctrines, determinately ad-

hered to by orthodox Antinomians, will be further delineated and defended in a series of letters, which, as you are aware, I am engaged to address to different friends, I shall only insert the summary of them in the one, which I have the honour to submit to your candid examination.

In the SECOND place, I observe that modern Calvinists affirm, that God elected, or chose, his people to the inheritance of sons, as heirs of future glory, from their lapsed or fallen condition, not knowing the Scriptures, (for such must be their case) that the elect were chosen from eternity, which they themselves sometimes allow, and again tacitly deny; for, if they were chosen, as viewed in their *lapsed* condition, the church must have been a polluted body, *united* according as they were chosen IN Christ from eternity, to a holy head, an unavoidable conclusion, of which modern Calvinists themselves would be ashamed, were they to encourage free enquiry on the subject; nor would they any longer indulge themselves in the idle talk, wherein they affirm, that the elect are not the “objects of divine *complacency*,” till made so by a life of repentance and duty-holiness. Dr. Gill, however, with Beza, Twiss, Bishop Davenant, and others, were as much opposed to modern Calvinism on this subject, and at issue with modern Antinomianism as are Antinomians themselves. They believed and taught, as also do we, that the elect church of God, were so constituted by their being chosen IN Christ, in other words, sanctified by the Father from eternity, in the pure mass, or lump, of creatureship from which the Father separated them, thereby giving them a union interest in Christ; by which separation, they became not in

a created, but in the most evangelical sense, God's sanctified or holy family united to a holy head.

I regret exceedingly, though that will not alter the fact, that modern Calvinists have, I think I may say altogether, excluded from their refined system of sublapsarian theology, the antiquity and unequalled sublimity of the supralapsarian divinity, taught by divines of the most celebrated accomplishments, both as divines and scholars; nor do modern Calvinists content themselves with abandoning the divinity taught by Twiss, Gill, Beza, and others, but they proceed to abandon and reprobate all who consent not to their evil deeds by doing likewise; but after they have done their most and worst, with a view to injure the reputation, and set light by the doctrine of modern Antinomians, on account of their inviolable adherence to the good old wine of supralapsarian divinity, there remains one thing which they will never effect, and that is,—disprove the truth of them. I may say of Dr. Gill, as he said of Dr. Twiss, “He carried things as high as any man ever did, and as closely studied the point, and as well understood it.”

But, if I think to achieve any victory over the sublapsarian system of modern Calvinists, by urging the names of Drs. Twiss and Gill, I shall be disappointed; in proof of this I might refer to many professed Calvinist Baptists, who have discarded the writings of Gill from their studies, and prohibited their being adhered to for a moment by the students in their Academies. One minister, in particular, of the Essex Baptist Association, expressed his most pious hope, that I did not believe with Dr. Gill on the doctrines of election and reprobation; and when I assured him, that I did, his countenance

was no longer towards me as it had formerly been. However, I was as grieved for him as he could possibly be for me; and so I continue, not only for him, but for the denomination in general, who, not contented with excluding the divinity taught for so many years, and with so much success, by Dr Gill, from the prominent place it once occupied in the denomination, but they have substituted in its room, a man's opinions, whose writings (which are little better than desultory tracts) contain neither excellency of learning nor sound divinity, and yet incredible as it may appear, his opinions, like oracles, are the standard of orthodoxy among modern Calvinists, in particular, of the Baptist denomination. But few, if any readers, will need to be informed, that I refer to the duty faith divinity of Andrew Fuller. Perhaps Dr. Dwight's writings are equally canonized by the independents, who, though for his literary abilities, as much excelled Mr. Fuller as Dr. Johnson excelled a man without learning, yet the divinity of the one was no better than that of the other. Should any reader, identified with modern Calvinists, think the above strictures on themselves and their leaders need an apology, I would refer them to the apology insisted on by the Rev. Mr. Birt, in his strictures on the system of theology taught by Dr. Hawker. "In this free country, every inhabitant possesses a *right* to publish his sentiments on all subjects."

