

to-morrow. For, (4.) God is the Father of them that believe, so long as they believe. But the devil is the father of them that believe not, whether they did once believe or no.

30. The sum of all is this: If the Scriptures are true, those who are holy or righteous in the judgment of God himself; those who are endued with the faith that purifies the heart, that produces a good conscience; those who are grafted into the good olive-tree, the spiritual, invisible Church; those who are branches of the true vine, of whom Christ says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches;" those who so effectually know Christ, as by that knowledge to have escaped the pollutions of the world; those who see the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and who have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, of the witness and of the fruits of the Spirit; those who live by faith in the Son of God; those who are sanctified by the blood of the covenant, may nevertheless so fall from God as to perish everlastingly.

Therefore let him that standeth take heed lest he fall.

A SUFFICIENT ANSWER

TO

"LETTERS TO THE AUTHOR OF 'THERON
AND ASPASIO.'"

IN A LETTER TO THE AUTHOR.

BRISTOL, *November 1, 1757.*

SIR,

IT is not very material who you are. If Mr. Glass is still alive, I suppose you are he. If not, you are at least one of his humble admirers, and probably not very old: So your youth may in some measure plead your excuse for such a peculiar pertness, insolence, and self-sufficiency, with such an utter contempt of all mankind, as no other writer of the present age has shown.

As you use no ceremony toward any man, so neither shall

I use any toward you, but bluntly propose a few objections to your late performance, which stare a man in the face as soon as he looks in it.

I object, First, that you are a gross, wilful slanderer. For, 1. You say of Mr. Hervey, "He shuts up our access to the divine righteousness, by holding forth a preliminary human one as necessary to our enjoying the benefit of it." (Page 4.)

Again: "You set men to work to do something, in order to make their peace with God." (Page 9.) This is an absolute slander, founded on that poor pretence, that he supposes those who repent and believe, and none but those, to "enjoy the benefit of Christ's righteousness." And has he not the warrant of Christ himself for so doing,—“Repent ye, and believe the gospel?” If this is “teaching man to acquire a righteousness of his own,” the charge falls on our Lord himself.

You say, 2. “As to that strange something which you call faith, after all you have told us about it, we are at as great a loss to tell distinctly what it is, as when you began.” (*Ibid.*)

This is another slander. You are at no loss (as will presently appear) to tell what Mr. Hervey means by faith. Whether it be right or wrong, his account of it is as clear and distinct as any that ever was given.

You say, 3. “The popular Preachers” (so you term Archbishop Tillotson, Dr. Lucas, Crisp, Doddridge, Watts, Gill; Mr. Guthrie, Boston, Erskine, Willison; Mr. Flavel, Marshal; Mr. Griffith Jones, Hervey, Romaine, Whitefield, Wesley) “never tell us what they mean by faith, but by some laboured circumlocutions.” (Page 282.)

This is a third palpable slander, as your own words prove: “They say, Faith is a real persuasion that Christ hath died for me.” (Page 5.) Are you not here told what they mean by faith; and that without any circumlocution at all?

You confute your own slander still farther, by adding three more: 4. “They make a pious resolve the ground of our acceptance with God.” (Page 360.) No, never. Not one of the writers you have named ever did, or does so now. 5. “The faith they talk of, is only a timid resolve, joined with a fond conjecture.” Or, 6. “It is a fond presumptuous wish, greatly embarrassed with doubts and difficulties.” (Page 404.)

Slander all over. We make the righteousness and blood

of Christ the only ground of our acceptance with God. And the faith we talk of is neither more nor less than a divine conviction, that Christ loved me, and gave himself for me.

You say, 7. "All who preach this doctrine are of the world, and speak of the world; therefore the world heareth them." (Page 14.) "Therefore they will always be attended by the body of the people." (Page 37.)

A sad mistake this, in point of fact. For whether they are of the world or no, it is certain the world, the generality of men, (good or bad,) doth not and never did hear them. At this day those who hear them are an exceeding small number, in comparison of those who do not. And if the body of the people in any place do attend some of them, how do they attend? Just as they would a mad dog; with sticks and stones, and whatever comes to hand.

