

A Short VIEW of, and INQUIRY into, the

# GLASSITE

AND NEW

1804/1877

INDEPENDENT Scheme of DOCTRINE;

In some of its leading ARTICLES.

IN TWO LETTERS.

The first, shortly, representing and maintaining said System; and the other an Answer thereto.

The Articles enquired into, are

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| I. The Nature of the Gospel.  | these, interferes with the Sovereignty and freedom of Grace, and makes our Salvation to be by Works. |
| II. The Nature of Faith.  |  |
| III. If we are only passive in Believing.   |  |
| IV. If we are entirely passive in our being interested in Christ, and enstated in the new Covenant. | VI. If means for attaining Salvation are to be used, and exhorted unto in Scripture.                 |
| V. If our being active in   |  |

By a Friend of the Ancient Protestant Doctrine.

*JUDE 3. Contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints.*

EDINBURGH:

Printed in the Year, M, DCC, LXIX.

---



---

 L E T T E R I.

*Dear Friend,*

U P O N account of our former religious acquaintance, when living together in one place, I thought it proper to acquaint you, with some alterations of religious sentiments, which now I am apt to make; hoping, that upon your acquaintance therewith, you will be of the same mind; and so our religious friendship shall be continued still.

What I may call my first and leading alteration from Calvinism is, my receiving and entertaining higher views of the sovereignty of grace through the atonement. This point of the sovereignty and freedom of grace, though formerly professed by us both; yet, I am now persuaded, was held in unrighteousness; held in such a way as overthrew it: and the following out hereof, in its full amount and necessary consequences, in opposition to contrary tenets, formerly held along herewith, is not only the chief, but almost the whole of the alteration I now pretend unto.

In order, then, hereunto, I now give up with what is called the *gospel offer*, or the *doctrine*; at least, strictly and properly speaking, of an offer of a Saviour, and life and salvation in him to sinners indefinitely: For the making of offers, hangs salvation on the conduct of the sinner in accepting or rejecting; which is quite opposite from hanging it on Divine Sovereignty. That way of offers, making salvation to be by embracing and receiving, does also suspend our comfort, upon this our own act, and makes it to be extracted therefrom. It also obscures the freedom of grace, and

makes us to be justified or saved by works: at least by the mental work of accepting and receiving an offer, or offered good; expressly contrary to the apostle, in his epistle to the Romans, who there excludes all works without limitation\*.

The nature of faith, as lying in receiving and resting on offers and promises, you see, I also give up with: being a part of that scheme of salvation, by offers and embraces. Exhortations to men, and the using thereof by graceless sinners, for attaining salvation, you see, I also set aside; for the more we are in these, the more do we frustrate, or attempt to interfere, with salvation by sovereign free grace.

Having set these aside, I then, in consequence of this first principle of sovereign free grace through the atonement, look upon the gospel as being only a declaration hereof, and testimony hereunto. If salvation from first to last, in the whole method thereof, be in this way; then what can the good news or the glad tidings

\* For ascertaining the truth of their thus setting aside the gospel offer, see letters on *Theron* and *Aspasio*, page 340. "The justice and sovereignty of God are pretty openly opposed by all our preachers of best fashion.—Their doctrine is double: in formally stating the articles of their creed, in opposition unto heretics, they seem to acknowledge these divine perfections; but in their addresses to the people they—overthrow them." And in proving that they overthrow sovereignty, he gives this as an instance from their writings, page 350. "The language of faith is, God offers a slain and crucified Saviour unto me, and I take the slain Christ for my Saviour. God hath made a grant, or deed of gift, of Christ and all his benefits, to sinners of mankind;" (*viz.* by free offers to be embraced by them) thus, by the free offer, according to him, they overthrow sovereignty, and so by him the gospel offer is set aside.

tidings of the gospel be ; but the declaration hereof, This glorious truth herein contained, *viz.* that the atonement is of value enough, and grace, on account thereof, free enough, to save the most guilty and undone sinner : This is the good news of the gospel, which is to be preached unto every creature, and which he that believeth it shall be saved, and he that believeth it not shall be damned. And though the preaching hereof be no offer of favours or privileges to be received, yet is an offer of a truth to be believed : and the belief thereof, will immediately comfort the mind, justify the person in his conscience ; and, also, produce in the heart, love to God : with every other good fruit \*.

From

---

\* See their plan of the gospel fully express'd in a pamphlet, entitled, *Simple Truth Vindicated*, page 74, 76.

“ If it be thought necessary to draw, what we have to say of the simple truth, into one point of view ; so as to be a direct answer to the question, What is the truth which brings salvation to sinners ? we have no creed but the bible, to refer to ; and the answer may stand in scripture words thus, *There is none that doth good, no not one.—Christ came to the world to save sinners.—Neither is there salvation in any other ; for there is no other name given under heaven, among men, whereby we can be saved.*” After quoting these ; with many other texts, he adds, “ The general truth,” or the gospel, the truth which bringeth salvation, which he promised to unfold, “ contained in these and such like words of scripture, is this, that the work finished by Jesus Christ, is the only requisite to the justification of the guilty, and is proved to be sufficient for this purpose, by his resurrection from the dead ; or, that by means of Christ’s work in the room and stead of sinners : and by that only, it is consistent with all the perfections of God, for him to bestow, with the utmost freedom, and in the most sovereign manner, all the  
“ blessings

From this view of the gospel, I next look upon saving faith, as now hinted, to be just the knowlege and belief of said gospel : Such a real belief hereof as hath a commanding influence on heart and life. As I look upon the gospel to have no other offer in it, than an offer of the truth ; so, I look upon faith as having no other receiving in it, than a receiving of the truth : by believing it. The word *faith*, you know, both in its most strict and common acceptation, signifies the *belief* of truth ; and as our Bible affixeth no positive meaning thereto, so it leaves us to its common acceptation \*.

In the next place, keeping salvation wholly by grace, in opposition to any works or performances of receivings, or of whatever, still in eye ; I look upon this faith as being wholly the effects of this grace, without having in it any of our activity ; a thing in which we are only passive : the evidence of truth shining in upon the mind, and causing assent, without any of our activity \*.

And,

---

“ blessings of salvation upon any, even the guiltiest of  
 “ mankind, without distinction of nation or character.  
 “ This truth becomes effectual to give hope, and peace,  
 “ and joy ; when it is made known to the soul by the  
 “ Spirit of God through the gospel.”

As the above is given us, as the amount, or general truth contained in these texts, which is an answer to that question, “What is that truth which bringeth salvation ?” So we hereby see, in so many words, what is their gospel : that it is only a making known that the work of Christ is the only requisite unto justification ; and that, on account of said work, salvation is free for God to give it to whom, and in what manner he will ; but has not a word of its being free, in respect of offer, for sinners to receive, *That whosoever will may take of the water of life freely.*

\* See also for this the same performance, p. 54. “But  
 “ is justifying faith no more than the divine testimony,  
 “ passively received? No.”

And, last of all, I look upon our being justified and saved, which is brought about this way, to be a thing in which we are only passive; in opposition to our using any activity for it; either in receiving offers, or any way whatever\*. This I look upon as the native consequences of the foregoing: for since salvation be by sovereign grace, in opposition to any of our works, means, or whatever; and since the gospel is only the declaration hereof, without any offers to be embraced, in order to the blessings being enjoyed; and since the faith or belief of this gospel, by which we are justified and saved, is a thing in which we are wholly passive; then, in like manner, so must our being justified and saved be. If we are only passive in the mean, so, likewise, in the end attained thereby. This, as it is the native consequence of the rest, so it is the crowning upshot of the whole; as being, a making God to be all in all, in our salvation; and ourselves to be perfect nothing in the matter.

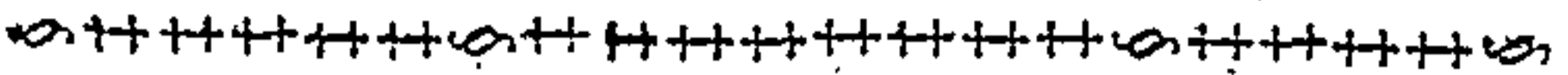
But, for brevity's sake, I shall now break off; leaving you to compare what I have said with the scriptures; hoping, that by so doing, you will see they speak the same things: and as for any texts you may think runs contrary, I must refer you to what is written on this subject already, by others, in its defence. And begging your judgment on the subject, as soon as convenient, I am, respectfully,

Your's, &c.

A. B.

L E T-

\* See for this, page 26th of same pamphlet: "The scriptures no where—exhort to any duty, as the mean of obtaining a saving interest in Christ." And again, page 33: "But are not exhortations, expressing great activity and labour, addressed to unbelievers: Such as, *Strive to enter in at the strait gate; fly for refuge; labour for the bread that endureth unto everlasting life*:—are not these addresses to unbelievers, and expressive of diligence to obtain a saving interest in Christ? No."



