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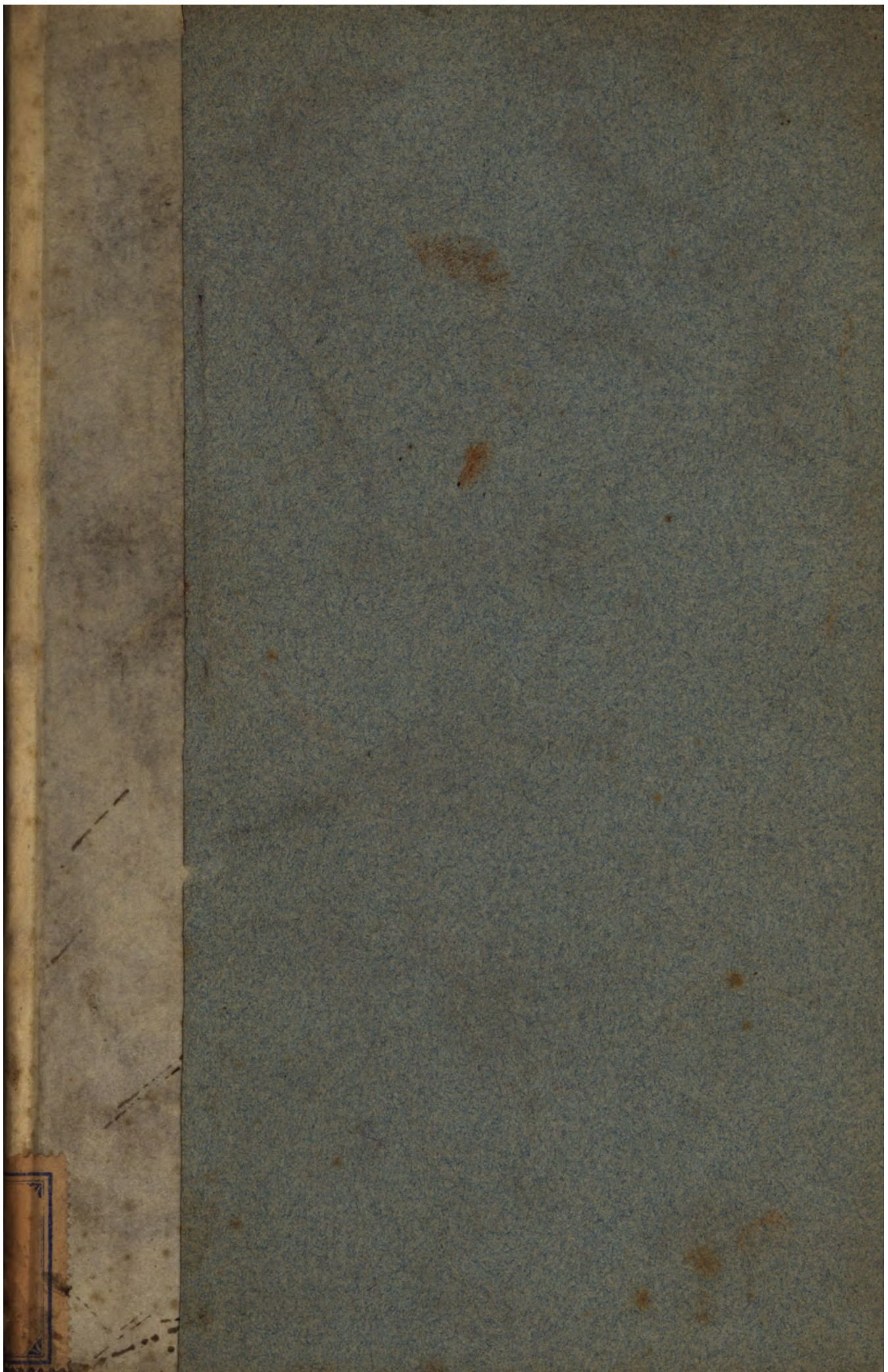
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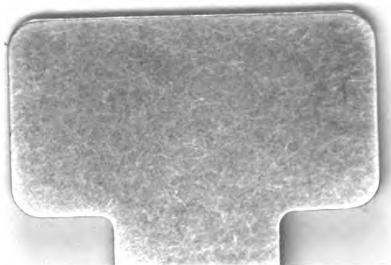
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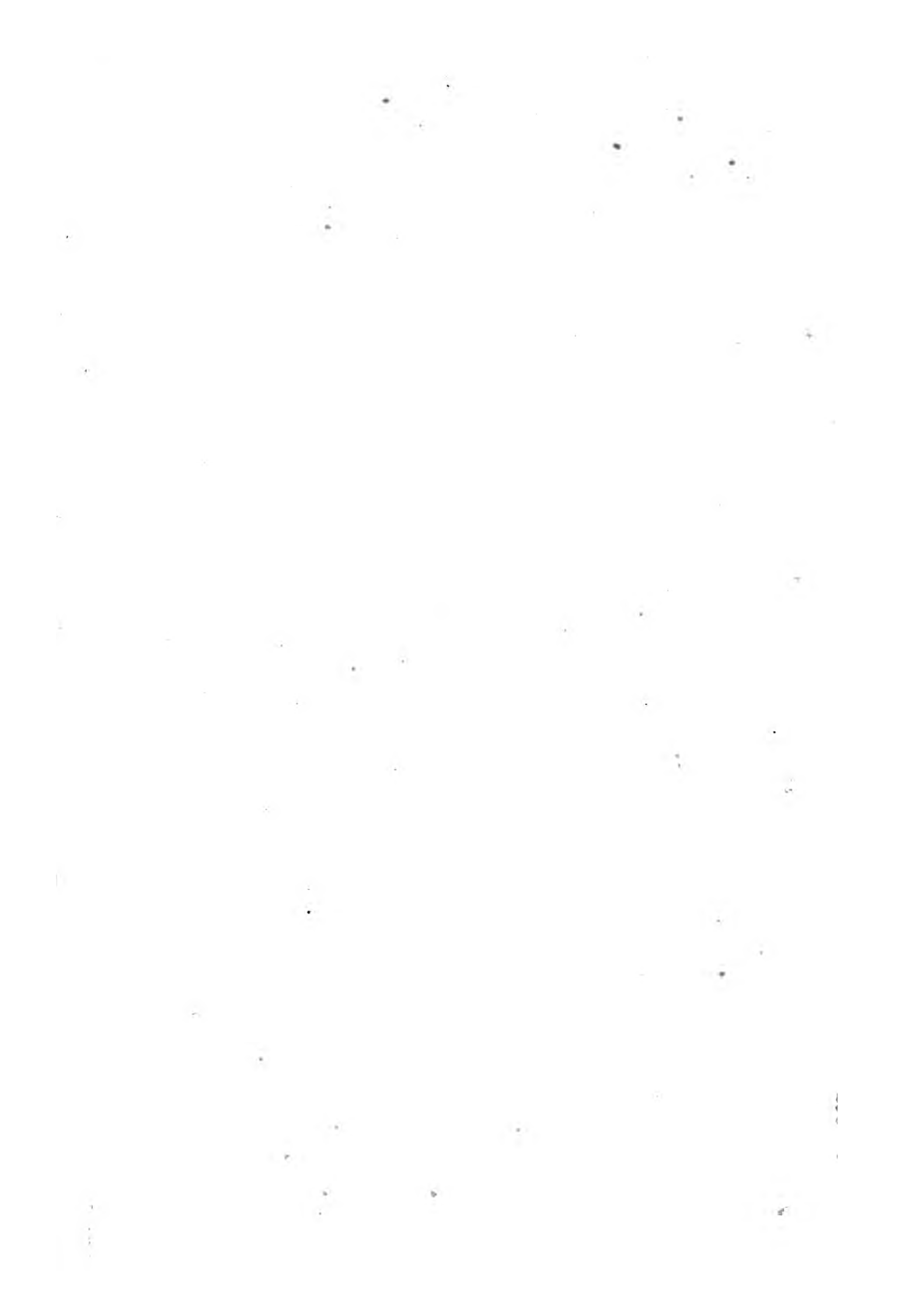
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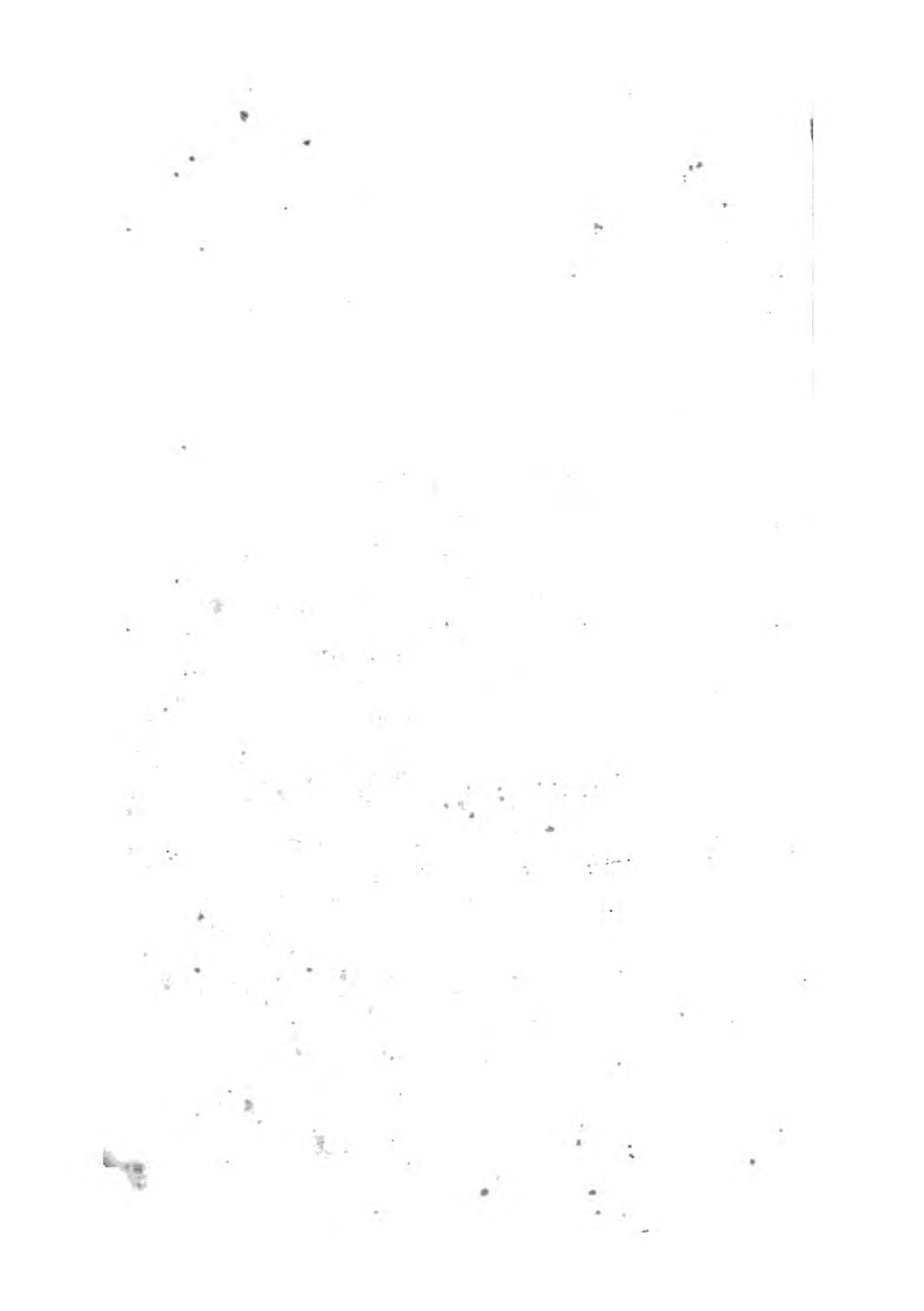
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THE  
FINISHING STROKE;

CONTAINING  
SOME STRICTURES

ON THE  
REV. MR. FLETCHER'S PAMPHLET,

ENTITLED,  
LOGICA GENEVENSIS,

OR,  
A FOURTH CHECK TO ANTINOMIANISM.

*Nothing so much abates the Courage of a Christian, as to call  
his brother Adversary.* Bishop HALL.

BY RICHARD HILL, Esq.

LONDON,

Printed for EDWARD and CHARLES DILLY, in the Strand,  
W. HARRIS, No 70, in St. Paul's Church-Yard; and  
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MDCCLXXIII.



130. e. 142.

E

## A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

Immediately after reading Mr. Fletcher's *Logica Genevensis*, perceiving that necessity, as well as friends, called upon me to take some notice of that pamphlet, (notwithstanding the resolution I had formed of being silent). I thought to write to him in a serious expostulatory way, but upon a second perusal of that part of his book where he pleads in such powerful terms for the use of *mild irony*, I thought it was better to parley with him *now and then* with his own weapons, which must plead my excuse to the pious, but more phlegmatic reader for any little strokes of satire, which may appear throughout my piece.

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Reverend Sir

January 2, 1773.