And this you yourself account for extremely well. *Sed oportet Palæmonem esse memorem.** "What a figure would a small number of Ministers make in the Church either of England or Scotland, who should agree to maintain the plain, obvious sense of their own public standards of doctrine; and insist upon an adherence to that sense, as a term of holding communion with them in the sacred institutions! Their situation in the national Church would be very uncomfortable, as well as extremely ridiculous. For many enemies would soon be awakened against them, to distress and misrepresent them in various respects." (Page 465.)

Thus much as a specimen of your veracity. I object, Secondly, that you know not what faith is. You talk about it, and about it, and labour and sweat, and at last come to a most lame and impotent conclusion.

You say, "That Christ died for me, is a point not easily settled, a point which the Scripture nowhere ascertains:" (The very thought, and nearly the words, of Cardinal Bellarmine, in his dispute with our forefathers:) "So far from it, that it affirms the final perdition of many who have great confidence of their interest in Christ;" (this only proves, that many fancy they have what they have not; which I suppose nobody will deny;) "yea, and declares, that 'wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction.'" (Page 14.) It is so; but this is nothing to the point,—the nature of true faith.

* But Palæmon ought to possess a good memory.—EDIT.

"Nature, these men say, begins the work;" (I know none of them who say so;) "and then grace helps out the efforts of nature, and persuades a man, though he be not mentioned in Scripture, either by name or surname, that Christ died for him." (Page 33.) "So the Spirit whispers something to the heart of a sinner, beside what he publicly speaks in the Scriptures. But will any lover of the Scriptures allow the possibility of this,—that the Spirit should ever speak a syllable to any man, beside what he publicly speaks there?" (Page 35.) You will presently allow something wonderfully like it. And you suppose yourself to be a "lover of the Scriptures."

"Some of the Martyrs were assured of being the friends of Christ." (Page 398.) How? Which way? Neither their name nor surname was mentioned in Scripture! Why, "the Holy Ghost assured their hearts and the hearts of the first Christians, that their joy was not the joy of the hypocrite, but the beginning of eternal life. Thus their joy was made full, and their love perfected by the highest enjoyments it was here capable of. Every believer finds a refreshment to his mind, far superior to all the comforts of this life. They stand in God's presence, and have their joy made full in beholding the light of his countenance." (Page 402.)

Allow this, and we will never dispute, whether the Spirit does or does not "whisper anything to their hearts." It is enough, that they have "the Spirit of adoption, crying in their hearts, Abba, Father;" and that this "Spirit witnesseth with their spirits that they are the children of God."

"The chief time of this agency of the Spirit is, while the Preachers are declaiming. And the people are in continual expectation of the season of power in hearing them." (Page 38.)

Yea, and reason good, if, as you affirm, "hearing is the only mean whereby God gives faith." (Page 391.) But we do not affirm so much. We only maintain, that "faith" generally "cometh by hearing."

But you go on: "They who partake of Christ's joy, receive the highest evidence that he is the Christ. Thus then faith is greatly confirmed by a kind of presence of its object. Their love is joyfully inflamed, and they obtain the assurance of hope, by having in themselves an experimental foretaste of their eternal enjoyment." (Page 415.)

Why, then, what are we disputing about, seeing you are

now so kind as to allow, not only the possibility, but the real existence, of all that we contend for?

"O, but this is not faith. Faith is quite another thing." What is it? Let us hear your account of it.

"The essence of true faith is the eternal God." (Page 288.)

"What is faith? It is the blood of Christ." (Page 330.)

Stark, staring nonsense! Sir, you can talk sense, if you please. Why should you palm upon your readers such stuff as this?

Very little better than this is your third definition: "The truth which a man believes is his faith." (Page 301.) No, it is not; no more than the light which a man sees is his sight. You must therefore guess again. "To believe this fact, Christ rose from the dead, is faith." (Page 169.) "Ask a man, Is the gospel true or not? If he holds it to be true, this is faith." (Page 296.) But is this saving faith? "Yes. Every one that believes the gospel history shall be saved." (Page 333.)