## L E T T E R II.

*Dear Friend,*

**Y**OUR's of the 3d last month I received; and for your concern about my welfare, in laying before me your new sentiments, I am your obliged. I have not only read your letter with care, but also all the writings upon your system of doctrine I could find; and has, likewise, conversed at large, with the maintainers thereof, in this place, upon the subject. However, after acquainting myself with your system, and comparing the same with the scripture, in (I hope) the most dispassionate manner, (in the faith of one to judge after me, whose knowlege is perfect, his judgment always according to truth; and whose determination shall stand) I find myself obliged to adhere to my former principles, and dissent from your new ones.

The chief and leading peculiarities of your system, I think, seems to ly in the following: *First*, In making the gospel to be only a declaration of the sovereignty and freedom of grace, through the atonement; for saving the most ruined and undone: A declaration of this, I say, without any offer of said atonement, and grace, to be embraced, as the way of being enjoyed. *2dly*, In making saving faith to ly in the knowlege and belief of said gospel. *3dly*, In making the sinner to be only passive, in this belief. *4thly*, In making us to be only passive in our being justified and saved, by being brought into a state of grace and salvation. *5thly*, and *lastly*, In objecting against, and dissenting from, the opposite doctrine of an offer—the view of faith as a receiving and resting thereon; and exhortations to sinners thus to believe;

believe; or even to use any means for attaining salvation whatever.

From this view of your peculiarities, I think, the general state of our difference land in this; Whether God, in bringing sinners into a state of favour and salvation, acteth only as an absolute sovereign, towards, or upon, them, as only mere passives, or passive matter; without requiring or causing them use any activity, in any mean whatever, thereanent? Or if, on the other hand, he, in a way of condescension, acteth toward them as rational creatures, by making rational offers thereof; and causing them, in a suitableness to their rational faculties, to accept, as the way of attainment? And to this short and general state of the question, take this short and general answer: That both Arminians, and those on your side of the question, go to the two opposite extremes: They seeing that the Bible every where holds out salvation to man by way of, offers; requiring their compliance with the tenor of the exhibition, as the way of enjoyment; do, therefore, refuse God's dealing in the matter of salvation sovereignly: as being contrary thereunto. And those again of your opinion, seeing that the scripture every where holds out God's dealing sovereignly, having mercy on whom he will; do, therefore, set aside, as inconsistent herewith, his dealing rationally, by way of offer. And as they go to opposite extremes, so truth lies betwixt the two: God dealing in the matter of salvation sovereignly, and yet thus rationally, at the same time. "All that the Father hath given me, shall come unto me;" this is his dealing sovereignly: "and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out:" This, again, at the same time, is his dealing rationally, by way of offer. "All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." Here is his dealing sovereignly; but it is added, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." This, again, is his dealing,



by way of offer, rationally. In short, when it is said, “ I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy,” this is dealing sovereignly ; and when it is said, “ Whosoever will let him take of the waters of life freely,” this is dealing, by way of offer, rationally. And what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.

But, I shall now, for a more particular answer, consider your peculiarities separately by themselves, as I have already arranged them.

I begin, then, with the first of these, *viz.* your making the gospel to be only a declaration of the sovereignty and freedom of grace through the atonement \* ; and applying the declaration, that “ he that believeth shall be saved,” to the belief of this point. And here, for clearness sake, my first observation shall be upon the propriety of your expressions : and it is this, That I think these are not so decisive and determinate concerning your system as they ought. As to your gospel proposition, or free grace truth, (as these your principles call it) *viz.* that, by means of the atonement, grace is sovereign and free, for the most ruined and undone ; one would think, that a proclamation of this, before the sons of men, were, upon the matter, an offer of said blessings unto them ; so that by embracing they should enjoy. But you hereby only mean, that grace is sovereign and free, in respect of actual conferment, for God to give it to whom, and in what manner, he will ; but not, that it is free, in respect of offer, for sinners to receive, that “ whosoever will may take of the water of life freely.”

And as to your other expression, namely, “ That he who believeth (*viz.* the truth of said proposition) shall be saved ;” this also, one would think, amounteth to an

an

---

\* This point they also set forth by many other expressions : such as, “ That in Christ God is well pleased.---  
“ That there is forgiveness with God.---That the atonement is of sufficient value, &c.” besides some others now to be noticed.

an offer of salvation, upon condition of our crediting or believing the truth of said proposition ; but as you make us to be only passive in believing, so all you mean hereby is, that he in whom the belief of this is passively wrought, shall be saved ; which is quite another thing. The amount then of your gospel proclamation, is only, that it is free for God, on account of the atonement, in the most sovereign manner, to save sinners ; and that the man whose eyes he opens, and passively maketh to see this truth, shall be saved ; while others shall not \*.

I would now add to this observation, that though the above manner of representation be with these of your sentiments the most common, yet I find other representations, also used, that are still more dark and indeterminate. In the pamphlet wrote in defence of your plan, entitled, *Free Grace indeed*, page 29. it is described thus, “ Jesus Christ, in all his grace and fulness, is declared in the gospel for this very purpose, to appear as the only, the immediate, and the sure foundation of a lost sinner’s hope, as such.” This, says the author, is the central truth. And again, says he, page 30. “ This central doctrine is what is more emphatically called the truth, or the gospel.” But the author is here, I think, not only dark, but contradictory ; for while this his central truth or gospel runs, “ Jesus Christ is declared in the gospel *for this very purpose*, to appear as the—foundation of—Hope, &c.” It carries its evidence in its bosom, that it is only a declaration of what he takes to be the *end and purpose* of the gospel, and so not the gospel *itself*. “ Jesus Christ (says he) is declared in the gospel for this purpose, &c.” Plainly intimating, that this itself is not the gospel declaration concerning him ; but is only a telling us, that he is declared there, for a certain end and purpose : but what the go-  
spel

---

\* This is not only the necessary, but the acknowledged amount of their gospel. See the marginal note hereafter, at the first letter.

spel declaration is, which is to answer that end and purpose, is not here told. And to give out that to be the gospel, which is, confessedly, only a declaration of the end and design of the gospel, seems to me, not so very consistent.

There is, likewise, one other manner of misrepresentation, which I would also notice, which these on your way do sometimes use on this point ; and which, I think, still as little to the purpose as any of the rest : It is that of a benefit, or privilege, being free among men \* ; though that of a real offer, in any shape whatever, they condemn in the popular doctrine (as they call it) : yet in this they represent their own doctrine, which, indeed, has in it no offer, in that very manner which, in others, they condemn. A benefit it is being free among men, means neither more nor less, than that it is free for them to take the privilege of it, and in this way enjoy it : but how salvation its being free for God to give it, and free, in respect of actual conferment, unto these upon whom it was bestowed, which is the amount of your gospel ; yea, the amount of all that a passive interestment in the covenant of grace will admit of ; now, I say, this can be represented by a benefit its being free among men, I cannot conceive : for they are evidently different. However, as this manner of representation is used by these of your principles so seldom, I am apt to think, it is not thought very proper by themselves.

Before I leave this observation about the propriety of your expressions, I cannot help making this one remark ; That by holding forth the gospel under the representation of a declaration, in general, of the sovereignty and freedom of grace through the atonement ; and even, sometimes, by that of a benefit, its being free among men : and then, afterwards, explaining these into your own system ; by this, I say, you, however, gain a certain purpose : you by this means speak in a more scriptural style, than otherwise you would ; and so it suits your  
high

---

\* See the already quoted pamphlet, page 84.

high pretensions of strict adherence to the scriptures. And the retaining of the scripture sound, is, no doubt, calculated to make both yourselves and others believe that you also retain their sense : however unnatural the ideas you fix unto them, be.