WHEN I have been travelling, I have often seen the following words written upon a board, and stuck upon a sign-post, "GOOD ENTERTAINMENT FOR MAN AND HORSE." And yet it is a general observation that the board promises, what the house seldom furnishes—A poor pilgrim is travelling Zion-ward, he jogs on; he casts an eye over your table of contents, and your prefatorial address to all Calvinists to walk in and refresh themselves. He says to himself surely I shall here find every thing which I can wish or desire, after all these professions of love and candor; and no doubt but each letter I read will fully answer the contents which are prefixed to it. Being sadly wearied, and perhaps *heavy laden* into the bargain, in he goes, expecting good meat, drink and lodging, but is much disappointed to find that there is nothing for him to feed upon but cold frozen meat, and a few dry crusts; nothing to drink but muddled water; and nothing to rest on but an hard matrafs without a covering. And if he wants any thing for his horse, the poor beast must e'en be contented with *hay and stubble*.

But not to dwell any longer on allegories, I proceed to inform you that last Saturday and not before, I received your *Logica Genevenis*, or *fourth check to Antinomianism*; and am truly sorry to find, that neither the spirit of the piece, nor the doctrine it contains, are a jot better than what appeared in the former checks. Still all who hold and preach the protestant doctrines of election and perseverance, finished salvation, and imputed righteousness, are held forth as *storming the new Jerusalem, as cutting the way through law and gospel, before an adulterer, in fla-*

B

grante



*grante delicto, as prostituting God's holy word, fighting the battles of the rankest antinomians, and doing the the devil's work.* And why this? Truly because we firmly believe, and unanimously assert that *the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin, and that if any man sin we have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous;* and that this advocacy prevails, and that the covenant of grace standeth sure in behalf of the elect, under every trial, state, and circumstance they can possibly be in: and because we cannot admit the contrary doctrine without at once undermining both law and gospel. For the law is certainly undermined by supposing that any breach of it whatever is not attended with the curse of God, according to those words of the apostle *curst is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.* And the gospel is certainly undermined by supposing that there is provision made in it for some sins, and not for others. But because some few extraordinary instances of the foul falls and backslidings of God's children are recorded in scripture by way of encouragement to the lifting up of the fallen, and by way of caution and warning to those who stand, do therefore the Calvinistic doctrines as held by our reformers necessarily lead to ungodliness? Or is the experience of David, Lot and Solomon, *that of all those who abide by those doctrines?* On the contrary, I believe this is not the case with one in ten thousand. And yet if I saw any such poor wanderer brought to a sense of his backslidings, I would without scruple tell him that the good shepherd was still as ready to receive him as if he had never departed from him, and that his *merciful high priest ever liveth to make intercession for him.*

But why so many mangled quotations from *Flavel* and others upon the necessity of personal holiness? Why do you again and again bring up the old stale objections of all the unconverted clergy who are continually making a noise about *works, works,* and perhaps

perhaps doing nothing all the while but *the works of darknes*. You know well, Sir, that these idle cavils were brought against our Lord and his apostles by the scribes and pharisees; that they were brought against the reformers by the papists, and that they were often brought against you when you preached more like a minister of the church of England than you do at present. You know in your own conscience that we detest and abhor that damnable doctrine and position of real antinomians *let us sin that grace may abound*, and that we constantly affirm that all who live and die in the practice of any one allowed sin, and who do not *follow after* inward holiness and conformity to the image of Christ, shall assuredly be damned for ever, whatever their doctrinal notions or opinions may be. Therefore for the Lord's sake, Sir, (as you will not for ours) think of the characters you have injured, and let the laborious, exemplary lives of hundreds who now smart under your lash, move you to recall the severe and unkind things you have said of them. But methinks I hear you again, repeat that "You do not mean to level any of your words against your pious Calvinistic brethren." But who are these? Certainly they do not occupy any of "OUR MOST CELEBRATED PULPITS," since the ministers who preach in these, are condemned without exception as such "*pleaders for sin*, that they say more "*for it than against it*, and handle no texts of scripture without distorting and violating them to make them grateful to the antinomian palates of their hearers, yea they sing the syren song of finished salvation, rock the cradle of carnal security, make their hearers afraid of the practice of good works lest they should work out their damnation instead of their salvation. These *celebrated* ministers (if your description of them be a true one,) tell their congregations that Moses, that superannuated legislator is buried, and that they have nothing to do with the law, that God's commandments are needless, impracticable functions; and therefore they

B 2

" vilify

“ vilify the moral law, and make it contemptible,  
 “ dressing it up as a scare-crow, and representing it  
 “ as an intolerable yoke of bondage. Moreover,  
 “ they choose comfortable subjects and select smooth  
 “ texts, to please their hearers, and to gratify an  
 “ antinomian audience: and being unwilling to lose  
 “ their reputation as evangelical preachers, they dare  
 “ not preach upon some important scriptures, unless  
 “ it be to explain away or enervate their meaning.  
 “ Thus they help their unregenerate hearers to think  
 “ they may be God’s children without God’s image,  
 “ provided they get evangelical phrases concerning  
 “ Jesus’s love in their mouths, and a warm zeal for  
 “ party in their hearts: and tell them that if they  
 “ can but believe their election, it is a sure sign they  
 “ are interested in the gospel salvation, though they  
 “ live in all manner of sin, and never feed the hungry,  
 “ clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned,  
 “ and go on in the total neglect of fasting, prayer,  
 “ &c. They give as confident accounts of the cove-  
 “ nant between the persons in the trinity, as if God  
 “ had admitted them on his privy council, but seldom  
 “ speak of the covenant in a practical manner; they  
 “ put doctor Crisp’s coat on the apostle, cut through  
 “ law and gospel, sooth murderers, adulterers, ido-  
 “ lators, and incestuous persons in their abomina-  
 “ tions, fight for rank antinomianism, and do the  
 “ devil’s work, till they and their congregations all  
 “ go to hell together [A].”

These, Sir, are the exact colors in which *Madey*  
 meekness, and *Helvetic* bluntness have painted all  
 the eminent gospel ministers of the day; therefore if  
 the pictures resemble the originals they may with  
 much greater propriety be called your *impious* than  
 your *pious* Calvinist brethren. But though I have  
 begged you so earnestly in my *Review* to point out  
 by name who these wretches are, and have told you  
 that without this the charge of slander must for ever

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[A] Second Check, p. 97, 103.

lie at your door ; still neither they nor their converts are produced, no nor one quotation from their sermons or writings in order to prove these black charges upon them. Can you wonder then, Sir, that we look upon you as a spiritual calumniator, and that we accuse you of vile falshood and gross perversion [B]? Let me beseech you for a moment to break through the cloud of party prejudice and candidly to consider the manner in which you have always been treated by those very ministers you now so rashly inveigh against ;

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[B] Though I hope that the conduct of the assertors of free grace is very opposite to the representation given of it by Mr. Fletcher, yet if he have a mind to see some of the fruits which the doctrines of free will, universal redemption, denial of imputed righteousness and sinless perfection have produced ; I can and will shew him a long black list of deluded creatures, (some of whom have been principal *leaders* in Mr. Wesley's classes, if they are not at present) and will also produce their names and places of abode, who have truly verified Mr. Whitefield's words, by turning out " temporary monsters." And I can bring such persons to their faces, as shall prove the abominations and wicked practices upon them, which they have been carrying on under the mask of religion. This I say I both can do and will do if required. Not for any pleasure I take in exposing these things, but because I hope it may be a means of wiping off some of those unhappy prejudices which Mr. Fletcher has conceived in favor of those persons and of their principles.

And if we come to the positive part of a Christian's duty which is certainly to abound in every good work, we have already seen by a letter quoted in the *Review*, from Mr. Wesley's last journal, p. 108. that " if he puts out of his societies all, who neglect to feed the " hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick, &c. that there would " be scarcely persons enough left in them to carry his body to the " grave."

The Lord God knows that I do not mention these things in a way of ill-natured triumph, but in order to shew the unreasonableness of your uncharitable exclamations against those men and doctrines which from the time of Edward the VIth, till the late inundation of Arianism, Socinianism, Pelagianism, and Arminianism, have ever been most highly esteemed among real Christians. And though you are kind enough to bear a much more honorable testimony of my conduct in all your *checks* than it really deserves, yet I confess I feel a sort of reluctance at being *sugared* over by so many appellations of dear Sir, and honor'd Sir, &c. &c. when those very principles on which I build my everlasting hopes, and those persons who I am persuaded are among the excellent of the earth, are made the subject of reproach, satire and ridicule.



they revered your character, they admitted you with pleasure to their pulpits, and they rejoiced in your labors for the good of souls. But alas! alas! what returns have you made to their brotherly love? When for no other reason than because they testified their disapprobation of such tenets as struck at the very root of protestantism, and such as you yourself only a few years ago declared an equal abhorrence of, you brand them as abettors of that most wicked and diabolical heresy "making Christ the minister of sin."

I know, Sir, that it was a warm attachment to your friend, which occasioned you to run the lengths you have done. But dear as that friend is to you, truth ought to be dearer still; yet the maxim which you seem all along to pursue, is, that Mr. Wesley *must be vindicated*; yea, though all the ministers in the kingdom, yourself not excepted, should fall to the ground.

But what makes us still more sensibly feel the power of your pen is, that our tenets are most shamefully (would I could say unintentionally) misrepresented, in order to prejudice the world against us, and to make them believe we hold sentiments, which from our inmost souls we most cordially detest; particularly with regard to the doctrines of election and perseverance, which you have made to stand upon a pillory as high as Haman's gallows, dressed up in a frightful garb of your own invention, and then pelted them till all your mud and dirt was exhausted.

For the better carrying on of your design, you have recourse to illustrations; but however these may strike weak minds, which cannot sift them to the bottom; you are generally very unhappy in the choice of them; to instance only in the following.

" An illustration will, I hope, expose the emptiness of the pleas, which some urge in favor of  
 " *unconditional reprobation*, or if you please, *non-*  
 " *election*.—A mother conceives an unaccountable  
 " antipathy for her sucking child. She goes to the  
 " brink of a precipice, bends herself over it with the  
 " passive

“ passive infant in her bosom, and withdrawing her  
 “ arms from under him, drops him upon the craggy  
 “ side of a rock, and thus he rolls down from rock  
 “ to rock, till he lies at the bottom, beaten to  
 “ pieces, a bloody instance of finished destruction.  
 “ The judge asks the murderer what she has got  
 “ to say in her own defence. The child was mine,  
 “ replies she, and I have a right to do what I please  
 “ with my own. Besides, I did neither throw him  
 “ down nor murder him. I only withdrew my arms  
 “ from under him, and he fell of his own accord.  
 “ In mystic Geneva, she is honorably acquitted;  
 “ but in England the executioner is ordered to rid  
 “ the earth of the cruel monster. So may God give  
 “ us commission to rid the church of your Diana,  
 “ who teaches that *the Father of mercies*, does by  
 “ millions of his passive children, what the barbarous  
 “ mother did by *one* of her's: affirming that he un-  
 “ conditionally withholds grace from them; and that  
 “ by absolutely refusing to be the author and finisher  
 “ of their faith, he is the absolute author and finisher  
 “ of their unbelief, and consequently of their sin  
 “ and damnation!”

Now this *illustration* as you call it, is totally fo-  
 reign to the purpose; and the least that can be said  
 against it, is that it proves the writer of it to be  
 strongly tainted with the Pelagian leaven: for you go  
 all along upon the supposition that fallen guilty man  
 who is by nature a child of wrath and born under  
 the curse, has no more forfeited all right and title  
 to the favor of God, by his fall in Adam, than a  
 young sucking infant has forfeited all right and title  
 to its mother's care. And to prove that this is not  
 an hasty conclusion against you, we have the very  
 same idea adopted, p. 148, where you mention the  
 doctrines of *limited grace* and UNPROVOKED WRATH.  
 What then is there nothing *provoking* to the God of  
 infinite purity in sin? Has the transgression of our  
 first parent entailed no condemnation upon his poste-  
 rity? If you believe it has not, why did you subscribe  
 to the 9th article of our church, which says *that in*

every man born into the world it deserves God's wrath and damnation? As therefore we choose rather to abide by the oracles of truth, and by the plain declarations of the church of England, than by the novel chimeras of the *fourth Check*, we must beg to dismiss both your illustration and your doctrine; together with all the poor sneers at *Geneva logic*, with which they are decorated. And as you are pleased to cry out "shame on the man who first called ours *the doctrines of grace*," we in return, must cry *shame on the man who thus grossly misrepresents them*.

AS to the doctrine of a twofold justification, I shall say but little more on that head: however I will give you in few words my own sentiments, and if as you would insinuate, there is no difference between us, then pray let there be an end of the dispute.

*First*.—I believe that every one who comes weary and heavy laden to Christ, is freely justified *by faith only*, as the hand or instrument whereby Christ is received.

*Secondly*.—That this faith (when genuine) will always manifest its reality by bringing forth good works and all the fruits of an holy life and conversation.

*Thirdly*.—That these works and fruits are *evidential* before men here, and will be *evidential* before assembled men and angels at the day of judgment, of a true conversion of the heart to God.