This is flat and plain. And, if it is but true, every devil in hell will be saved. For it is absolutely certain, every one of these believes this fact,—Christ rose from the dead. It is certain, every one of these believes the Gospel history. Therefore this is not saving faith: Neither will every one be saved who believes this fact,—Christ rose from the dead. It follows, that, whatever others do, you know not what faith is.

I object, Thirdly, 1. That you yourself "shut up our access to the divine righteousness." 2. That you vehemently contradict yourself, and do the very thing which you charge upon others.

1. You yourself shut up our access to the divine righteousness by destroying that repentance which Christ has made the way to it. "Ask men," you say, "have they sinned or not? If they know they have, this is conviction. And this is preparation enough for mercy." Soft casuistry indeed! He that receives this saying, is never likely either to "repent" or "believe the gospel." And if he do not, he can have no access to the righteousness of Christ.

Yet you strangely affirm, "A careless sinner is in full as hopeful a way as one that is the most deeply convicted." (Page 292.) How can this be, if that conviction be from God? Where He has begun the work, will He not finish it? Have we not reason to hope this? But in a careless sinner that work is not begun; perhaps, never will be.

Again: Whereas our Lord gives a general command, "Seek, and ye shall find;" you say, "Saving faith was never yet sought, or in the remotest manner wished for, by an unbeliever:" (Page 372 :) A proposition as contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture, as to the experience of every true believer. Every one who now believes, knows how he sought and wished for that faith, before he experienced it. It is not true even with regard to your faith, a belief of the Bible. For I know Deists at this day, who have often wished they could believe the Bible, and owned, "it was happy for them that could."

2. You vehemently contradict yourself, and do the very thing which you charge upon others.

"If we imagine we possess or desire to attain any requisite to our acceptance with God, beside or in connexion with the bare work of Christ, Christ shall profit us nothing." (Page 96.)

Again: "What is required of us in order to our acceptance with God? Nothing. The least attempt to do anything is damnably criminal."

Very good. Now for self-consistency: "What Christ has done is that which quiets the conscience of man as soon as he knows it. So that he need ask no more than, 'Is it true or not?' If he finds it true, he is happy. If he does not, he can reap no comfort from it. Our comfort arises from the persuasion of this." (Page 12.)

Again: "Men are justified by a knowledge of the righteousness of Christ." (Page 406.) And yet again:

"The sole requisite to acceptance is, divine righteousness brought to view." (Page 291.)

So you have brought matters to a fine conclusion; confuting an hundred of your own assertions, and doing the very thing for which you have been all along so unmercifully condemning others. You yourself here teach another "requisite to our acceptance, beside the bare work of Christ," viz., the knowing that work, the finding it true. Therefore, by your own word, "Christ shall profit you nothing." In one page you say, "Nothing is required in order to our acceptance with God;" in another, "Divine righteousness brought to view is requisite to our acceptance." *Brought to view!* What self-righteousness is this? Which of "the popular Preachers" could have done worse? "Men are justified by a knowledge of the righteousness of Christ." *Knowledge!* What! our own knowledge! Knowledge in us! Why, this

is the very thing which we call faith. So you have fairly given up the whole question, justified your opponents, and condemned yourself as "damnably criminal!"

I object, Fourthly, that you have no charity, and that you know not what charity is. That you know not what it is, manifestly appears from the wonderful definition you give of it. "Charity," you say, "is fellowship with God in his blessedness." (Page 453.) Muddy, confused, *ut nihil supra!** We know, he that loveth hath fellowship with God. But yet the ideas of one and of the other are widely different. We know, "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." But yet loving him is not the same thing with dwelling in him. If it were, the whole sentence would be flat tautology.

You say, 2. Charity is "the love of the truth." (Page 456.) Not at all: No more than it is the love of the sun. It is the love of God, and of man for God's sake: No more and no less.

You say, 3. "Christ is known to us only by report." That is not granted. "And charity is the love of that report." (Page 455.) Every intelligent reader will want no farther proof, that you know not what charity is.

No wonder then that you have it not; nay, that you are at the utmost distance, both from the love of God and of your neighbour. You cannot love God, because you do not love your neighbour. For he that loves God, loves his brother also. But such hatred, malevolence, rancour, bitterness, as you show to all who do not exactly fall in with your opinion, was scarce ever seen in a Jew, an Heathen, or a Popish inquisitor.