The THIRD opinion, in which modern Antinomianism outstrips modern Calvinism, is on reprobation. Modern Calvinists believe, that the scripture doctrine of reprobation is exclusively conditional. "It must be confessed," says the Rev. Joseph Fletcher, A. M. "that most unwarranted representations have been

given by thy-per-calvinistic writers and preachers on this subject; reprobation," he adds, "in the scriptural uses of the term, is opposed not to election, but to approbation;—it supposes a *test*, by the application of which, those who are found wanting, are reprobated or rejected." Here then is a popular advocate of modern Calvinism would have us to believe, that reprobation is a *time* act, which takes place subsequent to the subjects of it having served as probationers, by the standard of some *test*, by which they may or may not be wanting. If the latter then, they are not reprobated; if the former, then their doom is fixed. "It arises not from the good pleasure of GOD, we cannot resolve this act into the divine WILL in the same way in which we ascribe to that will the bestowment of mercy." Fletcher on Personal Election. But, though modern Calvinists cannot do this, they have been candid enough to inform us why they cannot. Not because the Bible is silent upon the subject, nor because the greatest divines that ever lived since the days of the apostles have not done it, but because it is "*calculated to raise an unpleasant feeling, and to produce a blush.*" What an argument! but, bad as it is, I suppose it is the best that Mr. Hargreaves was possessed of, in his defence of conditional and time reprobation—with the greatest propriety might he add, "If the Wesleyans will carefully read the following essay, "*Reprobation Disproved*," it is hoped, not only that they will find an election which does not imply reprobation, but also, that they will gladly agree to it." Is not this calculated to make every one who reads it blush, to hear an aged Calvinistic minister recommending the productions of his authorship to the attention of Armenians, from the persuasion, "*that they will gladly agree to it.*"

Antinomians, however, are instructed to believe, and that from the Holy Scriptures too, that reprobation is as much irrespective of bad works as election is of good ones, the two children having done neither good nor evil, when one was *loved*, and the other *hated*. Was not ESAU Jacob's brother? Saith the Lord, "Yet I LOVED Jacob, and I HATED Esau." Malachi i. chap. 2 ver. "The sole cause," says Luther, "why some are saved and others perish, proceeds from God's *willing* the salvation of the former and the perdition of the latter;" and so say modern Antinomians, nor do they hereby *justly* subject themselves to the reproachful stigma of Hyper Calvinists, by which it is insinuated, that they exaggerate the sentiments of the worthy Geneva reformer. "Many indeed," says that bold divine, "as if they wished to avert odium from God, admit election in such a way, as to deny that any one is REPROBATED. But this is puerile and absurd; because ELECTION itself could not exist without being opposed to REPROBATION: whom God passes by, therefore, he reprobates, and excludes them from the inheritance to which he predestinates his children." "If there be no reprobation, there can be no election" Synod of Dort, from Hargreaves, Rep. Dis. From the foregoing extracts, my dear Onesimus will perceive, that *modern Antinomianism* is neither more nor less than superlapsarianism, and that superlapsarianism is *modern Antinomianism*.

ANOTHER theological difference between the *isms* of modern Calvinism and modern Antinomianism, refers to the death or atonement of Jesus Christ. *Modern Calvinists*, on the doctrine of the atonement, contend "that there was sufficient efficacy in the death of Christ to save the

whole world." Their argument, in favor of this hypothesis, is as follows: "Whatever limits that efficacy, must limit the dignity of his (Christ's) character; if that were divine, as we contend, there can be no boundary to the sufficiency of his death." Green's Essays. From such Calvinism, however, modern Antinomians avowedly differ, believing, as they do, that all Scripture is directly opposed to modern Calvinism in their opinions on this solemn doctrine—What was the death of Christ, I would ask modern Calvinists, but a full and sufficient payment of others' debts! wherefore had the death of Christ been *sufficient* to pay the debts or sins of the whole world? God would be unjust to demand more than sufficient payment, and not less so, if he condemns any, after having received, by the death of His Son, an atonement sufficient to warrant their release from endless perdition; but the latter is not the case—"Jesus was made a surety;" but the fulfilment of a surety's engagements can only be sufficient for those persons' debts, for whom he became a surety. Now, for whom was Christ put to death? why? "For the transgressions of *my people*," saith God, "was he stricken." The death of Christ objectively, was to atone for the guilt and sanctify from the pollution of sin; in other words, to procure perfect innocence and holiness. Wherefore, if, as *modern Calvinism* affirms, there was sufficient efficacy in Christ's death to effect this for the **WHOLE WORLD**, such would have been the unavoidable result of his death; for common justice among men, and not less so with God, demands the release of the debtor whose creditor has received *sufficient* payment from the hands of the debtor's surety. "But, to contend thus," say modern Calvinists, "must limit the dignity of the Saviour's charac-

ter." So saying, and so proving, are different branches in controversy. To the former Mr. Green has paid strict attention; of the latter he has taken no notice whatever; thinking, I suppose, in common with his modern Calvinistic brethren, that modern Antinomians cannot discern between assertion and proof. Such, however, is not the case; in proof of which, let me ask, "Must it limit the dignity" of a prince's character, who might engage to be the surety, or pay the debts of his brethren, who might have done violence to his father's laws; I say, would it limit the dignity of his character, in case he endured the disgrace and punishment due to those for whom he became a substitute, to say, his sufferings were only sufficient to meet the liabilities of those for whom he suffered, and not for the rest of his father's subjects, taking it for granted that they were all implicated in the same crime and therefore became obnoxious to the same laws of justice? again, *must* it limit the dignity of a surety's character, who, because he only paid their debts for whom he became surety, though he was able to pay for others, had he been surety for them; I say, must it lessen his dignity, as a wealthy citizen, to say, what he did pay was *only* sufficient to pay their debts for whom he became answerable?