*Fourthly*.—I believe that there is no new act of justification passes at the great day, upon *the person* of him who is once interested in the blood and righteousness of Christ.

*Fifthly*.—I detest the notion of the works even of a believer being *meritorious*. And I declare that if God is pleased to reward them, it is owing wholly to his own free rich grace and undeserved favor. And therefore to affirm there is no difference between *reward* and *merit* is a very great error; and the confounding of these two, must necessarily open the door for the doctrine of *works of supererogation*.

Here

Here is my creed about faith and works: and the creed of all protestant divines and churches (quakers and mystics excepted) that ever I read or heard of. It is undisguised by pompous, flowery declamation; and not *darkened* with any *illustrations* which tend to mislead the honest inquirer after truth. But how to reconcile it with the creed you have given us p. 211. *I find not.*

“ We believe (*say you*) that for the alone sake of Christ’s atoning blood and personal righteousness, our personal *faith* working by obedient love, is imputed to us for righteousness [\*B]. And we assert, that this living faith working by obedient love, together with the privileges annexed to it, such as pardon through and acceptance in the beloved, makes up the robe of righteousness washed in the blood of the Lamb, in which true believers now walk humbly with their God, and will one day triumphantly enter into the glory of their Lord.”

I shall make no remarks on this strange incoherent jumble, this *linsey-woolsey, mingle-mangle*, (to use bishop Latimer’s expression,) for sure I am that to every good protestant reader it carries with it its own refutation. But you have brought two quotations one from doctor Owen and one from Anthony Burgess, in proof of a second justification by works at the day of judgment. As to the *latter*, it only describes the character of a real Christian, and might as well have been brought to shew that you had discovered the longitude, as to prove a second justification by works.— With regard to the former, it is most clear that the author only meant that every man should be *declaratively* justified by his own *personal obedience*, which obedience or righteousness, when brought forth in faith, and upon gospel principles, may certainly be called an *evangelical righteousness*; by which, says the doctor, we shall be DECLARED RIGHTEOUS in the last day. But he drops not the least intimation of any fresh act of justification which is then to pass

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[\*B] I am sorry upon this occasion, once more to desire the reader to turn to the faith of Mr. *Ignorance* in the *Pilgrim’s Progress*.  
upon



upon a believer's person, or that there is the least degree of *merit* in that obedience which he so justly urges as necessary for all that are in Christ Jesus. On the contrary, he boldly gives his opinion against this dangerous heresy of the Romish church, as is most clear from the following words which I have taken from the very treatise on justification you have quoted [C]; and they may be seen in the Scotch edit. p. 230, 231. chap. 5. entitled "THE DISTINCTION OF A FIRST AND SECOND JUSTIFICATION EXAMINED, &c.

" Those of the Roman church (says the doctor) do  
 " ground their whole doctrine of justification, upon  
 " the distinction of a double justification, which they  
 " call the *first* and the *second*. The first justification they  
 " say, is the infusion or the COMMUNICATION † unto  
 " us of an inherent principle, or habit of grace or  
 " charity. Hereby they say, original sin is extin-  
 " guished, and all habits of sin are expelled. This  
 " justification they say, is by faith, the obedience  
 " and satisfaction of Christ being the only merito-  
 " rious cause thereof. Only they dispute many  
 " things about preparations for it, and dispositions  
 " unto it, &c.

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[C] I never dare trust to Mr. Wesley or Mr. Fletcher in any quotations they make from other authors; and therefore not having Dr. Owen on Justification in my possession, I borrowed it of a friend, and upon turning to the place referred to, I found the following sentences (which fully explain the doctor's meaning) struck out of the middle of what Mr. Fletcher has cited from that excellent piece.

Words prudently expunged by the Rev. John Fletcher.

" Hereby (i. e. by personal obedience) that faith whereby we are justified, is evidenced, proved, manifested, in the sight of God and man."

More words expunged by Mr. Fletcher out of the short quotation he has taken from Dr. Owen on Justification.

" Not how a sinner guilty of death and obnoxious unto the curse, shall be pardoned, acquitted and justified, WHICH IS BY THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHRIST ALONE IMPUTED UNTO HIM."

[D] How to a tittle is this the language of Mr. Fletcher. Log. Gen. p. 193. and if the reader will please to pay a close attention to the whole passage as I have transcribed it *verbatim* from Dr. Owen, he will see how to the most minute point Mr. Fletcher and Mr. Wesley harmonize with the papists against the protestants.

" How-

“ However the council (of *Trent*) warily avoided  
 “ the name of merit with respect unto their first  
 “ justification.”

“ And this according to them is that justification  
 “ whereof the apostle Paul treats in his epistles,  
 “ from the procurement whereof he excludes all the  
 “ works of the law. The second justification is an  
 “ effect or consequent thereof. And the proper  
 “ formal cause thereof is good works, proceeding  
 “ from the principle of grace and love, &c. &c. &c.  
 “ Again, This is the way that most of them take  
 “ to salve the seeming repugnancy between the apostle  
 “ Paul and James. Paul, they say, treats of the *first*  
 “ justification only, whence he excludes all works,  
 “ for it is by faith in the manner before described.  
 “ But James treats of the *second* justification, which  
 “ is by good works. SO BELLARMINE, *lib. ii.*  
 “ *cap. 16. and lib. iv. cap. 18.* And it is the ex-  
 “ press determination of those at *Trent*, Sess. vi.  
 “ cap. 10. [E] This distinction was coined for no  
 “ end, but TO BRING IN CONFUSION UPON THE  
 “ WHOLE DOCTRINE OF THE GOSPEL. Justification,  
 “ through the free grace of God, by faith in the  
 “ blood of Christ, is evacuated by it. Sanctification  
 “ is turned into justification, *and corrupted by making*  
 “ *the fruits of it meritorious.* The whole nature of  
 “ evangelical justification, consisting in the gratui-  
 “ tous pardon of sin, and THE IMPUTATION OF  
 “ RIGHTEOUSNESS, as the apostle expressly affirms,  
 “ and the declaration of a believing sinner to be  
 “ righteous thereon, as the word alone signifies, is  
 “ utterly defeated by it.

“ Howbeit, others have embraced this distinction  
 “ also, though not absolutely in their sense. So do  
 “ the SOCINIANS. [F] Yea, it must be allowed in

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[E] See, Sir, what company you are again found in? Even in cordial harmony with the greatest champion the Romish church ever had, and with that anathematizing synod, which cursed all the protestants to hell.

[F] Behold, Sir, once more, what companions you have in your notion of a two-fold justification.

“ some

“ some sense, by all that hold our inherent righteous-  
 “ ness to be the cause of, or to have any influence  
 “ unto our justification before God. For they do  
 “ allow of a justification, which in order of nature  
 “ is antecedent unto works truly gracious and evan-  
 “ gelical. But, consequential unto such works,  
 “ there is a justification differing at least in degree,  
 “ if not in nature and kind upon the difference of  
 “ its formal cause which is our new obedience from  
 “ the former. But they (the papists) mostly say,  
 “ it is only the continuation of our justification, and  
 “ *the increase of it as to degrees*, that they intend by  
 “ it. And if they be allowed to turn sanctification  
 “ into justification, and to make a progress therein,  
 “ *or an increase thereof*, either in the root or fruit to  
 “ be a new justification, **THEY MAY MAKE**  
 “ **TWENTY JUSTIFICATIONS ASWELL AS**  
 “ **TWO FOR OUGHT I KNOW, &c.** Yea, they  
 “ may ‘**BE JUSTIFIED ANEW EVERY DAY.**’  
 “ I shall therefore shew that this distinction is both  
 “ unscriptural and irrational, p. 234.”

Once more, “ That which gives countenance unto  
 “ the fiction and artifice of this distinction, (of a first  
 “ and second justification) and a great many more,  
 “ is a dislike of the doctrine of the grace of God,  
 “ and justification from thence by faith in the blood  
 “ of Christ, which some endeavour hereby to send  
 “ out of the way upon a pretended sleeveless errand,  
 “ whilst they dress up their own righteousness in  
 “ its robes, and exalt it into the room and dignity  
 “ thereof, *Owen on Just.* p. 241.”

I might now go on to shew by how many argu-  
 ments this great divine proves our one compleat  
 justification by faith only in the righteousness of  
 Christ, but this would necessarily carry me on much  
 beyond my intended brevity; I must, therefore, be  
 content with recommending the book itself to the  
 perusal of my readers, and (for the present) conclude  
 my quotations from it with the following assertion,  
 which doctor Owen gives us, p. 281. of that very  
 treatise

treatise you refer to. “ There are two grand parties  
 “ by whom the doctrine of justification by the im-  
 “ putation of the righteousness of Christ, is opposed,  
 “ namely the *papists* and the *socinians*.”

And now, Sir, I fancy you have by this time had enough from doctor Owen’s treatise on Justification to wish you had never attempted to press him into Mr. Wesley’s service, or rather into your own, for I am persuaded Mr. Wesley (if he himself may be credited) never dreamed of more justifications than one, till you first thought proper that he should believe in *two*, and afterwards in *four*. And indeed you yourself seem to intimate as much, when by way of *vindicating* him, you give us to understand, p. 158. that till within THESE TWO YEARS poor old Mordecai was *purblind* in that most essential of all doctrines how a sinner could appear before the bar of God. The following are your own words. “ Three years ago  
 “ Mr. Wesley wanted *clearer light* to distinguish  
 “ between the justification of a sinner by faith,  
 “ and the justification of a believer by works;  
 “ but two years ago, God gave him this clearer  
 “ light.”—What then is become of thousands of Mr. Wesley’s followers who died before this *clearer light* came? It is certain they must be either saved, or lost. If you say they are undoubtedly saved, then it is certain that the doctrine which saved them must have been the doctrine of truth; and if so, why do you write against it? If you say they are all lost; then by your own confession Mr. Wesley instead of being *the greatest minister in the world*, must have been (what he himself calls the body of the mystics collectively) a deceiver and an antichrist. And I know not how you will reconcile this matter, but by saying that all those souls who died in connection with Mr. John before his *clear light* came, are neither in heaven nor in hell, but are now in purgatory.

Having fully vindicated doctor Owen from the charge you have brought against him of holding two justifications, as you tell us you have only given one in-  
 stance



stance out of a thousand which might be produced that the puritan ministers held the doctrine of a second justification by works, if that which you have pitched upon is so very opposite to your system, what must the other nine hundred and ninety nine be [G]!

Understand me well, Sir, I mean not to pin my faith on the sleeve of doctor Owen, or of any other man, but to found it on the word of God alone; yet I am determined to prove my former assertion against you, viz. "that you cannot find one protestant divine, either among the puritans or of the church of England, from the time of the reformation till the reign of Charles the second, including about the space of one hundred years, who held your doctrines and those of Mr. Wesley, but on the contrary always looked upon those doctrines to be *full of rottenness and deadly poison.*" And I moreover declare that this is no hasty affirmation, the effect of prejudice or of party zeal, as some would falsely insinuate; but it is founded on the result of a long search into the controversy between the church of Rome and those of the reformed religion, and particularly of a perusal of the authors, mentioned in the Review, 2d. edit. p. 97, 98, note. And therefore I say, "PROTESTANTS BEWARE;" for under the stale pretence of opposing antinomianism, popery itself, the worst species of real antinomianism, is *coming in full tide upon the church*; yea, *I speak the truth in Christ, and lie not*, that though it may be fact, that Mr. Wesley and Mr. Fletcher do differ from the papists in the belief of transubstantiation and in the ceremonies of religion, yet in all the essential points of doctrine, which have

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[G] The two quotations which Mr. Fletcher has brought from Mr. Madan and Mr. Haweis, are so totally foreign to the point, that it were meer trifling to take any notice of them. Besides their sentiments on this head are well known by thousands of living witnesses, and I myself for one have heard Mr. Madan when he has particularly born his testimony from the pulpit against the popish error of a twofold justification.

ever been matter of dispute between the jesuits and us, they intirely acquiesce with the former, and depart from the judgment of the reformed, as I have already proved in the sixth letter of the *Review*, 2d. edit. and if called upon I am ready to bring numberless more testimonies, from the confessions of all the protestant churches and ancient divines in confirmation of what I have advanced.

I must now observe, that there is a very wide disagreement between us in our ideas of regeneration: for whereas you suppose that Christ is grafted on the sinner, and not the sinner upon Christ; and whereas you compare Christ the living vine, to a crab stock, we, on the other hand, believe that the sinner, like *the wild olive*, and contrary to the natural way of grafting, is grafted upon Christ, the tree of life; and that therefore those branches which are *once* so grafted, by partaking of the sap and fatness of this *root of David*, shall never wither away intirely nor die eternally, whatsoever stormy winds and cold nipping seasons they may experience, according to that express declararion of Christ himself, “*because I live, ye shall live also.*” Your sentiment on this head is tolerably clear, *Log. Gen.* p. 19. but you are much more explicit in your *2d. Check*, p. 30. “If we find that *the old crab stock* instead of nourishing the graft, spends all its sap in producing wild shoots and four crabs,” [what possible conclusion can be drawn from hence, but either that Christ is *the old crab stock*; or else, that the old crab stock of corrupt nature nourishes the sap or grace derived from Christ!] “or if it is a tree, whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, *dead in the GRAFT, and in the stock,*” [one would imagine by this expression, that Mr. Fletcher’s mind was so full of falling from grace, that he thought Christ himself was to die, for Christ must be meant either by the *graft* or the *stock*,] “plucked up by the root, or quite cankered, far from declaring it a good tree, we shall pass sentence of condemnation upon it.”

