

LETTER VI.

TO MARTHA.

ON ETERNAL JUSTIFICATION.



“ *Kill reason and believe in Christ, whose righteousness is thy righteousness, and thy sin is his sin.*”
LUTHER.

Beloved Martha,

It is now five years since ignominy and disgrace were affixed to my ministerial character by the circumstance of my having been, *pro bono publico*, as was then insinuated, publicly EJECTED from “ the associated Baptist churches in the County of Essex,” as an incorrigible Antinomian; considering therefore, that the doctrine of ETERNAL JUSTIFICATION, to use the words of modern Calvinists, “ is a fundamental Antinomian doctrine,” I feel myself bound, if I am able, to substantiate the truth of this generally villified item of modern Antinomianism; the more so, from the various misrepresentations given of it by certain evangelical writers and preachers, such as Hall, Chase, Burt, and others, who have made themselves so notoriously popular, as “ practical preachers,” insisting, that the decalogue or Sinai law, is the perfect rule of their pious conduct, insomuch, that their disciples have taken it for granted, that all truth, and nothing but the truth, is preached and printed by these self terrified and terrific Sinai divines, so that Mr. Chase,

Mr. Hall, and the pious editors of the Baptist Magazine, have only to tell their adherents, that the Antinomian belief of eternal justification "is an impious compact between covetousness in the teacher and licentiousness in his disciples," while the Evangelical Magazine has only to say to its readers, in the language of one of its supporters, "my heart sincerely prays for you; that you may be kept from ANTI-NOMIANISM, IN ALL ITS ACCURSED FORMS; and that not one mite of the fruit of your honest industry, may ever go to the support of that cause, which has not holiness to the Lord in the hearts of men for its grand object," I say these self-adulated editors, with their employers, have only to insinuate, that Antinomianism is a cause, "which has not holiness to the Lord in the hearts of men for its grand object, but their infatuated disciples "rest assured that there is scarce one in twenty," I wonder where this one came from, but if one, why not one thousand, "who so strenuously opposes the term, *the law a rule of life*, but has a something couched under it, of a VERY IMMORAL TENDENCY;" nor are they less persuaded that the Antinomian doctrine of "eternal justification is CRISPIANISM in its VILEST doctrines." But what has Dr. Crisp done or said amiss? why, according to Dr. Williams's account, Dr. Crisp being asked "when did the Lord do this, viz. justify us, he answered, "he did it *from eternity*." But as I only design writing you a very short letter, I must desist from my too uniform custom of being prolix in my introduction; permit, me, therefore, to remark, that in my first letter to our beloved Onesimus, on Antinomianism, I have inserted from the last circular letter, published by the associated Baptist churches

in the County of Essex, the following advertisement,

PRO BONO PUBLICO.

“IT WAS RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY,” that is by the then associating Baptist churches in the County of Essex, “that the church at Braintree, now under the 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.” Now, of this wonderful notice, designed, as I should suppose, for the good of the public, or why publish it so publicly; I say, of this I should have taken no notice, only for the excitement it has occasioned in the minds of both ministers and people in town and country, to ascertain, if possible, of what heterodox materials the said RENOUNCED and exploded sentiments must have consisted, that a whole church once professing to believe them, as was certainly the case at my ordination, should afterwards renounce them in toto, with a view to obtain the suffrages of popular approbation, by being again permitted to re-unite with the association, from which they had formerly been read out in the most degrading manner, in token of the disgrace they had incurred, by daring to call over them, and be united to a preacher decidedly Antinomian. Not a few persons have long since urged me to print the said letter, containing the sentiments so obnoxious to the ire of modern Calvinists, that the ministers and churches out of the Essex Association might have an opportunity of judging for themselves concerning the affair; from this, however, I have hitherto desisted, with a view to

avoid further molestation, in the conscientious discharge of my ministerial duties, wishing to dwell exclusively with *my own people*, aloof from the various dissenting synods, between whom and the papal chair this difference alone exists. The church of Rome is too infallible *not to be right*, while the demagogues taking the lead at our dissenting **BOARDS, SYNODS, and ASSOCIATIONS** are too wise in their own eyes *ever to be wrong*; wherefore, it is of no consequence who reigns over a young preacher's conscience, dictates his religious opinions, and regulates his preachments; it matters not, I say, whether it is the Papacy, or Protestants, the thing is the same; nor do the consequences differ. Let a young minister, in our dissenting academies, dare to believe, and teach, contrary to the sentiments palmed upon him for infallible truth, by "his **THEOLOGICAL TUTOR**,"* and he is immediately reported to the supporters, and committee of the institution, as a character, whose religious opinions, savor so much of the

* "A theological tutor;" yes, I warrant you, the students in our dissenting academies, are *taught* the knowledge of theology, in which case, it is for ever out of their power to say to their bearers, "but we assure you, brethren, that the gospel which is preached of us, is not after man. For we neither received it of man, neither were we *taught* it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ." O no, the very reverse of this is the fact, in reference to the nice pious young men, sent from our dissenting academies, inasmuch, that on their first introduction to the notice of some diotrepes, who like to take the oversight of young ministers, when first introduced to the service of a congregation; I say, the first question that is asked them, is this, "And pray, Sir, where did you receive your education; and who was your theological tutor?" Why, Sir, replies the *demure* young rogue, (for all this time, he is studying to know how he may ingratiate himself into the favor of the new catechist, for the sake of the lucre, which he hopes will follow). I was taught theology, by Dr. "Ah," says his new patron, (that is, if he will now consent to become obedient to a second tutor, and governor) Dr. a very pretty speaker. I recollect he made us all laugh heartily, at the last missionary meeting, a very good natured man; another word, for a very fool "indeed."

Antinomian heresy, as to render it imprudent, to continue him any longer in an establishment, where he may be the means, to use their own words, "of extending the Antinomian leprosy, to the whole denomination;" wherefore, he becomes leared at, then "black balled," and ultimately excluded; till at last his reputation, by a misrepresentation of his sentiments and motives, becomes injured, and himself persecuted to the death of all his comforts, save those, arising from a source, with which his persecutors have no communion, that is, the truth of God. But is it not a matter deeply to be deplored, that dissenters should extend their persecutions of one another, to such lengths of cruelty and injustice, as to deter their members, in particular young ministers, from a free inquiry into the truth of God, from the well known fact, that if they do inquire, and apprehend that for which they inquired, even the knowledge of divine mysteries; then it is at their peril, to preach the doctrines they dare but believe; for if they do, their names shall be made to stink, yes, all manner of evil shall be spoken of them, falsely; and so far as their FORMERLY PROFESSED FRIENDS have it in their power, their ministerial usefulness, and acceptance, among the godly, shall be at an end. These things, as my dear friend is aware, I recite, not from hearsay, but from dear bought experience. My leaving the church at Braintree, which was occasioned entirely by a spirit of persecution, on account of my religious opinions, affords a most satisfactory proof; wherefore, that you, in connexion with the rest of my friends, may know for certainty, what those sentiments, for which I was ejected from the association, and which I am grieved, yes, to my very heart and soul, am I grieved, to learn the church at B.

have since *renounced*, rather than continue to suffer the dreaded ire of popular disapprobation against Antinomians; I say, that you may have the knowledge of those renounced, and exploded sentiments, I will now give you, a copy of the letter, in which I first inserted them.

