

LETTER

FROM

PHILOGRAPHERS

TO

PHILOPISTUS.

With his Answer.

Concerning the FAITH of CHRIST.

DUNDEE.

Printed in the Year M,DCC,LXX.



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# A LETTER, &c.

DEAR SIR,

I HAD yours of August the 2d, for which I return you very many thanks, both for returning so particular an answer to my letter, and encouraging me to continue a correspondence we were too long in beginning, and which has been but badly cultivated on my part since it was begun. I would have wrote you much sooner, had it not been for waiting an opportunity, which, contrary to my expectations, has not cast up till now.

I have again read over Palæmon's performance, and compared it with such of your tracts as I had by me, and can easily see how much you agree in sentiments; and likewise how much he hath been obliged to you. The chief, if not the only difference between you, that I observe, is, that you breathe a much more meek and gentle spirit than he. You seem to prefer his stile to your own: but of this I pretend to be no judge; when words convey clear and distinct ideas, I never quarrel; and I think I can understand you with the same ease that I do him. Hervey's rhetoric, in my opinion, but ill becomes the gravity of his subject, and seems to carry in it a reflection upon the easy and simple stile of the Gospel. But the apostles wrote for the

unlearned and Barbarians ; Hervey for the learned and polite.

There is something in your apology for Palæmon's manner of writing, to which I shall take the liberty of making some exceptions. I cannot allow that writing or arguing with such warmth as Palæmon sometimes discovers, can be justified from the example of our Saviour and his apostles. The most of the severe things said by them against the Pharisees and false teachers, were spoken in their hearing, or contained in the letters written to the churches whereof they professed to be members, or to persons of a very public character, for the benefit of the churches ; and therefore may be considered as so many publick rebukes to the offenders themselves, as well as cautions to others to beware of such doctrines or practices as they are censured for. Besides, they were spoken either by him, who knew what was in man, or written by them on whom he had conferred the gift of discerning spirits ; and therefore their accusations and censures must have been always just. But we do not find them using such severe language against those that were dead, however faulty they might have been during their lives, nor against those who might have erred in points of doctrine through ignorance, and without any wicked design ; which, for aught any man at present can know, might have been the case of severals of them upon whom Palæmon is so hard. Our Saviour's conference with Nicodemus, and the speech of the apostles concer-

ning Judas may be considered as instances of their behaviour towards such persons. But notwithstanding all here said, I am far from entertaining a bad opinion of Palæmon ; for, as I have no acquaintance of his person or character any other way than by his writings, I must look upon him as a man deserving regard, as being engaged in the defence of the best of causes, and (to men) by far of the greatest importance ; and I am obliged to him for his instruction. To every one like yourself, who are his friend, I have made his apology the best way I could, when I heard him censured, and have no other design in this than to make a reply to that part of your letter, which relates to him. I wonder that neither Hervey, nor any other has made a reply to his letters, which I would think they are loudly called upon to do. If you know of any such thing done, or intended to be done, I shall be obliged to you, if you'll acquaint me. Your letter and pamphlet have given me full satisfaction as to Cornelius. What you say on that head is so plain and convincing, that I almost blush at having started it as a difficulty. I am sorry you have left off publishing your *Notes on Scripture Texts*. They are one of the best keys I have seen for opening up the scriptures ; and though perhaps they may be relished by few of the fashionable and popular taste, yet every one who is willing to learn from the Bible, will think himself highly obliged to you.

As to justification by faith, which makes the principal subject of Palæmon's letters, after attending more closely to what he writes, and to what you have published on the same subject, and written in your letter, and comparing the whole as carefully as I could with the scriptures, I can find nothing to object. But as there is a point of view in which the whole controversy between Palæmon and his popular gentlemen may be seen, and in which I think, it has not been directly taken up by you nor him, I shall endeavour to set it before you, that I may have the benefit of your animadversions upon it in that light.