IN controverting the doctrine of *finished salvation*, you might have saved yourself much trouble, if you had not run away with a mistake which is carried all throughout your seventh letter. This is that we look upon the salvation of Christ to be finished in the applicatory part of it; which I suppose no man in the world ever asserted. But that Christ's own personal work is compleatly finished, and *that* salvation wrought out whereby every believer shall be brought to glory, we fully believe. We also intirely acquiesce with Mr. Wesley in his *Christian Lib.* vol. 36. p. 123, &c. "That as Christ DID *perfect* and *finish* his work as to the purchase, so he stands engaged to "*perfect* and *finish* it in the application." And therefore no Calvinist can scruple to join Mr. Charles Wesley in singing

"Salvation's glorious work is done."

P. 196. You are determined to force another doctrine upon us, which I look upon to be a most impious one myself, and which I don't know one person who holds.—Your words are these. "Your imputation stands upon a preposterous supposition, that Christ the righteous was an execrable sinner." I tell you reverend Sir, with the bluntness and honesty of an Englishman, that this is *execrable* Swiss slander.—We firmly believe that Jesus was *like unto us in all things, but without sin*, and therefore, when you accuse us of saying that he was *really the guilty person*, or an *execrable sinner* himself; you lay *execrable* blasphemy to our charge. But that Christ stood in the place of many *execrable* sinners, and that he bore many *execrable* sins which were laid upon his immaculate head, are truths which contain the very marrow of the gospel, truths which shine through all the shadows, sacrifices, and types of the Old Testament, and are most clearly held to view by the positive assertions of the prophets and apostles, in such texts as the following: *On him WERE LAID the iniquities of us all. He himself BORE our sins in his own body on the tree. He hath suffered the just for the unjust, that he*  
might

might bring us to God. He was made sin for us who knew no sin. Thus, as Mr. Erskine well observes, there is a reciprocal change between Christ and his people; their sins or breaches of the law are laid upon him by imputation, and his righteousness or obedience to the law is imputed to them: agreeable to those words of the apostle, *by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous*. But according to Mr. Fletcher, *fourth Check*, p. 195. this means only that they are made righteous by an inherent seed of light and righteousness which is given to all the world in consequence of Adam's sin. According to which doctrine every man is born with the grace of God in his heart, and the necessity of regeneration or the new birth is totally superseded; no man is *by nature a child of wrath*, and there are no such persons as are *in the flesh and cannot please God*. You must pardon me, Sir, if I ask you whether you did not get this interpretation of the text from your pious parishioner of Colebrook-Dale, that famous female preacher, Mrs. *Abiab Derby*, a good woman, and much more steady to her principles as a quaker, than you are to your's as a minister of the established church.

And now, Sir, if I were to retort upon all your doctrines, as many sneers and witticisms as you have poured out against this one of imputed righteousness, which you call a *fimsy, loose robe, spun at Geneva and Dort, and not at Jerusalem and Antioch, &c. &c. &c.* I am apt to fancy that in such case, you would find the robe of your own patience, whether it were spun at Madely, or at the Foundery, a very *loose and fimsy* one indeed to cover and keep down the risings of your own heart.

P. 78. We are presented with some assertions which do as little honour to the advocacy of Christ, as they bring credit to the modesty of the asserter. They are in substance as follows:

1st. That Christ took more pains for the salvation of Judas, than for that of St. Peter.



adly. That he prayed as much for Judas, as he did for St. Peter. This is at least strongly insinuated in that query, "Is this a proof that he never prayed for Judas?"

But if this were the case, those words of our Lord, "I know that thou hearest me always," must be untrue, for when he prayed for Judas, his prayer was rejected. After such an assertion, who could be astonished if Mr. Fletcher should attempt to prove from those words of St. Paul, *Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated*, that God loved Esau better than Jacob [H].

Before I quit this subject, I must desire the reader always to keep in mind two objections which were made against St. Paul himself, and he will generally find that if the arminians raise ten thousand cavils, they all terminate in these two. "Why doth he yet find fault, for who hath resisted his will." And, "Is there unrighteousness with God [I,?]" And who-  
foever

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[H] The whole passage runs thus. "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil; that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth. It was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Rom. ix. 11, 12, 13.

[I] Can there be a greater proof that we hold St. Paul's doctrine of election and justification, than that all the cavils which were brought against him, are brought against us? and if your doctrine is not liable to the same objections, can there be a greater proof that it is not *that* of the apostle. Yet so far is this from being the case, that your whole drift is to divest your system of divinity from those very objections which were continually urged against him. For instance, in your *second Check*, p. 34, you blame Mr. Shirley for denying *free will*, and you lament that by such denial, he makes the gospel ridiculous in the eyes of infidels. We on the contrary believe that the gospel from the very nature of it, is and must be ridiculous to infidels, because we believe that the mind of every man born into the world till enlightened by divine grace, is utterly incapable of discerning and receiving spiritual things; and therefore, that whosoever dresses up the gospel in such a manner as to make it palatable to human pride, and human reason, makes it in effect to be no gospel at all. Now the  
two

foever will trace arminianism up to the fountain head, will always perceive that it is the twin sister of pelagianism; and that slight notions of the fall, of the extent of the law, and of the demerit of sin, lie rankling at the bottom of that system: and indeed there cannot be a greater proof of its unsoundness, than the general assent which is given to it by all who know nothing of conversion to God, nor of divine illumination by his Spirit. However, this is certainly no argument with you, for though you acknowledge Mr. Whitefield to have been a truly converted man, yet you say "*You never thought him clear in our Lord's doctrine, for if he had, he would have renounced his Calvinism.*". But surely Sir, you have forgotten that in your *second Check*, p. 7. you tell us,

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two grand stumbling blocks which prevent the wise and prudent from receiving the gospel of Christ, are the doctrines of predestination, and our one compleat justification by faith *without the works of the law*. At both of these you stumble, and at both of these thousands stumbled in the apostolic age. Hence we find the great chosen vessel so often clearing his doctrine from those charges which were brought against him of preaching that *we might do evil that good might come*, which he calls a SLANDEROUS REPORT. *That he made void the law by faith; that he made Christ the minister of sin; that he taught that man might sin that grace might abound.*—But surely he might have saved himself the trouble of answering all these cavils, if he had preached the doctrines you contend for; nay, in such case, there was no possibility that such cavils should ever have been raised. So with regard to predestination and election: what need was there that the apostle should go about to vindicate the justice of God in the choice of some and in the rejection of others by the example of *the potter and the clay*; and what room could there be for the starting those questions, "*Is there unrighteousness with God?*" "*Why doth he yet find fault, for who hath resisted his will?*" I say what need of all this, if salvation depended on the will of man; or if God gave a salvable measure of grace to all the world, by the improvement of which they might come to the enjoyment of heaven and happiness? Again; what is it that must improve this universal spark of grace, this light within, since even upon your own plan every man has naturally two principles in him? If you say grace alone carries on the work and triumphs over all opposition, you fall into perseverance, and consequently into Calvinism. If you deny this, you have nothing to say but that *nature improves grace.*

“that Mr. Whitefield spoke the words of truth and soberness with divine pathos, and floods of tears declarative of his sincerity.” And in the vindication you compare him to Elijah, and Mr. Wesley to Elisha. Now I should be glad to know by what logic it can be made out, that any minister can preach *the words of truth*, and yet deviate from *our Lord’s doctrine*. And 2dly, As the spirit of Elijah rested upon Elisha, (and consequently Elijah had the pre-eminence) how that same spirit could teach Mr. Whitefield a doctrine contrary to that of our Lord, and yet teach Mr. Wesley *the truth as it is in Jesus?*

I would not for a thousand worlds have been the author of all those sneers, which you have so repeatedly thrown out against the doctrine of Christ’s imputed righteousness; but having said so much on this point in my former pieces, I shall not now hold any farther dispute with you on that head. But to prove to you, how clearly this was the doctrine, as well of all the eminent reformers of our own church, as of all the puritan divines, I must beg, 1<sup>st</sup>. to present you with a short confession out of Burnet’s history of the reformation, which was made by the bishops of Exeter, Gloucester, and St. David’s, as also by those glorious martyrs, Bradford, Philpot, Rogers, &c. &c. in the time of queen Mary, in defence of which they declared themselves willing to hang, or to burn at the stake. And, 2<sup>dly</sup>, with a sentence out of the assembly’s catechism, which was compiled by the unanimous approbation of the Westminster synod.

In the former, we have the following words of the before-mentioned worthies, then in prison for the testimony of Jesus Christ.

“That they believed justification by faith, which  
 “faith was not only an opinion, but a certain per-  
 “suasion wrought by the Holy Ghost, which did  
 “illuminate the mind, and suppled the heart, to  
 “submit itself entirely to God.”

“That

“ That they acknowledged an *inherent* righteousness, yet justification and the pardon of sins, they believed came ONLY BY CHRIST’S RIGHTEOUSNESS IMPUTED TO THEM [K].”

*Hist. of the Reform. part 2d. p. 285.*

In the latter, the assembly of puritan divines thus teach, in answer to the question, what is justification ?

“ Justification is an act of God’s free grace, whereby he pardoneth all our sins, and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, *only for the righteousness of Christ* IMPUTED to us, and received by faith.”

Now, Sir, however you might disapprove of the doctrine, yet give me leave to say, that as it has been constantly held by men the most eminent for piety and learning this nation ever produced, and who

[K] So *John Frith*, a martyr in the reign of Henry VIII. (consequently before the time that Calvin flourished as a reformer) against *Rastel*, p. 49, thus expresseth himself. “ Through Adam his sin was counted for our own. Through Christ his righteousness is IMPUTED to us for our own.”

In like manner *John Fox*, author of the book of martyrs against *Oforius*, p. 7. “ Verily whosoever rejecting the righteousness of Christ, whereof I speak, leads us aside unto any other manner of righteousness, I say that he pleads not for righteousness, but against it ; and doth not undertake the defence of the law of God, but is a professed enemy of the grace of Christ and his cross, and therefore doth not open but shut up all passages of true salvation, and all gates and doors of divine grace.”

*And else-where*, “ As Christ was made sin, so are we made righteous, but Christ was not made sin by inherent sin ; therefore we also are not made righteous by inherent righteousness.—And from *Rom. v.* he disputeth, p. 18. As the sin of one, *Adam*,—so the righteousness of Christ is IMPUTED to all his posterity, *viz.* that believe in him, &c. &c.”

Once more, “ The sons of the papacy do in no wise endure this imputation.”

I must acknowledge myself indebted for these quotations to a most valuable treatise, entitled *A vindication of the eternal law, and everlasting gospel*. By *John Beart*, pastor of a church of Christ, in Bury, Suffolk. Printed an. 1707.



cheerfully sealed it with the last drop of their blood; I would have delivered my opinion in more humble terms, and not (to use a favourite expression of your's against the Calvinists,) *with such an air of positiveness and assurance*, and so much in the spirit of *Faustus Socinus*.

However that one of us is in the wrong in this point is most certain; if it be I, then I have at least the satisfaction of being so with all the protestant churches, the reformed divines, and the *noble army of martyrs*; whereas the best company you can boast of, is that of *the sons of the papacy*, together with *the numerous army* of deists, arians, pelagians, and socinians.

THE time would fail me, were I to pretend to enumerate the many gross misrepresentations you have given of our doctrines throughout your last piece; and to point out the very unfair manner in which you have quoted my five letters, and the interpolations you have made in them. However, as you have actually represented me as saying, that the more a believer sins upon earth, the *merrier* he will be in heaven, I beg you will point out to me where, in the plain easy sense of my words, I have spoken any such thing, or where I have ever used so ludicrous an expression as that of *mirth* or *merriment*, when speaking of those *pleasures*, which are *at God's right hand for evermore*. Oh Sir, is this your love and candour! this your boasted reverence for truth and brotherly kindness!

P. 3. you hold us forth as *promising immortality to those who persevere in sin*; and p. 118. you quote that text of St. John, *little children let no man deceive you, he that doeth righteousness is righteous*, and you give us the following interpretation of it, which you have marked with commas, in order, as we may suppose, to make your readers believe, that it is a quotation from me, though neither I, nor any other assertor of the doctrines of grace that ever I heard of, ever thought or affirmed that it related to any other than  
a per-

a personal holiness. “ Let not Mr. Wesley deceive  
 “ you ; he that actually liveth with another man’s  
 “ wife, worships abominable idols, and commits in-  
 “ cest with his father’s wife, may not only be  
 “ righteous, but compleat in imputed righteousness.  
 “ In a righteousness which exceeds not only the  
 “ righteousness of the pharisees, but the personal  
 “ righteousness of converted Paul, and of the bright-  
 “ est angel in glory.”