“ A LETTER

From the particular Baptist church of Christ, at Braintree, in the county of Essex, to the several baptist churches, *professedly* of the same faith, and order, meeting in association at Colchester, in the county of Essex, the third Tuesday and Wednesday in May, 1825.

Men, brethren, and fathers,

Anticipating, by divine permission, another annual meeting, with you in association, we again unite in addressing you in the usual manner; being desirous to inform you, what great things God hath done for us, causing us to exclaim, ‘ what hath God wrought; greater is he that is for us, than all those who are against us; not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but to thy name be all the glory, for thy mercy and truth’s sake.’ We are aware brethren, that the usual form of our addresses are expected to be short, and comprehensive; to the latter, we wish to be strictly conformable, but we shall make no apology for deviating from the former, our circumstances this year, being more than ordinary; on account of which, prolixity will be as justifiable, as prominent, a feature in the present address. Doubtless some, if not all of you, will recollect that, on the occasion of our addressing you at the last association, we informed you, that Mr. Wilks, formerly of Diss, in Norfolk, had served us on probation, six months, at the expiration of which, we unanimously agreed to renew our

invitation to Mr. W. for three months longer, lest it should be said, we had acted with too much precipitancy, to which Mr. W. agreed : at the end of this period, we believing we saw the wisdom, love, and sufficiency of the great head of the church, in directing us to Mr. W. as well as in his evident usefulness in the conversion of sinners, in the recovery of backsliders, with his determination to know nothing among us, but Christ, and him crucified ; seeing these things, after repeated consultations among ourselves, and prayer to God on the subject, we unanimously solicited our brother Wilks to accept the pastoral rule over us, to which he having acceded soon after, that is, Oct. 7th, 1824, we publicly recognized our union, as pastor and people ; on which occasion, the Lord graciously provided for our spiritual entertainment and edification, by a selection of ministers choice in their experience of divine truth, workmen that need not to be ashamed ; for ' renouncing the hidden things of dishonesty, not handling the word of God craftily, (two things so common in the present day) they preached Christ the Lord, and themselves our servants, for Jesus' sake.' This providential supply we accounted for, from the great slight, not to say insult, shown us by *certain* ministers of the association to which we had, as a church, been united so many years, from whom also, we having received the greatest professions of concern, brotherly love and friendship, we wrote with the most respectful and brotherly feelings, expecting nothing less, than their attendance on the important occasion of Mr. Wilks's settlement among us, as a church and association ; but to this request we received reply upon reply, in the negative, some assigning no reasons, others very

dissatisfactory ones, such as insinuating that Mr. Wilks's character was not such as could be sanctioned by a public attendance on the day of his ordination; but we have since learnt, that it was not his character, but his sentiments, that gave the offence; WHEREFORE, on this account brethren, we think ourselves bound to give, on the present occasion, a somewhat fuller statement of our sentiments, than merely saying, we agree with the articles of faith at the head of your circular letter; as, that there are three equal persons in the Godhead; eternal and personal election, original sin, particular redemption, free justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ," &c. And first brethren, though it is a fact, that we cordially agree with those precious articles of the Christian faith, we can by no means accede to the order or statement of them. For instance, placing free justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ, after original sin, and particular redemption, this we think unscriptural, not 'holding fast a form of sound words, nor is it, in doctrine, shewing incorruptness;' for the justification of God's elect could not be subsequent to the fall, or redemption; if so, it would be a time act; then how could the church be eternally accepted in the beloved? for they could not be accepted without justification; beside, was justification a time act? as it must be, if, subsequent to the fall, or redemption, there must be as many different periods of the church's justification, as there are persons in the church; whereas we believe, with the learned Gill, Goodwin, Witsius, and others, that it was an emanant act of God, and that the people of God are as much justified before they are believers, as after they become so, and that their being believers is the con-

sequence of their justification, and not their being justified the consequence of their being believers; and St. Paul (who well understood the subject of justification) says, 'When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God,' (Rom. v. 10) that is, when we were dead in our sins. Again, 'God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them;' and what is this, but as says the very learned Witsius, 'The general justification of God's elect.' Again, we argue, that God's elect are his elect from eternity, as says your circular letter, and if no charge can be laid against God's elect, (Rom. viii. 33) they must be eternally justified: we wish it to be understood also, brethren, that while we profess to believe in particular redemption, we differ from certain, who profess the same, and yet in their preachments and writings are endeavoring to establish redemption on the broadest basis imaginable, by saying the blood of Christ, even * *one drop*, is sufficient for the whole world's salvation, *if* the whole world would believe in him; whereas we believe, that the atonement was so particular, that it neither has, nor could possibly have, either meritoriously, intentionally, or absolutely, to do with any but God's elect, any more than with fallen angels. We make no apologies, for these remarks, having divine authority, to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints, (Jude iii.) having all things in our creed in Scripture order; for 'see saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount, not diminishing a word, nor adding a word thereto, lest God reprove thee, and find thee a liar.' But in addition to these remarks, brethren, we think it requisite to

* See Hinton, p. 17, on Christ's death.

make some others, in particular relative to sanctification, exhortations and invitations to a participation of gospel blessings, with our views of Christian obedience. Sanctification, it must be allowed, is a very prominent and important feature in the Christian faith, but notwithstanding its great importance, no article of divine truth seems to be less understood; indeed Mr. W. our present pastor, has already suffered excommunication from the society of certain ministers belonging to your association, being suspected by them of holding corrupt views of this, and the foregoing statements; but if it really is so, we, as a church, must be equally corrupt; for such pastor, such people; for we have publicly professed to acquiesce in his views of divine truth; indeed we will say more, that is, if Mr. Wiiks or ourselves, as a church, are mistaken on the subject of Christian sanctification, it matters not what we are right in, and this is another reason why we would freely and fully acknowledge our belief of sanctification, that in case our brethren discover us in an error, we may be corrected and set right. But we hope we have not so learned Christ, as not to be able to give an account, to every man that would ask us, the reason of the hope that is in us. Besides this, our minister assures us, that he will most willingly be our amanuensis or scribe, to encounter with any minister, or number of ministers in the association, who may think us wrong, and are disposed to set us right from the Scriptures.* Our views then of sanctification

* Both Martin Luther, and Bishop Usher, boldly agreed to meet their hostile antagonists before an assemblage of spectators, and there dispute their religious differences: and I am equally willing to meet my warm opponents and do likewise, bearing the reproach of being defeated.

are, that sanctification is holiness unto the Lord, without which no man shall see the Lord, (Heb. xii. 14) of which holiness we believe every believer is made partaker, not in themselves, that is, not in any amendment, or alteration of their Adam nature, for we think it the most unscriptural jargon, to talk of "new modelling all the carnal mind, and making our natures clean;"* but on the contrary, we believe with our Lord, that, 'that which is born of the flesh is flesh still;' and with the ninth article of our established church we believe, 'that this sensual, fleshly, carnal infection of nature, is never altered, but that it doth remain the same in them that are regenerate, not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be;' and with President Edwards we say, "That we do not believe that grace alters sin," but that our Adam nature is as bad after regeneration as before; as a proof of this, we refer to David and Peter with every true believer's experience;† whereas, on the contrary,

* The above declaration gave unpardonable offence; at the association, the chairman, as a mouth for his brethren, used all his might to prove, that he not only believed it, but prided himself in saying it, even in my face; but he gave us no proof, from his enmity to the doctrine of justification, that his carnal mind was new modelled, or that his nature was made clean. The covenant promise runs thus—"A new heart will I give you;" not an old one, new vampt, mended, or altered; no, no; man's carnal mind, and Adam nature, will not bear mending, it is like Bunyan's slough, it will be slough still, notwithstanding the king's servants themselves have attempted (but it was without the king's authority) to fill it with good materials, and make it good ground. Had David's carnal mind been modelled all anew, or Peter's nature been made clean, the one would never have been besmeared with the filth of adultery, and the other with profanity.