What a pity it is, that men will introduce, for the sake of supporting party sentiments, nonsense in their discussions in divinity, which they would be ashamed of in commercial transactions. Jesus Christ is the Elect's Elder Brother, the Prince of the Royal Family of Heaven; his brethren sinned in common with all the subjects, by violating their respective obligations to their Father's laws; the Son of God undertakes to rescue his disgraced and obnoxious brethren from all their



liabilities, by enduring their disgrace and punishment in his own person, and he fulfils his engagement by redeeming his brethren from the curse of their Father's violated law; but, must it "limit the dignity of his character" to affirm, that the satisfaction which He rendered to His Father's violated laws, exclusively on behalf of his brethren, was *not sufficient* to satisfy the demands of His Father's righteous ire against the rest of His Father's subjects, surely not. Here, then, seems to be the mistake on the part of modern Calvinists. They are thinking that it is the deity of Christ, and not the covenant engagement of the Son of God, which constitutes the efficacious *sufficiency* of Christ's death. But, on their hypothesis in favor of Christ's death being sufficient for the whole world, might they not, with equal truth and more consistency, join issue with the Armenians, and contend for Christ's loving all mankind; for, if there can be no "boundary to the sacrifice or death of Christ, on account of his Godhead," why do modern Calvinists set a boundary to the love of Christ, seeing the lover is infinite.

*But*, ANOTHER doctrine, about which the most distinguishing difference marks the two systems, is that of justification. Modern Calvinists contend, that the justification of God's elect is a time act, and that they could not have been justified from eternity. "You mentioned," says a modern Calvinistic writer, "in your Confession of Faith, the doctrine of *eternal* justification; might we not, with as much propriety, speak of our calling, our believing, &c. &c. as having been eternal too? Now, why modern Calvinists deny the eternal justification of the people of God is, that they may be consistent with themselves; I refer to their opinion, that in

faith originates the union of Christ and his people; for so says Mr. Chase, “*By faith in Christ believers are brought into a new covenant with God, &c.*” Modern Calvinists also deny that justification is prospective. Now, could they prove these two opinions, Antinomians would be constrained to give up their belief in eternal justification; but as this is another of those distinguishing articles of Antinomian faith, which I intend to consider in a subsequent letter, you will expect no apology for my merely referring to it on the present occasion.

Modern Calvinists, I FURTHER remark, contend, in opposition to modern Antinomianism, that the believer’s sanctification is progressive. “Regeneration,” says the Rev. Joseph Fletcher, “is the *beginning* of holiness, and sanctification is its progressive advancement.” To this, however, with our hats in our hands, indicative of our great inferiority to those who, to be consistent with themselves as advocates of progressive sanctification, must say to us Antinomians—“Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am *holier* than thou.” I say, to such an opinion we must object; but, as *progressive sanctification* is another branch of modern Calvinism, on which I intend writing in an epistle by itself, I shall desist from further prolixity on this occasion, with the exception of inserting, for your perusal, an apposite extract from the writings of that worthy saint W. Mason, Esq. “We read that Pygmalion had got such a fine *image*, that he took it up for a real person, and fell in love with it. So some are more taken up with, talk more about, and seem more in love with the IMAGE of their *own* holiness and perfection than Christ’s glorious righteousness.” O, how descriptive is this of the advocates of progressive sanctification,

but how unlike it is to the opinion of every true Christian, who, with Dr. Watts, is obliged to confess that—

“ The best obedience of my hands  
Dares not appear before thy throne ;  
But faith can answer thy demands,  
By pleading WHAT MY LORD HAS DONE.”