Now, Sir, give me leave to pluck a feather out of your high-soaring wings, and to stop you short in that mighty bombast declamatory triumph, with which you exult upon this quotation, by asking you simply, from whence you have taken it ? Did I ever assert any thing like this ? or can you find any one Calvinist now upon earth, or that ever existed in time past, that put this forced construction upon the apostle’s words ? Prove your point, and then I will confess that you are no calumniator of God’s people, otherwise I must still insist upon it that you slander us, and however you may be displeas’d at our charging you with horrid perversion, falshood, and base disingenuity, you have no more cause to find fault on this score, than the man who is detected in taking away his neighbour’s purse, has cause to complain that he is called a thief, for you rob us of those things, which are infinitely more valuable to us than our lives, *viz.* our reputation and character ; though even these we would count as nought, if you would be contented not to rob Christ of the glory of a sinner’s salvation.

I must again accuse you of acting with the greatest disingenuity, in making your quotations from the *first*, and not from the *second*, edition of my five letters, and of the *Review* ; especially as I sent you that edition of both, several weeks before your last book was printed, or could even have been begun ; and wrote to you to request that you would refer to those, and not to the former editions ; notwithstand-

ing this, you have all along quoted (and that unfairly) the first impression of each, intirely overlooked such passages as obviate the objections you have raised, and have even brought against me an *erratum*, which you acknowledge to have seen in the table of *errata* annexed, and which made no alteration at all in the sense, whether it had been placed as an oversight or not, yea, which was intirely rectified in the edition I desired you to refer to.

Now, Sir, I cannot upon any principles of generosity, much less of Christianity, reconcile this conduct of your's, with the professions you make of love and regard; however, as you have made several appeals to all *candid unprejudiced* Calvinists, I will even venture to make one to all *uncandid prejudiced* arminians among your greatest admirers, whether you are justifiable in their esteem, for defending your favourite tenets by such slanderous positions and gross misrepresentations. And let me tell you, that I think there are certain invariable rules, which ought to be observed with the same strictness between controversial writers, as even what are called the laws of nations, ought to be adhered to, between one kingdom and another: and among these rules are certainly the two following; else, under pretence of investigating truth, we shall only lead our readers into a maze of error.

*First*, Never to misquote or misrepresent our opponent.

*Secondly*, In referring to other authorities, always to give the plain scope and design of the author's meaning; and on no account to make him speak what he does not intend, much less what he abhors, and what he is even bearing his testimony against.

How grievously you have transgressed against both these fundamental rules of controversy, must be very apparent to the conscience of every man, who is not absolutely determined to put out his eyes; and though  
you

you may probably find a *salvo* to your own mind, by looking upon such things in the light of *pious frauds*, yet it should never be forgotten that the *girdle of truth* is an essential part of the Christian's armour: but at all events Calvinism must be erased, though *Jerusalem* itself should become *an heap of stones* by its overthrow; though all the protestant churches and puritan divines should be mangled and perverted; though the venerable dust of Leighton, Hopkins, Bunyan, Owen, Flavel, Whitefield, &c. should be raked out of their several graves, in order to be blown into the eyes of the by-standers, to prevent them from seeing the strength of our towers, and from marking well the antiquity of our bulwarks. But antinomians we must be, whether we will or not, though those of our sentiments have in all ages made the most vigorous stand against real antinomianism, and particularly against that which Dr. Owen, in the very treatise you have quoted *so mal a propos*, calls the worst sort of antinomianism, (viz. that of the perfectionists) which consists in derogating from the honor, extent, purity and spirituality of the moral law, talking of *partial breaches of the law*, and setting up a milder law, to which they give the name of *the law of Christ*, as if God gave one law and Christ another, calling *sins* by the soft appellation of *infirmities*, and speaking of some transgressions, which we cannot determine *whether they do or do not bring the soul under condemnation*, as Mr. Wesley has expressly said by what he calls *sins of surprise* [L]. Yet herein consists your artifice; for

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[L] However Mr. Fletcher may sneer at the righteousness of Christ, as a *loose flimsy robe which covers adulterers and murderers*, I beg to inform him, that though we neither plead for adultery nor murder, yet unless this robe covers him from both these sins, he must lie under the guilt of them to all eternity. This no man can deny, who knows any thing of the extent of the moral law, or who has ever considered the interpretation given



for by making Calvinism and antinomianism synonymous and convertible terms, you the more easily pre-

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given of its commands by our Lord and the apostle. According to which interpretation every unclean thought is heart-adultery, Matt. v. 28.—xv. 19. and every angry thought is heart-murder, Matt. v. 21, 22.—xv. 19. 1 John iii. 15. If then the righteousness of Christ covers these sins in the *fountain head*, the heart, which is the spring of all wickedness, (call me antinomian or what you please for the assertion) it certainly covers them in the *streams*, unless you again fly to your old popish distinction between *sins* and *infirmities*, and draw the line between some transgressions of the law, which do, and some which do not, bring the soul under condemnation. And to this it is most evident, that the arrogant doctrine of sinless perfection leads all its votaries; therefore if I were to be asked to define the term, “what is sinless perfection?” I should answer, it means nothing more or less, than a total blindness of heart joined to the most consummate ignorance of the extent and purity of the law; and consequently no man can ever think himself *sinlessly perfect*, who is not first intoxicated with the highest degree of spiritual pride and diabolical delusion.

But the perfectionists, the better to gild their pill, call it by the name of *perfect love* and *Christian perfection*, to neither of which in the scriptural sense of the words we have any objection, but quite the contrary. *Perfect love*, which casteth out fear, is the *privilege* though not the *portion* of every true Christian; and as all who believe have an absolute perfection in Christ, so they have a principle of grace and sanctification in their hearts, whereby they are enabled to die unto sin, and to rise again unto righteousness, but still the flesh lusteth against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh, so that they cannot do the things that they would,

This is all the perfection the scripture knows any thing of on this side heaven. But Mr. Wesley tells us that his adult believers have no indwelling sin, no contrary principles of nature warring against grace, no evil thoughts, no wandrings in prayer; in short, that sin is totally *destroyed* in them *root and branch*.—How this gentleman and his *vindicator* dare to subscribe to the IXth article of our church, which declares that even in the regenerate, the flesh lusteth ALWAYS contrary to the spirit; and especially to the XVth article, entitled *Christ alone without sin*, which says in such positive terms, that “ALL OF US, though baptised and born again in Christ, yet offend IN MANY THINGS, and if we say we have no sin we DECEIVE ourselves,” I leave to their mature consideration; but I humbly apprehend, that most of my readers will be of opinion, that if I were to declare, that

I believed

prejudice the hearts of your readers against the former. But only suppose, that I were to face you down, and insist upon it again, again, and again, that you were a *mahometan*; and that I were gravely or *sneeringly* to bring an hundred quotations and arguments against *mahometanism*, and were to address them all to you, and to tell you, that though nobody did it with *greater bluntness*, yet I *challenged* you to

I believed from my heart a doctrine, which I detested from my heart, I should thereby give no convincing proof of my own perfection.

Be that as it will, I think our *petitioning* gentlemen can do no less than send an invitation to Mr. Wesley and Mr. Fletcher to dine at the *Feathers Tavern*; and if I might be allowed the liberty of drawing up the card, it should run in the following terms.

“ The Feather’s tavern fraternity present compliments to Mess. J. Wesley and Fletcher, as they perceive that they are universalists, free-willers, perfectionists, and merit-mongers, (and as they have a better opinion of them than to suppose they don’t find the 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th articles of the church of England very galling to their consciences,) desire their company to dinner, on \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, when proper measures will be consulted on for obtaining relief in the matter of subscription. In the mean while, the fraternity beg to assure Mess. Wesley and Fletcher that they perfectly agree with them in their cordial hatred of *Calvinism*; and that they love *free-will*, *man’s-merit*, and *justification by works*, as well as either of those gentlemen.”

I hope, Sir, you will pardon the *mild irony* of this card, which (though it carries much more propriety with it,) is intended by way of return for the mock proclamation, which you have given us, *Log. Gen.* p. 182. Signed at Geneva by four of his Majesty’s secretaries of state for the predestinarian department.

JOHN CALVIN.  
DOCTOR CRISP.  
THE AUTHOR OF P. O.  
R—— H——.

But suppose now I were to seek out for four secretaries of state for the *perfection* department. Who do you think I would pitch upon;—probably the following.

JOHN WESLEY.  
JOHN FLETCHER.  
THOMAS OLIVERS.  
GEORGE BELL.

find

find any body that did it in *greater love*. No doubt some few infatuated readers might be brought to lament the dreadful case of the vicar of Madely, and to cry out, "Poor Mr. Fletcher is certainly "turned Turk." And yet I have just as much reason to do this, as you have so liberally to dub Mr. Shirley, my brother, and me, a triumvirate of antinomians ; as I hope what follows will very clearly evince.

1st. It is certainly an antinomian assertion, that a believer is not to confess sin, nor to be humbled for it.—But none of us ever asserted this, God forbid. But if Mr. Wesley has not asserted it in words, his practice of leaving the confession of sin out of the communion service [M], looks as if he did not believe confession and humiliation to be very essential.

2dly. It is certainly rank antinomianism to assert that believers need not pray for pardon of sin.—But though we never asserted any such thing, yet I beg to ask if it was not debated at one of Mr. Wesley's conferences, whether a believer might not be in such a state as not to need the blood of Christ, nor to pray for the pardon of sin ?

3dly. We look upon it, to say the least, to be a very unguarded expression, that "*sin can do a believer no hurt,*" and therefore we never make use of it. But Mr. Wesley sings before a whole congregation that as *his best actions cannot save him*, so, (*because he is a believer,*) *his worst cannot condemn him*. Yea, he has given it under his own hand, that *the sins of the whole world cannot hurt a believer*.

4thly. We believe that it is the essence of antinomian dotage to affirm, that *we have nothing to do*

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[M] Mr. Wesley has told the public in his late remarks, That he has often done this in order to *save time*, but it would have carried an appearance of greater sincerity, if he had honestly said, "*We do not confess sin, because we have no sin to confess.*"

*with the law* [N]; consequently that this saying, which is so frequent in the mouths of perfectionists, is of a most dangerous tendency, and that what Mr. Wesley says about *the repeal of the Adamic law*, is not less so.

Hitherto we have clearly seen that Mr. Wesley and some of his deluded votaries, are the real antinomians in question; permit me now to ask, why you quote such expressions as the following, and why you bring them against us. "Christ hath believed for us." "Christ hath repented for us," &c. Do you think, Sir, that any of us suppose this to be sound doctrine? you know in your own conscience that we think otherwise: but it is enough for you, if you can but fasten such principles upon us, and make the world believe they are ours, however we may hate and detest them; and truly your conduct herein is just the same as when you fathered upon the Calvinists that child of your own brain, that a man may repent, pray, strive and reform, and yet be a reprobate: whereas we always declare that repentance, prayer, striving and reforming, are happy proofs that the man in whom they are found, really belongs to the election of grace [O]. However, ad-

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[N] In a little scurrilous publication signed *Illiterate*, written by a first rate perfectionist in defence of Mr. Wesley and Mr. Bell, (the latter of whom the author vindicates for saying he should never die) are these expressions, "I have nothing to do with the law, either in point of justification or sanctification." — "I keep the whole moral law in all its spirituality, without offending in thought, word, and deed." — "I have this testimony of myself in all things, *servant of God well done.*" —

See more of this in my *Review of Mr. Wesley's doctrine*, 2d ed. p. 59.

[O] Whoever will consult the rev. Mr. Toplady's last publication, intitled "More work for Mr. John Wesley," will there find a full answer given to all those cavils which papists, socinians, pelagians, arminians, and perfectionists bring against those doctrines commonly called Calvinist, as if they tended to promote licentiousness, or to make God cruel, unjust, and unmerciful, and will see every one of their objections retorted upon themselves in the most masterly manner.

mitting



mitting the charge, it is certain that you yourself go much farther, for you even suppose that a man may be a partaker of living faith, and of all the saving influences of the Spirit, and yet may be a cast-away and a *reprobate*.

WE will now proceed to your quotations from that eminent divine Mr. John Flavel. And here I must observe first that instead of freeing yourself from the charge I brought against you in the postscript of my *Review*, of grossly perverting that excellent author's meaning, you have absolutely made bad worse. For you have taken several more passages out of that piece, entitled *A succinct and seasonable Discourse, &c.* and still applied them to Dr. Crisp in that very sense which the seven puritan divines, whose names are annexed, declare to be *harsh* and *uncharitable*, and what the doctor never meant. But though I believe with these divines that Dr. Crisp was a very great and good man, and think that an uncommon vein of evangelical truth and piety runs throughout his sermons, yet I by no means vindicate him in every expression he makes use of, particularly in those which are objected to by Mr. Flavel. However as the doctor was a very consistent writer, by comparing such passages in his works as appear rather exceptionable, with others, we may always come to a clear knowledge of his design, which was (to adopt Mr. Hervey's expression concerning the test of true doctrine) to debase the sinner, exalt Christ, and to promote holiness.