All who are willing to take their faith from the scriptures, must be persuaded that the righteousness of Christ is that only in which God is well pleased. But how in the believing of this simple truth, a sinner is made righteous before God, is, I think, the principal point in controversy between Palæmon and his adversaries. No sinner can be righteous but by the righteousness of Christ imputed: but what connection is there between faith and the imputation of this righteousness? It may be easily understood, how a belief in Christ's righteousness may lay a foundation of hope even for the most desperate, and become within them a spring of love and of every good work. But still the question will recur, How a sinner, through a persuasion of the truth of what Christ hath done, becomes righteous before him who is of purer eyes than to look on evil? Though Christ hath fulfilled all righteousness.

in stead of his people, and God hath declared his acceptance of it, by raising him from the dead, and exalting him at his own right hand; yet as they are by nature the children of wrath as well as others, and continue so until they believe, there must be a connection between their faith and the imputation of righteousness. The gospel indeed brings the righteousness of Christ in view, and by hearing the voice of God speaking therein, the sinner is made to believe, yet this does not convey the idea of imputation; for a person may be conceived to hear and believe good news without sharing in the good things reported. If it shall be said that Christ having fulfilled all righteousness as the head and surety of those with whom he took part in flesh and blood: his righteousness was imputed to them, from the time that it was finished on the cross. This contradicts the scripture, which every where ascribes justification to faith, and supposes a person to be in a justified state, while he yet continues a child of wrath: which is what commonly goes by the name of Antinomianism, and makes faith to be only the sign or evidence of justification: and if we shall say, that righteousness is imputed upon believing, or in and by it; this would make faith a condition, or ascribe some sort of efficiency to it in our justification, which is the opposite of Palæmon's doctrine. But in support of this last it may be alledged, that sinners are made the righteousness of God in Christ, in the same way that he was made sin for them. Now iniquity was laid upon him

by his own voluntary consent, saying, *Lo I come to do thy will, O God.* Therefore there must be something in faith answering to this consent which may be thus explained. In the Gospel the righteousness of Christ is revealed, and the sinner believing the record of God concerning his Son, submits to it, and thereby it is imputed to him, or of God Christ is made unto him righteousness. In this way a connection may be seen between faith and the imputation of the righteousness believed; for this reason, I suppose faith is by many described as consisting in the assent of the understanding and consent of the will, and this likewise, I take to be the meaning of receiving, apprehending, coming to and closing with Christ, and many of the like phrases which denote an activity in faith in the justification of a sinner. Nor does this account of faith seem to be altogether without foundation in scripture, for when we attend to the faith of those that were healed, we find in it both a belief of the power of Jesus to heal, and a submission or consent to be healed by him. Thus the blind men having expressed their desire or willingness to have their eyes opened, Jesus required them likewise to confess his power, saying, *Do ye believe that I am able to do this?* and again, before he put forth his power in healing the impotent man laid at the pool of Bethesda, he said, *Wilt thou be made whole?* and had there been one sick that believed his power to heal but would not submit to receive this benefit at his hands, we have no reason to believe that he would have been healed. In



like manner it can scarce be thought that a sinner, tho' believing never so firmly the record of the gospel concerning the righteousness of Christ, could have it imputed to him, if he did not submit, or consent, to be saved by it. To this purpose our Saviour saith unto the Jews, "Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life," and the Apostle ascribes their rejection to this, that being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, did not submit themselves to the righteousness of God. Altho' this righteousness was declared to them, they would not submit, they would not consent to be saved by it. Whether this submission or consent of the will shall be called an act or fruit of faith, or by any other name, it can be of no great moment in the question, when without it no man can believe to the saving of the soul. It is true the same thing may be said of every kind of faith which is not productive of the proper fruits; but there is no fruit or act of it that more nearly respects the righteousness of Christ than this.

Thus, dear Sir, I have set forth the popular doctrine, if I have not mistaken it, with all the advantage I can; but at the same time I am very sensible of the danger of making our Justification depend in whole, or in part, upon any thing done or performed by us, whither it pass under the name of faith, or of works; for if it be a work of ours, a qualification or requisite, an instrument in our hands, or any thing else that can be found in us, exerted or performed by us, in order to our justification, whether by way of

preparation or otherwise, we are justified thereby, and the righteousness of Christ is made of no effect. And I heartily agree with Palæmon in all that he hath said on this head. As for my own part I am fully satisfied, whatever disputes or controversies may be raised on this head, that when he who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines into the heart, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of the Lord in the face of Jesus Christ, which is no otherwise done than by hearing of the gospel, the light of this glorious and comforting truth is mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds, casting down the high thoughts and the proud reasoning of men, and every high thing that exalteth it self against the knowledge of God, and bringing every thought in captivity to the obedience of Christ. We may pretend to accuracy in our disputes upon these heads, but when we begin to distinguish and separate that God hath joined, we are in danger of departing from the truth, and instead of being inlightned thereby, our foolish hearts are darkned. But I forget to what a length this tedious epistle is drawn out. I shall only add, that because a letter may without any design fall into bad hands, that I shall make use of a borrowed name and subscribe myself, in sincerity, your assured friend,  
 February 23d, 1758. PHILOLOGRAPHER.