† "My heart," said Mr. Macgowen on his death-bed, "is more and more vile every day. I have such humiliating views of heart corruptions, as weighs me down." But could this possibly have been the case, if his nature had been made clean, and his carnal mind all new modelled? and yet he added, "Methinks I have as much of heaven as I can hold." I add, he had perfect depravity in his Adam nature, perfect holiness in his divine nature.

we believe, that every believer's sanctification is **IN** Jesus Christ, who is expressly said to be our **SANCTIFICATION**; and if any man is a new or holy creature, it is **IN CHRIST JESUS**, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Eph. iv. 24. We believe that Christ is the 'true vine,' and that believers are the branches; and as the vine and its branches are both of a quality, so we believe, that Christ and his people are equally holy in nature, that they are pure, even as he is pure. 1 John iii. 3. So that, while we believe that our Adam nature is as bad in a father in Christ, as in a child in Christ, so likewise we believe, that a child in Christ, is as holy, according to his union with Christ, as is a father; neither do we believe, that a believer possesses any other holiness, indeed he wants none other, (John i. 16,) but that all other holiness which is derived from the works of the law, is like the church's righteousness, as filthy rags; and, that we believers, are like the Lord's family of old, altogether as an unclean thing; yes with saint Paul we can say, we count all things else, which among our holy people pass for piety, and growing more and more sanctified every day, we count it loss and dross, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, as our **RIGHTEOUSNESS**; but not more our righteousness, than our holiness or sanctification; for, in the first place, how could we be complete in Christ, if we have not all our sanctification in him, or how could Christ have perfected for ever by one offering, all them that are sanctified? for without perfect sanctification, or holiness, we are neither complete, nor perfect. From these remarks, brethren, you will perceive, that we are hostile to the idea of progressive sanctification; yes, we not only think it unscriptural, (and it need not possess a worse feature than being con-

trary to God's word) but we think it Satan, in the creeds of professors, as an angel of light, derogating from the fulness of Christ, as the church's holiness, feeding the pride of those professors, whose greatest pleasure is to lower the doctrines of the cross, giving it out, that they are more holy than others.* Brethren, we doubt not, but these candid confessions, of our faith in Christ, will be immediately followed with the cry of Antinomianism, and that we are all enemies to good works, but we wish you to understand to the contrary,† for we as much believe that God creates his people unto good works, as that Christ is his people's sanctification; and we should think it the greatest privilege, that heaven could allow us on earth, to be filled with good works; but, in this respect, we find that 'it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy:' in these things, we are not free agents; we cannot do as we please, if we could, we would never, no, never sin again; whereas, to the contrary of this, we cry, 'THE GOOD WE WOULD, WE DO NOT, BUT THAT WE HATE WE DO. O wretched men that we are.' Christ is our green tree, from him is all our fruit found, and it is only when he draws, that we run after him. It is only when he turns

* The very excellent W. Mason, Esq. author of *Morning Portions*, justly observes, that "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. Yea, they think their holiness can effect more for them, than Christ's righteousness; even secure their own salvation."

† Here I can but remark, in the language of Dr. H., that "if our opponents were fully aware of our actual views, and motives, and true to their own professed anxiety for the practice of good works, the very circumstance, which they are forward to denounce a crime, they would applaud as the most noble and worthy object of commendation: for our ardor in illustrating and recommending the DISTINGUISHING DOCTRINES OF THE GOSPEL, is inspired, and maintained by superior zeal, for the advancement of holiness."

us from sin to himself, that we are turned; it is only when Christ, our heavenly magnet, descends, overshadowing the church, that she rises from her mother earth, and on this account, we believe that believers are dependant on the Lord's free and sovereign favor, for their being filled with good works, with faith, hope, and charity, the fruits of the Spirit. But it often occurs, that God, in his love and wisdom, sees proper to leave his people to try them; yea, to "CAUSE THEM TO ERR FROM HIS WAYS, TO HARDEN THEIR HEARTS FROM HIS FEAR." Isaiah lxiii. 17. Had we more paper, we would as fully give you our views on Christian obedience, and exhorting all manner of men to a participation of gospel blessings. We have already said, that we believe Christians are created unto good works; and we know, that God who hath ordained his people, to go and bring forth fruit, will see to it, that what he ordains, shall come to pass; and that the rule of their obedience, is the preceptive part of God's word, under the church's head, Christ Jesus, the king of Zion. Isaiah ii. 3.* Yes, we believe that they who love Christ will keep his commandments, for says our Lord, "then are ye my friends, when ye do whatsoever I

* Which part of God's word, we believe to be the law of Christ, which the prophets Isaiah, and Micah, foresaw, would go forth out of Zion, that is, the gospel church, which law did not exist, but in the hands of Christ, as king of Zion, prior to his coming, who should be a ruler of God's spiritual people; but had that law of Christ been as we are told, by our moral law divines, was the case, that is, the law written on the two tables of stone; then, in fact, that law did exist formerly before Christ came. But such a notion contradicts Paul, who says, ye are not come to Sinai, but to Zion. Besides all this, there are three things, never to be forgotten. *First.* The law that gives life, must rule the life it gives. *Second.* The law that gives righteousness, must rule the righteousness given. *Third.* The law of faith must be ruled, or directed by the law, or authority of faith. Now does all this belong to the law of Sinai? Indeed it does not.

command you." But we must give you a word or two concerning our views of inviting and exhorting all descriptions of hearers to a participation of gospel blessings, and the exercises of Christian graces, as believing, repenting, and prayer. We differ decidedly from those who invite all their hearers, as sinners in a state of nature, to a participation of what Isaiah calls "wine and milk," what Christ calls "living water" and John "the water of life." We think to do this is to be wise above what is written; for that there is no Scripture precept or precedent for our so doing, neither dare we paddle in such dirty waters to make ourselves popular in the religious world; we have not so learned Christ as to give "the children's meat to dogs, or to cast pearls before swine."* We cannot agree, either with the Rev. Mr. Green, in the Baptist Magazine, where he says "prayer is to be enforced on the *manifest ungodly*," for we think with the twelfth article of the established church "that works done before the grace of

* Mr. Howard Hinton says, "If God's invitations are universal, so must his provisions of mercy; and if so, the idea that Christ died only for the elect, falls to the ground." And so say I, but I deny, and the Holy Scriptures deny the moderate Calvinist assumption, that Christ did die for any more than the elect. They deny also, that "God's provisions of mercy are universal." So that while Mr. Hinton, with those Calvinists by whom, as Mr. H. tells us, he "was immediately and warmly solicited to print his sermon," would found their universal invitations, tenders, and offers of Christ to all men, without exception, on the assumption, that the provisions of mercy are universal, and that Christ died for the reprobate as well as the elect, we Antinomians nauseate the dogma of universal offers, invitations, and indiscriminate exhortations on the ground of believing what Mr. Hinton says. "To that which is not prepared for a man's acceptance, it is not a matter of sincerity and good faith to invite him." Wherefore, let Christ's dying for all, and the belief that mercy is provided for all, be substantiated, and I will invite all to partake of Christ's gospel.