Come we now to Mr. Flavel's second appendix, which you quote with many *witticisms*, and with no small degree of triumph; but I take it for granted that if you had supposed I should have turned to the original, you would prudently have left Mr. Flavel as well as Dr. Owen, &c. to sleep in peace.

In comparing your citation with Mr. Flavel's own work, I find that you have expunged the following passages.

I. " No-

I. " Nothing is more opposite to loofness than the  
" free grace of God, &c."

II. You have left out a paragraph in which hon-  
ourable mention is made of Mr. Calvin, and a quo-  
tation brought from him against antinomianism.  
But this would never do for one who is determined  
to make Calvinism and antinomianism fynonymous  
terms.

III. You have wisely struck out of the middle of  
a paragraph (though you have given us the line be-  
fore and after) the following words which Mr. Flavel  
justly affirms do contain the grossest antinomianism  
[" *It is as impossible for Christ, himself to sin, as for a  
child of God to sin*" ] your reason for this was clear.  
Mr. Wesley is that very rank antinomian who has  
*literally* made this assertion in his sermon on Phil. iii.  
12. where he says, " Our blessed Lord had no evil  
" or sinful thoughts, nor indeed was *capable* of  
" having any; and hence it follows that neither  
" have real Christians. Therefore if he was free  
" from evil or sinful thoughts so are they likewise."

IV. You have again wisely broken off your quota-  
tion from Flavel at the following words [" *the papists  
" have notoriously corrupted the doctrine of justification  
" by free grace; DECRIED IMPUTED, and EXALTED  
" INHERENT righteousness above it,*" &c. &c. *Ob,  
" (said Stephen Gardiner) let not this gap of free grace  
" be opened to the people.*]"

Now, Sir, as the former citation from Mr. Flavel's  
second appendix which you pretend to quote, proved  
your friend Mr. Wesley to be an antinomian, so this  
proves yourself to be a papist by *decrying* IMPUTED  
and by *exalting* INHERENT *righteousness*. And that  
Stephen Gardiner and the vicar of Madely are in-  
tirely of one mind " *in not letting this gap of free  
grace be opened to the people.*"

I fancy, Sir, that by this time you have had enough  
of quoting or rather of *misquoting* that excellent man  
Mr. Flavel, whose testimony is not a jot more in  
your

your favor than that of Dr. Owen. However let us proceed a little further in this same second appendix, in which this sound Calvinistic divine Mr. Flavel so ably exposes the errors of real antinomians.

In the octavo edition of Mr. Flavel's works *second appendix of antinomianism*, p. 359. this judicious author fully vindicates the distinction so strongly insisted on in my five letters, against which you level all your eloquence, between God's hatred of a believer's *sin* and of his *person*, the want of which distinction says Luther is a most pernicious error of the popish schoolmen. Mr. Flavel's words are as follow. "God's  
 " antipathy to sin can never be taken away by the  
 " satisfaction of Christ, though his hatred to the  
 " persons of the redeemed be; for the hatred of sin  
 " is found in the unchangeable nature of God; and  
 " he can as soon cease to be holy, as cease to hate  
 " sin. Nor was Christ's death ever designed to this  
 " end, though Christ hath satisfied for the sins of  
 " believers, God still notes sin *in* believers. *His*  
 " *hatred to their sins, and love to their persons, are not*  
 " *inconsistent.*" This too you have all prudently left out of the quotation.

In the same piece of Mr. Flavel, you have likewise left out the following paragraph.

" We likewise grant that as the guilt of our sins  
 " was by God's imputation, laid upon Christ, so the  
 " righteousness of Christ is by God *imputed* to be-  
 " lievers, by virtue of their union with Christ; and  
 " becomes thereby as truly and fully theirs, for the  
 " justification of their particular persons before God,  
 " as if they themselves had in their own persons ful-  
 " filled all that the law requires, or suffered all that  
 " it threatened: No inherent righteousness in our  
 " persons, is, or can be more truly our own for this  
 " end and purpose, than Christ's *imputed* righteou-  
 " ness is our own."

Again p. 269. Though Mr. Flavel acquiesces with me that it is a dangerous and unguarded expression to

" the

say with Dr. Crisp and Mr. Wesley that *the sins of believers can do them no hurt*, yet he strenuously maintains and defends this position, viz. “ That the “ sins of the elect shall *not hurt* them, by frustrating “ the purposes of God concerning their eternal salvation, or totally and finally to separate them from “ his love.”—No, no, (says Mr. Flavel) his love to his people is unchangeable; *having loved his own, he loved them unto the end.*

Now, Sir, I hope you have had quite enough of quoting good Mr. Flavel’s second appendix, since there is not one of the doctrines you defend, but what this learned and excellent man bears his testimony against. Nor one that you censure, so far as they are really ours, but what he defends, in that very treatise you allude to.

I must own that it is a very disagreeable as well as an invidious task thus to pursue and follow you into all your hiding places, and then to drag you out and to expose your dissimulation and gross perversions before the view of the public. But how can I avoid this, if I would vindicate the writers you would artfully press into your service, from the charges you have brought against them?—Again, you would certainly have it supposed that you are leading your readers into truth; but how can this be, when you are doing all in your power to deceive them? and I declare in the presence of God before whose awful tribunal I must soon stand to give an account for what I write, that you do most shamefully deceive them when you make them believe that Flavel, Leighton, Burgess, Henry, Owen, Bunyan, &c. &c. or that any of our blessed reformers [P], or the puritan divines,

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[P] The two grand instruments under God of bringing about the reformation were *Martin Luther* and *John Calvin*; and all the protestant churches at home or abroad, are founded upon the doctrines of these two great men, *Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone*: nevertheless Mr. Fletcher expresses the greatest abhorrence of the tenets of both Luther and Calvin,



divines, are on your side of the question: for though they were no more antinomians than we are, nor we than they, yet they were certainly what you call Calvinists, and it is as certain that they one and all detested your principles as popish, heretical, and antichristian.

I shall only make one more remark on your late piece, and that is on your wonderful assertion, p. 167. "That Joseph told his brethren a GROSS UNTRUTH when he informed them *that it was God which sent him thither, (into Egypt) to preserve life.* This you say you would rather suppose to be the case, than that God should equivocate."

I assure you, Sir, I no more suppose God guilty of equivocation than you do, and yet if there be truth in his word, I firmly believe that he himself did really *send* Joseph into Egypt for most wise and gracious ends. And for this belief I have not only the authority of Joseph himself, but that of the prophet David, who, as well as Joseph, spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost; now David in the 105th Psalm tells us, that the same divine HE who sent a famine upon the land, SENT also a man before them, even Joseph, &c. But still you declare it to be your opinion that Joseph told his brethren a GROSS UNTRUTH, when he affirmed that God had sent him. Alas! Sir, where are you going? And what are you doing? You are not contented to make the chaste patriarch Joseph a liar, but you must make holy David a liar, and what is infinitely worse, you make God himself a liar also, for they

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whom he testifies his disapprobation of by name; and yet he would have the world believe, that he abides by the principles of our reformers, and of the protestant churches. This inconsistency is so very amazing, that I am at loss for an epithet to express its flagrancy, and therefore can call it nothing less than WESLEAN; as it only falls short of it in this one instance, (viz.) that it is hard to say whether Mr. Wesley has spoken oftener in *praise* or in *dispraise* of Luther and Calvin.

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are the repeated words of inspiration which you venture to call GROSS UNTRUTH. But Mr. Hill *must* be branded as an antinomian, and the Dagon of arminianism must be supported, though the testimony of patriarchs, and prophets, yea of God himself should fall down and be broken in pieces before it.

I cannot agree with you, reverend Sir, that our dispute is likely to be attended with any beneficial effects to ourselves, or to others. On the contrary, I believe that among real Christians none are the better for writing, and few if any are the better for reading controversial divinity. And with regard to the people of the world, it is certain that altercations of this sort rather tend to set them against all religion than otherwise. However I doubt not but there are some sincere enquirers after truth, and such persons are well worthy our attention, and we certainly ought to do all we can to point them to the object of their enquiry; but give me leave to say, Sir, that we treat them with a most unbecoming cruelty when we knowingly and willingly misrepresent any authors or facts in order to establish our own opinions and to lead them aside from that pearl they are digging for. How culpable you have been in this respect every reader may clearly see. And yet how small will the number be who do or will see it? Since Mr. Wesley has nothing to do but to hold up his finger in order to prevent thousands of his followers from ever looking into any thing that is written against his own faction, and to make them believe that the *four Checks* (as they are called) contain the *medulla* of the Christian religion. Be this as it will, the unfair quotations you have made [Q],  
and

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[Q] Since this letter was finished I have had a sight of the works of the reverend Anthony Burgess, an author quoted by Mr. Fletcher, who has (according to custom) most grossly and most shamefully perverted and misrepresented the doctrines of that eminent divine and laborious preacher of the gospel; who throughout all his writings and sermons insists strongly on the  
D 2 doctrines

and the shocking misrepresentations and calumnies you have been guilty of, will for the future prevent me from looking into any of your books, if you should write a thousand volumes. So here the controversy must end, at least it shall end for me. You may now misquote and misrepresent whomsoever and whatsoever you please, and you may do it with impunity; I assure you I shall give myself no trouble to detect you, and as for those who think proper to trust you, I can only say I am sorry for their credulity; since the following appear to be the principles on which you began, and on which you seem determined to carry on the combat.

1<sup>st</sup>. You think with yourself "If I can make the world suppose that the Calvinists believe so and so, I shall certainly set my readers against them." Then

2<sup>dly</sup>. You dress up a creed in an hideous masquerade dress according to your own fancy, and with a most undaunted confidence you declare that this monstrous creed is ours. Having done this,

3<sup>dly</sup>. You begin firing and pelting at this deformed child of your own brain, which all your devoted admirers are taught to father upon the assertors of free grace.—And then

4<sup>thly</sup>. Having cut the ugly bantling into a thousand pieces, you send it as the levite sent his mangled concubine, *into all the coasts of Israel*, (Judges xix. 29.) and begin vaunting, triumphing, exulting and sneering, as if you had really *done some mighty deed*; and as if under the pretence of expelling antinomianism, you had effectually taught Christ to know his place, and not to assume to himself too much in the work of salvation.

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doctrines of election and perseverance, and our one complete justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ alone. And has written a whole treatise expressly to prove that works cannot be a condition of justification.—Alas! that bigotry, prejudice, and party spirit should make a man of sense and learning stoop to such poor low artifices in order to defend his cause!

I cannot

I cannot however conclude without again acknowledging that in the sight of men, your life is exemplary, and your walk outwardly blameless. But still, Sir, you are a transgressor of the law, and consequently a sinner (*for sin, saith the apostle, is the transgression of the law, Rom. iii. 4.*) As a sinner, you are as much obnoxious to the curse, as if you were an *actual* adulterer or a murderer; for thus saith the scripture, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them. The wages of sin is death. He that keepeth the whole law, and yet offendeth in one point, he is guilty of all.* If therefore you have not a righteousness adequate to the demands of the law to plead before the bar of God, what must become of you? If you say you have this righteousness in yourself, I give you up for incurable: if you have it not in him, who alone hath *brought in that everlasting righteousness, which is unto all and upon all that believe,* the scripture affords you not one gleam of hope; and all that fine cobweb you have been spinning out of your own bowels and placing yourself in the midst of it; though it may now be a means of catching some poor unwary flies, yet when the winds of God's wrath shall blow upon it, and the besom of his law shall sweep it, will be found to be a *refuge of lies,* and the poor spider may wish in vain to find some hiding place to cover itself in.

Let me beseech you then, Sir, to look well to your *foundation,* for unless this be well laid, the higher you raise the superstructure, and the more ornaments you add to it, (however the beholders may be astonished at its beauty and decorations) the greater will be the danger of its falling, and then dreadful indeed *will be the fall thereof.*

No counterfeit coin passes so currently as that which most resembles the pure gold. It therefore behoves us well to examine whose image and superscription it bears; otherwise we may think ourselves *rich and increased in goods,* and that *we have need of*



*nothing*, when indeed *we are poor and miserable and blind and naked*. It is a good saying of Mr. Fuller, in his church history, "that a morsel of heretical doctrine is never so likely to poison those who taste of it, as when it is served up in clean dishes and scoured platters." Self-made holiness, (if I may use the expression) may deceive ourselves, and it may deceive others, but it cannot deceive him, who when he fathoms our best works, adds *righteousness to the line*, and *judgment to the plummet*.

Let me further remark that the apostle ranks *heresies, variance, and seditions*, with the worst of the deeds of the flesh, Gal. v. 19, &c. and for my own part, I think that slander, detraction and wilful perversion are as much breaches of the ninth commandment, as adultery, incest, and murder are breaches of the sixth and seventh, and that they are all equally inconsistent with the genuine spirit of gospel piety.

It appears by the size of your last work, that it has cost you more labor and pains than any of your other pieces; but permit me to hint to you, Sir, that you have now gone too far for many of your former admirers, who really begin to look about them, and to suspect that you are driving them on at too great a rate.—A little vessel is never so likely to be overset, as when her gallant top sails are all expanded, and when she has no ballast to keep her steady.—Let me advise you then, Sir, to lower your sails, and to throw over-board your mighty *invaluable* cargo of self-righteousness; take Christ for your pilot, and then you will pass safely over all the stormy billows of the law, sin, and death, till you arrive at the haven of everlasting peace.