"Nay, but you abhor persecution. You would persecute no man." I should be very loath to trust you. I doubt, were it in your power, you would make more bonfires in Smithfield than Bonner and Gardiner put together. But if not, if you would not persecute with fire and faggot,

Mirum!

Ut neque calce lupus querquam, neque dente petit bos: †

What does this prove? Only that you murder in another way.

* So as nothing can exceed it.—EDIT.

† The following is Francis's translation of this quotation from Horace:—

"Wondrous indeed! that bulls ne'er strive to bite,
Nor wolves with desperate horns engage in fight."—EDIT.

You smite with the tongue ; with the poison of asps, which is under your lips.

A few specimens follow :—

“The popular Preachers worship another God.” (Page 338.)
 “It can never be allowed that Dr. Doddridge worshipped the same God with Paul.” (Page 470.) “Notice the difference betwixt the God of these Preachers, and the true God ; betwixt their Christ, and the Christ preached by the Apostles ; betwixt their spirit, and the Spirit that influenced the Apostles.” (Page 40.)

“I know no sinners more hardened, none greater destroyers of mankind, than they.” (Page 98.) “By no small energy of deceit, they darken the revelation of God, and change the doctrine of the blessed God into a doctrine of self-dependence.” Strange, that you yourself should do the very same thing ! averring, that “men are justified by a knowledge of the righteousness of Christ,” not by the bare work which Christ has wrought ! You put me in mind of an old usurer, who vehemently thanked a Minister that had preached a severe sermon against usury ; and being asked, “Why do *you* talk thus ?” replied, “I wish there were no usurer in London beside myself !” Sir, do not you wish there was no Minister in Great Britain who taught this doctrine, beside yourself ?

“That any who has learnt his religion from the New Testament, should mistake their doctrine for the Christian, is astonishing.” (Page 40.) Theirs, or yours ? for it happens to be one and the same with regard to the present point. “By many deceits they change the truth of God into a lie.” (*Ibid.*) If they do, so do you. Indeed you heavily complain of the imputation. You say, “It is both astonishing and provoking, that, after all, men will say, there is no difference between their scheme and yours.” And yet, after all, so it is : Truth is great, and will prevail. In the leading point, that of justification, both you and they teach, “Men are justified by a knowledge of the righteousness of Christ.” Only they think, it is a divine, supernatural, experimental knowledge, wrought in the inmost soul ; and you think, it is a bare historical knowledge, of the same kind with that which the devils have.

One specimen more of your unparalleled charity, which in any but yourself would be astonishing : “If any one chooses to go to hell by a devout path, let him study any one of those

four famous treatises: Mr. Guthrie's 'Trial of a Saving Interest in Christ;' Mr. Marshal's 'Gospel Mystery of Sanctification;' Mr. Boston's 'Human Nature in its Fourfold State;' or Dr. Doddridge's 'Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul.' If any profane person, who desires to be converted, enter into the spirit of those books, he thereby becomes twofold more a child of hell than he was before." (Page 436.)

Such is the doctrine, such is the spirit, of Palæmon! condemning the whole generation of God's children; sending all his opponents to hell at once; casting arrows, firebrands, death on every side! But I stop. God be merciful to thee a sinner; and show thee compassion, though thou hast none for thy fellow-servants! Otherwise it will be more tolerable, I will not say for Seneca or Epictetus, but for Nero or Domitian, in the day of judgment, than for thee!

A LETTER

TO

A GENTLEMAN AT BRISTOL.

BRISTOL, *January 6, 1758.*

SIR,

You desire my thoughts on a paper lately addressed to the inhabitants of St. Stephen's parish, and an answer thereto, entitled, "A Seasonable Antidote against Popery." I have at present little leisure, and cannot speak so fully as the importance of the subject requires. I can only just tell you wherein I do or do not agree with what is advanced in the one or the other.

I agree with the main of what is asserted in that paper, allowing for some expressions which I could wish had been altered, because some of them are a little obscure, others liable to misinterpretation; indeed, so liable, that they could