Christ and the inspiration of the Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not from faith in Jesus Christ, nor do they make men meet to receive grace, for they have the *nature of sin*," "for without faith it is impossible to please God; yea whatsoever is not of faith is sin;" neither can we, yea we dare not tell dead sinners to repent and believe unto salvation, for for this we have no Scripture, but we must leave off. Brethren we have used great plainness of speech, thinking it necessary not only so to write and preach that we may be understood, but that we cannot be misunderstood. Having said so much about our sentiments, we have only to say of ourselves*—

‘ Tell it unto sinners tell,
We are, we are out of hell.’
Signed &c. &c.”

Such, my dear friend, was the confession of faith which I publicly read before very many witnesses, on the first anniversary of my being called to appear officially among the associated Baptist churches, in the County of Essex, in the year 1823; such also, oh it cuts me to the heart only to think of it, was the confession of faith which I made when I was ordained pastor of the church which has since RENOUNCED the very sentiments contained therein, while I, poor despised Antinomian, am escaped alone to tell thee. O, my dear friend, do unite with me in praying to our Divine Lord, that he would not wholly give up his dear sheep at B. They have been hindered in their belief of these truths, to which

* It is necessary to inform certain readers, that though this letter is absolutely the church's letter, it is the work of the pastor to draw it up; and this accounts for the association's malice being hurled at the person and ministerial character of the writer.

they once gave a hearty amen. The fear of man, O what a snare is that to unestablished Christians, insomuch, that they can sooner be prevailed upon to cease from walking in Christ as they first received him than bear the frowns, persecutions, and cruelties inflicted upon them by their fellow men. Oh that all Christians were privileged to obtain that *heart* establishment in the doctrines of grace, which would make them proof against every attempt, made by either *frowning foes* or *fawning friends*, to turn their feet from the way that leads to the city of bread, to the mountain, which when approached only, makes them *exceedingly fear and quake*, which is the natural and necessary tendency of the law or Sinai covenant, which, genders bondage and fear; whereas, the gospel speaks peace and strength, saying to them that are of a fearful heart, be strong, authorizing the weak to say they are strong, and the *consciously* guilty to rejoice that there is even now "no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus," forasmuch as they are and were justified from all things, even from eternity, being blessed with all spiritual blessings, according as they were from eternity chosen in him, whose righteousness as Jehovah Jesus was then the matter of his people's justification, even from eternity, as much as Adam's sin was the matter of condemnation to all the human race, from the moment that Adam himself became guilty before God, although not a single individual, of the first man's race, had then sinned, not being born; and yet we are informed that, from the moment Adam sinned, death passed upon all men, for that all had sinned: now this modern Calvinists, at least some of them, profess to believe, and at the same time undertake to reprobate, as the vilest of doctrines, the truth of the church's

eternal justification; and this they might undertake to do with uncontrolled success, could they but disprove the truth of the church's eternal union to our Lord Christ, as the "Everlasting Father," federal head, and representative of all God's eternally chosen people, IN whom also they were as much, and absolutely made righteous unto their actual justification, as it was possible for fallen Adam's race to be made sinners unto condemnation, by the medium of Adam's becoming federally unrighteous; but before I enter defensively on this subject, I shall suggest, as a matter never to be lost sight of, that the Christian church's spiritual legislator has instituted positive laws, accompanied with apostolic injunctions, for us to observe, believe, and hold fast, whatever he has commanded us; we are neither to add nor to diminish from God's council, no, not a word. Again, we are not only to be obedient to the matter, but to the order of his laws, decrees, and testimonies, believing all things "*according to the Scriptures.*" The Apostle Paul, for instance, not only commanded his son in the faith to hold fast sound words, but to hold fast a *form* of sound words, intimating that the form of sound words is of as much importance in the economy of salvation as sound words themselves; and such will appear to be the case, if we duly consider the subject. Arminians, for instance, hold the doctrine of election, but how do they hold it? why as a doctrine following, because founded on, God's foreknowledge of elected men's repentance, faith, and good works. But who does not know, that the Arminians might as well renounce their belief in God's election altogether; for not believing it according to the Scriptures, they virtually deny it, inasmuch, as

they make the doctrine of election to depend, in point of efficacy, on the good words, thoughts, and works of the individuals elected; whereas the Scriptures represent the doctrine of election eternal, absolute, and irrevocable. Election, with God or man, is adopted for the certain securing of a nominated object, or objects, to answer certain purposes; election therefore, in reference to God's choice of his people, from eternity, should be regarded, believed in, and represented from the pulpit, as the fore and rearguard of an army, so far as the security it affords the elect, making their salvation unavoidable, without a single concurring act, or latent desire, on their part; salvation not being obtained by works of righteousness, but by God's election of his people, to obtain that for which he has elected them. Are God's elect then, compared to soldiers? yes, indeed, and to an army with banners too, whom God has chosen to fight the good fight of faith; election, therefore, goes before, to make way for this hallowed army, to come after, and follows in its consequences, to secure the coming up of every chosen or elected soldier; so that, in case any would fall out of the ranks by the way, and desert, they cannot, for the rearguard has made it impossible for any to fall back into perdition, who have been first chosen into the army of Christ. But do Arminians, yea more, do many Baptist Calvinists believe in election in this light? * indeed they do not; but in such cases, they had better do, as did Arminius and Whitby, throw off the mask, and openly deny

* One of the ministers of the Essex Baptist association told me, it was dangerous to preach the doctrine of election; I inquired of him, whether God had revealed it to us; and if so, if God had revealed to us and our children a dangerous doctrine?

and assail the doctrine they profess to believe. But in further proof and illustration of my present argument, in favor of holding fast a *form* of sound words, let us suppose that Dilworth, or any other author of English spelling books, had, in introducing to the public's notice, and for the instruction of schools, inserted in his first page, what is called, the alphabet, or the elements of the English language called letters; suppose, I say, that, instead of his inserting them as he has, in their real dependencies and relation to each other, that he had inserted B, C, D, E, and then A, with what follows, to the end of the alphabet; would that have been accepted and sanctioned by the literati? no; but why not? does not the author's elementary contain every letter in the English language? is there the least numerical deficiency? are not the elements, on which the whole fabric of English learning is to be erected, contained, and unequivocally stated? most assuredly; then where is the deficiency? why in the statement and *order* thereof; and so flagrant is the disorder, whether the author knows it or not, that he might as well have denied the existence of every letter, as to have thus disorganized them; for in the first place, the beginning, foundation, or corner-stone of human learning, being removed, though not denied, is become of no effect; and secondly, that which is first, with those that follow, are rendered wholly useless by the removal of their antecedent, for B, C, and D, are not only consonants, and therefore imperfect at best, but they are mutes, and therefore ciphers in the system of literature, without their antecedent or subsequent vowels; and therefore the learned reader would think himself justified in correcting such a fundamental mistake in the