*Secondly*, Concerning this your gospel, in making it to be a declaration of the sovereignty and freedom of grace, through the atonement, intending no more thereby, than that it is sovereign and free for God to give it to whom, and in what manner he will ;—I observe, That it is a gospel, or a declaration, which cannot give any thorough relief to the distressed mind ; nor is it a sufficient ground for sinners, as such, to take hold of, and trust to, for salvation.—Absolute, or mere sovereignty, without making any condescension, by promise, offer, or otherwise, doth still leave as much ground for despair, as give ground for hope ; for though it be free for it to give, it is as free for it to withhold. To trust, then, unto absolute sovereignty, in this light, is to trust without a proper foundation. To trust thus to absolute sovereignty, is to trust to absolute uncertainty. This gospel, then, is only calculated to beget an equal measure of hope and despair, fear and joy ; and so, upon the whole, to cast the mind into a state of absolute suspense \*. But, according

---

\* Even these on your own system, though constantly asserting that this gospel, when believed, does immediately comfort the mind ; yet, when brought to the question, How does it so ? do for answer, instead of shewing hereof, tell us, “ That this is a truth which no man  
“ can effectually teach his neighbour ; but that it is well  
“ understood among them that believe.—That this will  
“ be the continual objection against the gospel.—That our  
“ assurance is to be attained, or our calling and election  
“ made sure, only by our obedience, or the marks and e-  
“ vidences of grace, &c.” (see *Epistolary Correspondence*,  
page 37.) all which, instead of answering, is only an e-  
vading of the question ; even the last mentioned article,  
about

ording unto scripture, the gospel is “ glad tidings of great joy ;—a ground of sure hope :—and in believing, filling the heart with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” And if you say that the promise connected herewith, gives the comfort ; viz. that he that believeth said gospel, shall be saved ; then you hereby give up with your former tenet, that it is your gospel, itself, that gives the comfort ; and makes the comfort to arise from the promise made to them who believe it : and so your comfort, when traced to its fountain, must arise from your own inward experience of having believed.

I might also observe, as another particular, That this gospel of your’s cannot be a principle of holiness and new obedience. “ We love him (says the scriptures) because he first loved us ;” but according to your gospel, we behoved to love him, only, because it is free for him to love us ; though still as free for him to forbear. “ Every one (says the scripture) that hath this hope in him, (viz. of seeing God as he is, and so of being like him) purifieth himself even as he is pure.” But according to your gospel, every one who is brought into an entire suspense about his state, must thus purify himself. In short, according to scripture, holiness is urged from a consideration of privileges, and so made to flow from a belief of them ; but by your gospel, it must flow from an entire suspense about them. But on this I shall not insist.

*Thirdly,*

---

about assurance, not excepted : for the question is not, if the gospel, when believed, gives immediate ground of sensible assurance ; a person’s actually and sensibly knowing that he shall be saved. But if it is a declaration calculate for sinners, as such, to take hold of, and trust to, for salvation ; to give, therefore, such an answer hereunto, is little less than a giving up the point ;—owning, that the ground of hope and trust, given in their gospel, is but very imperfect ; and making the chief grounds of these to be the evidences of actual interest.

*Thirdly*, Let me further observe here, that Divine Sovereignty, with which (when viewed simply in itself) it is free to give or withhold at pleasure, in the depths of divine condescension, hath, in the gospel, made, or come under, a free promise, or offer, of salvation, to sinners indefinitely, in and through the Saviour. This I shall endeavour to illustrate and confirm, in the following manner :

The declarations of grace, which you explain into its being free for God to give, and free in its actual conferment, are in scripture resolved into, or connected with, this of an offer. See Proverbs, ix. chapter ; where it is said, that “ Wisdom hath builded her house—hewn  
“ out her seven pillars—killed her beasts—mingled her  
“ wine, and furnished her table.” Is this resolved into a declaration, that it is free for God to give ; or that it is freely conferred, where it is conferred ? No ; for it is added with the same breath, “ who so is simple, let  
“ him turn in hither—Come eat of my bread, and drink  
“ of the wine which I have mingled.” Plainly resolving the declaration, or revelation, of salvation, into an offer thereof, or connecting it therewith. See also Zech. ix. chap. “ As for thee also, by the blood of thy cove-  
“ nant, will I deliver thy prisoners out of the pit where-  
“ in is no water.” This general declaration of grace is also connected with, or resolved into an offer, in the words which immediately follow them, “ Turn ye to  
“ your strong holds, (*viz.* the blood of the covenant) ye  
“ prisoners of hope, &c.” And, in short, the many general invitations, to come to the waters, and take of the waters of life freely, do all explain, the many declarations of the sovereignty and freedom of grace, into an offer thereof. And the gospel, instead of being held out only as a testimony unto God’s sovereignty, and free right to give or withhold at pleasure, is expressly held out as a promise or offer. “ Seeing then, (says the apostle) that  
“ a promise is left us, of entering into his rest, let us  
“ beware, lest any of us should seem to come short of  
“ it ;

“ it ; for unto us was the gospel preached, as well as  
 “ unto them.”

I shall only add further, in confirmation of this point, a few texts of scripture. In the Proverbs, viii. chap. 4th verse, it is said, “ To you, O men, I call, &c.” But if the gospel was not an offer of privileges to be embraced, but only a holding out of truth to be believed, it would only have been, Before, or unto you, O men, I testify. In Isaiah, lv. chapter, when a revelation of salvation is made, under the notion of waters, wine, and milk, &c. it is with a *ho*, to every one that thirsteth, to come to the same, and buy without money or price ; or, in other words, take and enjoy the same.—That this address is not made to believers, as those on your plan would alledge, seems evident : 1<sup>st</sup>, Because the persons addressed, are described to be, every one that thirsteth ; but thirst after happiness, is common to all. 2<sup>dly</sup>, After being invited to come to the waters, they are expostulated with, saying, “ Wherefore do ye spend your money  
 “ for that which is not bread ? &c.” And as their thirst must be after that for which they are spending their money, so it cannot be the gracious thirst of a believer : and however much a spending the money and labour for, and thirsting after, things which are not bread, and cannot satisfy, be the case, even with believers ; yet this is not their proper character. And further, when the address is renewed, verse 7th, they are described as wicked and unrighteous ; “ Let the wicked forsake his way,  
 “ and the unrighteous man his thoughts : and let him  
 “ return unto the Lord, for he will have mercy upon  
 “ him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” This character is not applicable, or ever applied to believers. And what further confirms this view is, that they are directed and exhorted unto this method ; as the way of attaining the salvation there revealed ; “ Come  
 “ ye to the waters ;” *viz.* to enjoy, “ hear and your  
 “ souls shall live ; and I will make with you an everlast-  
 “ ing covenant, &c.” but believers have attained these already. And in the evangelists, how often does our  
 Saviour

Saviour speak to this purpose, "Come unto me, all ye  
 " that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you  
 " rest.—if any man thirst, let him come unto me and  
 " drink.—Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise  
 " cast out.—Ye will not come unto me that ye may  
 " have life," &c. &c. &c.

Now, that these exhortations, or invitations, are not restricted to believers possessed of a gracious thirst or labour, or the like; as these on your way allege, (at least of some of them) seems evident: *First*, Because our Saviour in making them, does not so limit them; but in the most express manner says, "All ye that labour, come unto me, and I will give you rest." And to the most promiscuous multitude, says, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.—And him that cometh (be his case, his thirst and labour, what it will) I will in no wise cast out."

Moreover, when they are invited to come unto him, it plainly supposeth present distance; and to come for rest, for drink, &c. doth, likewise, suppose the want of them at present: but neither of these is the case with those who already believe. And to say that the coming exhorted unto, is only to believe the truth, because coming and believing are spoke of as equivalent expressions; this seems still as absurd: for though coming and believing be used synonymously, yet it is not the mere belief of what he said, that is the faith there spoken of; for that had in it no resemblance unto coming, (whatever it might produce) and so could not be used synonymously therewith. This, therefore, only proves that it is the believing on him for salvation, as exhibiting himself in his word, that can be meant: for it is this believing, only, which hath in it a coming unto him.—As believing on an offer and promise, for enjoyment of the privilege thereby held out, is only in a way of embracing, or receiving, said offer; so the believing for the same, on the maker of said offer and promise, can only be in a way of coming unto him: therefore, to represent this faith by a coming, or a coming by this faith, hath in it abundance  
 C of



of propriety. And since this must be the meaning, it makes nothing against the way of the gospel-offer; but is a proof of the same; for it supposeth, that he is, by offering himself, laying a foundation for such exercise.-- But that our Saviour is, in these places, holding himself out, not simply as a testifier of facts to be believed; but as a Saviour, having salvation;—to be come unto, and relied upon, for the same, seems self-evident.

The apostle Paul, to the same purpose, represents the gospel, under the notion or similitude of a treaty of peace, between different kingdoms: “And (says he) hath  
 “ committed unto us the ministry of reconciliation; *viz.*  
 “ that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto him-  
 “ self, not imputing unto us our trespasses.-- We then  
 “ are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech  
 “ you by us: we pray you, in Christ’s stead, be ye re-  
 “ conciled unto God.” Here you see the gospel is re-  
 presented as a treaty of peace, or reconciliation, between these at variance: God, on the one hand, declaring his being reconciled, not imputing unto us our trespasses; and, on the other hand, beseeching us, by his ambassadors \*, to be reconciled also: which plainly implies an offer of reconciliation. He also represents it as a promise, as already noticed, and makes them convertible, or synonymous, terms: “Seeing, then, that a promise is left  
 “ us of entering into his rest, let us beware lest any of us  
 “ should seem to come short of it, for unto us was the  
 “ gospel

---

\* Because these of your persuasion, limit the title, or office, of ambassadorship unto the apostles, or apostolic office; I, therefore, beg leave to remark, that the apostle here builds it upon another footing, *viz.* upon having the ministry of reconciliation committed to them: “And hath committed unto us the ministry of reconciliation, we then are ambassadors;” saith he. And this ministry was not committed to the apostles alone; we find it also committed to others: “O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust; the same commit thou to faithful men, &c.”