The NEXT thing, Sir, in which the two *isms* under consideration differ, and to which I would invite your attention, is the subject of conditional salvation. Mr. Hall, in his preface already referred to, gives it as his opinion that the direct way to Antinomianism, is that preaching which represents “ the promises of the gospel as *unconditional*; in confutation of which, he peremptorily asks, “ But if there be no conditions of salvation whatever, how is it possible to confute the pretensions or confound the confidence of the most licentious professor? I am at an utter loss to discover !” What these *conditions of salvation* are, we are informed by Mr. Chase, “ A sincere and faithful, a constant and enduring love to Christ, manifesting itself in a patient continuance in well-doing, is an *indispensible condition* of salvation.” Another equally popular modern Calvinist, of the Baptist denomination, the Rev. J. H. Hinton, says, that “ The actual enjoyment of them” (the blessings of salvation\*) is connected with the exercise of certain specified dispositions on the *part of men*, namely, repentance toward God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance is a change of mind or disposition, and in this connexion, a change from *enmity* to friendship towards God.” “ It is the method of *regaining* the forfeited

\* Hinton ; Theology, p. 114, 115.

friendship of God." O my dear ONESIMUS, what think you of modern Calvinism on conditional salvation, as stated and advocated by men, who are positively considered the very flowers of the Baptist denomination, both for learning and divinity.

What Arminian could say more than to affirm that "*Repentance is the method of regaining the forfeited friendship of God!!!*" nor is what follows a whit better;—I refer to his opinion on faith, as another *condition* of salvation. "Faith," Mr. Hinton says, "in its essential nature, is the right disposition of a sinner towards Christ. It is a state of the heart; nor will any orthodox Antinomian hesitate for one moment to accede thereto." But, after this, we are informed, that it is "*the condition of a sinner's deliverance from condemnation, and his return to amicable relations with the divine government; and we shall see, without difficulty, how it may be universally commanded as a duty, or the want of it punished as a crime; and, in a word, how properly it is made the grand test of the evangelical administration. Such appears to be the true nature of the dispensation of mercy. It established a new state of probation; a state, in which deliverance from the consequences of sin, and the attainment of forfeited happiness, were placed within the reach of man, (what a tall mortal he must be) and made to depend upon his voluntary determination.*"

These quotations, Sir, from three A. M's. might be greatly increased, but as they are sufficient to show the belief of modern Calvinists on the subject of conditional salvation, I need only add that the anti-gospel character of the sentiment, to say nothing of the language in which it is stated, is too palpable to need refutation. It

leaves nothing for the Holy Ghost to do. "Faith is the right disposition of a sinner's heart towards Christ, and this is *universally commanded* as a *duty*; it is made the grand *test* of the *evangelical* administration. In what perfect union is this evangelical administration with the probationary *test*, already quoted from the Stepney divinity, advocated by the Rev. Joseph Fletcher, a fourth A. M. where he says—"Reprobation, in the scriptural uses of the term, is opposed, not to election, but to *approbation*. It supposes a *test*, by the application of which, those who are *found wanting*, are reprobated or rejected." You must forgive the intrusion, Onesimus, but I should not have troubled you with the reinsertion of Mr. F's. probationary *test*, had not Mr. Hinton supplied a very great deficiency on the part of his reverend brother, who only informed his fellow mortals, that a test act was in existence, by the application of which they were to be reprobated or not reprobated, without informing them what that test act included: nor did he even stimulate them to application in their probationary state, by telling them what would become of them in case the application of their evangelical test act found them *not wanting*; whereas, Mr. Hinton has been more merciful and explicit, for he has informed his fellow mortals first, that a *test* act exists; secondly, what it includes or demands, that is, "A right state of the heart towards Christ, which," he says, "is a change from enmity, which is the sinner's natural state, to friendship towards God;" thirdly, as an incentive to their meeting the full demands of this *evangelical test* act, sinners are further told, that if they are not wanting in this *universally commanded duty* of the gospel administration, they shall attain forfeited happiness, but if they are

“ found wanting,” they, to refer again to Mr. Fletcher, will be “ reprobated or rejected.”

Now, Sir, to despatch the subject of conditional salvation, so strenuously contended for by modern *Calvinists*, I will close this part of my correspondence with an extract from the writings of that blessed man of God, Mr. John Berridge, who, on the subject of conditional salvation, proves that “ Whatever is made a condition in a human or divine covenant, be that condition less or more sincere, or perfect obedience, it must be executed punctually, from first to last, or the covenant is forfeited.” Well might the dear old man say, “ O fine condition ! surely Satan was the author of it !” O, suffer me to add, that to Antinomians God has revealed a “ *better covenant*” than that on which a *helpless* sinner’s hope of being saved is suspended on the cobweb of his fulfilling certain terms and conditions. The promises of God’s (though not of *modern Calvinists*’) evangelical administrations, are all of them, like their Author, absolute and unrestricted, and as void of involving any thing, like a condition, to be complied with by the creature, as the *term* of his future salvation, as inflexible justice is void of boundless grace. My brother, I was going to apologize for what is involuntary, I mean my prolonging, to such an undesigned length, a letter, which I intended to be short. I must, however, refer your attention to the difference of opinion between modern Calvinists and modern Antinomians on the obligations of natural men to perform spiritual duties. The former contend, that repentance unto salvation, and faith in Christ unto justification, is the obligation of all who hear, or might hear, if they chose, a preached gospel ; and, agreeable to their belief, they contend, that sinners acknowledged