## LETTER II.

In Answer to the above.

DEAR SIR,

**I**T is quite needless for me to reply to what you say of Palæmon's severity to his popular men: for till you be perswaded, as he is, that their doctrine is as great a perversion of the gospel, as was that of the Judaisers, you can never patiently suffer the Apostolic reflections on those to be applied to them. And indeed I cannot much blame you, who have not had the occasions for so full an experience of such men and their way (in opposition to the truth) as we have had, though you should look on them as well meaning men, labouring under some forbearable mistakes.

The view, wherein you would have the popular doctrine taken up and animadverted on, would I dare say be as disagreeable to Palæmon as any view he ever had of it. He would say, it is a scheme for setting aside the righteousness of God *which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all that believe*, in order to establish justification on the submission and consent of the will to Christ, so that we may become righteous not by faith in the righteousness of our God and Saviour; but by our work of faith, working in us that consent and that submission to righteousness.

What appears now to me in the view you give me of this old subject, is, that you would

infer it from the nature of imputation, and make it out from the imputation of Christ's righteousness to us. I always thought of the imputation of sin and righteousness as a thing proper and peculiar to God, and altogether independent of us. It is God that justifies the ungodly, imputing righteousness to him without works. Nor can any thing be imagined so sovereign as making us sinners by Adam's disobedience, and righteous by the obedience of Christ, or as making him, who knew no sin, to be sin for sinners, and them the righteousness of God in him. And this is wholly preventing as to any thing like consent on their part to whom sin or righteousness is imputed. For when God makes us sinners in Adam, giving us a being in him, this is manifestly without our consent. And in like manner, when we are of him in Christ made of him to us righteousness, our consent is entirely prevented hereby, unless we would say, that our consent to be in Christ prevents God's giving us a being in him; yea the imputation of sin to Jesus prevented his consent. For I have nothing to think upon but the eternal counsel of the divine Three before that time you mention, when a Body was prepared the Son of God to be offered a sacrifice for sin. Before that, he had not any ear to hear a commandment: but when he was made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem from it's curse by being made a curse, then it was that he humbled himself and became obedient to the death of the cross, and then he received that command from his Father

to lay down his life for the sheep. *A body hast thou prepared me; then said I, Lo I come to do thy will—by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ.*

As to the imputation of his righteousness to us, we see, that, to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is imputed unto righteousness, that, the man is blessed to whom God imputeth righteousness without works, and to whom the Lord will not impute sin, and that, as righteousness was imputed to Abraham believing, so it is also imputed to us believing on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. And from this we learn, that God justifies the ungodly by imputing to him a righteousness which he did not work, a righteousness that God testifies, and he believes to have been wrought by Christ whom he hath raised from the dead. Nor is this righteousness imputed to him working, who, in place of that, is believing it wrought by Christ to the full satisfaction of him who is of purer eyes than to look on evil. And so this his faith is imputed to him working nothing, but thus believing. When we take the idea of imputation from the scripture, we must have it in connection with faith, even as the scripture gives it. The righteousness that is imputed without works, is revealed and manifested in the divine testimony concerning it. And as this is the only way it comes to us, we have no other way of coming at it but know-

ing this revelation, and beholding this manifestation of righteousness in crediting the testimony that God gives of it. Thus the word is very nigh thee; in thy heart believing it, and in thy mouth confessing it. And thus we come to be in Christ, and to have Christ in us, only by the word of faith, and in believing that word. Therefore we see the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ is unto all and upon all them that believe. It is revealed unto faith, and is upon faith.