“gospel preached, (or promise made) as well as unto  
 “them.” And in many other places, to the same pur-  
 pose. And what is the difference between a promise and  
 an offer? are they not all one and the same deed, mak-  
 ing over privileges to be actually conferred in a continu-  
 ed way; and termed an offer, on account of the time  
 present, and termed a promise as respecting the time fu-  
 ture?

I might also have told you of Christ, and salvation in  
 him; their being held out, in the gospel, under the simi-  
 litude of—manna, to be gathered;—a city of refuge, to  
 be fled unto;—a feast prepared for all people, &c. &c.;  
 but shall break off by observing, that as the Bible pur-  
 posely abounds with the revelation of an atonement;  
 and grace and redemption thereby; so it, likewise, a-  
 bounds with universal invitations and calls to mankind,  
 to come and take, and in this way enjoy: And is, as it  
 were, shut up with, “The Spirit and the Bride saith,  
 “Come: And whosoever will let him take the water of  
 “life freely.”

Upon the whole, may I not appeal to every unpreju-  
 diced person, if the already quoted, and the like, ex-  
 pressions, do not hold out salvation to be free, even as be-  
 nefits are free, among men: free not only for God to give,  
 or free, in respect of actual conferment, unto those upon  
 whom it is conferred; but also free, in respect of offer,  
 for any to come, take and enjoy: If they do not inti-  
 mate, that though any man’s coming flows from the be-  
 lief of the truth, and be owing to sovereign grace, the  
 Father’s drawing; yet, that it is by coming they are to  
 enjoy. In short, do they not intimate, that salvation is  
 conferred upon us, not as mere passives, in a passive  
 way; but by making a rational exhibition and offer of  
 the same; and causing us, as rational creatures, to come,  
 that we may have this life. “Ye will not come unto  
 “me, that ye may have life.—Whosoever will let him  
 “take of the waters of life freely.” As soon, I am  
 persuaded, will the Socinians be able to overthrow the  
 doctrine of an atonement, notwithstanding its full repre-  
 sentation

sentation in scripture, as these on your system of principles will be able to overthrow the gospel offer ; for no point is in scripture more clear.

I come now, to your view of the nature of faith : And, I own, that the faith you are for, corresponds with what you make to be the gospel ; for if the gospel were only a testimony to be believed, then faith, in a correspondency therewith, were only the knowlege and belief of the same. But, if the gospel has in it an exhibition of blessings, by way of offer and promise, to be embraced and rested on (as, I hope, is sufficiently evident) ; then, that faith, as corresponding herewith, is a receiving and resting accordingly, I hope, will appear from the following observations :

*1<sup>st</sup>*, From the nature of things. Did the heads of some rich family, who wanted heirs of their own body, make free offer and promise, to the son of some poor friend, of adopting him as their son, and of making him heir of their possessions ; would not this, according to the evidence of their fidelity, give him ground to believe, that they actually would give, and that he should enjoy these things ? and would not this faith, though it be only a belief, in the strictest sense, include in it an embracing, or receiving, of said offer and promise ? and is not its amount, then, a receiving and resting on the same ?— Or, should a rich man make offer and promise of himself, to some poor woman, to be her husband ; along with himself, making offer and promise of all he had, to be forever hers ; would not this, according to his fidelity, give her ground to believe, that he would do accordingly ? And though her belief of this include in it, an embracing of his offer ; yet, is it not really believing ? and so really of the nature of faith ? And is not an embracing and resting, its precise amount, and so its proper definition ?

And is this the case, with offers and promises, among men, and shall it not be so with the free offer and promise of the gospel ? Do mens offers and promises, according to the evidence of their fidelity, give ground to believe

believe their accomplishment ; and shall not God's do so too ? Does the faith or belief of the accomplishment of mens offers and promises, to us, include a receiving or embracing of them, and yet be of the nature of faith notwithstanding ; and shall not the same be the case with the offers and promises of the gospel ? And does this faith of an offer and promise among men, amount just unto a receiving and resting upon the same ; and shall the nature of the thing alter, when applied to the offer and promise of the gospel.

In short, since the faith of an offer and promise, made unto us, consists, not only in the belief of the truth thereof ; but also in a belief of its accomplishment ; and since this includes an embracing of it ; and so amounts just to a receiving and resting thereon ; then, that faith is a receiving and resting on the free offer and promise of the gospel, and on a God in Christ, as therein held out, is thus evident in the very nature of the thing.—But,

*2dly*, This will be further evident, by comparing it with what all, even yourself, do own to be faith, *viz.* the knowlege of, and assent unto, a testimony. Is it said, that the assent unto a testimony, in a way of knowing it, is faith or believing, in the most strict or literal sense ; for what is assent but belief ? even so, resting on an offer, in a way of embracing it, is believing, in the same manner ; for what is this resting, but a believing upon said offer and promise, for enjoyment of the offered good ?

Is it again said, that this receiving and resting on a promise and offer, has in it *more* than a believing, even a receiving, as the way in which the believing takes place ; and that as the word *faith* can signify no more, so the nature of faith can contain no more than what is strictly a belief ? To this it may be said, that the faith of a testimony also, hath more in it than what is strictly believing ; even the uptaking and knowlege of the truth to be believed, as well as the believing, itself ; and the knowlege or uptaking is one thing, and the assent or belief is another ; so that, in this respect, they are equal.

But,

But, that the taking of the word, in somewhat of a large sense, is no objection, in either case, is evident from this, that neither in scripture nor common language, are words restricted to their most strict and restricted meaning. For instance, when it is said, "That whosoever believeth on him may not perish, but have eternal life;" if we are here to limit the *believing*, strictly to the *belief of truth*, even excluding the knowlege thereof; or to the belief that we shall enjoy an offered and promised good, even excluding the embracing thereof; then, at the same rate, we may limit the *life*, connected therewith, to simple *existence*; and the *perishing* delivered from, to *annihilation*: and so the text would run, "That whosoever believeth the truth of what is declared, shall not be annihilated, but have everlasting existence."

But is it again alleged, that receiving and resting on a promise, is only the fruit of faith, believing the truth? It may as well be said, on the other hand, that the belief of the truth, included in the knowlege thereof, is only an antecedent going before faith; believing on said truth for salvation, as therein held forth; so that from this there is no objection, why the one is not faith, more than the other: nor is there any absurdity, in looking upon the matter, as a going from faith to faith, from a faith's uptaking of, and assent unto, divine things, in the divine testimony, unto faith's embracing and resting on the divine offers and promises, contained in said testimony, for enjoyment.

Is it again said, that this way of faith, respecting a promise, makes the resting or believing thereon for salvation, to be built, not simply upon its truth, but upon our receiving, even upon our act thereof? With equal propriety may it be said, that in the faith of the divine testimony, the belief of the truth thereof, is not built upon the evidence of its being true; but upon our knowlege thereof: even upon our act of knowlege. But the truth is, that in neither case does this observation hold; for our belief of a testimony is not built upon our act of knowlege thereof, but upon the evidence of its being true

true, in a way of knowing it. And equally so, in the faith of a free promise ; our resting and believing on it, for enjoyment of its benefits, is not built upon our act of embracing ; but upon the offer and promise itself, in a way of embracing it.

Again, should it be said, that in this faith of an offer and promise, a person must first know, that he hath embraced it, before he can warrantably rest thereon ; and as it is not every real christian, that hath the sensible knowlege hereof ; so this faith of an offer and promise, cannot be saving faith : without which none can be saved. With equal propriety, on the other hand, might it be said, that in the faith of a testimony, a person must first know that he hath the knowlege of said testimony, before he may believe it is truth : and as it is not every one whose eyes are opened, and so are real Christians, that hath this knowlege, that they thus do know ; so the belief of the truth, which is consequential hereof, is not essential to saving faith. But in neither case will this remark hold. For in the case of a testimony, one cannot, when seeing and knowing it to be true, withhold an immediate assent, without ever enquiring any thing about their act of knowlege. And equally so, in the case of an offer and promise : when the person sees it to be every way suitable ; and so, accordingly, embraceth ; he cannot but rest upon it immediately, according as he looks upon it to be faithful : even without waiting any enquiry about his act of receiving. As in the case of the testimony, there is as much consciousness of knowlege in the very act thereof, as is necessary to assent ; so in the case of an offer, there is as much consciousness of receiving, in the very act thereof, as is necessary to resting thereon. And still in both cases, sensible knowlege may be wanting ; and the necessity of trying the knowlege and assent together ; and the receiving and resting together, is not superceded.