And as you are pleased to put me in mind of Apollo's advice to Phaeton.

———"Medio tutissimus ibis [R]"

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[R] "You will go safest in the middle."

I answer

I answer, that though there is *no middle way* between law and gospel, “*no third covenant* (to use “your own expression quoted in the postscript) *made up of grace and works mixed,*” yet be pleased to remember that the whole cause of Phaeton’s downfall, was that he would needs take the reins into his own impotent hands, and by soaring too high, and driving on too furiously, he set the world on fire, (*though not by a comet’s tail,*) and brought upon himself swift destruction.

Wishing you sincere repentance for all you have asserted against the truths of the gospel; and for the severe, rash and uncharitable spirit (which under words smoother than oil, and the profession of much candor) you have shewn against so many faithful ministers and servants of Christ, I remain,

Reverend SIR,

Your hearty well-wisher,

RICHARD HILL.

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P O S T S C R I P T.

**I** WILL not conceal from you, Rev. Sir, that I have in my possession a manuscript sermon, which you preached in your own parish church in the year 1764, copies of which were, by your permission, given about to several of your friends, and I among others obtained the favor of one. The text is taken from Rom. xi. 5, 6. *Even so then, at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace; and if it be by grace, then it is no more of work, &c.*

As to the performance itself it does you much credit, and plainly shews that you were *once* zealously attached to the doctrines of the church of England; upon this account, and because I really look upon it to be the best confutation of Mr. Wesley's minutes, and of all the *four Checks* written in vindication of them, I once thought to publish it, in which intention I had actually proceeded so far as to put it into the printer's hand, without adding a jot or diminishing a tittle, and a very considerable part of it, was really composed for the press; but, upon a more mature consideration, doubting whether I acted fairly and uprightly in doing this without your permission, I went in person to the printer, and stopped the publication of the discourse, which however I now earnestly intreat you to send abroad into the world, or elie to suffer me to do it for you, and in the mean while, I hope you will not be displeas'd at my transcribing, with the greatest exactness and fidelity, a few paragraphs from the manuscript, in  
hopes

hopes that as you have now tasted both *the old* and *the new wine*, you will upon taking a fresh sip of the former, be brought to say *the old is better*; and permit me to remind you, that when you delivered the sermon in question, you informed the congregation, that “ God being your helper, you were determined to preach the doctrine therein contained till your tongue should cleave to the roof of your mouth.” And I am persuaded that had any man then told you, that within the space of a few years, you would write any thing so flatly opposite thereto as what you have vented in your *four Checks*, as you call them, you would have been ready to answer with Hazael, “ Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing.”

P. 4. In the manuscript now before me, you give the following clear account of the two covenants.

“ Here consists the great difference between the first and second covenant. Under the *first*, an absolute unfinning universal obedience in our own persons is required, and such obedience we can never perform.—Under the *second*, this obedience in our surety Christ Jesus (when we are united to him by a faith of the operation of God) IS ACCEPTED INSTEAD OF OUR OWN [S]. Again, The second covenant then, or the gospel, is a dispensation of free grace and mercy to poor, lost, helpless sinners, who seeing and feeling themselves condemned by the law, and utterly unable to obtain justification upon the terms of the first covenant, come to Jesus Christ to seek that righteousness in him, which they have not in themselves; for the Son of God being both God and man in one person, and by the invaluable sacrifice of himself

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[S] How irreconcilable is this position of Mr. Fletcher, with that of Mr. Wesley in his letter to Mr. Hervey, where he (Mr. Wesley) affirms, “ That to say the obedience of our surety is accepted instead of our own, is neither a safe nor a scriptural way of speaking.”

“ upon



“ upon the cross, having suffered the punishment  
 “ due to all our breaches of the law, and by his most  
 “ holy life answered all the demands of the first co-  
 “ venant, God can now be just and the justifier of  
 “ them that believe in Jesus, Rom. iii. 26.”

P. 6. The author of this excellent sermon tells us, that God does not save those “ *who lead a good life in order to get pardon* ; and p. 19. he adds, “ a be-  
 “ liever does not walk in good works TO GET ETER-  
 “ NAL LIFE ; but to keep up and increase the vigor  
 “ of his faith, *by which he HATH eternal life* [T].”

P. 7. “ We can do no good works before we are  
 “ in a state of salvation.”

Again, “ A believer is first saved, and then he  
 “ does good works [U].” “ Works done before  
 “ justification, *before faith alone has put us into a state*  
 “ *of salvation*, not only do not fit us to receive  
 “ grace, but have in themselves the nature of sin ;  
 “ and consequently *deserve* death, the wages of sin,  
 “ so far from *deserving* grace and glory [X].”

P. 8. We have the following sound words.  
 “ Having thus shewn you how self-righteous una-  
 “ wakened sinners dream of salvation, either by the  
 “ covenant of works, or by a third imaginary cove-  
 “ nant, in which they jumble together two incom-

[T] How plainly does this assertion contradict that of the minutes, that a believer is to work *for* life, and “ in order to  
 “ find favor !”

[U] How opposite is this to that position of the minutes.  
 “ We have received it as a maxim, that a man is to do nothing  
 “ in order to justification. Nothing can be more false.” Again,  
 the whole doctrine of the minutes and of the *four Checks*, particularly of the first, which Mr. Fletcher calls *the Vindication*, is flatly contradicted by the following sound words, which I have extracted and translated from his little French tract on regeneration, p. 35. “ Sanctification cannot begin till after justification.”—“ Common sense shews that God cannot communicate  
 “ his nature and the graces of his spirit to a man, whose sins he  
 “ has not pardoned.”

[X] How agrees this with, we are rewarded *secundum merita operum*, *as our works* DESERVE ?

“ patible

“ patible things, *works* and *grace*, *merits* and *mercy*,  
 “ and having proved by plain unanswerable passages,  
 “ that the gospel and our church shew us salvation  
 “ cannot be attained, but under the second cove-  
 “ nant, that is to say by *faith only* and *not by works*;  
 “ I beg leave to recapitulate the whole in three  
 “ articles; they contain the sum of the gospel, and  
 “ of the doctrines, I HAVE CONSTANTLY PREACHED  
 “ AMONG YOU, and AM DETERMINED TO PREACH  
 “ (God being my helper) TILL MY TONGUE CLEAVE  
 “ TO THE ROOF OF MY MOUTH; and hereby I give  
 “ a public challenge to any man living to find a flaw  
 “ in either of them, by the word of God, or the  
 “ articles of our church [Y].

*Ibid.* “ As there is no salvation to be had but in  
 “ Christ by faith, through the covenant of grace, so  
 “ there is no mixing these two covenants without  
 “ renouncing the gospel. He that stands with one  
 “ foot upon the covenant of works, and the other  
 “ foot upon the covenant of grace, is in the most  
 “ imminent danger of eternal ruin.”

P. 9. “ Woe then to those who teach sinners the  
 “ double way, the pharasaic way, the popish way  
 “ of salvation, PARTLY BY MAN’S MERITS, and PARTLY  
 “ BY THE MERITS OF JESUS CHRIST. If we, or an  
 “ angel from heaven, says St. Paul, preach any other  
 “ gospel to you than that we have preached; namely,  
 “ that we are saved by grace through faith, and that  
 “ not of ourselves, not of works, but it is the gift  
 “ of God, let him be accursed. He really denies his  
 “ Saviour, and tears the seamless robe of Christ’s  
 “ righteousness, who goes to patch it up with *the*  
 “ *rags of his own righteousness*; he takes away all  
 “ the efficacy of Christ’s blood, who pretends to

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[Y] Who would have thought that the Vicar of Madely would so soon have accepted this challenge given by Mr. Fletcher?

“ mend

“ mend it by adding thereto the FILTHY DROPS of his own goodness.”

P. 14. “ THE CHILDREN OF GOD under the Old Testament acknowledged that *all their righteousnesses were as filthy rags* [Z].”

[Z] This is the third or fourth time within the compass of one sermon, that Mr. Fletcher introduces this scripture to shew the imperfection of all man's works, not only of the works of the unregenerate, but even of GOD'S OWN CHILDREN. And Mr. Wesley very frequently does the same, particularly in the hymns and sacred poems, vol. I. p. 185, and p. 313, where he says,

Hither my actions righteous deem'd  
By man, and counted good,  
As FILTHY RAGS by God esteem'd,  
Till sprinkled with thy blood.

Again,  
Nor can we thus thy wrath appease,  
We and our works are all unclean,  
As FILTHY RAGS our righteousness,  
Our good is *ill*, our virtue *sin*.

Yet Mr. Fletcher tells us, that he is glad to rescue this scripture out of the hands of the Calvinists; but surely he might as well have said out of his own and Mr. Wesley's. And if he is offended at the best of human works being deemed as *drofs*, *dung*, and *filthy rags*; he can never shew the propriety of calling them *filthy drops*, *bricks* and *lime*, yea, *ill* and *sin* itself, as Mr. Wesley has done in the verse just quoted, and as the Vindicator himself has so often stiled them in this very sermon; and therefore I might justly retort upon him his own manner of speech, *Log. Gen.* p. 119. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, i. e. your *ill*, your *sin*, your *bricks* and *lime*, your *filthy drops*.—She has wrought a good work, i. e. a *sin*, a *filthy drop*, upon me for my burial.—We are created in Christ Jesus to good works, i. e. to  *sins*, *bricks*, and *lime*, &c. &c. &c. The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, i. e. in all *filthy drops*. But I must now explain in what sense I firmly believe that no work, even of a believer can be called good, *viz.* when compared with the holiness of God's law. In this respect it may be said of every action, *why callest thou this good*, seeing it falls short of what the law requires, and every transgression of the law is *sin*? and yet in the scripture acceptation of the word, all those works which are done in faith may well be called *good-works*, as we say such an one is a good man, and yet we know that in the strict sense of the expression, *there is none good but one, and that is God*,

P. 3. " Making what we call the mercy of God  
 " a packhorse to carry us and our sins to heaven,  
 " upon THE FILTHY RAGS of our own righteousness."

" We come at last to despair of getting to heaven  
 " by building a Babel with the LIME of pharisaical  
 " sincerity, and the BRICKS of wretched good works."

P. 16. " Our best works themselves have such a  
 " mixture of imperfection that they must be atoned  
 " for, and made acceptable by Christ's blood [A]."

P. 17.

[A] Could it have been conceived that the same gentleman who here so positively affirms that imperfection cleaves to the best works of the best men, should in so short a time plead so powerfully for sinless perfection, and even look upon pious bishop Beveridge to be a stranger to *gospel liberty*, because in the views he had of his own insufficiency he cried out, " I cannot pray  
 " but I sin, I cannot preach or hear a sermon but I sin; my re-  
 " pentance needs to be repented of; and my tears to be washed  
 " in the blood of my redeemer."

If we consider how many of Mr. Wesley's contradictions and inconsistencies have been brought to light by Mr. Fletcher's *Checks*, we may justly wonder that he should not rather stile himself his *Detector* than his *Vindicator*, since every *Check*, which Mr. Fletcher writes against Calvinism, only makes poor Mr. Wesley appear more and more contemptible, especially as Mr. Wesley himself has the revival and correction of all Mr. Fletcher publishes. Not to mention the different assertions of these two gentlemen in the points of free-will, mysticism, two-fold justification, imputed righteousness, &c. &c. we have here a striking proof how Mr. Fletcher can instantly make Mr. John give up any author he thinks proper, however highly Mr. John may have esteemed those authors before. For instance, Mr. John has not only introduced bishop Beveridge's *Private Thoughts* into his *Christian Library*, but in one of his own pamphlets he particularly recommends this book, among those in which he chose to instruct his converts. But Mr. Fletcher having found out in his *Third Check*, p. 66. that bishop Beveridge was a stranger to " *gospel liberty*," when he wrote his *Private Thoughts*, and having made an *appeal* from them to the *declaration* and *experience* of St. John, his worthy friend *Pliable* immediately joins issue, though by so doing he in fact informs the world, that he himself has been for near forty years together, recommending, publishing, selling, yea, instructing others out of a book, which he now acknowledges to have been contrary to apostolic doctrine, *gospel liberty*, and *Christian experience*, But I had forgotten.—" The  
 " clearer



P. 17. " *When you have done all that is commanded you, AND WHERE IS THE MAN THAT HAS DONE I SHALL NOT SAY ALL, BUT THE ONE HALF OF IT [B], say we are unprofitable servants.*"

P. 19. " Others, who as the dying thief and little children have not had time to shew their faith by their works [C], shall enjoy a less degree of glorious bliss; but all shall ascribe THE WHOLE OF THEIR SALVATION ONLY to the mercy of God, the merits of Christ, and the efficacy of his blood and Spirit."