God then imputes righteousness to the ungodly, when he, who calleth the things that be not as though they were, gives them a being in Christ by his word, or when he gives unto them in the behalf of Christ to believe his righteousness sufficient to justify them the ungodly. But here is nothing to be thought of about the sinner, but allennarly what he believes; and every thing but that is excluded by his faith, believing that alone infinitely sufficient, and having respect to nothing about himself but his ungodliness, and respecting God as justifying the ungodly by the righteousness of Christ, who died for the ungodly, and rose again for their justification. Yet for this very reason it is of faith: for so only could it be by the grace that gave the son of God to die for the ungodly, and to work righteousness for them, which is the true grace of God bestowed on men. But, being as little disposed to submit to this grace of God as to his righteousness, we have no ear to give to this reason, and are ready to say, this faith is nothing

at all : for there is nothing in it beside what is believed to contribute to the justification of one man rather than another. And therefore we must find faith having something in it or about it fitting a sinner for the imputation of righteousness to him, and affording some reason why it should be imputed to him now rather than before. And so we consider faith, abstractly from its object, as an action of the soul, and likewise as a principle and spring of action there, and have recourse to philosophy, distinguishing the action of the soul into understanding and willing. And being now philosophers on the faith, we ascribe assent to the understanding, and consent to the will. But not being able to make any thing to the purpose out of a bare assent, and finding something of more force and weight in the consent of the will ; we even choose to speak nonsense in philosophy, and say, True faith is the sincere consent of the will. But, if neither philosophy, nor the scripture (constantly distinguishing faith from love) will allow us to call this faith ; then surely it is the nearest and first effect of it, and according to scripture, inseparable from it : and so faith must justify the ungodly, not by what it believes ; but by what it works in him, or makes him work suitably to that.

Though this view you give of the popular doctrine presents so flat a contradiction to the Scripture ; yet it seeks for some foundation in the scripture's speaking of the faith of those that were healed by their faith. For though it cannot be denied, that the Lord ascribed

their healing only to their faith ; yet, without any foundation, either in recorded fact, or in any probability, one needing healing is supposed believing all that they believed who were made whole by their faith, and yet not willing to receive this benefit at his hand : and on this it is presumed, that as we have no ground to think such an one would be healed, even so, it cannot be thought that a sinner, however believing the record of Christ's righteousness, could have it imputed to him, if he did not submit or consent to be saved by it. The conclusion is, that healing, and so the imputation of righteousness, is not by faith but by this submission and consent, without which, faith could neither heal nor make righteous. And this is supported by the Lord's requiring this willingness of the man at the pool, in order to his being healed. But when that passage is viewed, it will be found very ill chosen for this purpose: for the man in answer to him, professed his willingness indeed, but willingness, not to be healed by him, but by the pool, if he could attain it, which he lamented he was not able to do. And the Lord prevented all profession from him, either of his faith in him, or of his willingness to be healed by him ; even as he prevented the man born blind, by creating eyes to him before he knew him to be the son of God. Among them that were made whole by their faith, as a sign of eternal salvation in the remission of sins by faith in the blood of the son of God, we find one very willing and most earnest in his application to Christ, to have healing from him to



his son if possible; and yet not receiving that benefit till he professed faith in the Son of God as able to do this, as the Lord said, All things are possible to him that believeth. And even so I can suppose one willing to give up his righteousness, in every other shape, and very willing to have Christ's righteousness imputed to him, and yet not believing that righteousness sufficient to justify him; without that same willingness which he has, or would fain have true and sincere. Now I cannot think, according to the scripture, that Christ's righteousness is imputed to such a man thus not believing it sufficient. It is fact, that Jesus healed men perceiving their faith, that he required faith in order to healing, that he did not these mighty works to men because of their unbelief, and that he ascribed their being made whole, as well as forgiven, only to their faith, even as he said to the woman who loved much, and to whom much was forgiven, Thy faith hath saved thee. And therefore to go about to ascribe it to any thing else about them, is to labour at contradiction to the plainest thing the scripture says.

A Brother of yours in this presbytery wrote a paper against Palæmon's faith, shewing there was more than that in the faith of those whom Christ healed; even an application to him for it, worshipping him, and desiring and begging it earnestly of him. And upon his reading this to your correspondent, Thomas Glas, he received this short answer, How shall they call on him in whom they have not be-

lieved? I suppose this answer did not satisfy him; but it serves to distinguish faith to me from every thing else that men would palm upon me for it, and to show me that all my salvation, with all in me that can accompany it, and every evident token of it about me, must only be by my faith.