Should it again be said, that in the case of a testimony, the belief of it includes, or supposeth, the knowlege of it ; and the knowlege of it includes, or cannot be without

out

out the belief of it; and so are rather to be viewed as one, than as different things. Even so in the case of a promise, the resting on it includes, or supposeth, a receiving: and receiving as true and faithful (otherwise it is not a receiving at all) includes, or cannot be without a resting or believing on it, for its out-making; and so are to be viewed as one, no less. But still in both cases, tho' they be acted complexly, and are inseparable, yet are really distinguishable, or distinct things.

Should it again be said, that a promise must be known and believed as well as any other testimony, and as well as embraced and rested on. Even so in the case of a testimony, when containing a promise, there must be not only a knowing and believing it is truth; but, also, a believing on it for the enjoyment of the promised bliss: which, as already observed, is only in a way of embracing. But the whole of this, as noticed formerly, is only a going from faith to faith.

Upon the whole, since the receiving and resting on a promise, has in it a belief, in the most strict and literal sense; as well as what the knowlege of, and assent unto, a testimony hath; and since the knowlege of, and assent unto a testimony, has in it more than strictly a belief, and is faith, not in the strictest, but in a common sense; as well as the receiving and resting on a promise; and since the knowlege and belief of a testimony, is cloathed with no circumstances which makes it faith or belief, in any more proper sense, than the receiving and resting, or believing, on a promise; then, may we not conclude, that faith is the receiving and resting on a promise, as well as the knowlege and belief of a testimony: and that there is as much propriety, in giving the name of faith unto this acting toward a promise, as unto that acting toward a testimony. And the reason why, in common language, the word *faith* is ofteneft used, respecting the knowlege and belief of a testimony, is, because that testimonies are more frequent than free promises and offers.

But, for further confirmation of this point, you may observe next, that as this embracing and resting on the  
gospel-

gospel offer and promise, is faith, in the nature of things, and common language; and is so, as much as the knowledge and belief of a testimony; so, likewise, the scriptures speak of it accordingly: of which I shall give you a few instances, of many that might be adduced. In 2 Chron. xx. chap. 14 to 20 verse, it is said by a prophet, "Thus saith the Lord, be not afraid, or dismayed, by reason of this great multitude: for the battle is not yours, but God's. To-morrow go ye down against them.—Ye shall not need to fight in this battle.—And, as they went forth, Jehoshaphat stood and said, Hear me, O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, Believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper." Here, you see, that the prophet is to be understood and believed, as a testifier of truth, in a suitability to the faith of a testimony: for unless they did this, how could they be excited by his words. But is this believing of the prophet sufficient; and so all that is required? No: They are, also, in a suitability to God's promise, contained in his words, to believe in the Lord their God. "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall you be established;" and in order hereunto, "believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper." Thus, does it not seem evident, that the believing in the Lord, here enjoined, is the fruit of believing the prophet in what he had said; in a suitability to the faith of a testimony; and lies in a believing, or a receiving and resting for deliverance, on God's promise, held out in the prophet's words.—And says the psalmist, "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord, in the land of the living." His believing of this, behoved to respect some promise or exhibition of grace, giving ground for it. And wherein does his faith, respecting that exhibition of grace, ly? is it only in knowing and believing it is truth? No: It lies also in believing, or resting and staying on it, for its accomplishment, to himself. "I had fainted, (says he) unless



“ I had done *this*, viz. believed to see the accomplish-  
 “ ment,—the goodness of the Lord, in the land of the  
 “ living.” And, indeed, it is only in so far, as the accom-  
 plishment of an exhibition of blessings is believed, with  
 application to one’s self, that it can comfort one concern-  
 ing himself. And this belief, with application to one’s  
 self, hath in it, an embracement of, and resting on, said  
 exhibition. And the apostle Paul, (Heb. xi.) while in  
 a suitableness to the knowlege and belief of a testimony,  
 he calls faith “ the evidence of things not seen;” so,  
 likewise, in a suitableness to this of receiving and rest-  
 ing upon a promise, he calls it “ the substance of things  
 “ hoped for :” for it is only the embracing and staying  
 of the mind upon the promise for accomplishment, which  
 is to the soul the substance of the promised, and in this  
 way, hoped for, blessings. And in the whole of that  
 chapter, it is easy to see, that the faith of the Old Te-  
 stament saints, there spoke of, when it respects a pro-  
 mise, has in it a resting and trusting thereon.

And how oft does the scripture speak of faith, and  
 this receiving and resting, as synonymous, or convertible,  
 terms : “ They believed not in God, nor trusted in his  
 “ salvation.—Wilt thou trust him, (*viz.* the unicorn)  
 “ because his strength is great?—Wilt thou believe that  
 “ he will carry home thy seed?—In whom also ye trust-  
 “ ed, when ye heard the truth of the gospel.—In whom,  
 “ also, when ye believed, (or trusted) ye were sealed,  
 “ &c.—I know in whom I have believed; and am per-  
 “ suaded, that he is able to keep that which I have  
 “ committed to his trust, (or believed on him for) a-  
 “ gainst that day.”

And how often does our Saviour speak unto the same  
 purpose : “ He that cometh unto me shall never hunger.  
 “ —He that believeth on me shall never thirst.—If any  
 “ man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.—He  
 “ that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow foun-  
 “ tains of living waters,” &c. &c. Thus you see they  
 are made one. But that it is not the simple belief of  
 truth.

truth, and this coming and trusting, that are made one, is evident, as already noticed ; because they have neither sameness nor likeness to one another, in their own nature : and, therefore, cannot be represented by one another. It is only the receiving and resting on an offer and promise, or on its maker, as therein held forth, that hath in it—a coming—a trusting, or the like : and, therefore, it is only this which can be the faith which is represented thereby ; or is made a representation thereof.

But that our Saviour, when treating of coming unto him, is not exhibiting himself simply as a witness to truth, to be believed ; but as a Saviour, having salvation to be conferred, is self-evident. And that the coming invited unto, is not simply the belief of what he said as a witness, or testifier ; but an actual mental coming unto him, as a Saviour, for his salvation, seems evident no less : and might be illustrated by such observations as these.—The coming he makes one with faith, is, the fruit of the knowlege, and belief of the truth ; and so not itself.—“ Every one that hath heard and learned of “ the Father, cometh unto me.” It is also the fruit of drawing power :—“ No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him.” But the belief of the truth, is only the fruit of illumination. It is excited unto by such motives as these : “ He that cometh shall never hunger.—He that believeth shall never thirst,” &c. But these are not calculate to produce the assent of the understanding, but the coming of the will. All which hold out, that the faith which is one with coming and trusting, is not the knowlege and belief of the truth of the gospel ; but the receiving and resting thereon, or its author, for salvation, as therein exhibited.

When the Jews enquired at Christ what sign he shew them, that they might believe on him ; whether they understood faith in your light or not, I shall not positively say ; but rather thinks, they enquired for the evidence

dence of his being the Messiah, and glorious deliverer they expected; not simply that they might believe he was so; but, also, that they might believe, or receive and rest on him, as such, for deliverance: but be this as it will, the apostle Peter seems to understand Christ as he speaks: and hence, in the issue of his invitations and exhortations says, “To whom, Lord, shall we go  
 “but unto thee? for thou only hast the words of eter-  
 “nal life. And we believe, and are sure, that thou art  
 “the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Concerning this view of faith, I may now, in the next place, add, That the thing, in scripture representation, by which we are saved and justified, or interested in the blessings of the gospel, is there made a fruit of the belief of the truth; and to consist in a receiving and resting on the free offer and promises, or on Christ, in the same held forth: so that if we be justified by faith, and saved by faith, then this must be it.

For proof and illustration of this, I shall only refer you to a few texts of scripture.—In Galatians it is said, “Knowing, brethren, that a man is not justified by the  
 “works of the law, but by the faith of Christ, even we  
 “have believed in Christ; that we might be justified by  
 “the faith of Christ, and not by the deeds of the law.” Here, we see, that the knowledge (which includes belief) of the gospel, and gospel-plan of salvation, goes before justifying faith.—“Knowing, (says he) even we have  
 “believed.”