author's arrangement; and allow me to ask, if the same argument will not admit of its full force in matters of religion? Let us grant, that Arminians and modern Calvinists hold every article of the Christian faith; but making, as they do, repentance, obedience, and faith, *conditions* of our salvation, they might as well deny the whole of revelation, and turn infidels, it being incontrovertibly true, that the mutes B, C, and D, without their concomitant vowels, tell for as much in the science of literature, as repentance, obedience, and faith, amount to, without their antecedent absolute election, in the economy of God's salvation; for, except a sinner is eternally elected in Christ, all his obedience is like Cain's wickedness, his repentance and faith are the effects of a dead branch in Christ by profession, but not by election. Wherefore, if this reasoning be at all conclusive and logical, it will evidently appear, that it is not only essential and important for Christ's ministers to contend earnestly for the faith, but for the faith *in order, as once delivered to the saints*, which order we have, in the most illustrious copy, set forth, by Jude, as first election, or sovereign setting apart in a holy and righteous Christ, by the Father; second, the church, or elect of God, notwithstanding their fall in Adam, were preserved *perfectly righteous, and spotlessly holy in Christ*; and then comes experimental religion in time, by the effectual calling of the Spirit, to the knowledge and enjoyment of what we *eternally were*, and possessed in Christ Jesus as our election head: now, to disorganize this order of divine truth, is no better than denying it. I am aware that some will say I make election every thing, and therefore I am always contending for it; to this charge I reply, I make election as important in

a sinner's salvation, as St. Paul made his Lord's first rising from the dead to the church's resurrection; for he argued, that if Christ was risen, then the church must rise from the dead also, but if he has not, then the church could not; and so I argue, if a sinner be elected in Christ, certain and genuine repentance, faith, and obedience, unto eternal salvation, shall follow, but where sinners are not elected in Christ, all their obedience, repentance, and faith, shall certainly terminate in their eternal confusion. I add further, in defence of a form of sound words, that Moses was commanded to make all things according to the pattern (form or order) showed him in the mount; but why? the reason is evident; i. e. had he made *all* things, but not made them according to the pattern showed him, he would have done worse than nothing. This therefore, may be considered at least as introductory to my defence, and self-justification, as an Antinomian, who have never yet been prevailed upon, either by devils or men, to believe or admit, with the ministers and churches of the Essex Baptist Association, that the justification of God's elect is a time act, believing as I do that it was from eternity; nor do I hesitate to pronounce such a doctrine scriptural, without referring to a single human author, in defence of the *now-a-day* unfashionable and Antinomian belief; although a Gill, Witsius, Goodwin, Ames, and other most celebrated divines, as ever wrote or preached, in defence of Christianity, all contended for the same. But leaving these worthies in Christ's cause out of the question, and controversy for the present, let us attend to the important question of, what saith the Scriptures on the subject? "To the law and to the testimony," therefore, which alone ought to be the

standard to judge of light and darkness, of truth and error, I now appeal; wherefore, my beloved friend, "Hear now my reasoning, and hearken to the pleadings of my lips," in defence of the eternal justification of God's people; and first of all, it may be proved, from the doctrine of election, or the church being chosen in Christ. Now all spiritual persons will readily allow, that the whole church of God was chosen, elected, and sanctified, or set apart by God in Christ from eternity; wherefore the question is, in what character or condition were they in, as chosen in Christ? that is to say, were they in him as condemned and unrighteous, or justified and pure? Should I receive for answer, that God's elect were in Christ *from eternity*, but not *justified from eternity*, then, necessarily, they were condemned IN Christ. Now, to say nothing about the absurdity of such reasoning, making a justified head and condemned members, a justified head and condemned body, which must be the case, if eternal justification is denied; I say such a denial of a plain and positive scriptural doctrine, makes St. Paul and the Holy Ghost false witnesses; for the former, as inspired by the latter, has asserted that, now that is according to the apostle's reasoning, in Rom. vii. 25, "there is *no* condemnation IN Christ Jesus," and if there is none now, there never was, for Christ Jesus, and therefore his people in him, (and they were never apart) are the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Wherefore, if you will allow, and you must, that there never was any condemnation IN Christ, any more than there could be drowning for Noah in the ark, then the people of God were eternally justified, for they were from eternity IN him. Again, was the church righteous, holy, or unholy,

as eternally chosen in Christ? Should it be said they are unholy and unrighteous, till they believe, though they were eternally, even from everlasting, chosen in him, then necessarily Christ and Belial, light and darkness, must have been united, and, quite contrary to James's reasoning, salt water and fresh must have proceeded from one fountain. But as Christ for Belial, sin and holiness, can have no union, then we know the church was eternally holy and righteous, and therefore, justified in Christ, and *in him* saith the Scriptures *there is no unrighteousness*, and where there is no unrighteousness, there must be justification. Besides, the opposers of eternal justification, in their professed differences with the Arminians on the subject of the church's election, unavoidably establish the doctrine of eternal justification. The Arminians, as I have already proved, believe in election, as well as modern Calvinists, but herein they differ, the former believe in a time election (i. e. election when sinners believe, whereas modern Calvinists, do profess to believe in eternal election. But how they can believe in the eternal and personal election of God's people, and treat with the greatest contempt and buffoonery, yea, deny altogether their eternal justification, I know not, for they stand and fall together; as a proof of this, let me ask you, what is implied in the justification of God's people, is any thing more implied, than their being one with, and therefore accepted in Christ, as their innocent, spotless, righteous representative, chosen in him before the foundation of the world? certainly not. Again, then I repeat St. Paul's words of triumph, "who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" Now to receive the word elect in this place, in a grammatical sense of the word, we must neces-

sarily receive it as it is meant, that is as referring to all the chosen people of God, called and uncalled, believing and unbelieving, for a noun without an article to limit it is to be taken in its widest latitude; wherefore, as all God's elect are evidently referred to, and that they were his elect from eternity, therefore, they must have been eternally justified, or some charge, and just charge, yea awful charge, could be laid against them. But let my angry opponents be judges; they allow that God's people are freely justified by the imputation of Christ's righteousness—so far, so good. Here, then, let me ask, was not Christ's righteousness imputed from eternity? if not, some charge could be laid against them; yes, without it the elect in Christ are laid open to every charge, and therefore to condemnation, which contradicts Rom. viii. 1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." Besides, how could they possibly be blest with all spiritual blessings from eternity without it. Now if the foregoing arguments do not satisfy my opponents, as many more will not; but some will say, "if by the doctrine of eternal justification, you only mean God's eternal purpose of justifying his people when they *become* believers, then we not only understand you but believe the same, but we believe also, that God eternally purposed his people's calling and repentance, and therefore you ought to preach eternal calling and eternal repentance." To this I reply, the church's calling and repentance is the work of God effected *in* his people, do not mistake me, not a work wrought by his people, nor yet from themselves, but a work brought to pass in them by God the Holy Ghost, working in them to will and to do of his good pleasure—they are temples

for God the Holy Ghost—he maketh intercession in them, yes he cries Abba Father, working all their works in them, but the work of justification is neither of, from, nor in the Lord's people, but wholly IN CHRIST, and therefore, as Christ was set up from everlasting, and their justification was wholly in him, it must be from eternity, though their calling and repentance, which are but fruits necessarily flowing from and following their eternal justification, is not wrought in them till time, and therefore this supposed, and, as some think, incontrovertible objection, comes to nothing, as must every hostility to the truth, when examined by the light of Scripture. But it will be further objected, that the Scripture saith, we are justified by faith, and therefore it must be in time, for faith is a time, and not an eternal act; to this also I reply, yes, I know all God's believing people are justified by faith, and that in the same sense as I am fed by a fork, which fork, like faith, is the mean of participation but not the matter of justification, no, the subject matter of the elect's justification is as distinct as the food we eat, and the instrument by which that food is received. Our Lord said, whosoever ate his flesh or drank his blood had eternal life in them; but why? because they did eat from eternity, no, but because in time, they who believe, do eat or partake of that eternal life, which was their eternal life, hid in their eternal Lord, life, and head, from eternity; and just so, though faith in Christ does not take place till time, even the time of the soul's new birth, until which the soul's justification is neither heard of, made known, nor thought about, and much less realized and appreciated; nevertheless, this is no argument against the believer's eternal justification, for a child might be immensely rich, before it had a