Thus I have taken some pains to animadvert upon the view you give me of the popular doctrine, which I am glad to find, by what follows in your letter, is not your own doctrine; for though your spirit be not so stirred in you against it as is Palæmon's, yet it is good you have not that damnable doctrine. And if any thing I have said can serve to confirm you unto zeal against it, even in that best view you can have of it, I shall think my pains well bestowed. But as you tell me you have a multitude of subjects to write upon, I fear your correspondence is come too late now for me, who am past the age proper for study and writing, as to which I find myself greatly failed, and having little strength either of body or mind for it: so that I am much pleased with having Palæmon, much fitter for the purpose, as a successor in that way. And to give you all the information and satisfaction I can about him, I have sent you herewith, letters he received concerning his book, from two popular dissenters in London, adversaries to one another about the faith, together with his answers to them both, which, whether they please you or not, will not, I suppose be very agreeable to either of them.

And now you'll think I have answered your letter to a sufficient length. So I think it is time for me to have done, and in compliance with your humour, to subscribe myself in sincerity,

Your assured friend,

(signed)

PHILOPISTUS.

March 3.]  
1758.]

COPY of a Letter from Mr. GLAS, to the Elders at Kirbylonsdale, in Answer to one he received from them, with a Pamphlet, supposed to be done by Mr Ingham, dated April 12th, 1765.

I Cannot understand what sort of people these are who have been turn'd away from looking after the Church, by the pamphlet you sent me, nor how they could be turn'd away by means of it. They see not the Divine Three distinguished to us in the scripture, as persons are distinguish'd: because so it would lead to Tritheism, and it doth not call them persons. Thus they find the man Christ Jesus cannot be a *Divine Person*; and the union of the humanity with the Divinity is not personal, is not in a divine person. But they have some way of perceiving that the Scriptures shew them the Essence of God, in distinction from its influence, and this Essence united with the Essence of man; so that the union of the Deity with the Humanity is Essential; and this composition of the two Essences into one, constitutes what they would call the Person of Jesus Christ! giving the name person (which they deny to be Scriptural) to what is neither a Divine Person distinct from the other two, nor a human person, but an union of the Deity (the same in all the three and abstracted

from them) with the Humanity, or human essence, abstracted from all about it that may serve to distinguish one individual man from another.

These your lookers after the Church, seem to be a sort of metaphysical philosophers, lovers of the wisdom of words, by which they would have the word of faith explained, with some help from Hutcheson's philosophy; seeing their Divine three only in fire, light and air, and their one Divine Essence in the invisible matter of these visible three, which (without seeing it) they can imagine to be the very same in each of them. But while other Hutchinso- nians see three Divine Persons in these visible three, and two persons in Christ (the Divine and the Human) with Nestorius; they can see no such thing, no Divine Person, and in Christ they find the Divine nature and the Human nature (without personality) compounded together into one nature (with the Euti- chian Hereticks) which compound one, they now affirm to be the person of Jesus Christ. This is their Son of God! and this is their faith of the Son of God!

If this is not so; I cannot guess, from the pamphlet, that turned them from looking toward the Church, what sort of people they are; for according to the author of that pam- phlet, pretending to avoid Tritheism, they are Sabellians, and seeking to avoid the Divi- nity of the person of that Holy Thing born of the Virgin, they are Eutychians. Nor can I see how otherwise they could be turned away.

from any of our Churches, by that pamphlet, which opposes them in no other point but that grand one, wherein they stand united (and may it ever be without controversy among them) viz. their faith of the Son of God; which has been set forth as I could, in the notes, vol. 20, particularly on Luke i. 35. and in the notes on Celsus, vol 3. page 269, line 16. 17. 18. 19. and page 270 and 271, beginning with these words, "It seems Origin," and ending with these "calling himself the Lord." I would congratulate you upon your happy deliverance from these people, who have turn'd away from you upon your faith of the Son of God; but would be very sorry if any of you should be staggered at that faith by what is set forth in the pamphlet.

Could any of you bear to see its Author, in the explication of the first text he quotes, applying the Son given, even as the Child born, to Christ's Human nature, in distinction from the Divine nature? though that be inconsistent with his making the Son to be the essential union of the two natures.

F I N I S.