Again, when it is said, “Turn ye to your strong holds,  
 “ye prisoners of hope.—Him that cometh unto me, I  
 “will in no wise cast out.—Whosoever will, let him  
 “take of the waters of life freely,” &c. These do all plainly suppose a belief of the truth, going before compliance with the invitation contained therein: for who will comply with an invitation he does not believe. And they also plainly hold out, that it is not by that belief, but by complying with the invitation believed, that we are to be possessed of the invited unto salvation: therefore, as  
 already

already noticed, if we are saved by faith, this must be it ; this must be the faith by which we are saved. And when it is said, that “ by his knowlege shall my righteous servants justify many,” or the like, these do not interfere herewith ; for so we are justified by knowlege, in a more remote sense, viz. as it excites to an actual embracing, as the more immediate mean thereof. Or, when it is said, “ That this is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God ; and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent,” or the like ; this, also, is fully consistent herewith : for this knowlege is life eternal, in regard it leads to the embracing of, resting on, and solacing ourselves in God, and his Son, as the immediate mean thereof.—In the knowlege of the truth we enjoy it ; and in the embracement and solacing of ourselves in privileges held out, in and by that truth, we enjoy them.

I shall add, upon this point, only one observation more ; namely, that if faith has in it no embracement of, nor resting upon, the gospel-testimony, for our own particular case ; but were only general ; then it could not relieve and comfort the mind. It was already observed, when upon the nature of the gospel, that a general testimony cannot give thorough comfort : and that it is only in proportion as the gospel-testimony respects ourselves, in particular, that it can comfort us, concerning ourselves, in particular. And the same may here be said of faith ; that it is only in proportion as we believe, with application to ourselves, that by our faith we can be comforted, concerning ourselves. If the eyes of the mind are opened, to judge rationally, its believing with application to itself, and its comfort concerning itself, will keep so equal pace, that the one will not, yea, cannot, go one step before the other.

Since, then, that it is granted by these on your plan, that faith comforteth and relieveth the mind, concerning a person's self ; then, it necessarily followeth, that it is a believing with application to a person's self. And that this application includes in it, or amounts unto, an embracing

embracing and resting upon the gospel exhibition of mercy, for our own salvation, is already illustrated; yea, is self-evident.

I come now to your third peculiarity specified; namely, Your holding us to be passive in believing. And here, I own, that as to the faith of a testimony, already described; which is all the faith you will allow of; I own, I say, as to this, that when a truth is fully known, we cannot withhold our assent: or, when an object is presented before the eye of the understanding, in fulness of evidence, it cannot withhold perception and knowledge: yet, still, this will not make the soul to be passive in the matter. For, *first*, Even in the nature of things, though the soul be only passive, in the object's being presented before the eye of the mind, yet it is active in looking at it: even as in nature, when a striking object is immediately presented before the naked eye, though it cannot withhold seeing it, yet it is active therein, in as much as it sees it only by looking thereat: however constrained its seeing or look may be. And if active in the knowledge, surely no less in the assent connected therewith; which is only done in this way of active looking at; or taking in, and judging upon the evidence of the truth to be believed. Yea, if in the faith of a testimony, the soul's being passive in the object, its being presented before the mind, makes it also passive in the seeing thereof, or the looking thereat, and assenting thereto; because the object so presented leads thereto, so as they cannot be withheld; then also in the faith of a promise, the soul may be said to be passive, of which yourself will not allow: for when an offer and promise is borne home upon the soul, as being fully suitable to its case; and that so as it cannot but look at, and assent unto the same; then, neither can it withhold its reception and recumbancy, or resting on it for enjoyment:—as the view of the evidence of truth constrains to assent, so the view of the suitability of an offered privilege, constrains to reception.

But

But leaving the nature of things, I refer you, immediately, to scripture representations. If, in believing, the soul were only passive; then faith would only be a privilege, and not a duty. But, says the scripture, “ This  
 “ is his commandment, that ye believe on the name of  
 “ his Son Jesus Christ.—Believe on the Lord Jesus  
 “ Christ, and thou shalt be saved,” &c.

If faith were only the discovery of a testimony, in which we were only passive, then it were, at most, Christ’s coming unto us. But in an agreeableness to activity; yea, to an active embracing and resting on an offer, or on the Saviour, as therein exhibited; it is represented as our coming unto him: “ Him that cometh  
 “ unto me shall never hunger.—Him that believeth on  
 “ me shall never thirst,” &c. If therein we were only passive, then scripture language and representation would have run accordingly. And, hence, instead of saying, “ him that believeth shall be saved,” it would have run, “ him in whom I work faith, shall be saved.” Instead of saying, (when speaking of faith) “ Except ye eat the  
 “ flesh, and drink the blood of the Son of man, ye can  
 “ have no life in you,” it would have run, “ except I  
 “ feed you with my flesh and blood, ye can have no life  
 “ in you.” Instead of “ he that eateth me, even he  
 “ shall live by me,” it would have run, “ he whom I  
 “ feed with my self, even he shall live by me,” &c. In short, the scripture speaking of faith constantly in the active style, plainly shews, that tho’ the work be God’s, yet the duty is ours. Tho’ it be God that enables, yet it is us that acteth faith as well as other duties.

I come now to your fourth peculiarity, *viz.* Passive justification and salvation, or interestment in Christ, and constatement in the new covenant; which is your crowning point. The state of the question upon the difference betwixt us here, is, whether God brings us into a state of favour, entitles us unto, and interest us in the blessings thereof, only as mere passives; or if he does it, by dealing with us thereanent, in a way suitable to our natures, as  
 rational

rational creatures ; by making offer thereof in his Son's righteousness, and causing the soul betake itself thereto, in the way of believing thereon, already described ? And here it will almost be sufficient, to refer unto the nature of the gospel, and of faith, as already described. Since the gospel makes offer of the salvation it contains, unto all indefinitely ; and makes the way of attaining thereof, to be by faith, embracing and resting thereon ; what is this but a dealing with us in the active way, in the matter of attaining the offered blessings ? And that this includes justification, even in its strictest sense, is evident, when we consider, that this offer has in it an offer of Christ's infinitely valuable righteousness, to atone for all sin, and entitle unto all happiness. And the souls embracing the offer, has in it, a receiving of the same accordingly. From this it evidently appears, that the person, at this time, and by this means, comes under a very different relation unto God, from that wherein he stood before. He formerly being a guilty sinner, and under the covenant of works, which condemns for every transgression, stood under the relation unto God of a condemned malefactor : and God under the relation unto him, of an offended and condemning Judge. But now, by virtue of this gospel-offer, or constitution, which God himself hath made ; he, by this way of faith, accepting the offered righteousness, comes under the relation to God of an absolved and acquitted person, from his crimes ; and a favourite and heir of salvation : and God comes under the relation unto him, of a sin pardoning and person accepting God ; entitling him unto, and interesting him in, the blessings of salvation. Thus, in short, he comes from a state of condemnation, unto a state of justification.

I come now to your fifth peculiarity, *viz.* Your objections against the way I have been insisting on, *viz.* The way of the gospel-offer, and receiving and resting thereon by faith. Your first objection is, that it is inconsistent with the sovereignty of grace, that by making  
of

of offers, the matter is hung on our accepting or rejecting; so not on divine sovereignty. To this it is easy to reply, that hanging the matter on our accepting or rejecting, as the second mean, is fully consistent with hanging it on sovereignty, as the first and sole cause: even as in the case of these in the vessel at sea, with Paul in the storm; while their preservation and deliverance depended, entirely, on the sovereignty of God, who only had wind and seas at his command, as the first cause; yet it hang not the less on their abiding in the vessel, as the second mean. Had the will of man a self-determining power, whereby it acted independently upon any thing without itself; then, indeed, to hang salvation any way upon its choice or refusal, were so far, to make God dependent upon it, and the creature sovereign over him: But since our acts, however free, in respect of us as the second cause, are, notwithstanding, over-ruled by God, as the first cause; he turning the heart as the rivers of waters; then, however much any event hang upon them; yet sovereignty is still reserved unto God therein; that he may work in them, thereby, to will and to do of his good pleasure. And we find our Saviour still representing sovereignty in this way: "No man can come, except the Father draw him.—Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep.—All that the Father hath given me shall come."

You next object, that the way of offers suspends our comfort upon our own act of receiving, and makes us to extract it therefrom. To this it may be replied, that when the soul sees Christ, and salvation in him, to be an object of comfort, it cannot but be comforted thereby: as immediately in this, as in any other way. Were the gospel even an absolute declaration of universal redemption and salvation, it could not comfort more immediately; for, even in that case, the soul's being comforted thereby, would imply a cordial embracing thereof, and resting thereon, as its only hap-



pineness, in a way of being well pleased therewith: and this way, we have seen, requires no more: and though in a different respect, it makes nothing against the immediateness of the comfort. As in temporal things, the free offer of an inheritance as a gift, will comfort as immediately, as the declaration of one's being a born heir thereto; so, when the soul is enabled to act rationally, in spiritual things, the case will be the same.