manifest existence, knowledge thereof, or enjoyment therein; wherefore, the elect's justification and their reception of it, or joying in it, being distinct things, this objection also must fall to the ground, like Dagon before the ark. My sentiments and preaching have been wickedly charged with dooming infants to hell, an assertion of which modern Calvinists might have been ashamed; their object, however, was to make me contemptible, and therefore a falsity suits such holy people better than the truth. But allow me to observe, that except souls can be justified without faith, so that they be but chosen in Christ; then, neither infants nor idiots can possibly be saved, for there is no salvation without justification, whereas, infants and idiots have no faith, wherefore, it is my opponents' sentiments and not mine, that lock infants and idiots out of heaven, consigning them over to unavoidable anguish, for want of faith; a sentiment the most horrid and dreadful, and not less contrary to the Scripture doctrine of eternal justification. Besides all this, do not the Scriptures declare, that while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God, by the death of his Son. Rom. v. 10, "For if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." And if you read 2 Cor. v. 19, "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." You will see what that was to wit, God's not imputing their trespasses unto them; and Psa. xxxii. 2, tells us, that this is the justification of God's people. And in perfect accordance with this, Dr. Crisp, in his sermon from 2 Cor. v. 19, says, note this, "the apostle himself speaks of

it (justification) as a thing **ALREADY PAST**; he doth not say God *is*, or will be, but he speaks in the preter perfect tense, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself;" it is a thing long before finished perfectly to our hands; that we may, when God hath given us eyes to behold it, see it is a thing already done, and perfected long before, and not now perfecting, much less now to be begun." "The Scriptures," says Mr. Polhil, "know not two ways of justification," and yet two ways there must be, if elect infants and idiots are justified in a different way from the rest of God's chosen people. That, therefore, which cannot fail to settle this controversy, and establish the hearts of God's regenerated children, in the belief of eternal justification, is, first, the consideration of, who it is that justifies the righteous. *Secondly*, what is the matter of their justification. And then, *thirdly*, how long the justified of God have inherited the matter of their justification. That God's people are a justified people, is a truth beyond all contradiction; the saying of envious Balaam sufficiently proves this, "He," that is God, "hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel." Now, this is pre-eminently true of all God's spiritual Israel, I say of **ALL** God's Israel; for, as the saying of Balaam referred to the whole body of God's ancient church, so must we apply the same to all God's anti-typical Israel, both believers and unbelievers, even as many as were, from eternity, chosen in Christ Jesus, as "**THE LORD THEIR RIGHTEOUSNESS**," in whom alone the seed of Israel are justified, and in whom they glory; and in what do they glory, but in this, that there is even now no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus;" and why not? why? because "it is God that justifies them." Now

the act of God justifying, gives BEING TO his eternally beloved people's justification. "It is God that justifieth," saith the apostle, that is God the Father, as I apprehend, who, all through the Scriptures, is represented as personifying divine justice; on the Father, therefore it devolved, to justify the righteous, according as they stood chosen in Christ, from the beginning of God's ways, even from eternity; for, as Mr. Allen observes, "as justification is an emanant act in God, an act of grace in his eternal mind, it can take place but once;" and Solomon saith, "I know, that whatever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor can any thing be taken from it." Some divines, however, and good men too, have labored hard to prove, that God's justification of his people, is both *emanant* and *transient*, in which they have unavoidably failed, even from their own arguments; for either God did justify his people from eternity or he did not. "Now the definition of justification," says Dr. Ames, "belongs to some declared act or sentence of God," which, I add, being once passed, is, according to Solomon's words, passed for ever. Now "I own," says Mr. Beart, in his inveighings against the doctrine of eternal justification; "I own," he says, "that there was a grant of justification made to Christ, on the behalf of the elect from eternity; as a benefit, above the consideration of the fall, in the mind of God. Thus the elect stood before God, in all that perfection, in all that glory, which they shall be glorified with, unto eternity." Now what more than this is wanted, I should like to know, to constitute God's elect justified from eternity. "God was in Christ," says Mr. Dutton, (who can tell how early) surely he was in him, by his eternal counsel, will, and covenant, "reconciling the world unto himself, NOT IM-

PUTING their trespasses UNTO THEM." Justification, then, as Dr. Gill says "is an act of God's grace, flowing from his sovereign good will and pleasure; which is an act internal, and eternal, taken up in the divine mind *from eternity*, and is an emanant, abiding one in it; it is, as Dr. Ames expresses it, "a sentence conceived in the divine mind, by the decree of justifying." Now as God's will to elect, is the election of his people, so his will to justify them, is the justification of them, and lies in his estimating, accounting, and constituting them righteous;" and, such being the case, God's people must have been justified from eternity: for proof of this, we have only to consider, secondly, of what God's justifying his people consists; and of what does it consist? why his pronouncing them righteous; now, concerning the matter, or of what the righteousness of the righteous consists, we are told all through the Scriptures, for as, "unto Adam, and to his wife, the Lord God made coats of skins, and clothed them;" so also did the Lord God covenantly constitute his eternally chosen and beloved people justified, by himself becoming, in the person and relative character of Christ, the matter of their justification, for IN the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified; for IN the Lord, say they, we have righteousness, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord; so that their righteousness is the righteousness of GOD, insomuch, "that this is the name wherewith she shall be called, the Lord our righteousness." Jer. xxxiii. 16. Now whatever righteousness the elect of God possess, they can only possess it in Christ, and therefore their righteousness is the righteousness of God; forasmuch, as that Christ, who is his people's righteousness, is very God, as well as very man, therefore whatever Christ is to his people, he is

made that unto them by God the Father, by whom the elect are in Christ, and of whom Christ is made unto his people, all that he is made. Then, finally, let this never be lost sight of, viz. whatever Christ is, to his elect people, as made unto them by God the Father, he must have been all that to them, from eternity; is Christ, then, the righteousness of his people? he is. Was he their righteousness from eternity? he was. Then must not the righteous, or God's elect, have been justified from eternity, and not from the time of Christ's dying, or their believing? yes, they must, for all are agreed, even in literal things, that the person of the surety being taken hold of, by law, from that moment, the individual, or individuals, for whom the person, becoming surety, undertakes, must be acquitted and justified, as exonerated from all liability to condemnation, there being no cause of condemnation in them; wherefore did Christ undertake, from eternity, to stand in the law-place of his people, making himself liable in their stead, by taking their sins, into which God had decreed his church, in common with reprobate humanity, should fall? I say, was Christ the surety of his people, from eternity? he was. Then must the justice of God have been violated, not to have exonerated from all possible liability to the laws, demands those, for whom Christ became a surety; besides, it is much more congruous and agreeable to Scripture, and the analogy of faith in general, to believe in, and contend for, the doctrine of eternal justification, than otherwise: for instance, was Adam's sin the *matter* of all his posterity's condemnation, and therefore was all human nature condemned IN him, even before human beings, individually considered, had an existence? Verily, such was the case; not that Adam's race