P. 15. Against the doctrine of merit the author thus *verbatim* expresses himself. " I declare it as upon the house-tops of all the false doctrines that ever came out of the pit of hell, none have done such execution for satan, in the church of God. Stealing, drunkenness, adultery, have killed their

" clearer light is come." However, I must add, that if the *Vindicator* and the gentleman *vindicated* were each of them to draw up a confession of faith, consisting of 39 articles, for the use of their disciples, and were not to be together at the time of composing it, I cannot help thinking that they would contradict each other in twenty of those articles, and contradict themselves in the other nineteen.

[B] How agrees this with Mr. Fletcher's *Vindication*, p. 76, where he says, that those who have a clear witness, that they HAVE DONE WHAT GOD COMMANDED, may, without heresy, humbly demand the promised reward?

[C] We find it impossible by all the arts of our *Logica Genevensis* to reconcile Mr. Fletcher's assertion in this sermon, that " THE DYING THIEF HAD NOT TIME TO SHEW HIS FAITH BY HIS WORKS;" and his assertion in the *second Check*, p. 25, that this same thief was justified by his *reproofs, exhortations, prayers, patience, and resignation*, by which he evidenced the liveliness of his faith, as THERE WAS TIME and opportunity; yea, "[that he fulfilled the whole law of Christ, and that the fulfilling of all the law of Christ was work enough to justify the converted thief by that law." But though we poor blundering Calvinists cannot by our *Logica Genevensis* bring about any harmony between these two opposite affirmations, yet by the magical power of *Logica Westiensis*, or *Logica Helvetica*, we doubt not but it may be easily effected,

" thousands

“ *thousands*, but this damnable error, which is the  
 “ very root of unbelief, its *ten thousands*.”

“ All the delays of our conversion, and all our  
 “ going on with remorse in sin and wickedness, is  
 “ FOUNDED ON THE DOCTRINE OF MERITS; well  
 “ then may our church call it a devilish doctrine,  
 “ a doctrine which is meer blasphemy against God’s  
 “ mercy, a doctrine which by turning Christ out of  
 “ his seat, first leads to licentiousness, as the conduct  
 “ of many who cry up the merit of good works  
 “ plainly shews, and next to pharasaic morality, and  
 “ formality, and from both, (except converting grace  
 “ prevent it) *into endless misery*. For no doubt says  
 “ bishop Latimer, (*Serm. on twelfth day*) HE THAT  
 “ DEPARTETH OUT OF THE WORLD IN THAT OPINION,  
 “ SHALL NEVER COME TO HEAVEN.”

P. 10. Speaking of faith he with great propriety  
 tells us, “ That it is the *instrumental* cause of our  
 “ free salvation; that it receives Christ and salva-  
 “ tion as the hand of a beggar receives an alms.”

In the same page speaking of good works and  
 shewing what place they have in the gospel plan,  
 he tells us like a sound Calvinist, that they are  
 “ *Declarative* of our free justification; a constant  
 “ uniform course of all sorts of good works with  
 “ an holy, heavenly-minded conversation, being the  
 “ only EVIDENCE of a lively saving faith. Thus  
 “ Christ’s merits faith *alone* apprehends, and good  
 “ works *alone* EVIDENCE salvation. Yea they are the  
 “ fruit of salvation.”

Thus does this (late) evangelical preacher make  
 it clearly appear “ That (to use still his own words)  
 “ there is a vast difference between preaching against  
 “ the MERIT of good works, and preaching against  
 “ good works themselves.” And therefore he adds  
 “ Lastly, we are to do good works not to go to  
 “ heaven by them, (this selfish, proud, antichristian  
 “ motive would poison the best doings of the greatest  
 “ saints, if saints could thus trample on the blood  
 “ of

“ of their Saviour. Such a wild conceit being only  
 “ the pharisees cleaner way of going to hell,) but  
 “ because they shall be rewarded *in* heaven, though  
 “ not *with* heaven.”

Several other reasons does Mr. Fletcher add in this excellent sermon, why a believer should “ abound  
 “ in good works WITHOUT THE DOCTRINE OF MERIT,” or “ *the wild conceit that they are to bring us  
 “ to heaven.*”

1<sup>st</sup>. “ In obedience to our heavenly Father.”

2<sup>dly</sup>. “ To be JUSTIFIED BEFORE MEN, and to  
 “ shew that our faith is a saving faith, which  
 “ he tells us St. James strongly insists on.”

3<sup>dly</sup>. “ That others seeing our good works, may  
 “ glorify our Father which is heaven.”

4<sup>thly</sup>. “ Out of love and gratitude to Christ, who  
 “ hath purchased heaven for us by his blood.”

I shall only add, that in various parts of this sermon, Mr. Fletcher complains loudly of the cavils, *sneers*, and objections which were raised against him, as if he preached against the practice of good works, because he denied the merit of them; and as if his doctrine countenanced licentiousness, because he would not let man come in for a share in his own salvation; and shews that these slanderous cavils and reproaches have been the lot of the faithful ministers of Christ in all ages: that the same objections were brought against the apostles themselves, that “ *the devil  
 “ fought against our reformers with the same weapons;*  
 “ and that all the books which the papists wrote  
 “ against them rang with the charge of their turning  
 “ good works out of Christianity.” Methinks when I read these words, and consider how lately it was that Mr. Fletcher drank of the same cup of ignominy with many zealous preachers of the gospel, who still abide by the same principles, I am amazed that he should so readily and unkindly take up those very  
 weapons,

weapons, which by his own confession must have been snatched out of Satan's hands, and join a cry against them, which had been so often raised against himself, whilst he was a strenuous asserter of the doctrines of that church in which he had the honor of being ordained a minister. And yet when I do but cast my eyes over the excellent discourse from which I have made the foregoing short extracts, I can instantly forget all the hard speeches and reproachful names, which he has so unjustly and illiberally poured out against us, and do *esteem him very highly in love for his* (quondam) *works sake*; especially as I have been well informed, that this very sermon, the day it was delivered, was made the means of *converting* two papists, who providentially came into the church, to the true protestant faith. God grant that his four checks may never have the direct contrary effect, by being made instrumental to the *perverting* any protestants to the faith of Rome.

F I N I S.

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E R R A T A.

P. 9. l. 8. after prejudice add a comma. P. 14. after the word communication make the reference with a [D] and not with †. P. 22. note, l. 11. after the word *apostle*, instead of a full point, make a point of interrogation. P. 23. l. 26. note, for every man *has naturally* two principles in him, *read*, every man that is born into the world has two principles in him.



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## A P P E N D I X.

**A**LTHOUGH I observed, p. 26, that the time would fail me, were I to pretend to enumerate the many gross misrepresentations you have given of our doctrines, throughout your last piece; and to point out the very unfair manner in which you have quoted my *five Letters*, and the interpolations you have made in them: yet upon a re-perusal of your *Logica Genevensis*, I was so struck with the unkindness and, I must beg leave to say, the *baseness* of the following paragraph, which you have put into my mouth, and marked with commas (as if it were really a quotation from my *five Letters*, though not a syllable of it is to be found there) that I cannot help adding a few lines by way of observation upon it. Your words are these.

“ Before I was acquainted with the truth, I imagined that sin would dishonor God, and injure me; but since the preachers of finished salvation have opened my eyes, I see how greatly I was mistaken. P. 106.”

Soon after this in the next page, you say “ I need not tell you, honored Sir, that I am indebted to you for all the doctrines and most of the expressions of this dangerous confession of faith. If any one doubts of it, let him compare this creed and the letters together. Some clauses and sentences I have added, not to *misrepresent* and *blacken*, but to introduce, connect, and illustrate your sentiments. P. 107.”

Now under pretence of *introducing, connecting, and illustrating my sentiments*, you have given us a most injurious and cutting sneer against the preachers of finished salvation, who are all brought up as teachers of the two following doctrines.

1st. That sin does not dishonor God.

2dly. That it doth not injure the believer.

And both of these doctrines I am introduced as an abettor of, whereas they are directly opposite to my own sentiments, and to those of all the preachers of free grace that ever I heard; for though we firm-

ly believe that God can and doth over-rule even sin itself for good, yet we as firmly believe that it brings the highest dishonor upon his government, yea, that it is the only thing whereby he is dishonored; and that although it will not deprive a believer of his heavenly inheritance (because the payment for sin is made, and the possession itself purchased) yet we know that it will *greatly* INJURE him by robbing him of his comfort and of his communion with God; and therefore it may as reasonably be asserted that the felon who robs his neighbour on the highway does not *injure* him, unless he also take away his life, as that sin does not *injure* a believer, because it will not deprive him of that everlasting life, which is the free gift of God in Jesus Christ.

But you say, that you have not added these words to *misrepresent* and *blacken* my sentiments.—No! for what other end then have you introduced them, when I abhor not only the *expressions* but the *doctrines* they contain, and when I have not spoken the least word, syllable, or tittle, that tends to authorize the citation you have forged, yea, when you know in your own conscience that I never meant or intended any such thing? Oh! Mr. Fletcher, I am indeed grieved to find you so disingenuous, but it only confirms what I have advanced, p. 40. However (you say) “if any one doubts of it, let him compare this creed and the *Letters* together.” So say I, and therefore conclude with the following *exact* quotation from those letters, by which the reader will be much better able to judge, than from those mangled scraps you have brought, what ground you had so peremptorily to make the foregoing assertions.

“No thanks to sin, if the LORD over-rule it for  
 “the good of his people. It is still the abominable  
 “thing which his soul hateth; and whatever may  
 “be his secret will, we are to keep close to the  
 “declarations of his own written word, which bids  
 “us to resist sin even unto blood. Whosoever can  
 “delight himself in sin, under the persuasion that  
 “God will make it work together for his good, is

“ under a most powerful delusion of the devil. Such  
 “ an one is indeed accomplishing God’s decree ; but  
 “ he carries a dreadful mark in his forehead, that  
 “ such decree is, that he *shall be punished with ever-*  
 “ *lasting destruction from the presence of the LORD.*  
 “ Sin is directly contrary to the new nature of a  
 “ believer, to that incorruptible seed which re-  
 “ maineth in him, and therefore *he cannot sin because*  
 “ *he is born of God* ; that is, the new man, the  
 “ regenerate part, cannot sin. *It is not I,* (says the  
 “ Apostle) *but sin that dwelleth in me.* Yea, so great  
 “ an aversion is there between the love of sin and  
 “ the new creature, that he esteems the position,  
 “ *let us sin that grace may abound,* as the most dam-  
 “ nable doctrine that ever steamed out of the bot-  
 “ tomless pit of hell : and though grace and sal-  
 “ vation is all his song, yet he knoweth that the  
 “ grace of God, which bringeth salvation, teacheth  
 “ us, that *denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we*  
 “ *should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this*  
 “ *present world.*”

Now let me request the reader to reconsider the  
 pretended quotation beforementioned, and I think his  
 heart must rise with a generous indignation, mixed  
 with an holy compassion, to see a man who is plead-  
 ing for such superlative degrees of holiness, and cry-  
 ing out Antinomianism, Antinomianism, against all  
 the Christian world, descend to the poor illiberal  
 arts of forgery and defamation, in order to *blacken*  
 his opponents, and to establish his own pernicious  
 principles.

But though we heartily detest any such diabolical  
 assertions, as that *sin neither dishonors God, nor injures*  
*the believer,* yet I think we have too much reason to  
 suppose that the author of *Logica Genevensis*  
 thoroughly adopted these sentiments, otherwise  
 would pay a little more regard to the voice of  
 commandment which saith, **THOU SHALT  
 BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST  
 NEIGHBOUR.**

I need not tell you, Sir, that there is not  
 in the world for whom I had an higher regard,  
 whom I had a better opinion, than I had of yo



and so great was my prejudice and partiality in your favor, that in spite of facts, I shut my eyes against the misrepresentations and false glosses of your former pieces, and endeavoured all in my power to find some excuses for both, as is evident from my postscript to the *Review*; and still more so from the *five Letters*, and from my *Remarks* on your *Third Check*. I will moreover confess to you, Sir, that several of my Christian friends were much disgusted at the testimony I bore of you in those *Remarks*, as being "a man after God's own heart," and as "having a single eye to his glory." But your last work has indeed done for me what the preachers of finished salvation could never effect, (viz.) it has at length "opened my eyes," to see more and more of the dreadful tendency of your system, which from beginning to end brings no message of glad tidings to the lost and to the helpless, but tends to bolster up fallen creatures in self-righteousness, and self-sufficiency, and therefore it is not to be wondered that you have so many admirers among such of the clergy, whose hearts are full of bitterness against all the doctrines of grace and of free salvation.

Lastly, with regard to the spirit of your performances, it is certain, that the judicious and candid, even among Mr. Wesley's friends, by no means defend it; and as for those who are so bigotted, as to call high-flown'd sarcastic declamation, base forgeries, and gross misrepresentations, by the names of *sweet words*, *mild irony*, *love and candor*, on account of the "dear Sirs," "honoured Sirs," and "pious Sirs," with which the pill is so finely gilded, I must leave such persons quite undisturbed in their infatuations, and will therefore only add, that as you have now fastened the public with *four Checks to the grace of God* (for so your pamphlets ought to have been intitled) I hope in the *fifth* you will lay some check upon your slanderous pen, and copy the diffidence of Shirley, in recanting what you have advanced against the glory of Immanuel, and against the peace of the church.

*Finis*

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