And as to extracting our comfort from our act of receiving, this is still as great a mistake; for when the soul sees the offered salvation to be a proper object of comfort, it then receives and rests thereon accordingly; viz. as the comfort: as it is only seeing of the offered salvation to be the comfort, that can excite to the receiving thereof; so, in receiving, it receives it as the comfort: and so extracts, or takes its comfort, not from its own act; but by its act from God and his word, making it over.

As to your objection, that the way of the offer, and interestment by receiving, obscures the freedom of grace, I see no reason why God cannot confer salvation, as freely by way of offer as a gift; and causing the soul to accept accordingly; as though he conferred it on us as mere passives, in a passive way. Sure the making of a gift is not calculate to interfere with the freeness of the actual conferment; but only to be a mean thereof, in a rational way: respecting the receiver as well as the giver. And as the making of a gift does not interfere with the freedom of actual conferment, so neither does the acceptance of it: for this is but acting in a suitableness thereunto. If one did give to a bankrupt, money to buy a forfeited inheritance, the giving of the money would be free; but the inheritance bought therewith would not be so, strictly and properly: But to give the inheritance itself as a gift, and, as such cause to receive it, this would make it free in the most perfect sense. The application is easy. Should  
God

God have enabled man to work and win salvation, his enablement would be free ; but the salvation wrought for, and win by that ability, would not be properly so : But to make over the salvation as a free gift, and, as such, cause to receive it, makes it free in the strictest manner.

As to these on your way allegeing, that according unto us, the act of receiving must be performed, penitently, lovingly, humbly, and the like ; or else it will not do its office. It is easy, as to this, to observe, that, although, when the eye of the soul is opened, so as to excite to receiving, the same views does also excite unto humility in ourselves, love to the giver and gift, and the like ; yet it is the act of receiving alone, which interests in the gift. As the gift is made unto all, simply as sinners, so the soul, in receiving, doth likewise receive just as a lost sinner ; whatever be its present inward frame. Thus, though faith or receiving be never its alone in the justified ; yet it is by it alone, that we are justified. To allege, that receiving salvation, humbly, lovingly, &c. mars the freedom thereof, were to impose upon common sense, in other things ; for when persons receive temporal gifts, do they not sometimes receive them in like manner ? and are these things, thus received, less free, than these received with a worse frame and disposition ?

Upon the whole, I hope, the invalidity of the objection is evident : yea, and I may add, that even the reverse is the truth ; namely, that this way makes salvation more free than the plan you set up : for, according to it, salvation is free only in respect of actual conferment, -- into possession, unto them upon whom it is conferred ; but according to this way, it is free, also, in respect of offer, unto all : so that any may come and take of the waters of life freely.

Your next objection is, that it makes us to be justified or saved by works ; at least, by the mental work of receiving. Upon this I own, that to seek salvation  
by

by our works, is an improvement that has often been made, even of the doctrine of grace. The natural man, whatever be his speculative opinion, yet, in his practical religion is legal. When he hears the call, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," the view he takes of the matter is this, here is my duty, *believe*; and here is my reward, be *saved*: and so he sets about believing, as a work to be performed *for*, and as entitling unto, *life*. But he whose eyes are opened, to see matters in their true light, has a very different view. Here, says he, is a Saviour, and salvation in him, exhibited unto me, to be believed upon for salvation; I then heartily comply: I renounce all my own righteousness, in the matter of salvation, and embrace and rest upon Christ, by faith, for all. Thus, he renounceth all his own activity, even his act of believing not excepted, in the matter of his justification and salvation; and by his act only, relies on Christ for all.

If this is to seek salvation by our own works, I know not what the seeking of it by faith, spoken of in the scriptures, must be: for a mere passive interestment, and setting aside all means, is, not to seek salvation at all.—If this is to seek it by works, then to seek by our own righteousness, or works, and to seek only by free grace, through the righteousness and works of another, must be all one: for in this last way the person here only seeks. And as the person who acts according to this way, does not therein *seek* salvation by his own works; so neither does he find or obtain it, by his own works. For, though by embracing the Saviour, and salvation in him, as held forth in the free offer of the gospel, he is interested in the same; or, in other words, is justified and saved, as already illustrated\*; yet this act of embracing does not thus interest, justify, or save, as it is a piece of activity or work; but  
only

---

\* See the article about passive justification.

only as an instrument.—If it interested in the offered blessings, just as it is a work, or piece of activity; then it would interest therein, by entitling thereunto, as a debt or reward of said work: for works, as such, cannot otherwise interest or save. But the reception of a freely offered benefit, does not entitle unto said benefit as a debt; but only as an instrument taking it home, interest in it as a gift.

And to allege, still, because we are interested by an active receiving, though not as a work, but only as an instrument, that yet still we are justified by works being active; and so are contrary to the apostle, (Rom. x.) who excludes all works; to allege this, I say, is contrary both to common sense and language; and also to scripture. Common sense distinguisheth between *working* for a benefit, and getting in the way of a gift, by receiving it; and common language is applied accordingly. Hence, these who receive the necessaries of this life as a gift from others, whether through the means of begging it, or in the more honourable way of gifts, these are not, in common language, said to work for it; though still in getting the same they are active. And these, again, on the other hand, who work to win their bread; or by their work are entitled to the same as a debt; these, whether their work be more or less honourable, are only said to *work* for it. And as common sense and language runs thus, so the scripture, when borrowing the things thereof, to represent spiritual things by, will not misrepresent it, nor play the critic: and that too without informing us of the same: for this were not to inform, but to deceive.

But that the scripture understands *working* in the common sense, as now described, is also evident, from the scope of the places where it is used; that presently referred unto (Rom. x.) not excepted. The same apostle, in another of his epistles, says of some persons, “that they were idle, *working* not at all;” and charges them, “that with quietness they work, and  
“ eat

“eat their own bread.” But does he, therefore, suppose, that they were not active, but passively letting time go over? No; for he, at the same time, calls them *busy-bodies*: and says, they went from house to house. And in the very place referred unto, (*viz.* his epistle to the Romans) that he there takes the word *works* in the same sense, is also evident, from the scope thereof: “For (saith he) to them that work is “the reward reckoned, not of grace, but of debt.” But it is working only in the common sense, as already described, that makes the reward to be of debt; and not the receiving all freely as a gift. The works he excludes, he describes them to be opposite unto grace; but the reception of a gift, we have already seen, is not so. The works, in short, that he excludes, is, works according unto the tenor of the law, or covenant of works; *viz.* that “the man that doeth these “things shall live in them;” which are works entitling unto the privileges as a debt, making the reward of debt, of which already; whereas we have, also, already seen, that the way of receiving does not entitle to the blessings as a debt; but only interest in them as a grace or free favour. Yea, the blessings interested in, by embracing, are not given as a reward of that act; but given to the receiver, in and by that act, as a gift; or in some cases, as a reward of some other thing.

But that the works the apostle is excluding, is works for to win, or thereby be entitled to the bliss as a debt; and not an active believing; seems fully evident, even from these texts you build the contrary upon: such as, to “him that worketh not, but believeth,” &c. He does not speak in the passive style, saying, “To him “that acteth not, but in whom I work faith;” but in the active style, “to him that worketh not, but believeth.” And when he tells that Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, “that the man “which doeth these things, shall live in them;” and opposeth the gospel thereunto, saying, “But the righteousness

“teousness

“teousness which is of faith speaketh on this ways,” &c. He makes the gospel language to be, not “if I work faith in thee;” but “if thou believe,” &c. Upon the whole, does it not appear, that salvation by an active believing on Christ, does not set up salvation by our own works. And that the excluding of our own works, does not exclude an active believing on the works of another.

I come now, *lastly*, to your setting aside exhortations to sinners, to use means for salvation, which I shall dismiss with the two following observations :

*First*, The way of means, though opposite unto your passive scheme, yet does not run opposite unto the other doctrine of the gospel : such as, *1<sup>st</sup>*, It does not interfere with the sovereignty of grace ; this already appears evident, in answer to your first objection. And, moreover, when God passeth by some sinners, leaving them in their sins, and causeth others actively to betake themselves to his device of salvation, and so enjoy the good of it ; his sovereignty is as much exercised and displayed, as if he interested them in his salvation as mere stocks and stones, in a way to them entirely passive. *2<sup>dly</sup>*, Neither does it interfere with God’s being found of them that seek him not, spoke of in scripture : for as no man can seek in a right way, *viz.* by coming unto Christ, except the Father draw him ; so God’s being found of them, in thus causing them to seek, does not hinder his being found and enjoyed by them, as their God and portion, only in this way of seeking. Though God is found of them that seek him not, in a way of discovery and energy, revealing himself so unto them, and backing the revelation so with power, as causeth them to come ; yet this will not hinder his being found of them, in respect of enjoyment, as their portion and whole salvation, only in the way of seeking, *viz.* seeking by faith ; coming unto him by the Mediator. Yea, I may add, that though it be consistent with God’s perfections, to quicken and reveal himself  
to

to the wicked and guilty sinner, so as to cause him to come; yet his unspotted holiness, whereby he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity without abhorrence, forbids his giving the enjoyment of himself unto him, as his salvation and portion, except in the way of coming unto him by the Mediator, who is able to save to the uttermost, all that come unto God by him. *3dly*, Nor does the way of means interfere with the instances of conversion in scripture, wherein the person was prevented with converting grace, when using no means; but even going opposite thereto; such as Paul; Manasses, Mary Magdalen, &c.: for what are these, but God's being found of them that sought him not, as already illustrated. Nor, *4thly*, is it consistent with our natural state, as being spiritually dead, and so incapable of using means: for God's being first found of us, before we seek him, as already illustrated, doth likewise solve this difficulty. Is it not as easy for God to bring the spiritually dead sinner into a state of favour and fellowship with himself, by quickning, so as to cause to come to him in the appointed way for it: even as easy as to confer it in a way to them entirely passive.