had sinned individually, for that was impossible ; but they were constituted guilty relatively, Adam being their federal head, and representative. But was Adam, in any sense of the word, more the head or representative of his people, or posterity, than Jesus Christ was the representative and federal head of his people, from eternity? I should think not, indeed ; wherefore, as Adam's sinning, before his children actually existed, made them actually unrighteous, in consequence of which, actual condemnation was passed upon all, for that all in Adam had sinned, why may not modern Antinomians believe, without libling themselves to the charge of heresy, that Christ Jesus's righteousness, as the head and representative of God's elect, actually justified them, even from eternity, it being from eternity that the Lord Jesus Christ, as God-man, became " the Lord, his people's righteousness ;" with whose righteousness God was well pleased, and therefore accepted those to whom it was imputed, joying over them, to do them good. This doctrine, however, by modern Calvinists, is called "*Crispianism, in its vilest doctrines :*" well be it so, it is no disgrace, to modern Antinomians, to be found walking hand in hand, in matters of faith, with such men as Drs. Gill, Crisp, Ames, &c. &c. not that I am claiming equality with those ancient worthies, no, indeed ; at the same time, it is a great mercy to obtain the same divine teaching, as enabled those great divines to believe in, write, and preach about, and in defence of the now-a-days despised doctrine of eternal justification.

" To grace, free grace, be all the praise,
 And none, my God, to me:
 All that I am, and all I have
 That's good, I owe to THEE !"

O with what ecstasy of mind, and, I doubt not, gratitude of heart, did the psalmist exclaim, "I will go in the strength (Heb. "strengths, repeated and continual strength") of *Adonai Jehovah*: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only!" "Let this then," says Mr. Serle, "comfort thy conscience, amidst all thy doubts and fears, thy perplexities and troubles. Thou hast HIM for THY RIGHTEOUSNESS; who can eclipse the glories of all created righteousness in heaven, and can put to silence all the accusations of sin and hell. Arrayed in this spotless robe, heaven for thee shall triumph, and hell be dumb for ever. 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of GOD's elect. It is GOD that justifieth!'" Oh, yes,

"Our debts to Christ's account were all transferr'd,
 BEFORE the LORD's creative voice was heard:
 And by HIS bill (HIS covenant oath) were paid,
 ERE THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE WORLD WERE LAID;
 Were *then, well* paid; for 'mongst mankind, you know
 Notes on demand, instead of cash, will go.
 Nor cou'd of failure Justice be afraid,
 He knew th' eternal fulness of our Head:—
 Accordingly when on the cross he dy'd,
 By perfect payment JESUS satisfied:
 THUS FROM ETERNAL AGES, WHOLLY CLEAR,
 FROM EVERY CHARGE, ALL GOD'S ELECTED WERE."

"Agreeable to this," as says Dr. Gill, "are the reasonings and assertions of Twisse, Maccovius, and others." "Justification," continues that great master in Israel, as Mr. Tucker calls him, "is not only before faith, but is from *eternity*, being an emanant act in the divine mind, and so an internal and eternal one; as may be concluded, *first* from eternal election; the objects of justification are God's elect? 'it is God which justifies,' that is the elect. Now, if God's elect, as such, can have nothing laid to their

charge, but are, by God, acquitted, discharged, and justified, and if they bore this character of elect, from eternity, or were chosen in Christ, before the world began, then they must be acquitted, discharged, and justified, so early, so that nothing could be laid to their charge; besides, by electing grace, men were put into Christ and were considered in him before the foundation of the world; and, if they were considered in him, they must be considered as righteous, or unrighteous; not surely as unrighteous, unjustified, and in a state of condemnation; "for there is no condemnation to them which are *IN* Christ." Rom. viii. 1, and therefore must be considered as righteous, and so justified: "justified then, we were," says Dr. Goodwin, "when first elected, though not in our persons, yet in our head, as he had our persons *then* given him, and we came to have a being and interest in him." *Secondly*, justification may well be considered as a branch of election; it is no other, as one expresses it, than setting apart the elect alone, to be partakers of Christ's righteousness; and a setting apart Christ's righteousness for the elect only; it is mentioned along with election, as of the same date with it; "*wherein*," that is, in the grace of God, spoken of before, "*he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*" Ephes. i. 6. What is this acceptance *IN* Christ, but *justification in him*? and this is expressed, as a *past* act, in the same language as other *eternal* things be, in the context. He *hath* blessed us, and he *hath* chosen us, and *having* predestinated us, so he *hath* made us accepted; and, indeed, as Christ was always the beloved of God, and well pleasing to him; so all given to him, and in him, were beloved of God, well pleasing to him, and accepted with him, or justified in him from eternity. *Thirdly*, Christ became a surety for his people, from everlasting;

engaged to pay their debts, BEAR THEIR SINS, (not merely the effects of them, as says Mr. Fuller, and modern Calvinists, for were that moderate gospel true, then, indeed, we are still in our sins) and make satisfaction for them; and was accepted of as such, by God his Father, who thenceforward looked at him (*as the sinner, says Luther*) for payment, and satisfaction; and looked at them as discharged, and so they were in his eternal mind: and it is a rule that will hold good, as Maccovius observes, “that as soon as one becomes a surety for another, the other is immediately freed, if the surety be accepted;” which is the case here. And so Dr. Goodwin observes, that God, in the everlasting transaction with Christ, “told him as it were, that he would look for his debt and satisfaction of him, and that he did let the sinner go free; and so they are in this respect JUSTIFIED FROM ALL ETERNITY.” Dr. Twisse, makes the very quiddity and essence of justification and remission of sin, *which he takes to be the same*, to lie in the will of God, not to punish; and asserts, that this will not to punish, as it is an emanant act, was from eternity.” Justification then, as Dr. Gill elsewhere observes, “does not take place in time, or at believing, but is antecedent to any act of faith. *First*, faith is not the cause, but an effect of justification; it is not the cause of it in *any sense*; it is not the moving cause, that is, the free grace of God, “being justified freely by his grace.” Rom. iii. 24, nor the efficient cause of it: “it is God that justifies.” Rom. viii. 23, *nor even the instrumental cause*; for as Mr. Baxter himself argues, “if faith is the instrument of our justification, it is the instrument, either of God, or man; *not of man*, for justification is God’s act, he is the *sole* justifier. Rom. iii. 26. Man does not justify

himself, nor of God, for it is not God that believes ;" it is not in any class of causes whatever, but it is the effect of justification. The reason why any are justified, is not because they have faith ; but the reason why they have faith, is because they are justified ; precious faith is obtained through the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ ; 2 Pet. i. 1. Faith is no part of, nor any ingredient in, our justification ; the latter is a complete act in the eternal mind of God, without the being or consideration of faith, or any foresight of it ; a man is as much justified before, as after believing, in the sight of God ; and after he does believe, his justification does not depend upon his acts of faith ; for though WE BELIEVE NOT, yet he abides faithful," &c. &c. Now my dear friend, this is what I call Christ's gospel : sound speech, that cannot be condemned, and just as cold water is approved by a thirsty soul, and as every bitter morsel is sweet to the hungry soul, so acceptable and precious will the old fashioned doctrine of the believer's eternal justification, prove to all and every soul, that is made to know and feel, that there is no more dependence or trust to be put in a Christian man's graces (which is all some professed Christians have as a ground for their hope) than there is in his very corruptions. I know of no greater evil among a certain class of Christians in the present day, than that of making a heaven, or a hell of their experience, conning over *their graces*, instead of God's love, and Christ's merits, as revealed to their understandings by the Holy Ghost, as the ground of their assurance, and the evidence of their interest in Christ, "as made of God" (unto every one taught of the Spirit, the latter flowing from the former) wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification,