to be dead in sin, are to be indiscriminately exhorted to the performance of spiritual acts, and invited to the participation of spiritual blessings. Now, I have only referred your attention to this, from its being one of those heterodox opinions, held by modern Calvinists, to which Antinomians are strenuously opposed, believing, as they do, that the exclusive standard of man's duty, according to his natural relationship, or man as man, towards both his Maker and his neighbour, is contained in the decalogue or ten commandments; and, as for the privileges of the gospel, we believe, that none have a right to be invited to partake of them, but such as God the Holy Ghost, by a work of life-giving grace, has prepared or made equal to partake of them; indeed, monstrous as it may appear to his friends, and equally contradictory to his own general sentiments, poor Mr. Chase, the most inveterate of enemies to Antinomianism, in one instance is so overseen, as to turn Antinomian himself. See "Antinomianism Unmasked," page 96, where he says, "And none but sinners, who *know* and *feel* their guilt and helplessness, have any encouragement to come to Him; "The weary and the heavy laden"—"The poor in spirit"—"The publican and sinner" are graciously invited—*all others are excluded.*" Now, what would modern Calvinists have said to this, had it come from the pen of an Antinomian. Why, had they said the truth, they would have said, that it is in perfect accordance with the rest of their sentiments. Well, but what ought they to say of such *excluding* sentiments from the pen of a modern Calvinist? Why, that it is equally in accordance with the modern Calvinists' uniform sentiments; for while modern Antinomians uniformly contend for a system of truth, in perfect

accordance with the gospel of God, which is yea and amen in Christ Jesus. Modern Calvinists uniformly contend for a system of theology, which is in perfect accordance with *say* and *un-say*, called by Dr. Hawker "A yea and nay gospel." For proof of this, read their works, in which there is no end to the greatest contradictions, and palpable inconsistencies: for instance, how ridiculous to talk in one page of the certain perseverance of the saints, saying, "The justice and faithfulness of God then both stand equally pledged for the final salvation of the redeemed;" not long after, he affirms, that "*the believer in Christ*" is in danger of falling into final *perdition*, and that nothing but a determined resistance of the believer's great spiritual adversary, &c. &c. (see page 248) secures him from final perdition, and that the apostle Paul *expresses the same fear with respect to his own salvation.*" Chase. Nor is Mr. Hinton less ridiculous and inconsistent with himself, and contradictory in his creed. "Every man," he says, "is undoubtedly in a state of spiritual death, which, *we* have been accustomed to believe, came upon the human race, as an immediate consequence of their first parent's transgression;" but Mr. Hinton says no—for "The divine displeasure, on account of our first parents eating the forbidden fruit, fell on *them alone*, so that their posterity are not born under the wrath of God." So much for modern Calvinism. As for the LAW being a rule of life or conduct to believers, which is another sentiment of dispute between us and our opponents, I say, of that I shall take no more notice at present, than to say, it will be made a subject of consideration by itself in a subsequent letter.

There are other marks of doctrinal differences, equally distinguishing, between the two systems,



with those already referred to; but, to avoid the vulgarity of imposing too much on the generous patience and uniform urbanity of my proverbially courteous friend, I shall conclude my present epistle with a promise to resume the subject in another, being solicitously mindful of my obligation, not only to subscribe but to show myself my ever dear Onesimus's

Most devotedly obedient  
 And humble servant,  
 WASHINGTON WILKS.

“ Cease, mortal man, to fight, with impious rage,  
 Against Jehovah's holy will and word,  
 Dare not his grace, ye fashionable hosts,  
 Who call yourselves by Jesu's lovely name,  
 Yet persecute his saints: remember, Oh remember,  
 That His church is like the apple of His august eye,  
 And he, who will assail her, and annoy  
 Her priests, shall straight incur, immediate and severe,  
 Her faithful Bridegroom's, Great Jehovah's hate.  
 What makes the devil rage, and plot destruction  
 For the saints of God? Is't not, because he knows  
 Full well, what Balaam owned of old, “ That these  
 Are they, whom God himself hath blessed,  
 Beyond the power of men and angels, joined,  
 To hurt, or injure, much less to destroy.”