When the nature of the death is attended unto, that it is a death in sin; and so consisting in the souls being sunk in enmity and rebellion against God, so as to be insensible thereof, and past feeling therein, as the dead are with respect unto bodily things; then what hinders it from being a mean of deliverance from this death, to set the same before the persons eyes, in its true nature and consequences, as making him odious to God's holiness, and obnoxious to his justice: and then revealing Christ unto him, as making atonement; God as well pleased in him, offering salvation unto all in and through him; beseeching, exhorting, and commanding all, to accept and be saved. Is not this way of dealing suitable to the person's case; having a tendency to his recovery: and does it not constitute his compliance therewith,

therewith, to be a mean of attaining the exhibited salvation: Yea, why may not even salvation from spiritual death to spiritual life, take place in this way; for as the death is a death in sin, the sum of which is enmity against God, and as the life to which we are to be brought, is a life of holiness, the sum of which is to love him; which love of him must be as our own God: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God:" \* and, therefore, our love must be by means of a view of interest, and our view of interest can only be in the way of accepting the offers which constitute it. By this way, then, of accepting the offered salvation, we not only receive *love to God*, as the same is an offered grace or privilege; but also in the way of embracing, we have such views as excites unto it as a duty.

And if it should be said, that still the using of means, accepting the offers of salvation, or the like, suppoeth grace to be conferred, enabling so to do; and that means, with their pre-requisites, are parts of salvation, wherein we cannot be interested by means, if we are spiritually dead by nature. To this it is easy to reply, that as a full salvation is offered, so the acceptance thereof, with the grace requisite thereto, are rather means of salvation than parts of it: and are parts only as they are means; and, therefore, if destroyed from being means, are also destroyed from being parts. The doctrines, then, of spiritual death by nature, and

---

\* The scriptures are full upon this point; assuring us, that we love God because he first loved us: and that it is hope, and not suspense, (as formerly observed) that purifies the heart. And reason, or the nature of things, do also confirm it: for even a view of God's loveliness, abstract from any view of interest, would leave a reluctancy in the mind unto him. And when offering himself and his grace, to love him, in this case, with the whole heart, abstract from embracing his offer; or (which is the same thing) in a way of neglecting it; is still more absurd.



yet the use of means in attaining salvation, are not beyond the power and wisdom of God, to make consist together: however dark the connection of things often appear to us. Nor, 5thly, does the doctrine of means interfere with the view of our natural state, as being a state of enmity, hating the salvation held out, and, consequently, despising means for attaining it: for along with the exhortation to means, sufficient motives are given, fully calculate for breaking the enmity of the heart, and causing it comply. Nor, 6thly, is it inconsistent with salvation by grace, without works: this is already evinced. As a person's working for his bread is one thing, and his receiving it as a gift, or begging it, is another; even so working for life, and using means of grace are different.

But that these, or like doctrines, do not interfere with the way of means, is further, yea, and fully evident from this, that they are joined together in scripture: and "what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." This leads me to the other general observation upon this point, which is,

*Observ. 2.* The way of means is not prohibited, but expressly required in scripture. Though the doctrines mentioned on the last observation, which your friends think overthrow means, though these are established in scripture, yet this your supposed inference from them, you will not find established, or ever drawn; though the using of wrong means, which have always taken place, did loudly call for it, had it been real. And for proof that means are expressly required, I refer you to the texts already quoted, anent the offer and way of interestment therein, which plainly establish that one mean, viz. of believing—flying for refuge—coming for life—taking of the waters of life freely; &c. is required. See also the apostle's assertion, that "the Jews who followed after the law of righteousness, have not attained unto the law of righteousness. And wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law." Plainly intimating.

mating, that it is only wrong means, or means in a wrong way, that are prohibited: and that there is a *seeking* of salvation by the way of faith, as well as by the way of the law. See also Eph. v. 14. "Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Here the very image of being dead is used, and yet an exhortation to means is given. And that the death spoke of, is not meant of the partial deaths of the real Christian, as your friends allege; but of these in a state of nature, is evident in the scope of the place. In the 3, 4, and 5 verses, the believing Ephesians are cautioned against some gross sins: in verse 6th they are told, that "for these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience:" in verses 7 and 11, they are forbid to partake, or have fellowship with them; "but rather (says he) reprove them:" which reproveing is materially an exhorting unto the opposite duty: that of embracing mercy not excepted. And, as if they, with you, had objected, that these children of disobedience were spiritually dead, and so incapable of exhortations or means, he adds, "for he (*viz.* God) saith, Awake thou that sleepest, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." As if he had said, You are thus to reprove or exhort them, for the scriptures, which should silence every objection, doth so before you, saying, "Awake," &c. You may likewise see the forecited Is. lv. 7. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Doth not this intimate, that a returning unto the Lord, according to the plan of the gospel, as the way for attaining its salvation, is exhorted unto. But I will not insist. Many are the express scripture exhortations to men, simply as sinners destitute of salvation, to seek the Lord while he may be found, to call upon him while he is near, to turn to the Lord, who will have mercy, to pray, that,

if

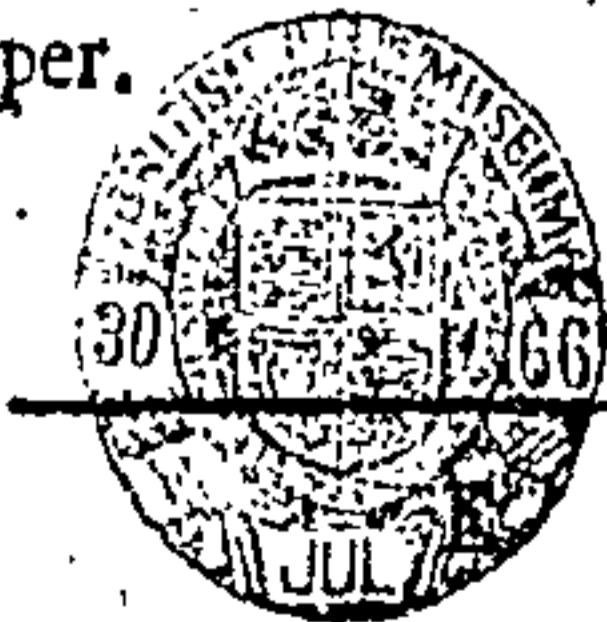
if so be, the thoughts of their hearts may be forgiven; and the like. And though the compliance with these must flow from a belief they are true; from a belief that there is forgiveness and plenteous redemption with God, that he may be thus feared and sought unto; yet we see, that this belief is not enough: but an using of the mean, in consequence thereof, is expressly required and exhorted unto, for attaining the blessings. And the publican, who acted accordingly, betaking himself to God's mercy in Christ, by faith, in the exercise of prayer, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner," is represented as going down to his house justified.

Thus, as shortly as I could, I have given a hint, and but a hint, at the contents of your letter. And might now take the opportunity of animadverting upon others of your peculiarities: such as, your rejecting human confessions of faith, and yet refusing church-communion with all who adhere not to the particular meaning which you affix unto the scriptures; your denying the distinction between the common and saving knowledge of gospel-truths; your unjust insinuations against others, about a principle of grace distinct from the word, &c. &c. but finds I cannot insist: and therefore concludes, wishing that both you and I may be kept from taking up with the opinionative and speculative part of religion, instead of the vital part of it;—that we may be made both to know and comply with God's plan and device of salvation; and that the Lord may plead his own cause, that no weapon formed against it may prosper.

I am

Your sincere friend,

A. B.



R R A T A.

In page 10, line 19, for as these your principles, read as these of your principles.—Page 12, line 15, for it is; read its.—Page 25, line 36, for it is, read its.—Page 40, line 14, for consistent, read inconsistent.