and redemption. The knowledge of which a quickened soul may have, and be fully assured of, in the most scriptural, and authorized sense, at seasons, when he is the subject of a hundred weight of the most virulent and active corruptions, to an ounce, either of faith, or repentance; yea he may have no grace *at all in exercise*, towards either God or godliness, but quite the reverse, and yet be assured of his being justified from eternity in the Lord, by being grounded, and established in the knowledge of the truth, as much as if he were freed from lust and sin altogether; otherwise, a man's evidences of his interest in the Lord, his justifying righteousness, must be founded on his pleasant, and devotional frames, and feelings, and not on divine teaching. "There, are," as Dr. Gill says, "many objections made to this truth;" well be it so, that is no valid objection to the truth objected to. You, my dear friend, will not, but perhaps some as aforetime, will object to my folly, as they are pleased to term it, in adhering, with so much unguarded warmth to anti-modern authorities; let such objectors remember, that when I go to modern authorities, like Mary to the sepulchre in search of her Lord, I am obliged to say of them, as she said, "*they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him,*" and what have they substituted in his place? why their own negative, and positive goodness, for truly we live in the day, famed for every one's crying up his own goodness, either what he has attained to, in a life of progressive piety, or what he promises himself, *if he proves faithful*, or what goodness he might have been possessed of, *had he but been faithful* to the talents given him.

"With them, no gold is current till alloy'd,
With CHRIST's rich dainties their weak stomach's cloy'd;

With FANCI'D TERMS the COV'NANT THEY DEBASE,
As though we were to merit CHRIST and GRACE."

Not so however with the old school; this therefore is my answer to those who arraign me, for disaffection towards the writings, and preachments of modern appositely called, *moderate* Calvinists; let the latter desist from their pious cant, about "practical preachers, and practical preaching, about progressive sanctification, and the Sinai law, the eternal and perfect rule of a spiritual life;" I say, let them turn from these dumb idols, to serve the living God, by preaching Jesus Christ, in the glories of his person, the perfection of his work, and the preciousness of his names, and covenant characters, with the person, and sovereign agency of God the Holy Ghost, and I will become one of their disciples; till then, I shall hold fast that which I have, not suffering myself to be robbed of my reward, by attending to those things, which have indeed, a *show* of wisdom in will worship, and feigned humility, but are in no wise conducive to feeding the hungry soul with good things. Wherefore beloved, having written you a brief, but I hope, comprehensive, and the Lord the Holy Ghost grant, that it may prove to your soul, and the souls of all who may read it, a beneficial illustration, and defence of the blessed Scripture doctrine, of the saints' eternal justification, by medium of their eternal union to, and interest in, the Lord Jesus Christ, as Jehovah their whole and sole righteousness: now permit me to close my account, in the language of an excellent man of God, in his essay on Christ's name, as "JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." "It was this blessed doctrine," says he, "which could make a good man say, upon the prospect of death;" I am not anxious either to live or die: if a die, I

shall be with GOD ; and, if I live, he will be with me. Everlasting righteousness, is an undoubted title to everlasting life ; and such is the righteousness of Jehovah—Jesus. Couldst thou unite all the righteousness of heaven and earth in thine own person, thou wouldst see, O Christian, that the infinite righteousness of thy Redeemer, so vastly transcends the splendid aggregate, that with the apostle, thou mightest count them all but *dung* and *dross*, in the comparison, and seek justification and glory in his alone. Rejoice then in HIM, who is unchangeable; and trust in his righteousness, which can never fail.” Is Christ’s righteousness ours then? it is; and is Christ’s righteousness the *exclusive* matter of our justification? it is; then must not our justification have been from eternity? for every body must know, if they believe the Scriptures, that Christ’s righteousness was ours from eternity, yes beloved, it was from eternity, that we were chosen in Christ, and from eternity, Christ was made, all that to his people, which has since been revealed to them in the Holy Scriptures, and on this account I do defy a host of self-righteous Christians, to disprove the eternal justification of God’s elect, without disproving, at the same time, the Scripture doctrine of eternal election, and mystical union, described by Jude, as the eternal sanctification, and separation of God’s elect from the rest, or reprobate part of human nature, as eyed in one whole lump, from which the Father sanctified, and justified the elect, by choosing them in Christ Jesus, as made unto them, from eternity, WISDOM, RIGHTEOUSNESS, SANCTIFICATION, AND REDEMPTION ; here then, my beloved sister in the Lord, I close my short epistle, in defence of what is called, a fundamental doctrine of the

accursed doctrines, held by modern Antinomians, accursed indeed, by those, whose unsanctified minds are too proud (although they may, and have a zeal for God, but it is founded on ignorance) to submit to the righteousness of God; to those, however, who are so impoverished, as to say with the apostle "in us, that is in our flesh, dwells no good thing," and with the proverb, "from nothing, we can nothing have;" I say, to these souls, the doctrine of eternal justification, will be life from the dead. My dear friend, I exceedingly regret every deficiency, marking my endeavor to support a truth so glorious in its origin, so supporting in its influence, and fruitful of all good in its consequences; but having done what I could, I feel assured, that you will do me the honor to believe, that I am, under all circumstances, however painful, or pleasing,

Your most devoted, and

Affectionate pastor.

WASHINGTON WILKS.

" Important question ! ' How shall guilty man,
 Poor wretched feeble man, be just with God ?'
 Jehovah answers ; let his sacred word
 Point out the wondrous love concerted way.
 ' Behold he cries ; oh words of mightiest grace,
 Behold my sister, my beloved spouse ;
 I, even I, Jehovah is my name ;
 I am the Lord ; thy husband, and thy friend ;
 My righteousness, perfections, holy self
 Was, ere I framed creation's fabric, thine,
 Thine all I have, and am, and will, and do,
 And thou my lovely ornamented bride,
 By union firm, and lasting as my throne,
 Art mine—mine, safe encircled
 In my fond embrace, ere time,
 With all attendant tribulations, sins,
 And pond'rous debts, were suffered to exist,
 Mine, still beloved, and innocently pure
 Before the Majesty of Heaven, elen when
 Thy constant vileness made thee weep, and mourn ;
 And mine eternally thou shalt remain.
 Thy glorious robes, the splendid sun outshine,
 And share the kingdom of thy saving Lord.
 O mighty wonder ! vast abyss of love !
 Worms, trait'rous sinners : holy, spotless, pure,
 Their guilt all cancell'd, and their mighty debts
 Paid e'er contracted, and themselves beheld
 By God himself, as free from sin, and blame.
 Here shines the friend, the precious saving friend,
 Who stood responsible, and amply paid
 The twice ten thousand aggravated scores,
 Each Peter, David, Magdalen, and Paul,
 Had madly ran : yet still mysterious grace ;
 He bids them take, rely upon, and wear,
 The robe of him, who pays a stranger's debts ;
 Calls them most comely in their lovely dress,
 And challenges both earth and hell to find
 One single charge against his own elect."